

Review

A curriculum design for a masters of Arts program in international studies with a concentration in international security and a specialization in international terrorism

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This article presents a prescriptive curriculum design for a new masters of Arts program in international studies with a concentration in international security and a specialization in international terrorism for an international studies MA program. Picking up from an earlier empirical study that conducted and analyzed an extensive needs assessment, this work offers detailed recommendations for curriculum, instruction, assessment, and program evaluation aspects of this graduate program. Likewise, this paper features course descriptions, recommended textbooks and other requirements for this course of study. Reflecting on this effort to establish a serious graduate program in international studies, this research asserts a significant program of study and provides a rich proposal for those seeking to inaugurate a similar effort.

Key words: Program development, curriculum and instruction design, international studies and security studies.

INTRODUCTION

This is the second, follow-on article describing curriculum and instruction research for a new academic program. An earlier needs assessment examined the proposal of establishing a new masters of Arts program in international studies with a concentration in international security and a specialization in international terrorism. The study analyzed the results of the data collection and provided a rich collection of information with significant implications for curriculum, instruction, assessment, and program evaluation aspects of this potential graduate program. The previous needs assessment study provides empirical data for consideration of this potential program. First, the study findings strongly suggest the interest and market for a new graduate program in international studies with a concentration in international security and a specialization in international terrorism. Second, the assessment results reveal not only interest in a potential

program, but data indicating specific subject matter and curriculum content. Additionally, the research information also provides qualitative and descriptive data highlighting instructional and curriculum areas for focus. Moreover, the resulting empirical research data analysis strongly suggests significant interest in the proposed program of a new masters of Arts program in international studies with a concentration in international security and a specialization in international terrorism. Finally, qualitative and quantitative data analysis strongly suggests substantial enrollment projections.

Proposal

The needs assessment study recommended the proposed program of a new masters of Arts program in

international studies with a concentration in international security and a specialization in international terrorism should be initiated and scheduled as soon as practical with the suggested start date of the Fall 2009 semester. Based upon the empirical data provided by the study, a number of curriculum, instruction, learning assessment and program evaluation factors are apparent.

Curriculum

First, the study's resulting data analysis indicates a number of individual courses to be included in the program. Data analysis clearly indicted stronger interest and suggestion of importance by the respondents for certain courses and a lesser amount of preference for other courses. A distinct constellation of courses is formulated and provides structure for the recommended curriculum. These specific courses are listed later in the article.

Instruction

Second, issues related to instruction are also provided by the study. For example, the suggested instruction configuration is a graduate seminar with readings, discussion, guest speakers, discussions, writing and verbal presentations. Moreover, the instructional methods of this course will consist of the following instructional methods: lecture, discussions, case studies, group exercises, writing and briefing exercises, and analytical and problem-solving situations.

Assessment

Third, the study results argue for specific learning assessment criteria. Due to the combination of the nature of the subject matter material and the fact that this program is at the graduate-level, the student learning assessment factors are critical. Specifically, this program calls for the assessment tools such as article assessments, issue topic papers, book assessments, case studies, regional and country studies, student participation, exercises as well as quizzes and exams.

Programmatic issues

The nature of this program suggests unique issues and calls for rather unique methods of evaluations. Consideration should be given to issues such as a graduate certificate program, courses offered via a distance format, scheduling at non-traditional times (afternoons and evenings), and the like. Evaluation concerns should address methods and strategies to

appraise courses, overlaps and redundancies, overall macro-course structure and dynamics and ways to modify, adjust and incorporate new courses and requirements.

Core courses

The recommended core courses include the following four: Comparative Foreign Policy, International Politics, Theories of International Relations, and Major Issues in International Security.

Elective courses

The recommended elective courses (with the requirement for completion of six) include the following: Emerging International Security Threats; United States Foreign Policy; United States National Security Policy; Political Violence and Insurgency; Foundations of International Terrorism; Operational Aspects of International Terrorism; Transnational Militant-Extremism: Regional Studies; Counterterrorism: Policies, Procedures, and Perspectives; Special Topics: Dynamics of Global Terrorism - al Qaeda; and International Weapons Proliferation and Weapons of Mass Destruction.

Research

Six credit hours of research must be completed with this program with the combination of the following possible options: Internship, study abroad, thesis or two Significant Research Projects (SRP) of three credits each.

Language requirement

At least one language to be satisfied through language seminars (no fewer than two semesters) including such as the following: Spanish, Yoruba, Swahili, French, Arabic, Farsi, Pashto, Hindu-Urdu, Chinese or Dari.

Summary and Conclusion

This paper provides a prescriptive curriculum design for a new masters of Arts program in international studies with a concentration in international security and a specialization in international terrorism for an international studies MA program. Of course, these recommendations can be modified to fit a given situation.

