

1. BASIC INFORMATION

Course	Defense and Security Alliances
Degree program	Global Degree in International Relations
School	School of Social Sciences
Year	Third Year
ECTS	6 ECTS
Credit type	Compulsory
Language(s)	English
Delivery mode	Face-to-face
Semester	First Semester
Academic year	2025/2026
Coordinating professor	PhD. Thomas Kruiper

2. PRESENTATION

This course is designed to present students with a deeper understanding of security alliances in the field of international relations. Traditionally alliances are associated with the theory of structural realism, in which sovereign states ally or bandwagon with threatening states to maximize their (military) security. Modern alliances are much more complex, as they are formed and sustained through a mix of tactical, historical, and ideational variables. For example, NATO is as much about countering the traditional threat of Russia as it is about defending the interests of liberal democracies. Since the field of security studies has become broader and deeper, alliances have also changed their objectives. NATO's activities today include joint military exercises, but also counterterrorism activities, cyber- security, and peacebuilding in places as far away as Afghanistan. The African Union even aims to uphold the responsibility to protect civilians in conflict, a concept at odds with the very sovereignty African states fought for in their struggle for independence.

This course is divided into four blocks that help conceptualize the different perspectives on security in international relations: (1) Security Alliances and IR Theory, (2) the North Atlantic Treaty Organization, (3) The African Union, the Organization of American States, the Association of South East Asian Nations, and the Arab League, and (4) China, the USA, and their Allies. Together, these blocks help students in gaining a deeper understanding of the world major security alliances, their strengths and weaknesses, and their role in international relations.

3. COMPETENCIES AND LEARNING OUTCOMES

Core competencies:

- CB1 – Students possess and demonstrate their knowledge in an area that departs from a level of secondary education and is based on advanced textbooks, and also includes aspects that imply knowledge of their field of study.
- CB2 – Students know how to apply knowledge from their field of study, work, or vocation in a professional manner and possess competencies that are demonstrated by elaborating and constructing arguments relevant to the main concepts of the course. Students show problem-solving skills.
- CB3 – Students have the capacity to combine and interpret relevant data and content within the course and are able to analyze, judge, and reflect upon issues and case studies related to the course topic.
- CB4 – Students can transmit information, ideas, problems, and solutions to an audience, whether specialized or not.
- CB5 – Students develop learning abilities necessary to understand future studies with a great deal of autonomy.

Cross-curricular competencies:

- CC4 – Ability to analyse and synthesise. Being capable of disentangling complex situations or problems into separate parts. Being able to evaluate alternative options, solutions, or perspectives in order to find optimal solutions to a problem. Being able to synthesise complex problems into understandable blocks and propose a solution.
- CC6 – Oral and Written communication. Ability to transmit and receive data, ideas, opinion and attitudes and turn them into comprehension and action, whether in an oral presentation, debate, or through written exercises or explaining graphs and tables.
- CC10 – Innovative and entrepreneurial spirit. Capacity to cope with and resolve difficult and stressful situations successfully. Capacity to anticipate problems, propose improvements and plan successfully. Ability to successfully manage projects.
- CC13 – Problem solving. Capacity to find solutions to complicated questions or difficult situations without a predetermined or predefined solution, which makes finding an objective harder.
- CC14 – Innovation and Creativity. Capacity to propose and elaborate new and original solutions that add value to proposed problems, including those coming from other academic or professional fields.

Specific competencies:

- SC09 – Recognize global, universal, and cosmopolitan perspectives while studying actors, institutions, structures, and transactions that constitute international relations.
- SC12 – Understand the dimension of human rights as values inspired by the international community and the international legal framework in which they are embedded.
- SC25 – Identify and relate concepts with other international actors.

Learning outcomes:

- LO1: To contribute to promoting peace policies and proposals for peaceful solutions to conflicts.
- LO2: They will be able to recognize global, universal, cosmopolitan perspectives in the study of the actors, institutions, structures and transactions that constitute International Relations.
- LO3: They will be able to analyse, interpret and develop programmes and projects aimed at improving aspects related to international security.

The following table shows the relationship between the competencies developed during the course and the learning outcomes pursued:

Competencies	Learning outcomes
CB2, CB3, CB4, CC6, CC10, CC13, SC12, SC25	LO1: To contribute to promoting peace policies and proposals for peaceful solutions to conflicts.
CB1, CB3, CB4, CC4, CC6, SC09, SC25	LO2: They will be able to recognize global, universal, cosmopolitan perspectives in the study of the actors, institutions, structures and transactions that constitute International Relations.
CB2, CB3, CB4, CB5, CC4, CC10, CC14, SC12, SC25	LO3: They will be able to analyse, interpret and develop programmes and projects aimed at improving aspects related to international security.

