

COURSE DESCRIPTION

Introduction to Security and Strategic Studies

(Introducere în studii de securitate și strategice)

Academic year 2026-2027

1. Programme-related data

1.1. Higher Education Institution	Babeș-Bolyai University
1.2. Faculty	History and Philosophy
1.3. Department	Department of International Studies and Contemporary History
1.4. Field	Security Studies
1.5. Level of study	Bachelor
1.6. Degree programme / Qualification	Security Studies in English
1.7. Form of education	Full-time

2. Course-related data

2.1. Course title	Introduction to Security and Strategic Studies			Course code	HLE3104
2.2. Course coordinator	Lecturer Marius Grad PhD.				
2.3. Seminar coordinator	Lecturer Marius Grad PhD.				
2.4. Year of study	1	2.5. Semester	1	2.6. Type of assessment	Exam
2.7. Course status	Compulsory		2.8. Course type	Core subject	

3. Total estimated time (hours per semester of teaching activities)

3.1. Number of hours per week	4	of which: 3.2. course	2	3.3. seminar/ laboratory/ project	2
3.4. Total of hours in the curriculum	56	of which: 3.5. course	28	3.6. seminar/ laboratory	28
Time allocation for individual study (IS) and self-taught activities (ST)					hours
Learning from textbooks, course materials, bibliography, and notes (IS)					25
Additional research in the library, on subject-specific electronic platforms, and on-site					10
Preparing seminars/ laboratories/ projects, assignments, reports, portfolios, and essays					25
Tutoring (professional guidance)					3
Examinations					6
Other activities					-
3.7. Total hours of individual study (IS) and self-taught activities (ST)				69	
3.8. Total hours per semester				125	
3.9. Number of credits				5	

4. Prerequisites (where applicable)

4.1. curriculum-related	Not applicable
4.2 skills-related	This is an introductory course and does not require prior knowledge of strategic or security studies. Students are expected to possess basic academic skills, including critical reading, analytical thinking, and introductory academic writing. A general awareness of global political issues and an interest in international affairs will be beneficial.

5. Specific conditions (where applicable)

5.1. course-related	Regular attendance and active engagement with assigned readings are required. All coursework must adhere to academic integrity standards. Students must have access to the university's digital learning platform and be able to conduct basic academic research. Given the nature of the subject, respectful and inclusive discussion of sensitive global issues is expected at all times.
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5.2. seminar/laboratory-related	Students must be able to engage with academic literature and produce written assignments in English. Students are expected to complete assigned readings prior to class and actively participate in discussions. All assignments must comply with institutional academic integrity policies.
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6.1. Competencies resulting from the completion of the degree programme (as referred to in the curriculum)¹

Professional competencies	
Competency code	Competency
PC1	<i>Analysis of the national and international security environment</i>
PC3	<i>Security risk and vulnerability assessment</i>
PC4	<i>Strategic analysis and intelligence reporting</i>
PC5	<i>Public policy and security policy analysis</i>
Transversal competencies	
Competency code	Competency
TC1	<i>Critical thinking and reflective analysis</i>
TC2	<i>Professional communication and analytical reporting</i>
TC4	<i>Professional ethics and accountability</i>
TC5	<i>Autonomous decision-making and responsibility management</i>

