

The Secret Side of International Politics

PLSC 29202

Spring 2018

Time: Tuesdays, 9:30am– 12:20 pm

Room: Pick Hall 506

Professor: Austin Carson, Department of Political Science, acarson@uchicago.edu

Office Hours: Tuesdays, 1:30-3:30pm (Pick Hall 428).

Course description

This course introduces students to the secret side of international politics. We will survey a range of theoretical approaches to studying secrecy and analyze the variety of activities that take place “behind closed doors.” We will cover intelligence analysis, secret alliances, secrecy in crisis decision-making, and covert wartime military operations. Questions we will address include: What agreements do diplomats negotiate privately and why? For what ends do state use secrecy in wartime? What do covert cooperative partnerships look like and when do they succeed? What espionage practices do states use and how have they changed over time? The grade is largely based on an original research paper that draws on unique archival/declassified materials. As part of this assignment, students will receive detailed guidance in the research and writing process including how to access relevant archival materials, how to organize your research materials, how to effectively prepare to write, and how to write well. *The course is run like a graduate seminar. It meets once per week, has a heavy reading load, requires original research, and high quality writing. Attendance and substantial participation are essential.*

Books for purchase

Acquire these books as soon as possible. Some may be at the Seminary Co-Op Bookstore but all are available online. Double check for correct editions via the ISBN number.

Goffman, Erving. *The Presentation of Self in Everyday Life*. Garden City, N.Y: Doubleday, 1959. ISBN 9780385094023

Goffman, Erving. *Interaction Ritual; Essays on Face-to-Face Behaviour*. 1st ed. Garden City, N.Y: Anchor Books, 1967. ISBN 9780394706313

Gusterson, Hugh. *Nuclear Rites: A Weapons Laboratory at the End of the Cold War*. University of California Press, 1996. ISBN 9780520213739

Jervis, Robert. *Why Intelligence Fails: Lessons from the Iranian Revolution and the Iraq War*. Cornell University Press, 2011. ISBN 9780801478062

May, Ernest R., and Philip Zelikow. *The Kennedy Tapes: Inside the White House During the Cuban Missile Crisis*. W. W. Norton & Company, 2002. ISBN 9780393322590

McCoy, Alfred W. *Policing America’s Empire: The United States, the Philippines, and the Rise of the Surveillance State*. University of Wisconsin Press, 2009. ISBN 978-0299234140

McDermott, Rose, and Uri Bar-Joseph. *Intelligence Success and Failure: The Human Factor*. Oxford University Press, 2017. ISBN 978-0199341740

Rovner, Joshua. *Fixing the Facts: National Security and the Politics of Intelligence*. Cornell University Press, 2011. ISBN 978-1501700736

Polakow-Suransky, Sasha. *The Unspoken Alliance: Israel's Secret Relationship With Apartheid South Africa*. New York: Pantheon Books, 2010. ISBN 978-0375425462

Zegart, Amy B. *Spying Blind: The CIA, the FBI, and the Origins of 9/11*. Princeton University Press, 2009. ISBN 978-0691141039

Requirements

Students are expected to attend every session and complete the required readings (not “additional readings”). The class grade will be based on the following:

- Seminar participation (15%)
- Discussion leader (15%)
- Original research paper (70% total). This is composed of:
 - Topic proposal and research question (Wk 3) (5%)
 - Data and conventional wisdom summary (Wk 4) (5%)
 - One para summary and outline (Wk 5) (5%)
 - Five pages swap (including feedback to partner) (Wk 8) (5%)
 - Final research paper (Finals) (50%)

Seminar participation. Students must regularly contribute to discussion with comments that reflect careful engagement with the readings. Aim for at least one or two high quality contributions per week. Avoid over-participation. I take student discomfort with verbal contributions in a seminar setting seriously. Please meet with me during office hours early in the quarter to discuss strategies/alternatives if you are struggling.

Discussion leader. Each student will help lead discussion once during the term. Discussion leaders are expected to kick off discussion with an oral summary and respond when called on during discussion. Sign up will take place during Week 1. Grades will be based on the completeness and accuracy of the summary. Bonus points for creativity, such as slides (only a few!) that visually represent ideas, concepts, or relationships among the readings.

