

## SYLLABUS

SCST 5339-02: Foundations of Homeland Security  
Sam Houston State University  
Fall 2017  
W 6-8:50 PM  
The Woodlands Center 00255

Professor: Dr. Natalie D. Baker  
Security Studies

Phone:

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Office:

Office Hours: By Appointment

*\*\*\*IF YOU HAVE ANY QUESTIONS ABOUT THE CLASS, PLEASE  
READ THE SYLLABUS FIRST BEFORE YOU CONTACT ME BECAUSE  
ANSWERS TO MOST OF YOUR QUESTIONS WILL BE FOUND  
HERE\*\*\**

Also, here is a video/course trailer I made for a similar class at my former university. You should watch it if you like Godzilla and rap music:

<https://vimeo.com/147380261>

**Course Description:** This class introduces students to major concepts within the field of security studies, focusing specifically on large-scale manmade/non-manmade risks. The course will examine how concepts of 'security' and 'threat' came to be through a variety of socio-cultural-historical perspectives. While this is a traditional class in the sense that students shall look to the course professor to facilitate learning, this will be accomplished in a different way than the traditional lecture and testing-based environment of the typical college course.

We will read, listen, watch, and discuss during the class. This will happen in a collaborative fashion, as this is a skill fundamental to both work in fields related to security, and getting through life and work successfully.

\*\*\*If you are not prepared to actively join in discussion, and demonstrate you have read course materials during each class period do not waste your time, nor that of the class (including me).\*

**The major objectives of this course are:**

1. Understand the complex origins of security in the US socio-cultural context.
2. Provide theoretical and practical grounding in this interdisciplinary topic.
3. Be able to name, identify, and understand fundamentals of the field.
4. Develop the collaborative skills necessary to successfully work in security, or your field of choice.
5. Refine your ability to make connections between seemingly disparate topics in relation to the course material.
6. Rethink pre-existing assumptions and misconceptions.
7. Own your engagement with knowledge.

**Disclaimers:**

- I will do my best to work within your style of learning, but cannot please all.
- Please review the syllabus to make sure this class is a good fit for your style of learning or level of energy.
- Some of the material contains adult language and topics that might be offensive to some people. If you feel this might be an issue for you, please discuss with me beforehand.
- This course is dynamic and somewhat experimental. The tasks and schedule may change slightly over the semester. I will keep you informed of any changes as they come along via blackboard announcements, email, and announcements during class. If you have a problem with change, please take a different section. Or, if this is your only option, then approach the class with an open mind.
- I will challenge you. Please don't be offended, as I will also challenge myself.
- There is no right or wrong. Your ideas are your own, but should be rooted in a body of knowledge that has been established over time.
- Finally, while I am the leader of this class, it is important to me that you learn and are respected as a human being. With that said, I am pretty flexible, but please do not take advantage of it. This means, it's pretty obvious to me when people don't do their work, and I will call you out if you try to play me.
- As this is an online course, it is CRUCIAL you read my email communications and announcements, as I will update you with any important information (such as class cancellations or extra credit opportunities) through this method, as well as verbal communication in the classroom setting.
- If you have questions/concerns/complaints/need help, please email me. I am always happy to assist.

**Required Texts:** The course texts are available online through sites such as amazon.com or textbooks.com. They are the following:

- 1) The Theater of Operations: National Security Affect from the Cold War to the War on Terror by Joseph Masco: [http://www.amazon.com/Theater-Operations-National-Security-Affect/dp/0822358069/ref=tmm\\_pap\\_swatch\\_0?encoding=UTF8&qid=&sr=1-2&keywords=resilient+life](http://www.amazon.com/Theater-Operations-National-Security-Affect/dp/0822358069/ref=tmm_pap_swatch_0?encoding=UTF8&qid=&sr=1-2&keywords=resilient+life)
- 2) Resilient Life: The Art of Living Dangerously (1<sup>st</sup> Edition) by Brad Evans and Julian Reid: [http://www.amazon.com/Resilient-Life-Art-Living-Dangerously/dp/0745671535/ref=sr\\_1\\_2?s=books&ie=UTF8&qid=1452532356&sr=1-2&keywords=resilient+life](http://www.amazon.com/Resilient-Life-Art-Living-Dangerously/dp/0745671535/ref=sr_1_2?s=books&ie=UTF8&qid=1452532356&sr=1-2&keywords=resilient+life)

Supplementary Texts and Materials: Will be posted on Blackboard.

### STRUCTURE OF THE COURSE

This course is designed to facilitate both individual and co-learning. We will not have lectures. Rather, students will pose questions in the beginning of each class that will be designed to question the material and learn about topics on a deep level. Some examples of what we might do in class: create a visual map of how you envision connections between major topics in the beginning of the course, and then show how this changes by the end of the semester, identify assumptions and pre-misconceptions and chart how this changes over the entirety of the course.

