



ITSS
International Team
For the Study of Security
Verona

Summer School Track: Foundational Courses - Shades of Security

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Module Description

Whilst widely studied, security remains one of the most contested topics in academia. Not only is security hard to theorise, categorise, and, ultimately, define. Generally, it is highly context-dependent too. It is inherently relative – i.e. it means different things to different people. And, as a concept, security is often politicised. As ITSS Verona, we have no pretention to address and solve the aforementioned matters. Rather, as passionate academics and researchers who wish to internationalise apolitical discussion, we would like to ask the following: why do conflicts erupt? What does international law say about conflict and human security? Which are the most inspiring non-Western approaches to international security? What are effective qualitative and quantitative methods to analyse international security? How can we bridge the gap between academia and policymakers? What does it mean to be an academic? How important is academic publishing?

Aims

A combination of frontal lectures and seminars by ITSS Verona members, this module has two aims. First, given the potentially charged nature of the topic, we invite participants to **embrace and appreciate the many variegated facets of security**, which are the cornerstone of security studies. This is not to argue that individuals cannot mature their own views on what security matters and entails. Rather, this is to provide members with a short but yet in-depth understanding of the main underlying themes and debates in the field. In doing so, the module's second aim is to **expose** participants to how members of academia see **security, its study, and its practical implications**. Not only are we going to introduce mere academic concepts; we are also responding to what we, as academics, are often required to know as for impact, relationships with media and policymakers, and the job market.

Learning outcomes

By the end of the course, participants will be able to demonstrate the following.

Knowledge and understanding of:

- Major dilemmas surrounding definitions, theories, and causes of conflict
- Main elements of international law and conflict
- Most relevant non-Western approaches to international security
- Key quantitative and qualitative methods used in the field
- Academia-policymaking relations
- Academic career
- Academic publishing

Transferable/employability skills (through the seminars):

- Communication and presentational skills
- Balance in crafting an argument by appreciating complexity, avoiding jumping to uncorroborated conclusions

- Mental flexibility – as explained below, members are to think as critically and as holistically as possible
- Respect – for every actor’s research, work, and overall perspective

Teaching arrangements

The module is divided into **eight lessons** spread across **four weekends** – i.e. one on Friday morning and one Saturday morning for four consecutive weekends, equalling **12 hours total**. Teaching sessions will be delivered remotely. Lessons feature **frontal lectures** (1 hour) and **short seminars** (30 minutes). Images, videos, online material will facilitate interactive and practical lectures. Seminars gravitate around one or two pivotal questions that naturally arise from the underlying themes. **Participants are encouraged to engage**, contribute to scholarly debate, defend their arguments and, ultimately, share potential solutions to concrete problems.

Hence, this is how the module is specifically divided:

Friday, June 10th, 2022

Lesson #1: “Introduction to international security”

What do we mean by security? Why do we study it? What are the main causes of conflict? What are the main theories that explain war and tension in the international system? In this session, Mr Francesco Bruno (ITSS Verona) answers the aforementioned questions by zooming on realism, liberalism, and constructivism.

Saturday, June 11th, 2022

Lesson #2: “International law, conflict, and security”

How is conflict envisioned in international law? What constitutes conflict? How are States to conduct war? What is admissible and what is not? In this session, Mr Luca Mattei (ITSS Verona) illustrates how the so-called ‘Ius ad bello’, exploring treaties and customary law that regulate modern conflict amongst States.

Friday, June 17th, 2022

Lesson #3: “Non-Western approaches to international security”

What do we mean by non-Western approaches? Why is it important to include and increasingly appreciate academia and professional work that does not come Western institutions? Dr Inderjeet Parmar (City University) offers an overview of the rationale and the advantages of more inclusive academia, with particular reference to how non-Western sources may view current important security-related issues, like the US-China competition.

Saturday, June 18th, 2022

Lesson #4: “Quantitative research methods”

Why do we need statistics, models, and numbers to spot trends in international security? What do ‘research questions’, ‘variables’, and ‘hypotheses’ mean? Which models are most suited for the study of international security? In this session, Mrs Julia Hodgins (ITSS Verona)

shares her extensive professional experience to illustrate the most important quantitative tools required to analyse security-related matters.

Friday, June 24th, 2022

Lesson #5: “Qualitative research methods”

If we already have quantitative data, why do we also need qualitative data? What do ‘questionnaires’, ‘surveys’, and ‘focus groups’ actually mean? Which methods are most suited for the study of international security? In this session, Mrs Julia Hodgins (ITSS Verona) and Richard Colebourn (BBC) share their extensive professional experience to illustrate the most important qualitative tools required to analyse security-related matters.

Saturday, June 25th, 2022

Lesson #6: “The impact of academia on policymaking”

Do academic theories have an impact on policymaking or do theoretical frameworks solely come, live, and die in the classroom? What comes first? Theory or practice? In this session, Mr Omri Brinner (ITSS Verona) examines the role of academic theories in policymaking by focusing on several historical case studies from around the world, touching upon domino and ‘mowing the grass’ theories, as well as the question of academics involved in policymaking.

Friday, July 1st, 2022

Lesson #7: “Life as an academic”

After all those years studying and taking exams, how is life as an academic? What are the advantages and disadvantages of the profession? What do academics actually do? What is the future of academia? In this session, Dr Michele Groppi (KCL and ITSS Verona) shares his personal experience on life as an academic, research, administrative tasks, departmental life, work-life balance, and professional opportunities.

Saturday, July 2nd, 2022

Lesson #8: “On academic publishing”

What is an ‘academic’ publication? How does the latter differ from a non-academic published work? How does academic publishing work? What is the status of academic research? What does the future hold in terms of academic publishing? In this session, Dr Zeno Leoni (KCL and ITSS Verona) shares his personal experience on academic publishing, zooming in on writing, research, academic market, dissemination, and impact.

Module requirements

There are no formal requirements for this module. Everyone with an interest in the aforementioned topics is welcome.

Referenced sources/Supplemental materials

A full list of reading/viewing materials will be provided in due course.