

Pacific Security Issues

Last Updated: Mon, 11/24/2025

Course prefix: INTA

Course number: 3131

Section: RNZ

CRN (you may add up to five):

35545

Instructor First Name: Katja

Instructor Last Name: Weber

Semester: Spring

Academic year: 2026

Course description:

This course examines security relations in Asia-Pacific. Following a discussion of World War II in the region, we will then take a closer look at Cold War security structures (hub-and-spokes relationships with the U.S.). Thereafter, we turn to the post-Cold War environment and will focus on both traditional and non-traditional security challenges (such as piracy, illegal trafficking of people and goods, infectious diseases, and environmental disasters) in the region. Core concepts such as non-interventionism, non-use of force, consensus decision-making, sovereignty, and the protection of human rights will feature prominently in our discussions. We will end the course with a simulation exercise, resembling a Model United Nations.

Course learning outcomes:

Students will be able to use their knowledge of various state/non-state actors in Asia Pacific in a practical problem-solving way to address issues of immediate concern to these actors. Students should be aware of the diverse cultural/ethnic backgrounds of these international actors and the many challenges that arise from their heterogeneity. Students, moreover, will demonstrate the ability to describe the causal and determinant relationships between various actors and their security concerns and will be able to explain specific cases where human security is threatened. Students should also be able to express their arguments clearly and effectively both in written reports and in class negotiations; work in small groups in a way that demonstrates respect for their colleagues and efficiency in working collaboratively towards projects and goals.

Required course materials:

Course readings will be provided on Canvas.

Grading policy:

20% of your grade will be based on active **participation** in seminar discussions. It is imperative that you attend ALL sessions well prepared (i.e., having not only read the material but thought about it), and willing to engage in a dialogue with your classmates. This is the responsibility of every program participant.

(To obtain an “A” you need to make meaningful, regular, articulate contributions to our seminar meetings. To obtain a “B” you need to make meaningful, regular contributions but they do not always have to be fully thought out. To obtain a “C” you must participate regularly and demonstrate at least a rudimentary understanding of the readings. You will receive a “D” if you participate very irregularly in class discussions.)

30% of your grade will be based on **3 prompts (10% each)**. During three separate entries of 350-500 words each you will be asked to reflect on the readings and demonstrate critical thinking. It is not enough to merely recount the readings, but rather, you are expected to present your own thoughts (analysis) of the material studied. You will be given **deadlines** for turning in each of these assignments.

(To obtain an “A” you need to provide a comprehensive analysis of the assigned question, demonstrate a sophisticated understanding of key concepts and relevant factors, and present a well-organized and coherent structure with clear sections addressing the key aspects of the assignment.

To obtain a “B” you need to present ideas with basic insight into the question’s complexities, but your answer may lack some depth, and your ideas might be presented in a somewhat disjointed structure, lacking clear transitions.

You will receive a “C” if you fail to provide several basic insights, if your answer lacks some coherence and logical organization.

You will receive a “D” if you fail to address the central question and your answer lacks a coherent analysis.)

20% of your grade will be based on an **oral exam** (conducted in small groups) during which you will be asked to answer short questions, make an argument regarding Asia-Pacific security-related matters and to lend support to your position by drawing on materials from your readings. You are allowed to bring 2 pages of handwritten notes, but you cannot read from them verbatim. That is, you can use notes to trigger your memory, but you cannot read an essay to me—you need to speak freely and address the actual topic that is posed to you. (I will explain the grading in class prior to the exam).

30% simulation (This is a bit like a Model UN exercise where you are split up in teams and will negotiate with each other. You will receive a tasker, will be asked to come up with a

position paper, and then will engage in several rounds of negotiations with members from the other teams. This exercise will be set up and conducted during the final week of our stay in Australia).

There will be NO extra credit assignments!

Grading Scale

Your final grade will be assigned as a letter grade according to the following scale:

A	90-100%
B	80-89%
C	70-79%
D	60-69%
F	0-59%

Attendance policy:

You can get one extension of 2 days on one of your prompts, if needed, without penalty. If any additional prompts are late, I will subtract $\frac{1}{2}$ a letter grade for each additional day, unless you can document a serious illness or family emergency, as determined by the Dean of Students.

Academic honesty/integrity statement:

Students are expected to maintain the highest standards of academic integrity. All work submitted must be original and properly cited. Plagiarism, cheating, or any form of academic dishonesty will result in immediate consequences as outlined in the university's academic integrity policy.

Core IMPACTS statement(s) (if applicable):

This is a Core IMPACTS course that is part of the Social Sciences area.

Core IMPACTS refers to the core curriculum, which provides students with essential knowledge in foundational academic areas. This course will help students master course content, and support students' broad academic and career goals.

This course should direct students toward a broad Orienting Question:

- How do I understand human experiences and connections?

Completion of this course should enable students to meet the following Learning Outcome:

- Students will effectively analyze the complexity of human behavior, and how historical, economic, political, social, or geographic relationships develop, persist, or change.

Course content, activities and exercises in this course should help students develop the following Career-Ready Competencies:

- Intercultural Competence
- Perspective-Taking
- Persuasion