### SELF-REFLECTION/ COURSE GRADE

I assess grades in a non-traditional manner. As part of a college education is to learn how to conform to rules in order to obtain a job, students must turn in all assignments to get an A, but there are no points assessed for any activity required of the course. In lieu of quantitative assessments of your engagement with and mastery of the course, you will send to me a reflection about: 1) How your assumptions have changed over the course. 2) Ways in which you have improved in terms of knowledge and discipline over the duration of the course. I will then add my assessment of your performance. 3) We will co-determine your grade.

### ACTIVITIES/ASSIGNMENTS

There are a number of activities students will engage to reinforce and demonstrate learning. They are detailed below:

### **1) SECURITY GALLERY**

This can be an individual or group assignment. Meaning, you can work on this by yourself or with others, if you so choose. Everyone will pick a topic that falls under one of the themes below. You are welcome to propose your own topic of interest. These themes are kept intentionally vague as I want you to push yourself in this assignment, to be as creative and critical as possible.

*Themes:* The course is organized around many of the below themes. While they might seem unrelated, all are relevant to security studies. The point is for you to organize the content of your 'gallery space' within the context of the course goals. You can be creative or as traditional as you would like to be. This activity is designed to engage your thinking on the topic rather than have you memorize facts. If you do not complete this activity, it is not possible for you to get any grade above a C. It is also important that you contribute to your group, if you so choose this route.

Possible themes are as follows:

- mass media
- policy
- history
- music
- popular culture
- literature
- philosophy
- film
- institutions
- time
- power
- organizations
- action
- vulnerability
- race
- gender
- age

You are welcome to suggest other themes as you see fit. We will present projects to the class at the end of the semester.

**Expectations:** You will work to develop the space in this 'gallery' related to your theme. You can create your space using a variety of media (e.g. videos, movies, music, literature). It is expected this work will connect with weekly readings from

both the general texts, and then also others surrounding your topic.

## **2) DISCUSSION LEADER SESSIONS**

Each class member will serve as discussion leaders along with approximately 1-2 other students for at least 1 class periods this semester (depending on enrollment). We will divide up who takes which readings when based on interest, the number of classes we have in a particular week, and class enrollment size. The professor will serve as a discussion leader for a few classes as indicated in the syllabus, or determined by enrollment/interest in a topic. Leaders must work together and condense the material into one succinct examination of the topics at hand.

The discussion leaders will:

- 1) Summarize the reading(s) in your own words
- 2) Work together with your group to develop 3 questions based on the readings and pose them to the class.
- 3) Connect a current (loosely defined) event to the readings. You must explain the event and then contextualize it in terms of the relevant readings
- 4) Critique the readings
- 5) **Discussion leaders will send discussion material to me via email by 12 PM the day before your assigned session. Each session is held every class as detailed in the schedule below. Thus, I will need the discussion materials by 12 PM each Tuesday before the beginning of a class week.**
- 6) Dr. Baker will post all questions and commentary about the readings on Blackboard in advance of class on or before every Wednesday class.

Work with the professor to facilitate in-class discussions I will moderate and oversee each discussion, as well as provide feedback on student's understanding of material.

All students should please read the texts and go over the materials, as I can generally tell when people don't do the readings.

## **3) CRITICAL MOVIE REVIEW**

We will watch a "bad security-related movie" towards the end of the semester. You can choose which movie you want to cover, but must get my approval. The worse the movie, the better.

You will create a written summary/critique of this movie where you apply knowledge gained from the class to assess the way the event and its management is portrayed. This should be at-least four double-spaced pages

minimum and no fonts beyond 12-point.

Specifically: 1) summarize the movie – no more than one to two paragraphs max, and 2) critique the movie using the readings, discussions, other evidence. Opinions are fine too, but they must be rooted in legitimate knowledge. Like all other assignments, you cannot receive an A in the course if you do not complete as directed, or you will drop one letter grade in the course if your effort here is not adequate (i.e. follows the directives above).

#### **4) Grade Self-Assessment**

I will assess grades in a non-traditional manner. As part of a college education is to learn how to conform to rules in order to obtain a job, students must turn in all assignments to get an A, but there are no points assessed for any activity required of the course. Rather, you will send to me a reflection about: 1) how your assumptions have changed over the course, 2) ways in which you have improved in terms of knowledge and discipline over the duration of the course. I will then add my assessment of your performance and then we will co-determine your grade.

This must be more than two or three sentences. I will provide more info over the course of the semester.

### **READING LIST AND SCHEDULE OF CLASSES**

Below, I outline the readings for each class. You are expected to have read them before each respective day listed, as we will be discussing them each class. Please note there will be readings that come from outside the text. These will be provided via Blackboard.