Original research paper. Students must write an original research paper that draws at least partially on originally internal or “primary” government documents. There are two basic ways to do this. A paper might use previously unavailable materials to reanalyze an important historical event. This event need not have centrally involved secrecy but formerly secret material should shed new light on it. Alternatively, students might conduct a case study of a covert action program or secret peace negotiations which are now documented. Here secrecy is bound up in the event itself. Whichever style, the goal is for students to get hands-on experience doing qualitative historical research using “archival” data sources. The overall paper grade is based on the intermediate tasks plus the research paper itself. Many details on this assignment will be provided the first week and later.

Professionalism

I run this course like a graduate seminar. We will create our own quarter-long intellectual community. Its norms will be collectively generated and honed over time. My goal is for all of us to feel comfortable developing and scrutinizing one another’s ideas. To allow this, students must

follow basic norms of respectful intellectual exchange. Be professional in all communications. Emails should be thoughtfully composed with normal punctuation and salutations. Comments in class should be respectful of other students. Avoid adopting a confrontational tone. Respectfully disagree by suggesting a different view rather than forcefully contradicting. To create and sustain an open environment, acts of sexual misconduct, which encompass a range of conduct from sexual assault to sexual harassment, will be treated as violations of the standards of our community and unacceptable. Other forms of misconduct based on race, religion, or sexual orientation are equally unacceptable. A new and useful university resource on gender-based misconduct is [here](#).

Email policy

Note that in general I do not read or respond to student emails until the evening or next morning. On weekends, I often do not read/respond at all. Do not expect immediate replies.

Late policy

All deadlines are strict. Papers/assignments received late will be dropped one letter grade for each 24 hours past the deadline.

Make-up exam policy

If the course has an exam, students may have to miss the regular exam date because of illness or other excusable reasons. Students may take a make-up exam only after receiving permission from me in writing before the regular exam. To do so, students must submit a request by email to me, any TA, and your college adviser.

Academic integrity

I will strictly follow the University's policy on academic integrity: "It is contrary to justice, academic integrity, and to the spirit of intellectual inquiry to submit another's statements or ideas as one's own work." More details on the policy are [here](#).

Disability accommodations

If you need any special accommodations, please provide me with a copy of an Accommodation Determination Letter (provided to you by the Student Disability Services office) as soon as possible so that you may discuss with him/her how your accommodations may be implemented in this course.

Schedule and Readings

Week 1 (3/27/18). Overview and Research Practicum

We will review the syllabus and learn about the course's major assignment: the research paper. I will give a short lecture on two contrasting approaches to secrecy represented in the required readings. Students will sign up for discussion leader roles. We will conclude with a short demo on how to do archive-driven empirical research, how to organize research materials, and some tips on writing.

Required reading

Fearon, James D. "Rationalist Explanations for War." *International Organization* 49, no. 3 (Summer 1995): 379–414. [read marked sections in PDF on Canvas]

Colson, Aurélien. "The Ambassador Between Light and Shade: The Emergence of Secrecy as the Norm for International Negotiation." *International Negotiation* 13, no. 2 (2008): 179–95. [read marked sections in PDF on Canvas]

Additional reading

Trachtenberg, Marc. *The Craft of International History: A Guide to Method*. Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 2006. Chapters 3-7.

Hughes, R. Gerald, Peter Jackson, and Len Scott. *Exploring Intelligence Archives: Enquiries into the Secret State*. Routledge, 2008. Chapters 1, 2, 8.

Lustick, Ian S. "History, Historiography, and Political Science: Multiple Historical Records and the Problem of Selection Bias." *The American Political Science Review* 90.3 (1996): 605-618.

Week 2 (4/3/18). Secret Allies

This week analyzes secret cooperative partnerships through two lenses. The first pair builds on Fearon (Week 1) and argues that a) the value of allies is for building capabilities and providing mutual security and b) secrecy helps misrepresent and obtain strategic advantages vis-à-vis the shared threat. The second pair introduces sociological ideas about team secrets and impression management and offers an example of a secret alliance where secrecy seemed to play a different role.

(Note: detailed understanding of the mathematical model in Bas/Schub is not expected.)

Required reading

Leeds, Brett Ashley. 2003. "Do Alliances Deter Aggression? The Influence of Military Alliances on the Initiation of Militarized Interstate Disputes." *American Journal of Political Science* 47 (3): 427–39.

