

## Political Science Y311 – Democracy and National Security

*Meets Tuesday and Thursday*

*9:30-10:45 AM, Jordan A106*

Section 29472, Spring 2014

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Is Edward Snowden a traitor or a whistleblower? Or could he be both? Has the National Security Agency gotten out of control, or is it a responsible member of the “intelligence community”? Are there any viable alternatives to Guantanamo? Or to our increased use of drones? Is a nuclear Iran an existential threat or just another inconvenience? Given the repeated sacrifices we ask from our volunteer military, it time to reinstate a draft? How should the military adjust to changing social norms in society at large? How much should we care if people in other countries are killed by chemical weapons?

**Answers to questions such as these turn on the meaning of "democracy" and "national security"** – two multi-faceted and inherently controversial concepts that shift in endless tension with each other. Despite the high value Americans assign to both of these concepts, it is often difficult to pursue national security while remaining faithful to basic principles of democracy. **Students should take from this course a better understanding of these terms and the tensions between them.**

These controversies reflect today’s problems of reconciling a need for national security with our nation’s commitment to democratic values and processes, but similar issues have arisen in all previous eras and new tensions will arise in the future. **In this course we examine these controversies by looking beyond partisan position-taking, to develop a series of analytical questions or criteria to help guide citizens of a democracy in evaluating these fundamental tensions in particular contexts.** Students will apply these criteria to cases discussed in class, as well as others they will need to investigate on their own.

Given the rapid pace of recent events on these topics, there will be no assigned textbook but instead lots of breaking news and opinion pieces (and a few classic readings available on-line). **Grades will be based on** class participation (15%), a few in-class and take-home exercises (25%), a take-home midterm exam (25%), and a final paper assignment (35%) in which students will apply these questions/criteria to a contemporary controversy, a historical case, or a hypothetical scenario. **This final paper will be due on Thursday, May 1,** and we will not meet during finals week.

**Students are expected to come to class every day,** and attendance will be taken at irregular intervals. Class discussion is strongly encouraged and questions are always welcomed. **Our goal is to jointly develop a series of criteria that can be applied to evaluate different cases of tensions between democratic values and the requisites of national security,** but there is no reason to presume that everyone will agree on the final evaluation of any specific controversy. Room must remain for reasonable disagreements, and **all comments in class must remain respectful of other people's opinions.** You can be assured that this requirement applies to the instructor just as much as to any student. Please let me know if you feel any comments in class have been unfair to you or to anyone else.

Because of the dynamic nature of these events, **this is a minimalist syllabus**. The list of topics and reading assignments given below includes many blanks that will be filled in by the end of the semester, and students will need to come to class regularly to keep up with changing developments. **All additional readings will be announced and made available through the On Course website for this course**. Also posted there will be additional information on course assignments, the grading procedures for this course, as well as other rules and expectations for your participation in this course.

**Outline of Course Topics** (details to be added and revised throughout the semester)

Week 1	Jan 14, 16	Intro to course
2	21, 23	Current Intelligence Issues (revelations by Edward Snowden and related issues)
3	28, 30	
4	Feb 4, 6	Understanding the Intelligence Community
5	11, 13	
6	18, 20	Understanding Democratic Values and Institutions
7	25, 27	
8	March 4, 6	Responding to Snowden's Revelations (including Pres. Obama's forthcoming proposals)
9	11, 13	<b>Midterm writing assignment (due Thursday, March 13)</b>
	15-23	<b>SPRING BREAK</b>
10	25, 27	Finalize Framework for Analysis: Values, Institutions, & Tensions
11	April 1, 3	Military Policy Issues: Intervention, Organization, and Culture
12	8, 10	
13	15, 17	Diplomatic and Economic Issues: Sanctions and International Law
14	22, 24	
15	April 29, May 1	<b>Final Paper Due Thursday, May 1</b>
Finals	May 6	<b>NO FINAL EXAM</b>

**An Initial List of Useful Websites**

**George Washington University**, National Security Archive Electronic Briefing Book No. 436, *The Snowden Affair -- Web Resource Documents the Latest Firestorm over the National Security Agency*, September 4, 2013, ed. Jeffrey T. Richelson, <http://www2.gwu.edu/~nsarchiv/NSAEBB/NSAEBB436/>

**Wikipedia** websites on Snowden and related topics: [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Edward\\_Snowden](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Edward_Snowden) and [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Timeline\\_of\\_mass\\_surveillance\\_disclosures](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Timeline_of_mass_surveillance_disclosures) (content likely to be revised!)

**Manchester Guardian**: *The NSA Files website* <http://www.theguardian.com/world/the-nsa-files>, including interactive feature *NSA Files Decoded; what it means for you*, <http://www.theguardian.com/world/interactive/2013/nov/01/snowden-nsa-files-surveillance-revelations-decoded#section/1>

**University of Oslo** website on *Global Surveillance*, <http://www.ub.uio.no/fag/informatikk-matematikk/informatikk/faglig/bibliografier/no21984.html>

**National Federation of Scientists**, *Project on Government Secrecy*, <http://www.fas.org/sgp/index.html>, and links to selected Congressional Research Service reports: <http://www.fas.org/sgp/crs/index.html>

**Office of the Director of National Intelligence** <http://www.dni.gov>