6.2. Learning outcomes relevant to the degree programme (as referred to in the curriculum)²

Learning outcomes targeted by the subject		
Competency code	Knowledge and comprehension	Specific academic skills
PC1	<i>C9: The student/graduate identifies, interprets and analyses political and economic factors in the analysis of modern societies, focusing on factors such as production and trade and their relations with law and authorities. C10: The student/graduate identifies, interprets and analyses the origins of conflicts, actions within conflicts and their termination.</i>	<i>A2: The student/graduate applies scientific methods and techniques to investigate phenomena, acquiring new knowledge or correcting and integrating prior knowledge</i>
PC3	<i>C9: The student/graduate identifies, interprets and analyses political and economic factors in the analysis of modern societies, focusing on factors such as production and trade and their relations with law and authorities.</i>	<i>A2: The student/graduate applies scientific methods and techniques to investigate phenomena, acquiring new knowledge or correcting and integrating prior knowledge.</i>
PC4	<i>C4: The student/graduate recognizes, analyses and explains systems of governance; methodologies for analysing political activity and behaviour; and the theory and practice of influencing people and acquiring governance.</i>	<i>A6: The student/graduate prepares research documents or delivers presentations to report the results of a research and analysis project, indicating the analysis procedures and methods that led to those results, as well as possible interpretations.</i>
PC5	<i>C6: The student/graduate recognises, analyses and explains political activities, plans and intentions of a government for a legislative session addressing specific causes. C8: The student/graduate recognises, analyses and explains procedures related to the implementation of government policies at all levels of public administration.</i>	<i>A2: The student/graduate applies scientific methods and techniques to investigate phenomena, acquiring new knowledge or correcting and integrating prior knowledge</i>

¹ The professional and/or transversal skills targeted by the subject for which the course description is prepared will be copied from the curriculum of the degree programme. For each competency, the complete entry, including the competency code, will be copied with the exact wording that appears in the curriculum, without any changes. If no competency is copied from either of the two categories, the row corresponding to that category is deleted from the table.

² The learning outcomes relevant to the degree programme and targeted by the subject for which the course description is prepared will be listed. The entries, copied without any changes from the Curriculum by subject type (Core Subject/Specialisation Subject/Complementary Subject), are listed under the corresponding competency.

TC1	<i>C1: The student/graduate uses the theoretical methodology of scientific research, including conducting background research, building a hypothesis, testing it, analysing data and substantiating results.</i>	<i>A2: The student/graduate applies scientific methods and techniques to investigate phenomena, acquiring new knowledge or correcting and integrating prior knowledge.</i>
TC2	-	<i>A6: The student/graduate prepares research documents or delivers presentations to report the results of a research and analysis project, indicating the analysis procedures and methods that led to those results, as well as possible interpretations.</i>
TC4	-	<i>A3: The student/graduate applies fundamental ethical principles and legislation in scientific research, including research integrity aspects. They conduct, review or report research while avoiding misconduct such as fabrication, falsification and plagiarism. A5: The student/graduate develops and demonstrates indepth knowledge and complex understanding of a specific research field, including responsible research, ethical and scientific integrity principles, respect for privacy and GDPR requirements related to research activities in a given discipline.</i>
TC5	-	-

7. Subject-specific learning outcomes

Knowledge and comprehension
<i>PS-K1 : The student/graduate explains key concepts in strategic studies and international security (hybrid threats, deterrence, human security) relevant to security assessments.</i>
<i>PS-K2 : The student/graduate describes risk management frameworks (identify–analyse–evaluate–treat–monitor) applicable to physical and organisational security.</i>
<i>PS-K3 : Understand the core concepts, principles, and scope of strategic and security studies.</i>
<i>DS-K1 : Trace the historical evolution of strategic theory and the changing character of war and conflict.</i>
<i>DS-K2 : Apply key theoretical frameworks (realism, liberalism, constructivism, and critical security studies) to security issues.</i>
<i>DS-K3 : Critically reflect on the ethical and political dimensions of security policy and practice.</i>
Specific academic skills
<i>PS-S1 : The student/graduate produces security assessments and forward-looking scenarios based on geopolitical indicators and risk analysis</i>
<i>PS-S2 : The student/graduate applies vulnerability assessment tools and proposes context-specific risk mitigation measures</i>
<i>PS-S3 : The student/graduate uses policy analysis tools (problem definition, options, cost–benefit, impact evaluation) to formulate recommendations.</i>

8. Contents

8.1. Course	Teaching and learning methods	Remarks³
Foundations of Strategic and Security Studies 1 <i>The evolution of “security” as a concept, the interdisciplinary nature of the field, and the link between strategic and security thought – the basics</i>	Interactive Lecture Guided discussion	
Foundations of Strategic and Security Studies 2 <i>The evolution of “security” as a concept, the interdisciplinary nature of the field, and the link between strategic and security thought – a little more than basics</i>	Interactive Lecture Guided discussion	
Foundations of Strategic and Security Studies 3	Interactive Lecture Guided discussion	

³ For example, organisational aspects, recommendations for students, specific aspects relating to the course/seminar, such as inviting experts in the field, etc.