4. CONTENT

Presentation and critical assessment of the main organizations focused on security and collective defense. Command structures, functions and evolution of objectives and operational strategies

5. TEACHING-LEARNING METHODOLOGIES

The types of teaching-learning methodologies used are indicated below:

- Cooperative Learning
- Problem-Based Learning (PBL)
- Simulation Environments
- Case Studies

6. LEARNING ACTIVITIES

Listed below are the types of learning activities and the number of hours the student will spend on each one:

Learning activity	Number of hours
Discussions and colloquiums	3
Oral Presentations	5
Tutoring	18
Autonomous work	50
Master Class	22
Non-Synchronous Classes	11
Case Studies	14
Problem Solving	18
Written assignments	7
Assessments	2

TOTAL	150
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7. ASSESSMENT

Listed below are the assessment systems used and the weight each one carries towards the final course grade:

Assessment system	Weight
Knowledge Assessment	30%
Oral expositions	30%
Portfolio	20%
Individual assignments	20%

When you access the course on the *Campus Virtual*, you'll find a description of the assessment activities you have to complete, as well as the delivery deadline and assessment procedure for each one.

7.2. First evaluation period

To pass the course in the first exam period, you must obtain a final course grade of at least 5 out of 10 (weighted average).

In any case, you will need to obtain a grade of at 5.0 in the final exam for it to count towards the final grade along with all the grades corresponding to the other activities.

7.2. Second evaluation period

To pass the course in the second exam period, you must obtain a final grade of at least 5 out of 10 (weighted average).

In any case, you will need to obtain a grade of 5.0 in the final exam for it to count towards the final grade along with all the grades corresponding to the other activities.

The student must deliver the activities not successfully completed in the first exam period after having received the corresponding corrections from the professor, or those that were not delivered in the first place.

8. SCHEDULE

This table shows the delivery deadline for each assessable activity in the course:

Assessable activities	Deadline
Oral Expositions	Week 7 – Friday 23:59
Individual Assignment	Week 11 – Friday 23:59

Final Assessment	10-25 January (exact date and time tbd)
Portfolio	Weekly forum activities

This schedule may be subject to changes for logistical reasons relating to the activities. The student will be notified of any change as and when appropriate.

9. BIBLIOGRAPHY

The main reference work for this subject is:

- Lanoszka, A. (2022). *Military alliances in the twenty-first century* (1st ed.; ISBN 978-1509545568). Polity.
- Allison, Graham. 2017. *"Destined for War: Can America and China Escape Thucydides's Trap?"* (New York: Houghton Mifflin).

The recommended Bibliography is:

- Fukuyama, Francis. 2016. *"The Origins of Political Order."* New York: Farrar, Strauss, and Giroux.
- Snyder, Glenn. 1997. *Alliance Politics*. Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press.

All course readings and other materials will be provided in PDF or video-format on Canvas.

10. EDUCATIONAL ORIENTATION, DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION UNIT

From the Educational Orientation, Diversity and Inclusion Unit we offer support to our students throughout their university life to help them reach their academic achievements. Other main actions are the students' inclusions with specific educational needs, universal accessibility on the different campuses of the university and equal opportunities.

1. Accompaniment and follow-up by means of counselling and personalized plans for students who need to improve their academic performance.
2. In terms of attention to diversity, non-significant curricular adjustments are made in terms of methodology and assessment for those students with specific educational needs, pursuing an equal opportunities for all students.
3. We offer students different extracurricular resources to develop different competences that will encourage their personal and professional development.
4. Vocational guidance through the provision of tools and counselling to students with vocational doubts or who believe they have made a mistake in their choice of degree.

Students in need of educational support can write to us at:

orientacioneducativa.uev@universidadeuropea.es

11. ONLINE SURVEYS

Your opinion matters!

The Universidad Europea encourages you to participate in several surveys which help identify the strengths and areas we need to improve regarding professors, degree programs and the teaching-learning process.

The surveys will be made available in the “surveys” section in virtual campus or via e-mail.

Your assessment is necessary for us to improve.

Thank you very much for your participation.