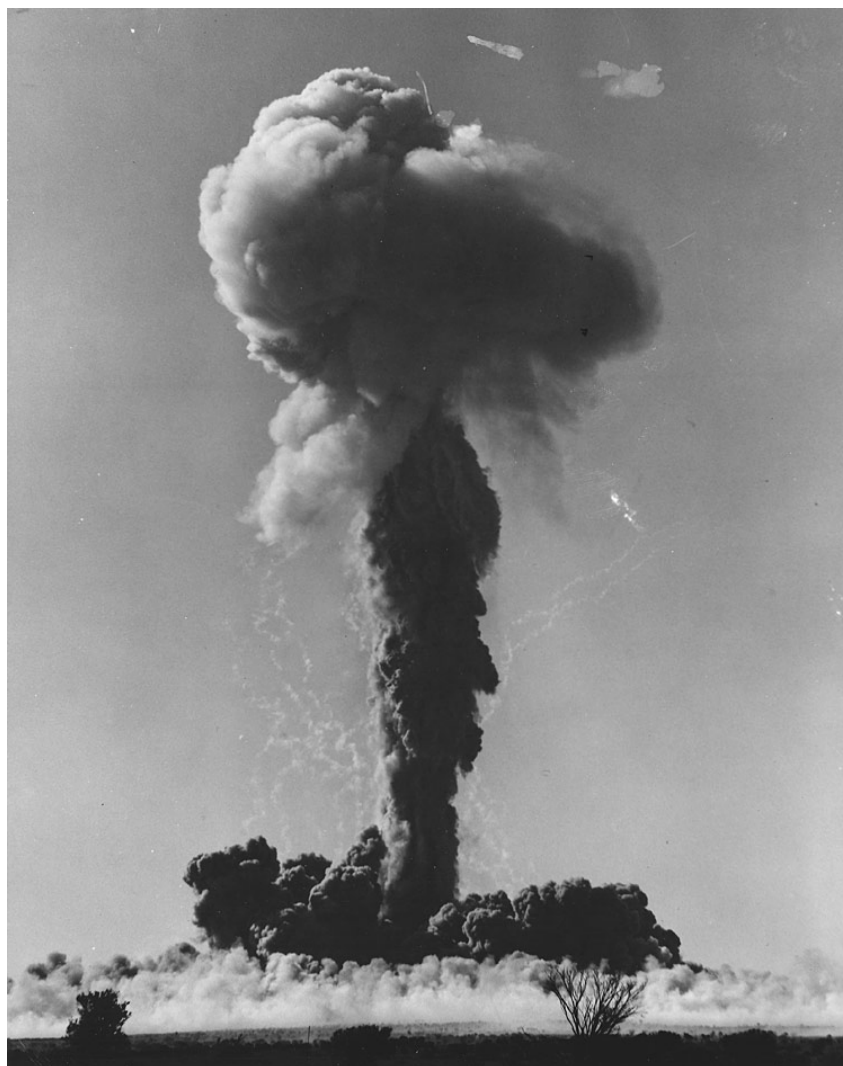


WINTER SEMESTER  
2021–2022



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Tuesdays  
11:00–12:20

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Room 301

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## POLITICS OF NUCLEAR (NON-)PROLIFERATION

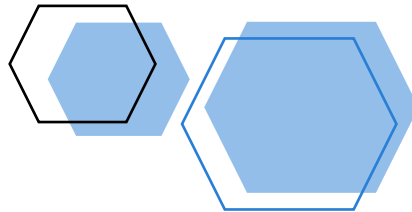
DR. MICHAL SMETANA

- Master's-level course about the role of nuclear weapons in international politics
- provides you with a basic introduction into the world of arms control diplomats, disarmament activists, nuclear experts, and scholars studying the causes and consequences of the spread of nuclear weapons
- the course is recommended for active students who enjoy interactive teaching methods, challenging debates, and scholarly puzzles



## WHAT DO WE COVER IN THE COURSE?

As you are becoming experts on international relations, you simply cannot avoid the issue of nuclear weapons in the world politics of the 20<sup>th</sup> and 21<sup>st</sup> century. Whether you think that nuclear weapons represent the ultimate evil, or they are the guardians of a long great-power peace, the spread of nuclear weapons is frequently placed among the top international security threats the humanity is facing today. In this course, we will discuss the contemporary discords in the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty regime; unpack new initiatives aiming for global nuclear abolition; elaborate on the current problems with nuclear programs in Iran and North Korea; and try to solve the big puzzles that keep nuclear scholars awake at nights – such as why countries develop nuclear weapons in the first place, what are the consequences of nuclear weapons spread, and why they have not been used in a military conflict since the Second World War.