<i>The evolution of “security” as a concept, the interdisciplinary nature of the field, and the link between strategic and security thought – details make perfection (Why theory matters?)</i>		
Classical Strategic Thought <i>The roots of strategic thought; the interplay between war, politics, and human behavior.</i>	Lecture (context + thinkers) Text interpretation	
Strategic Theories and the Evolution of Military Rivalries 1 <i>How strategic theory evolved with technology, industrialization and total war.</i>	Lecture Comparative historical analysis	
Strategic Theories and the Evolution of Military Rivalries 2 <i>How strategic theory evolved with technology, industrialization and total war – the “new world order”</i>	Lecture Comparative historical analysis	
Post-Cold War Transformations <i>How the end of bipolarity expanded the concept of security to include new dimensions & sectors. The Copenhagen School. RSCT.</i>	Conceptual Lecture Guided Discussion	
Contemporary Security Challenges (Risk, Threat, Vulnerability) <i>From conventional wars to complex, borderless threats affecting state and non-state actors alike.</i>	Interactive Lecture Problem-Based Learning (PBL) Case Study	
Non-Traditional Security (NTS) <i>Security beyond soldiers and borders — particular dimensions of safety and survival.</i>	Lecture Debate Reflective discussion	
Regional and Global Security Dynamics 1 <i>Security as a regional phenomenon influenced by geography, identity, and interdependence</i>	Interactive lecture Case Study Map-based analysis	
Regional and Global Security Dynamics 2 <i>Security as a regional phenomenon influenced by geography, identity, and interdependence – recent developments</i>	Interactive lecture Case Study Map-based analysis	
Collective defense vs. collective security International Security Institutions and Regimes <i>Institutional management of global insecurity — cooperation, norms, and enforcement.</i>	Interactive Lecture Guided discussion	
Final review	Guided discussion Open discussion / synthesis	
Bibliography – same as for the seminar This course has no assigned textbook. All readings will come from academic journal articles which may be accessed through the BBU library’s databases. Copies of the readings will also be made available in PDF format on the course’s MsTeams class. Due to copyright restrictions, students are asked not to distribute copies of the assigned readings to people unaffiliated with BBU. Anyone with questions about copyright restrictions on the readings should contact the instructor.		
8.2. Seminar/ laboratory	Teaching and learning methods	Remarks
Foundations of Strategic and Security Studies 1 <i>The evolution of “security” as a concept, the interdisciplinary nature of the field, and the link between strategic and security thought – the basics</i>	Concept mapping, discussion	
Foundations of Strategic and Security Studies 2 <i>The evolution of “security” as a concept, the interdisciplinary nature of the field, and the link between strategic and security thought – a little more than basics</i>	Comparative analysis	
Foundations of Strategic and Security Studies 3 <i>The evolution of “security” as a concept, the interdisciplinary nature of the field, and the link between strategic and security thought – details make perfection (Why theory matters?)</i>	Theory comparison, debate	
Classical Strategic Thought <i>The roots of strategic thought; the interplay between war, politics, and human behavior.</i>	Text interpretation, debate, discussion	
Strategic Theories and the Evolution of Military Rivalries 1 <i>How strategic theory evolved with technology, industrialization and total war.</i>	Case study, historical comparison	
Strategic Theories and the Evolution of Military Rivalries 2 <i>How strategic theory evolved with technology, industrialization and total war – the “new world order”</i>	Case study, historical comparison	