Bas, Muhammet, and Robert Schub. "Mutual Optimism as a Cause of Conflict: Secret Alliances and Conflict Onset." *International Studies Quarterly* 60, no. 3 (September 1, 2016): 552–64.

Goffman, Erving. *The Presentation of Self in Everyday Life*. Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday, 1959. Introduction, Chapters I-III.

Polakow-Suransky, Sasha. *The Unspoken Alliance: Israel's Secret Relationship With Apartheid South Africa*. New York: Pantheon Books, 2010. Chapters 5, 7-9, 11.

Week 3 (4/10/18). Secret Diplomacy

This week returns to themes in Colson (Week 1) by analyzing secrecy's role in diplomatic negotiations, drawing special attention to its utility vis-à-vis domestic politics. The required readings feature recent work in IR that links secrecy to leaders coping with domestic constraints. We therefore disaggregate the state and assess the interplay in "two-level games." This week also introduces primary material from the Cuban Missile Crisis which we will return to in later weeks.

(Note: skimming Putnam to familiarize yourself with "two-level games" is recommended.)

Skim for background

Putnam, Robert D. "Diplomacy and Domestic Politics: The Logic of Two-Level Games." *International Organization* 42, no. 3 (Summer 1988): 427-460.

Required reading

Kurizaki, Shuhei. "Efficient Secrecy: Public Versus Private Threats in Crisis Diplomacy." *American Political Science Review* 101, no. 03 (2007): 543-58.

Brown, Jonathan N., and Anthony S. Marcum. "Avoiding Audience Costs: Domestic Political Accountability and Concessions in Crisis Diplomacy." *Security Studies* 20 (April 2011): 141-70.

Hafner-Burton, Emilie M., Zachary C. Steinert-Threlkeld, and David G. Victor. "Predictability versus Flexibility: Secrecy in International Investment Arbitration." *World Politics* 68, no. 3 (June 23, 2016): 413-53.

May, Ernest R., and Philip Zelikow. *The Kennedy Tapes: Inside the White House During the Cuban Missile Crisis*. W. W. Norton & Company, 2002. Intro + pp. 22-72.

Additional reading

Stasavage, David. "Open-Door or Closed-Door? Transparency in Domestic and International Bargaining." *International Organization* 58, no. 04 (2004): 667-703.

Bjola, Corneliu, and Stuart Murray. *Secret Diplomacy: Concepts, Contexts and Cases*. Routledge, 2016.

Yarhi-Milo, Keren. "Tying Hands Behind Closed Doors: The Logic and Practice of Secret Reassurance." *Security Studies* 22, no. 3 (2013): 405-35.

****Topic proposal and research question due Friday, April 13****

Send to acarson@uchicago.edu

Week 4 (4/17/18). Secret Defense Societies

This week returns to a sociological lens for secrecy focusing on the unique cultures that emerge within communities that operate in secret, specifically national security institutions. We also get a crash course in the complexity of maintaining secrecy in a complex organizational setting. The technique of ethnography – rarely used in political science and especially International Relations – is highlighted.

Required reading

- Costas, Jana, and Christopher Grey. "Bringing Secrecy into the Open: Towards a Theorization of the Social Processes of Organizational Secrecy." *Organization Studies* 35, no. 10 (October 1, 2014): 1423–47.
- Cohn, Carol. "Sex and Death in the Rational World of Defense Intellectuals." *Signs* 12, no. 4 (Summer 1987): 687–718.
- Gusterson, Hugh. *Nuclear Rites: A Weapons Laboratory at the End of the Cold War*. University of California Press, 1996. Chapters 1, 3, 4, 6.

Additional reading

- Erickson, Bonnie H. "Secret Societies and Social Structure." *Social Forces* 60, no. 1 (September 1, 1981): 188–210.
- Tefft, Stanton K, ed. *Secrecy, a Cross-Cultural Perspective*. New York, N.Y.: Human Sciences Press, 1980.
- Masco, Joseph. "Lie Detectors: On Secrets and Hypersecurity in Los Alamos." *Public Culture* 14, no. 3 (2002): 441–67.