### **PART I – NATIONAL (in)SECURITY**

#### **Week 1: Wed. 8/23 – Course Introduction**

- Read 'Community Emergency Planning: False Assumptions and Inappropriate Analogies'
- Read 'What is a Disaster?'
- Watch: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MDOrzF7B2Kg>

#### **Week 2: Wed. 8/30 NO CLASS**

#### **Week 3: Wed. 9/6– Social chaos and other mythologies**

- Read 'Metaphors Matter'
- Read 'Disaster Mythology and Availability Cascades'

**Week 4: Wed. 9/13– Transforming the Cold War to the counterterror state – How US National Security came to be**

- Read Intro and Chapters 1 and 2 of Masco book

**Week 5: Wed. 9/20- Masco Continued...**

- Read Chapter 3 of Masco book
- Read Baker, Natalie D. 'Dirty sneaky rats, bad hombres, and the stewards of moral good: old battles in new theaters –sociotechnical performances of (counter)terror' in review for *Critical Studies on Terrorism*.

**Week 6: Wed. 9/27- Biosecurity**

- Read 'Baker, Natalie D. and Samonas, Spyridon. 'Keeping the Ebolas Out': Relativism, Pluralism, and the Construction of Imagined Crises to be submitted to *Security Studies*.
- Read Chapter 4 of Masco book

**Week 7: Wed. 10/4 – The Hazards Cycle and National Security Infrastructures as Basically Understood**

- Read the information on the following sites:  
<http://restoreyoureconomy.org/disaster-overview/phases-of-disaster/>
- Take and pass the following trainings:
  1. National Incident Management System (NIMS) An Introduction:  
<http://training.fema.gov/EMIWeb/IS/courseOverview.aspx?code=IS-700.a>
  2. NIMS Resource Management:  
<http://training.fema.gov/EMIWeb/IS/courseOverview.aspx?code=IS-703.a>
  3. Introduction to the Incident Command System:  
<http://training.fema.gov/EMIWeb/IS/courseOverview.aspx?code=IS-100.b>
  4. National Response Framework: An Introduction:  
<http://training.fema.gov/EMIWeb/IS/courseOverview.aspx?code=IS-800.b>

- Familiarize yourself with the following sites:

<https://www.fema.gov/>

<https://www.dhs.gov/>

## **Part II – Questioning the State of Things**

### **Week 8: Wed. 10/11- Preparedness?**

- Baker, Natalie D. and Grant Ludwig, Lisa. 2016. 'Disaster Preparedness as Social Control', *Critical Policy Studies*.  
<http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/19460171.2016.1214075>.
- Read Baker, Natalie D. 2014. "Everything Always Works': disaster preparedness as construction of the 'risk society'. *International Journal of Mass Emergencies and Disasters*, Vol. 32(3): 428-458.
- Read Baker, Natalie D. 2014. 'Potential Improvisations: the role of explicit and implicit practices in the production of situated preparedness for disasters.' *Natural Hazards Review*, Vol. 15(4).

### **Week 9: Wed. 10/18 - Resilience and Vulnerability?**

- Read Chapters 1 and 2 of Resilient Life by Evans and Reid

### **Week 10: Wed. 10/25- Resilience and Vulnerability Continued**

- Read Chapters 3 and 4 of Evans and Reid book

### **Week 11: Wed. 11/01 - Contextualizing Resilience and Vulnerability**

- Watch 'Trouble the Water':  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=oOOV1A3NloM>

### **Week 12: Wed. 11/8- Race and Vulnerability**

- Read 'Race, Class, and Hurricane Katrina'
- Read 'Baker, Natalie D and Kubrin, Charis. 'Now it time to bounce back: New Orleans bounce rap, Hurricane Katrina, and re-creating sameness'',



to be submitted to *Critical Inquiry*.

### **Part III: Presentations**

**Week 13: Wed. 11/15** Class Presentations

**Week 14: Wed. 11/22** – NO CLASS - THANKSGIVING

**Week 15: Wed. 11/29** – Class Presentations

**Week 16 FINALS WEEK – NO CLASS**

**Final Grades Due – 12/11/17 @ 12PM** - the Critical Movie Review is due  
**Friday, December 8 11:59 PM** (email to Dr. Baker)

\*\*\*The professor reserves to alter the syllabus and schedule, as this is a dynamic and evolving course.\*\*\*

#### **\*\*\*\*TECHNOLOGY USE POLICY\*\*\*\***

**I fundamentally trust that students are mature and responsible enough to use technology wisely. With that said, I absolutely DO NOT want to see excessive phone/laptop use in this class!!! If I see it, I will call you out because it is disrespectful to the professor and other students.**

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