International Security and Intelligence Programme:
Twenty-First Century Perspectives on Intelligence and Contemporary Threats

THE SYLLABUS

2020
COURSE DIRECTORS:

Dr David Gioe is Assistant Professor of History at the US Military Academy at West Point where he also serves as the History Fellow for the Army Cyber Institute. He has nearly 20 years of experience as an intelligence practitioner and is a Commander in the US Navy Reserve.

Professor Michael S. Goodman is Professor of Intelligence and International Affairs and Head of the Department of War Studies, King’s College London. He is official historian of the British Joint Intelligence Committee and also a Visiting Professor at the Norwegian Defence Intelligence School.

SYNOPSIS:

The International Security and Intelligence (ISI) programme offers a unique opportunity to study with leading academics and practitioners. With a special emphasis on human intelligence, students will explore the role of the intelligence and security agencies, applying their enduring principles to cutting-edge problems. Participants will consider the 21st century threat landscape in historical perspective. We will explore, through a wide panoply of optics, the intelligence cycle, the competing claims of state secrecy, information operations, terrorism, the problems generated by the demand for regional security and the security aspects of digital revolutions. Intelligence collection, analysis of the product, and its dissemination to customers remain at the core of the intelligence cycle. Counterintelligence and covert action play more opaque but still vital roles at the heart of the nation state and international alliances. Understanding these perspectives, what intelligence can achieve, but also its limitations, are major course themes.

Setting the tone and direction of the programme will be a series of outstanding guest lecturers covering a broad spectrum of contemporary intelligence and security challenges. Speakers in recent years have included practitioners, the Heads of MI5, MI6 and GCHQ; the Chief Judge to the Appeals Court of the United States Armed Forces, and the CIA Deputy Director for Operations – and leading academics working in the field of Intelligence and Security studies.

The multitude of threats facing Western democracies is diverse and the issues which preoccupy the highest levels of government will be discussed and analysed. With its emphasis on contemporary and future challenges and practice, this is a course which will appeal to those with an academic or professional interest in intelligence and contemporary threats.

This Syllabus describes the:

- Aims of the programme
THE AIMS OF THE PROGRAMME ARE:

- To promote multidisciplinary understanding of concepts, issues and debates regarding intelligence and national security issues more broadly.

- To encourage reflection on the meaning, value and nature of intelligence and of types of intelligence as evidence and bases for action.

- To encourage understanding of the interactive processes of assessment and analysis.

- To foster conscious critical reading and discussion of issues concerning information, intelligence, policy and action.

- To promote an understanding of scholarly activity in relation to intelligence.

- To foster appreciation of intelligence skills and tools for understanding future developments.

- To foster understanding and application of a range of transferable intellectual and study skills.

- To foster understanding and application of a range of transferable key skills – communication, listening, and teamwork.

THE PROGRAMME WILL PARTICULARLY APPEAL TO:

Students and practitioners with an intellectual or professional interest in statecraft and the interlocking themes of intelligence, security, defence and foreign policy.

LEARNING OUTCOMES:

- Familiarity with key concepts in intelligence.

- Understanding of the variety of factors affecting the collection, processing and use of information.

- Command of key concepts such as human intelligence, counterintelligence, signals intelligence, assessment and analysis, and information operations.

- Understanding of intelligence as both a challenge to and a support of
- An understanding of different approaches to intelligence in history and other forms of social science.
- Knowledge and understanding of intelligence and security in relation to specific empirical cases.
- The problems and possible practical solutions to issues of intelligence, war and security.
- To have contributed to and participated in the formation of co-learning, investigating and assessing the relevance and relationship of intelligence to future developments in policy and practice.
- Career and employability skill development.

TEACHING METHODS:

At the core of the programme are a series of Key Theme Lectures covering a broad spectrum of contemporary intelligence and security challenges. Each lecture has a number of corresponding small-group seminar, led by the lecturer where key themes as debated and discussed. All teaching is conducted with strict adherence to the ‘Chatham House Rule’ which all students must respect (when a meeting is held under the Chatham House Rules, participants are free to use the information received, but neither the identity nor the affiliation of the speaker(s), nor that of any other participant, may be revealed).

KEY THEME LECTURES AND SEMINARS

1. The ISI introduction to Intelligence Studies

This, the first lecture, considers the historiography of intelligence and the development of intelligence studies as a distinct field of academic inquiry. Guidance will be given on research methods, interpretative approaches and analytical writing when exploring this exciting but challenging field. Required readings (in advance) are:

2. The British Approach to Intelligence

Here we will examine the ways in which the British intelligence community has developed what can be seen as a specific, characteristic approach towards its work over time and in response to the changing nature of the threats it has encountered. Required readings (in advance) are:


3. Human Intelligence and Operational Tradecraft

This lecture uses a Cold War case study to illuminate the potential and pitfalls of humans as intelligence agents. We will focus on intelligence collection, counter-intelligence and agent security – timeless tradecraft issues. Required readings (in advance) are:

4. **Surprise Attack and Warning Failures**

Here we will consider classic examples of surprise attack including the Soviet invasion of Czechoslovakia in 1968 and the Argentine invasion of the Falkland Islands in 1982 and will identify some of the general lessons that emerge from them. We will consider whether there are ways to remedy the failures apparently inherent in intelligence work.


5. **Intelligence Liaison – not all it might seem**

The focus here is on intelligence sharing, exploring the nature and importance of, and obstacles to, liaison between specific intelligence agencies and between international communities.

