



In addition to elective options and leadership and practice courses, CISA's full time programs include the following courses:

Core (all full-time programs)

6901 Strategic Thought

Strategy is core to the art of the national security professional, but what does strategy exactly mean in the 21st century? Is the nature of war becoming more complex? What is the appropriate relationship between strategy and policy? What strategic changes will the future hold? A significant challenge for modern defense planners is that they must anticipate threats in an era of uncertainty and against enemies for which accessible and detailed evidence is crucially deficient. This course will explore this conundrum by examining the theory of war and warfare using thinkers like Sun Tzu, Clausewitz, Lawrence, Mao, Galula, van Crevelde, Kaldor, and Smith, and Liang and Xiangsui. Students will examine how the theory and practice of strategy interact in case studies such as the Peloponnesian War, the American Revolution, the Soviet Invasion of Afghanistan, and the Lebanon War of 2006. This course seeks to equip students with conceptual tools to forge effective strategy for the post 9-11 security environment. 3 credits

6920 Geostrategy

Geostrategy is a required core course in the Master of Arts in Strategic Security Studies (MASSS) program. This course is designed to enable students to define and critically analyze the dimensions of the contemporary security environment. In Section I, students will explore the concept of security and how that concept has changed in the post-Cold War and post 9/11 environments. A key feature of the contemporary security environment is the proliferation of actors both in number and type. In Section II, students will examine a complex array of new actors and new linkages among them. These actors include not only states, but also international organizations, armed non-state actors, and super empowered individuals and groups. As the number of actors has proliferated, so too has the number of security challenges. In Section III, the course examines the key dynamics and threats that define the contemporary security environment. Students will focus on globalization, scarcity, state failure, democratization, ethnic and sectarian conflict, cyber-attacks, and WMD proliferation. In the final section of the course, students will examine the actors and security dynamics explored in Sections I, II and III across Africa, South and Central America, the Middle East and the Maghreb, Central and Southwest Asia, Southeast Asia, and Europe. The purpose of the course is not to create regional experts but to develop a working knowledge of the international security context that is essential for creating, analyzing, and carrying out national security strategy and policy. 3 credits

6929 Power, Ideology and Legitimacy

This course will examine the genesis, conceptual development and relationship between power and legitimacy, focusing particularly on how ideologies are used either to justify rule or oppose the established order. The initial part of the course will focus on the greater debates of political philosophy relevant to the meaning of these and other intimately related concepts, such as justice and the nature of the sovereign. The second section will revisit the different interpretations given to these concepts, looking at how they are operationalized throughout time. Finally, an in-depth analysis of radical Islam will help answer two questions: How do ideology, legitimacy and power interact with the current challenge posed by religiously inspired armed non state actors whose goal is to fundamentally alter the current international system? How can the state employ its sources of power and legitimacy to approach this challenge? 3 credits

Research & Writing (all full-time programs)

6909 Research Methods

CISA 6909 provides an introductory overview of methods of analysis and argumentation to equip decision-makers to utilize methods from different sources and under varied conditions, and to help them pursue future additional study as needed. Focusing on modern complex security challenges such as terrorism, the course examines the application of these methods: Their ideas, the tools they offer, and the situations that may evoke them, and options for their further study. The course frequently discusses the logic of arguments, the approach of different natural sciences, social sciences, mathematics, law, journalism and politics. The course also examines similarities and differences between a written communication, such as a report, and a verbal communication, such as a briefing. Our goal is clarity, self-awareness, and a critical perspective on alternatives, developing arguments, presenting findings, and recommending actions. The course aims mainly at students with professional backgrounds and will utilize student experience for examples and problems. This course also enables students to start on their student research project. 3 credits

Thesis

The Master's Thesis provides a capstone to the Master of Arts in Strategic Security Studies program at the College of International Security Affairs. It allows students to inquire deeply into an area of professional significance, policy importance, academic value, and/or personal interest. In this way, the thesis permits students to demonstrate their analytical abilities and creative argumentation skills enhanced during their studies at the College. Students undertake the thesis

by choosing a problem with direct relevance to their professional duties and the needs of their sponsoring agency or country. Coursework assignments completed during the year can be oriented toward this problem and be integrated into the thesis. With this in mind, students should consider how best to align coursework requirements with their thesis and Area of Concentration for the MASSS degree.

Counterterrorism Area of Concentration

6975 Dynamics of Terrorism

This course examines terrorism as a contextual phenomenon produced by the manner in which individuals, organizations, and the state are situated within larger surroundings. Case studies and use of primary documents are used to explore the multiple forms of and motives for terrorism. Students examine origins of terrorism in the splintering of social movements, followed by the strategic and operational choices faced by the splinter and its members. Works by key theorists are supplemented by in-depth examination of particular episodes of terror to emphasize that even agency (individual choice) is bounded by a host of social and personal factors and constraints. 3 credits

6976 Dynamics of Counterterrorism

This course provides an examination of the counterterrorism response at the national and international levels. Case studies and use of primary documents allow students to examine the implications for appropriate and comprehensive response. Students analyze strategic response by exploring the appropriate campaigns constructed to neutralize components of insurgent strategy. As a culminating exercise, students develop a national counterterrorism plan. 3 credits

6990 Combating Terrorism Strategies and Policies

This course examines the ongoing challenge to US national security posed by the threat of international terrorism. The course will examine the causes of the rise of the global terrorist threat, the motives and methods of the terrorists, and the ways in which the United States is waging war to prevent future terror attacks and safeguard the homeland. Readings include primary source documents related to the continuing conflict, as well as classics in terrorism literature. 3 credits