## WHAT HAPPENS BEFORE AND IN THE CLASS?

Most classes in this course are a lecture-seminar hybrid; while I try to share with you some basic overview of the current developments in the field and relevant academic concepts and theories, your own input and ideas are critically important for a joint learning process. There will be also some special lectures delivered by practitioners or other guests. If the COVID-19 situation allows it, we will also jointly visit the experimental nuclear reactor in Prague so that you get an idea how (civilian) nuclear hardware actually looks like (see the schedule in [Moodle](#)). Attendance is compulsory, with up to three abstentions allowed (for whatever reason – no prior excuse is needed). For each class, I will ask you only for a brief preparation: usually reading a short policy article or document or watching a video.





## WHAT HAPPENS AFTER THE CLASS?

After each class, I will ask you to follow up on what we've learned and read, on average, two scholarly articles that will elaborate on our problem in more detail. There is good evidence that from a learning perspective, this approach works much better than the traditional "read first – attend the lecture second" approach. Readings for each class will be available for you in the [Moodle](#). After you read the articles, you will have time until Monday on the following week to provide me (and others in the class) with a brief Moodle reflection (approx. 250 words) on the readings: did it make sense? What is still unclear? How else can we approach the problem? What are some other possible applications? Note that in order to pass the course, you need to read *all* the assigned readings and provide reflections for *all* of them – you can be late with your reflections up to three times during the semester but not more than that.

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## TERM PROJECT: NON-PROLIFERATION PODCAST

During this semester, you will also record your own podcast episode. You can either work alone or in a pair – your choice. The episode should have 40–50 minutes, half of it will be your discussion of the selected topic and the other half your interview with a foreign scholar or expert of your choice. I will provide you with a list of possible topics, but you are welcome to come up with your own: we will discuss them regularly on Moodle. Each of you should have a topic and an interviewee selected by week 5. You will submit the podcast outline/script by week 10 and the final podcast by January 15<sup>th</sup>. In addition to your own work, you will also provide feedback on the podcast outline of your classmates by week 11 (at least two detailed feedbacks!). We will upload the final podcast episodes on YouTube, to be publicly accessed by anyone.



## EXAM

The exam part of this course will be probably slightly different than you are used to. Whether you end up as an academic or a diplomat representing your country, you will often find yourself debating others on different issues and this is exactly what you are going to do here as well. We will set-up a debate, in which you will be defending an assigned position against others, using everything you have learned during the semester. The point is not to “win” the debate and “defeat” your opponent but to demonstrate your ability to actively use what you have learned during the course. I will set at least three available dates for these debates in January and in the first half of February.

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## ONE MORE IMPORTANT POLICY

In all my courses, including this new one, we observe a strict no-laptop / no-tablet / no-phone policy; in other words, the students and lecturers are not allowed to use electronic devices during the class. Please note that the motivation for this rule is not to discipline the students or to make it harder for you in any way – on the contrary. Using laptops for note-taking during class has, according to the latest studies in neuroscience and pedagogics, very high cognitive costs; it is a constant distraction for your brain, which is unable to fully focus on the lecture itself. This ‘no electronic devices’ policy has been tested at many renowned universities abroad and the results are extremely positive. I encourage you to simply listen to the lectures, pose questions whenever something is unclear or worth further elaboration, actively engage in the in-class debates, and just make a short note on paper when you feel it is something you would like to follow up on at home.

Due to the COVID-19 epidemic measures, this course will be probably taught in a hybrid (both physical and on-line) form during winter semester 2021–2021. The ‘no electronic devices’ policy obviously does not apply to on-line lectures ☺ You will get more detailed information about the on-line variant at the beginning of the semester. Depending on the development of the COVID–19 situation, some other rules included in the syllabus may be further adapted.

# COURSE SCHEDULE

**Week 1 (Oct 5):** Introduction: The Problem of Nuclear Proliferation in World Politics

**Week 2 (Oct 12):** Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty and the Birth of Nuclear Order

**Week 3 (Oct 19):** Banning the Bomb: Politics of Nuclear Disarmament

**Week 4 (Oct 26):** Why Do States Build Nuclear Weapons? Causes of Nuclear Proliferation

**Week 5 (Nov 2):** Curbing the Arms Race: The Practice of Nuclear Arms Control

**Week 6 (Nov 9):** Nuclear Taboo or the Tradition of Non-Use?

*Week 7 (Nov 16): note that there is no class on November 16 as we observe the Dean's Day. Moreover, on the day after (November 17), we observe the International Students' Day. I encourage you not to study on this date and instead either join some of the rallies in the city or otherwise commemorate the events of November 1939.*

**Week 7 (Nov 23):** Optimists and Pessimists: Consequences of Nuclear Proliferation

**Week 9 (Nov 30):** Non-Proliferation and Disarmament Advocacy: A Practitioner's Perspective (*guest lecture by Alyn Ware, global coordinator of Parliamentarians for Nuclear Non-Proliferation and Disarmament – PNND*)

**Week 10 (Dec 7):** Monitoring and Verifying Nuclear Non-Proliferation (*guest lecture by the inspectors of the State Office for Nuclear Safety*)