****Data and conventional wisdom summary due Friday, April 20****

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Week 5 (4/24/18). Secrecy in Crisis Decision-Making

This week shifts the focus to the individual. We draw on psychology-based propositions about how individual and group-level decision-making is influenced by secrecy. Key ideas include groupthink, storytelling during the decision process, and integrative complexity. Some of this material is not explicitly about secrecy so students will be asked to extrapolate and hypothesize regarding its role.

Required reading

- Smith, Steve. "Groupthink and the Hostage Rescue Mission." *British Journal of Political Science* 15, no. 1 (January 1985): 117–23.
- Guttieri, Karen, Michael D. Wallace, and Peter Suedfeld. "The Integrative Complexity of American Decision Makers in The Cuban Missile Crisis." *Journal of Conflict Resolution* 39, no. 4 (December 1, 1995): 595–621.
- Gibson, David R. "Avoiding Catastrophe: The Interactional Production of Possibility during the Cuban Missile Crisis." *American Journal of Sociology* 117, no. 2 (2011): 361–419.
- May, Ernest R., and Philip Zelikow. *The Kennedy Tapes: Inside the White House During the Cuban Missile Crisis*. W. W. Norton & Company, 2002. October 18, 19, and 20, 1962 (pp. 73-137).

Additional reading

- Saunders, Elizabeth N. "War and the Inner Circle: Democratic Elites and the Politics of Using Force." *Security Studies* 24, no. 3 (July 3, 2015): 466–501.
- Colaresi, Michael P. *Democracy Declassified: The Secrecy Dilemma in National Security*. Oxford University Press, 2014.

****One paragraph summary and outline due by Friday, April 27****

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Week 6 (5/1/18). Secrecy and Surveillance I: Empire

This is the first of three weeks on intelligence, an information gathering task critical to international politics and typically reliant on secrecy in both collection and analysis. This week we adopt the lens of an historian and analyze how intelligence influenced the maintenance of European imperialism. How did foreign rulers see and control local populations? How did such dynamics foreshadow contemporary debates about privacy and surveillance?

Required reading

Thomas, Martin. *Empires of Intelligence: Security Services and Colonial Disorder after 1914*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 2007. Chapters 4, 5 [on Canvas].
Cormac, Rory. *Confronting the Colonies: British Intelligence and Counterinsurgency*. Oxford University Press, 2014. Chapters 1, 2 [on Canvas].
McCoy, Alfred W. *Policing America's Empire: The United States, the Philippines, and the Rise of the Surveillance State*. University of Wisconsin Press, 2009. All of Part One.

Additional reading

Bayly, Christopher Alan. *Empire and Information: Intelligence Gathering and Social Communication in India, 1780-1870*. Cambridge University Press, 1996.
Sengoopta, Chandak. *Imprint of the Raj: How Fingerprinting Was Born in Colonial India*. London: Macmillan, 2003.

Week 7 (5/8/18). Secrecy and Surveillance II: Satellites

This week's material draws on Science and Technology Studies to think about the politics of satellite images. We shift to the modern, focusing on the implications of commercial satellite imagery. Since the invention of flight, overhead imagery has been an important intelligence collection technique. Satellite imagery has been an especially powerful tool that, until recently, was a distinct comparative advantage for governments. We focus on the implications of the rise of commercial satellite imagery and the politics surrounding a space-based gaze.

Required reading

Perkins, Chris, and Martin Dodge. "Satellite Imagery and the Spectacle of Secret Spaces." *Geoforum* 40, no. 4 (July 2009): 546–60.
Shim, David. "Remote Sensing Place: Satellite Images as Visual Spatial Imaginaries." *Geoforum* 51 (January 1, 2014): 152–60.
Witjes, Nina, and Philipp Olbrich. "A Fragile Transparency: Satellite Imagery Analysis, Non-State Actors, and Visual Representations of Security." *Science and Public Policy* 44, no. 4 (August 1, 2017): 524–34.

Read at least two of the following, plus the final entry on Russia and doctored images.

- Satellite imagery and North Korea/China crackdown ([here](#))
- Satellite imagery and North Korea circumvention ([here](#))
- Satellite imagery and Rohingya razing ([here](#))

- Satellite imagery and UAE/Libya (UN [here](#))
- Satellite imagery and Powell's UN presentation on Iraq WMD ([here](#))
- Russia and doctored MH-17 satellite images ([here](#))

Week 8 (5/15/18). Intelligence Failure

Here we focus on intelligence analysis failures. Bureaucracy and organizational dynamics are the lens we adopt this week. States try to use clandestinely acquired information to make inferences about other states but often make mistakes. Some scholars trace this to organizational and bureaucratic dynamics. We analyze a number of famous cases of intelligence failure and consider why they happen and whether they can be avoided.