South and Central Asia Area of Concentration

6918 South Asia: From the Mogul Empire to Osama bin Laden

This course is a required elective in the MASSS South and Central Asia program. It touches on the people, geography, history, and politics of South Asia prior to 2001, with an emphasis on state formation, state viability and the roots of security issues in Afghanistan and Pakistan. Students will identify the key dynamics affecting state formation in those two countries, including colonialism, partition, modernization and backlash, foreign invasion, civil war, and political Islam. Students are introduced to different academic models to Afghanistan and Pakistan, including modernization theory, the political development literature, globalization, and post-colonial independence, and asks students what insights these paradigms generate, if any, into the successes and failures of state formation in South Asia at the turn of the millennium. The purpose of the course is to prepare students to be long-term South Asia area experts, who understand the origins of security concerns in the region and are able to evaluate and apply the concepts of this course in an academic, policy, intelligence, or military setting. 2 credits

6919 Frontline of Global War: Afghanistan and Pakistan since 2001

This course is a required elective in the MASSS South and Central Asia Program. It covers the political and military history of Afghanistan and Pakistan since 2001. Students will identify and understand the recent security challenges facing those two countries—insurgency and counterinsurgency, terrorism, political Islamism, militarized international peacebuilding and reconstruction, and externally-supported democratization. Students will evaluate each country's success or failure in meeting these challenges. Students will also be asked to understand and use basic concepts of comparative political science: they will identify, understand, and apply, as appropriate, lessons that can be learned from other states that have confronted similar challenges elsewhere in the world. Finally, students will evaluate the prospects not only for the international stabilization and counterterrorism missions in Afghanistan and Pakistan, but for long-term democracy and development in the region. The goal of this course is to complete students' preparation to be long-term South Asia area experts, who can critically examine the security challenges of the region and are able to evaluate and apply the concepts of this course in an academic, policy, intelligence, or military setting. 2 credits

6997 Politics, Security, and Globalization in Eurasia

This three-credit seminar is a course developed for the purpose of understanding contemporary events in the vast block of the Eurasian steppe bounded by the South Caucasus, the western borders of China, and by the edges of the Russian Federation, Iran, and Afghanistan. A major effort will be made to describe how the role of external factors in combination with internal conditions framed the problems new leaders had to confront when the Soviet Union collapsed. Topics studied include: economic development, identity politics, the role of culture and the evolution of Islam in the modern and post-modern eras, and the politics of oil and the new 'Great Game' in Central Asia.

International Security Studies Area of Concentration

6902 Force and Statecraft (Option 1 of 2)

This course examines the role military power has historically played in shaping cooperation, competition and conflict among nation-states. It examines the interrelationship between military and nonmilitary instruments of power. Students will explore different models of the international system and basic tenets of strategic thought. After reviewing the structure of the US national security decision-making process and America's post-World War II national strategy, the course will conclude with an examination of nuclear, conventional and low-intensity conflict and strategy. 3 credits

6973 Conflict Resolution Strategies (Option 2 of 2)

This course trains students in conflict resolution methods that have applications in counterterrorism, counterinsurgency, regular and irregular warfare, and traditional international relations. It is an interdisciplinary course that first looks at the causes of conflict between individuals, groups, and nations by examining political, economic, and social factors, as well as psychological, religious, and international influences on how people identify themselves and understand their interests in various interpersonal interactions. The second section introduces practical ways to target identities and interests to find common ground between rival parties so as to create and protect places for dialogue and compromise; these can include symbolic gestures and physical spaces ranging from shrines and historic battlefields to borders and public squares. Case studies provide the principles behind reducing violence and creating peace, as well as examples of how to apply them in the field.

6903 The Origins of Conflict and War

The existence of war is often thought to be synonymous with the existence of man. Traditional conceptions of war involve great power militaries engaging in hostilities over the ownership of physical territory. In the 21st century, as we consider the dominant role of non-state actors engaging in conflict over identity and ideology, we must explore whether this indicates a change in war's origins. Through multiple levels of analysis, this course will arm students with an interdisciplinary approach to examining and identifying the origins and causes of armed conflict and war. Further, it will provide students with the theoretical framework necessary to recognize and address the strategic challenges facing political, military, economic, and diplomatic actors in today's international security environment. Through a combination of historical study and theoretical analysis, this course will ultimately provide students with a concrete understanding of

why war occurs, while illuminating possible strategies for future conflict prevention and peaceful resolution. 3 credits

6906 American Foreign Policy

This seminar explores America's many interactions with the world from the First World War, through the Cold War, to the Global War on Terror and the current debates on the role of the US in the world. Using primary documents, textbook readings and articles highlighting central themes in American foreign relations, we will explore the key challenges the U.S. has faced in its foreign relations and the central ideas which have informed foreign policy. The course will explore whether the U.S. is somehow "exceptional" in the international system and examine how this country reached a preponderance of power. The class will also consider competing rationales for American involvement in conflicts around the globe US strategy based on retrenchment, restraint and rebalancing.

6908 Political Economy of Contemporary Conflict

The overall goal of this course is for students to understand and be able to apply the basic concepts of political economy, its applications to traditional warfare and statecraft, irregular warfare, and other illicit power structures, as well as political economy policies for counterterrorism, counterinsurgency, and economic development. In order to accomplish this, the course is developed into four sections. The first introduces basic political economy concepts, with focused case studies on national security issues. The second section focuses on concepts of political economy development, and its flip side, state fragility and failure. The third section focuses on key political economy aspects of irregular warfare and illicit power structures, including insurgency and terrorism financing, transnational criminality, "warlordism", and the so-called "resource curse," with a specific emphasis on the political economy of maintaining irregular conflict and its spoilers to conflict