The final two items in this paper are the recommended courses and the recommended textbooks.

Recommended courses

Major issues in international security

This foundational graduate course provides a broad overview and context of the current major issues in international security. The national and international security communities currently face a number of serious security issues. The course will examine how international security is studied and pursued, identifying the concerns and perspectives that drive contending views of security policy. It will introduce students to the field of security studies, as it has evolved since its inception following World War II and will explore some of the critical events and issues that form the background of Sept. 11th, toward the end of considering strategies for enhancing international security. This graduate course investigates pressing, critical security threats and issues and focuses on the security problems and the potential solutions. Selected topics include traditional and non-traditional concerns. In addition to assigned readings and realistic class simulations, the students will also receive experience writing an issue paper similar to that typically prepared within national and international security communities to assess the future security environment and to help develop policy and strategies for dealing with these crucial security threats.

Emerging international security threats

The national and international security community currently faces a number of emerging international security threats. This graduate course investigates these critical security threats and issues and focuses on the security problems and their potential solutions. Selected topics include such traditional issues as genocide, narcotics, organized crime, and weapons- and human-trafficking. Moreover, this course also surveys the non-traditional threats such as energy, health, economic and political challenges; also addressed are the security implications of food scarcity and global climate change. In addition to assigned readings and realistic class simulations, the students will also receive experience writing an issue paper similar to that typically prepared within national and international security communities to assess the future security environment and to help develop policy and strategies for dealing with these crucial security threats.

United States foreign policy

This course surveys American foreign policy and the associated decision-making process with assessments of the effectiveness of foreign policies. Topics include definitions and problems of American foreign policy;

various aspects of the history of American foreign policy; and significant past, present and future events, operations and implications involving American foreign policy. This course examines the concept, framework and applications of American foreign policy. Topics include definitions and problems of American foreign policy. The course analyzes the relevant historical background, as well as current national and international issues. Formulation and implementation of strategic, national and operational-level policy will be addressed within the context of American foreign policy. The focus of the course will center on American foreign policy and related national and international security issues.

United States national security policy

This course introduces the principles of U.S. National security policy. Topics include definitions and problems of U.S. National security policy; various aspects of U.S. National security policy; and significant past, present and future events, operations and implications involving U.S. National security policy. This course examines the concept, framework and applications of U.S. National security policy. The course analyzes the relevant historical background and current national and international issues. Formulation and implementation of strategic, national and operational-level policy will be addressed within the context of U.S. National security policy. The focus of the course will center on U.S. National security policy-related national and international security issues.

International weapons proliferation and weapons of mass destruction

This course explores international weapons proliferation and weapons of mass destruction. Indeed, this course explores the worldwide proliferation of weapons and military hardware. Special attention is given to weapons of mass destruction including fundamental principles of weapons development and deployment; unique characteristics and effects of nuclear, biological, and chemical weapons; and delivery systems. Strategies to counter this international problem are developed and needed capabilities are identified.

Political violence and insurgency

This graduate course will explore the concepts of political violence and insurgency in the context of international security. While these essential elements of political violence and insurgency will be treated separately, this course will also examine and define their relationship to international terrorism. The approach of the course will be

both descriptive and prescriptive in nature and content and will be presented within the framework of an operational and policy perspective. This course subject and content material is essential for anyone who is interested in or involved with international and national security and who must deal with political violence, insurgency, and international terrorism or counterterrorism. International terrorism is now the single most critical national and international security threat and issue. Political violence and insurgency provide the context and background for international terrorism. This graduate course will examine the concept of Political violence and insurgency and explore the problems and the solutions of Political violence and insurgency from a policy-makers perspective. Much of the course material concentrates on the operational aspects of political violence and insurgency and thereby allows for subsequent analysis for policy formulation to counter this strategic and international problem. This course addresses the following, specific topics: Political violence; insurgency; international terrorism; a model for understanding insurgency; a variety of past and present case studies; international intelligence operations for counterterrorism; and counterterrorism policies. This concept of political violence and insurgency will be explored in an operational light and within the context of the policymaker and the national and international security policy formulation, execution and evaluation domain.

Foundations of international terrorism

International terrorism is now the single most critical national and international security threat and issue. This graduate seminar focuses on a number of fundamental aspects of international terrorism and provides the framework for the subsequent sessions.