6. **The Good the Bad and the Ugly; Case Studies in Intelligence History**

Classic examples from the history of intelligence will be analysed with a view to identifying the role that intelligence plays in events and conflicts, and considering whether any generic issues emerge.


7. **Reading the Mind of the Enemy**

As Cyberpower increasingly dominates political and security agendas we will consider, through historical examples, including the Pacific Theatre in the 2nd WW, the impact that code-breaking and deception have had on warfare.


8. **Rising Powers and Failing States**

The conventional wisdom holds that the US, UK, and NATO are challenged by Rising Powers such as an aggressive China and a resurgent Russia. But could it be the case that the transatlantic countries are actually threatened more by failing states?

9. **Treachery – a framework for the assessment of the damage wrought by betrayal.**

   Cambridge University has produced its fair share of spies and traitors – not least the famous Cold War Five. Were any of these more outstandingly treacherous than Edward Snowden? We will look at the claims of these and others to the title of ‘the greatest traitor ever’.

THE SPECIAL SUBJECT LECTURE SERIES

The titles for these vary each year partly reflecting the flow of recent events. Recent special subject lectures have included the following titles:

- Intelligence Cooperation and Security Assistance in the Global South
- The Future of the State in the Middle East
- Intelligence History: from Spies to Said
- Legal and Ethical Dilemmas of Targeted Killing

SUPERVISION – Individual guided research

Before arriving in Cambridge students will submit a research proposal and been paired with a member of the ISI Faculty to undertake a tailored, in-depth study of their chosen security or intelligence theme through faculty-led ‘supervisions’, a method at the heart of Cambridge teaching. Supervision groups have up to six students and are designed to foster independent learning and presentation skills. They meet five times during the course, allowing time for ideas to develop and questions to evolve. Students are required to take ownership of their own research with guidance from their supervisor. To this end supervisors also offer office hours.

Samples of recent proposals and completed research can be found here.

Example essay titles include:

- Dangerous, Fanatical, Fantasists: Conspiracy and Government in the Assassination of John F. Kennedy
- How Should the UK Deal With Captured British Islamic State Foreign Terrorist Fighters?
- Is clandestine diplomacy compatible with liberal democratic values of transparency and accountability?
- Understanding the drought-conflict nexus in Africa: A case study from northeastern Tanzania
- Is NATO’s eFP a successful countermeasure to Russian Hybrid Warfare?

The CSI CONFERENCE

At the half-way point of the Programme students all attend the two-day CSI Conference, where they join delegates from the worlds of business, government, academia, the security services and the military. Entitled Intelligence and National Security Policy in a Changing World, the conference programme is built around a series of lectures and panel discussions. The range of topics and quality of speakers makes this a unique opportunity for ISI students to hear, question and
interact with those who have worked at the highest levels in the fields of Intelligence and Security.

Additional information, including the 2019 conference brochure, can be found here: https://thecsi.org.uk/isi/isi-conference/

ASSESSMENT AND CREDIT

Assessment and credit are awarded on the basis of performance in the Programme’s two tracks.

1. Independent supervised research leading the submission of a graded essay of 3,500 words (including footnotes) produced during the Programme and submitted within a week of the Programme ending.

2. Lectures, Seminars and the Conference There will be a minimum of 40 hours contact time comprising:
   
   - Key theme lectures and seminars (22.50 hours)
   - Special subject lectures (7.5 hours)
   - Conference participation, 10 hours)

   - Students will be assessed on their engagement with the Programme and on their performance in two c. 750 word written pieces to be completed during the third week of the programme.

   - All participants successfully completing ISI will receive a transcript showing two grades together with grading guidance notes in early September after external validation has been completed. All work is moderated to ensure consistency, and are assessed in relation to the mark schemes produced by the Department of War Studies at King’s College London.

   - Students will be assessed in relation to their highest academic qualification. For example, if students are currently enrolled in a BA degree the essay will be marked using the BA standard marking criteria. An MA student will be subjected to the MA grading criteria.

GRADING
As a guide it can be noted that for completion of each of the two tracks a student usually receives 3-4 US credits or 7.5 European Credit Transfer and Accumulation System (ECTS) credits.

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**DIVERSITY**

ISI attracts a diverse range of participants, from working professionals in the field of security and intelligence to students preparing for undergraduate and postgraduate courses. In 2019 there were fourteen different nationalities represented across 63 students. The range of academic interests and experiences creates a unique learning environment, supported by the Cambridge model of lectures, special lectures, seminars and supervisions. All students are expected to do the required readings, preparations for supervisions and contribute to seminar discussions.

**GENERAL READING:**

Any of the following volumes are all good introductions to the field of Intelligence Studies and students may wish to bolster their knowledge and understanding of intelligence terms and topics before arriving in Cambridge for an intensive programme:

- Rob Dover, Michael S Goodman and Claudia Hillebrand (eds), *The Routledge Companion to Intelligence Studies* (Routledge 2013)

- Christopher Andrew, Richard J. Aldrich and Wesley K. Wark (eds.), *Secret Intelligence: A Reader* (2009)

- David Omand, *Securing the State* (2012)


- Mark M. Lowenthal, *Intelligence from Secrets to Policy* (2016– various older editions are available and fine to use)


In addition, students might find it helpful and interesting to regularly read the following Blogs as they deal with aspects of intelligence and national security:

- UNREDACTED: the national security archive, unedited and uncensored - [http://nsarchive.wordpress.com](http://nsarchive.wordpress.com)


- Sources and methods - [http://sourcesandmethods.blogspot.co.uk](http://sourcesandmethods.blogspot.co.uk)