Post-Cold War Transformations <i>How the end of bipolarity expanded the concept of security to include new dimensions & sectors. The Copenhagen School. RSCT.</i>	Case study, concept application, RSCT analysis	
Contemporary Security Challenges (Risk, Threat, Vulnerability) <i>From conventional wars to complex, borderless threats affecting state and non-state actors alike.</i>	Case study, Security perception testing, discussion	
Non-Traditional Security (NTS) <i>Security beyond soldiers and borders — particular dimensions of safety and survival.</i>	Case study, discussion	
Regional and Global Security Dynamics 1 <i>Security as a regional phenomenon influenced by geography, identity, and interdependence</i>	Comparative analysis, region analysis	
Regional and Global Security Dynamics 2 <i>Security as a regional phenomenon influenced by geography, identity, and interdependence – recent developments</i>	Comparative analysis, region analysis	
Collective defense vs. collective security International Security Institutions and Regimes <i>Institutional management of global insecurity — cooperation, norms, and enforcement.</i>	Debate, case study, discussion	
Final review	Quiz, synthesis	
Bibliography (C = compulsory / O = optional, 1.1 – topic 1, reading 1, 2.1 – topic 2, reading 1... and so on) C.1.1 Paul D. Williams (ed.), <i>Security Studies: An Introduction</i> (2nd ed., 2013), Chapter 1 – Security Studies. C.1.2 Barry Buzam, “Peace, Power, and Security: Contending Concepts in the Study of International Relations”, <i>Journal of Peace Research</i>, 1984, vol. 21, no. 2, pp. 109-125. O.1.3 Steve Walt, “The Renaissance of Security Studies,” <i>International Studies Quarterly</i>, 35(2), 1991. C.2.1 David Baldwin, “The concept of security”, <i>Review of International Studies</i>, 1997, vol. 23, pp 5-26. C.2.2 Mazarr, M.A et al. (2016), <i>Understanding the Current International Order</i>. Santa Monica: Rand Corporation. Chapter 2: Defining the International Order, pp. 7-30. C.2.3 Nye, J. S. (2011) ‘Power and foreign policy’, <i>Journal of Political Power</i>, 4(1), pp. 9–24. C.3.1 McSweeney, B. (2006). <i>Security, identity and interests: A sociology of international relations</i>. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. Chapter 2: Early States of Development. Chapter 3: Broadening the Concept of Security. C.3.2 Bull, Hedley. “Strategic Studies and Its Critics.” <i>World Politics</i>, vol. 20, no. 4, 1968, pp. 593–605. C.3.3 Strachan, Hew, “The Lost Meaning of Strategy”, in <i>Strategic Studies</i>, ed. by Joseph A. Maiolo and Thomas G. Mahnken, 2nd edn (Routledge, 2014), pp. 429–46. C.4.1 Lavinia Maria Savu, <i>Realism, liberalism and constructivism in the pursuit of security</i>, DOI: 10.53477/2668-2001-21-02. C.5.1 Alastair Iain Johnston, “Thinking about strategic culture”, <i>International security</i>, vol. 19, no. 4, 1995, pp. 32-64. pp.32-42 (until The Third Generation) C.5.2 William R. Hawkins, “Imposing peace: total vs. limited wars and the need to put boots on the Groud”, <i>The US Army War College Quarterly: Parameters</i>, vol. 30, nr. 2, 2000. C.6.1 Barry Buzan, Ole Waever, <i>Regions & Powers – The structure of International security</i>, 2003, Cambridge Univ. Press – Part 1 – Ch. 1 & 2 & 3 C.6.2 Barry Buzan, Ole Waever, Jaap de Wilde, <i>Security – A new framework for analysis</i>, 1998, Lynne Rienner Publishers. – Chapters 3 / 4 / 5 / 6 / 7 – for each one the introductory discussion talking about ... <i>The security agenda</i> C.7.1 Maria Vilchez, Francisco Trujillo, “The perception of security and youth: a practical example”, <i>Social Sciences</i>, 12:227, 2023. C.7.2 Ruddy, Christopher. 2022. “The Devil Is in the Detail: Assessing Threat-Framing in Violent Extremist Discourses.” <i>Studies in Conflict & Terrorism</i> 48 (5): 485–504. C.8.1 Bogdan Stefanachi, “From state to individual. Human security – a new framework for understanding sovereignty”, <i>Eastern Journal of European Studies</i>, vol. 12, issue 2, 2021.		