Providing context and underlying factors of international terrorism, this seminar addresses such topics as historical aspects and roots of international terrorism; sociological, economic, and psychological factors of international terrorism; elements of psychological social conditioning; Islamic studies and the concept of the Jihad; Wahhabism and the Salafi Jihad; the ideology of militant Islamic extremism; dynamics of suicide terrorist operations; and the Mujahedin. Comprehensive in scope, this course will cover a wide range of relevant topics from the historical background and roots to the sociological, economic, and psychological aspects of international terrorism. This concept of international terrorism will be explored within the theoretical context of the policymaker and the national and international security policy formulation, execution and evaluation domain.

Operational aspects of international terrorism

International terrorism is now the single most critical national and international security threat and issue. This graduate course focuses on a number of operational aspects of international terrorism and provides the framework for related international terrorism courses. With a practical approach, this graduate course centers on operational facets of the single most critical national and international security threat of international terrorism. Illustrating the operational aspects of international terrorism, the seminar explores substantive issues like terrorism operations (as detailed in such documents as the Manchester document and the Al Qaeda Targeting Memo); Terrorism and organized crime; financial aspects of international terrorism; The Beslan case study; terror networks and strategies; tactics and techniques of terrorist operations. Actual examples and case studies are scrutinized in order to grasp the relevant principles. Comprehensive in scope, this course will cover a wide range of relevant topics all centered on the operational aspects of international terrorism. This concept of operational aspects of international terrorism will be explored within the existent context of the policymaker and the national and international security policy formulation, execution and evaluation domain.

Transnational militant-extremism: Regional studies

International terrorism is now the single most critical national and international security threat and issue. This graduate course focuses on transnational militant-extremism: regional issues, and provides the framework for related international terrorism courses. With a practical approach, this seminar investigates the subject of transnational terrorism with a traditional regional studies methodology. The worldwide problem of terrorism will be surveyed in a region-by-region approach to include the global regions of East Asia, Latin America, Europe, North Africa, Central Asia, and the Middle East. Concentrating on major developments and trends, specific terrorist groups will be analyzed in terms of organizational description, areas of operation, political objectives, activities and operations, operational targets, and counter-strategies. Special attention will be paid to individual groups, regional situations and transnational dynamics. Actual examples and case studies are scrutinized in order to grasp the relevant principles. Comprehensive in scope, this course will cover a wide range of relevant topics all centered on the transnational militant-extremism: regional issues. This concept of transnational militant-extremism: regional issues will be explored within the existent context of the policymaker and the national and international security policy formulation, execution and evaluation domain.

Counterterrorism: policies, procedures and perspectives

International terrorism is now the single most critical national and international security threat and issue. This graduate course focuses on countering terrorism: policies, procedures, and perspectives, and provides the framework for related International Terrorism courses. With a practical approach, this seminar investigates the subject of countering terrorism: policies, procedures, and perspectives with the central focus of the course on policy. This capstone course spotlights the problems and available solutions from the national and international policy-makers perspective. Much of the course material concentrates on the policies, procedures, and perspectives of international terrorism and thereby allows for subsequent analysis for counterterrorism policy formulation. Special attention is paid to the intelligence, security organizations, counterterrorism operations and national and international cooperation to counter this strategic and international problem. Moreover, current and prescriptive recommendations are addressed within the context of the policymaker and the national and international security policy formulation, execution and evaluation domain. Comprehensive in scope, this course will cover a wide range of relevant topics on counterterrorism policies, procedures, and perspectives. Actual examples and case studies are scrutinized in order to grasp the relevant principles. Comprehensive in scope, this course will cover a wide range of relevant topics all centered on countering terrorism: policies, procedures, and perspectives. This concept of countering terrorism: policies, procedures, and perspectives will be explored within the existent context of the policymaker and the national and international security policy formulation, execution and evaluation domain.

Special topics: dynamics of global terrorism - Al Qaeda

International terrorism is now the single most critical national and international security threat and issue. This graduate course focuses on dynamics of global terrorism: Al Qaeda. Al Qaeda, the symbol of International terrorism, is the focus of this special topic seminar. A variety of subjects are addressed including Al Qaeda origins, genesis, and evolution; key personalities and leaders; pioneer and competing ideologies; movements and factions; organizational factors and idiosyncrasies; past, current and potential future operations; and other relevant concerns. Strategic issues and conclusions and current and future questions are emphasized, and of course, counter-strategies are addressed. Drawing on operational data, this seminar session examines Al Qaeda and the dynamics of global terrorism. This critical

course spotlights the problems and solutions from the national and international policy-makers perspective. Special attention is paid to the intelligence, security organizations, counterterrorism operations and national and international cooperation to counter this strategic and international problem. Moreover, current and prescriptive recommendations are addressed within the context of the policymaker and the national and international security policy formulation, execution and evaluation domain. Comprehensive in scope, this course will cover a wide range of relevant topics on counterterrorism policies, procedures, and perspectives.

Recommended textbooks

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