Required reading

- Betts, Richard K. "Analysis, War, and Decision: Why Intelligence Failures Are Inevitable." *World Politics* 31, no. 1 (1978): 61–89.
- Jervis, Robert. *Why Intelligence Fails: Lessons from the Iranian Revolution and the Iraq War*. Cornell University Press, 2011. Chapters 1, 3 and 4.
- Rovner, Joshua. *Fixing the Facts: National Security and the Politics of Intelligence*. Cornell University Press, 2011. Chapters 2, 3, and 4.
- Zegart, Amy B. *Spying Blind: The CIA, the FBI, and the Origins of 9/11*. Princeton University Press, 2009. Chapters 1, 5, and 6.

Additional reading

- Yarhi-Milo, Keren. *Knowing the Adversary: Leaders, Intelligence, and Assessment of Intentions in International Relations*. Princeton University Press, 2014.
- Fursenko, Aleksandr, and Timothy Naftali. "Soviet Intelligence and the Cuban Missile Crisis." *Intelligence and National Security* 13, no. 3 (September 1, 1998): 64–87.

****Swap five pages of drafting with your partner by Friday, May 18****

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Week 9 (5/22/18). Wartime Secrecy I: Surprise

The final two weeks focus on secrecy's role during war. This week returns to the state-centric, rationalist framework (e.g. Fearon, Week 1) and highlights the operational security value of secrecy. Concealing wartime military capabilities and operations can protect forces in the field and enable surprise attacks. The final reading provides a contrasting psychological view of what leads to successful wartime surprise.

(Note: detailed understanding of the mathematical model in Slantchev not expected.)

Required reading

- Betts, Richard K. "Surprise Despite Warning: Why Sudden Attacks Succeed." *Political Science Quarterly* 95, no. 4 (1981): 551–72.
- Slantchev, Branislav L. "Feigning Weakness." *International Organization* 64, no. 3 (2010): 357–88.
- Holt, Thaddeus. *The Deceivers: Allied Military Deception in the Second World War*. Scribner, 2004. Chapters 2, 13. [on Canvas]

McDermott, Rose, and Uri Bar-Joseph. *Intelligence Success and Failure: The Human Factor*. Oxford University Press, 2017. Chapters TBD.

Additional reading

Axelrod, Robert. "The Rational Timing of Surprise." *World Politics* 31, no. 2 (January 1979): 228–46.

Betts, Richard K. *Surprise Attack: Lessons for Defense Planning*. Washington, D.C: Brookings Institution, 1982.

Lindsey, David. "Military Strategy, Private Information, and War." *International Studies Quarterly* 59, no. 4 (December 1, 2015): 629–40. doi:10.1111/isqu.12208.

Week 10 (5/29/18). Wartime Secrecy II: Escalation

This final week focuses on my own research, which develops how secrecy helps adversaries at war "save face," define their conflict encounter, and avoid escalatory spirals. We first read some of the original inspiration from sociological reviews of everyday life by Erving Goffman. The applied readings include an alternative view of secrecy in several modern conflicts.

Required reading

Goffman, Erving. *Interaction Ritual; Essays on Face-to-Face Behavior*. Anchor Books, 1967. Read: Introduction, On Face-Work, Embarrassment and Social Organization.

Carson, Austin, and Keren Yarhi-Milo. "Covert Communication: The Intelligibility and Credibility of Signaling in Secret." *Security Studies* 26, no. 1 (January 2, 2017): 124–56.

Carson, Austin. *Secret Wars: Covert Conflict in International Politics*. Princeton University Press. 2018. Chapters 2, 6 [on Canvas].

Additional reading

Legro, Jeffrey. *Cooperation Under Fire: Anglo-German Restraint During World War II*. Cornell University Press, 1995. Chapter 4.

O'Neill, Barry. *Honor, Symbols, and War*. University of Michigan Press, 1999. Chapter 7.

****Final paper due Thursday June 8 by 5 pm****

Send to acarson@uchicago.edu