C.8.2 Fu Xiaoqiang, Han Liquan, "Impacts of Nontraditional security issues on National security", *CIR*, vol. 31, no. 4, 2022.

C.9.1. Tavares, R. (2008). Understanding regional peace and security: a framework for analysis. *Contemporary Politics*, 14(2), 107–127.

C.9.2. Alyson Bailes, *Introduction. Global security governance: a world of change and challenge*, Yearbook 2005: Armaments, Disarmament and International Security, on-line.

C.10.1 Jervis, R. (1982). Security regimes. *International Organization*, 36(2), 357–378.

C.10.2 Federica Fazio, *Collective defence in NATO – A legal and strategic analysis of Article 5 in light of the war in Ukraine*, DCU Working Paper Series, 2025.

9. Evaluation

Type of activity	9.1 Evaluation criteria ⁴	9.2 Evaluation methods ⁵	9.3 Percentage in the final grade
9.4. Course	• Understanding of the core concepts, principles, and scope of strategic and security studies. • The ability to trace the historical evolution of strategic theory and the changing character of war and conflict. • The ability to identify and evaluate contemporary security challenges, including terrorism, cyber threats, pandemics, and climate change. • Apply key theoretical frameworks (realism, liberalism, constructivism, and critical security studies) to security issues. • Critically reflect on the ethical and political dimensions of security policy and practice.	final written exam { duration: 90 minutes; 25 multiple choice questions + 1 synthetic essay Multiple choice questions will have 5 answers and at least one will be correct. (each question might have, 2, 3, 4 or 5 correct options). Only those questions with all the correct answers clearly marked will be quantified. For example, if there are 3 correct answers and only 2 are marked, that question will not be taken into account.)) 1 point extra – is included in the grading scheme of the final exam	50%
9.5. Seminar/ laboratory	Preparation + Participation + Quality of Contribution • Understanding of the core concepts, principles, and scope of strategic and security studies. • The capacity to apply key theoretical frameworks (realism, liberalism, constructivism, and critical security studies) to security issues. • Active participation to activities / group discussions/ debates - quality, relevance, and analytical depth • Preparation and engagement with readings	midterm evaluation (duration: 45 minutes, 25 multiple choice questions – from the readings) – The topics covered will be announced in due time	20%
		seminar activity & assignments (1 + 2 x 1pt.)	30%
9.6 Minimum standard for passing			
• Knowing & understanding the core concepts, principles, and scope of strategic and security studies - Foundations of Strategic and Security Studies 1 & 2 & 3 – definitions, theories + examples • Understanding & explaining (definitions, formulas + examples) for Contemporary Security Challenges (Risk, Threat, Vulnerability) • At least 1 assignment completed for the seminar & the midterm evaluation (at least 13 questions marked correctly)			

⁴ The evaluation criteria must directly reflect the learning outcomes targeted at the level of the degree programme respectively at the level of the subject. More specifically, the learning outcomes set out in the expected learning outcomes are assessed.

⁵ Both final evaluation methods and ongoing evaluation strategies should be established.

10. SDG labels (Sustainable Development Goals)⁶

		Sustainable Development Generic Label						
								
								
								No label applies
								

Date of entry:
01.05.2026

Signature of course coordinator

Marius Grad

Signature of seminar coordinator

Marius Grad

Date of approval in the department:

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Signature of the head of department

Associate professor Claudiu Marian

⁶ Select a single label which, according to the [Implementation of SDG labels in the academic process](#), best matches the subject. If the subject addresses sustainable development in a generic manner (i.e. by presenting/introducing the general framework of sustainable development, etc.), then the Sustainable Development generic label may be applied. If none of the labels describe the subject, select the last option: "No label applies."