**Week 11 (Dec 14):** Technology of Nuclear (Non-)Proliferation: A Visit to a Nuclear Reactor

*\* Please note that the field trip to the experimental reactor VR-1 located in Prague-Holesovice will take approximately 3 hours. We will meet at “Nadrazi Holesovice” metro station (line C, downstairs between the tracks) at 12:00 (sharp!) and the visit will conclude around 15:30. Make sure to (1) bring an ID/passport with you (you cannot enter without one!) (2) have a proper breakfast or early lunch. And one more important note: the reactor is not a safe place if you are pregnant or nursing. The visit may be rescheduled or cancelled, depending on the development of the COVID-19 situation.*

**Week 12 (Dec 21):** A (Non-)Proliferation Case Study: North Korea and the Crossing of Nuclear Rubicon

Note that the schedule is subject to change during the semester. Follow the [Moodle](#) page for regular updates.





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## OKAY...A SUMMARY

**Before each class:** check [Moodle](#) and read the assigned reading and/or watch the assigned video

**During each class:** listen, ask, discuss, challenge, think; up to three absences are allowed; we observe 'no-electronic-devices' policy

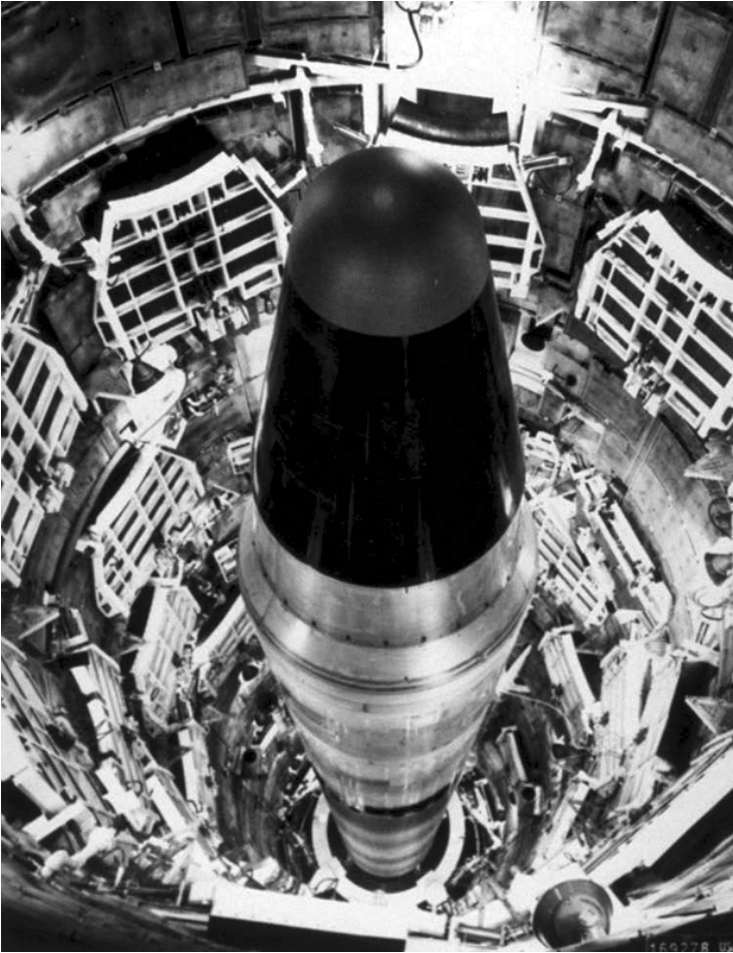
**After each class:** read the assigned readings and write a short reflection on them in Moodle (approx. 250 words) by Monday on the following week; you should upload your reflections for all the assigned readings and not be delayed more than three times during the semester

**By week 5:** discuss your podcast topic and interviewee in Moodle and have it pre-approved by me

**By week 10:** upload the outline/script of your podcast

**By January 15:** upload the final version of your podcast on YouTube

**Between January 10 and February 13:** exam sessions



## EVALUATION

### After-class reflections:

0-2 points / week, i.e. max. 22 points

### Podcast:

0-50 points, -2 points for each day of delayed delivery

### Exam:

0-28 points

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100-91 points: A

90-81 points: B

80-71 points: C

70-61 points: D

60-51 points: E

50-0 points: F

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## ABOUT ME

Besides teaching at the Department of International Relations and the Department of Security Studies, I am also working as a head researcher at the Charles University's Center of Excellence [Peace Research Center Prague \(PRCP\)](https://cuni.academia.edu/MichalSmetana). My main research interests revolve around nuclear weapons in world politics, but I am also very interested in applying social/experimental psychology in IR, studying the dynamics of international norms and deviance, theorizing deterrence models, and exploring frozen conflicts in Europe and Asia. My articles and books are mostly available here: <https://cuni.academia.edu/MichalSmetana>

For consultations, please contact me at [smetana@fsv.cuni.cz](mailto:smetana@fsv.cuni.cz)