POS 7267 - Professional Development: The Practice of Security Studies

Section: 0001

College of Sciences

School of Politics, Security, and Intl Affairs

Course Information

Term: Spring 2026
Class Meeting Days: M
Class Meeting Time: 10:00AM - 11:50AM
Class Meeting Location: HPH O305G
Modality: P
Credit Hours: 1.00

Instructor Information

Name: Thomas Dolan
Title: Associate Professor
Office Location: HPH 314
Email: Thomas.Dolan@ucf.edu

Office Hours

Monday 3:30-5, Wednesday 12-1:30

Course Description

POS 7267 COS-POLS 1(1,0)Professional Development: The Practice of Security Studies: PR: Admission to Security Studies Ph.D. program or C.I. Addresses ethics in security studies and prepares students for careers in the security sector, including topics such as ethics in decision making. Graded S/U. Even Spring.

The purpose of this course is to help students explore and prepare for non-academic careers working in government and the private sector. There are three foci: identifying career opportunities and pathways through them, developing perspective on how to translate academic skills and competencies into professional assets; and improving communication skills for effectively communicating expertise to more general audiences.

Student Learning Outcomes

- Students will develop knowledge about how to explore non-academic career paths
- Students will develop skills for effectively pursuing non-academic positions
- Students will develop writing and communication skills for writing as an expert to generalist audiences

Required Course Materials and Resources

Foreign Policy Careers for PhDs
Authors: James Goldgeier and Tamara Wittes
Publisher: Georgetown

Other materials available via UCF sources or webcourses

Course Assessment and Grading Procedure

First week academic Activity
A short quiz is available via the webcourses page

Linkedin Page 5%
Students submit a linkedin page for review.

Resume 5%

Students will prepare a professional resume. The final draft will be graded.

Informational Interviews 10% each
Students will conduct 3 informational interviews with people who hold, or have held, positions that are of interest to them. Interviews should typically last 30 minutes. Students should use the report form available on webcourses.

Op-ed 10%
Students will draft an op-ed of 1,000 words addressing an area within their expert competence. Students will identify a target publication and provide a brief explanation (on a coversheet) explaining why they are selecting this newspaper, blog, etc.

Policy Analysis Memo 10%
Paper of 1,000 words on a topic to be given in class, written to a decision-maker with a generalist background. Topic and decision-maker will be identified 3 days prior to due date.

Podcast--10%
Each student will serve as interviewer and as interviewee for a 'podcast' on a professionally relevant topic. The 'podcast' clips will be uploaded as private youtube clips. Podcasts will last no more than 5 minutes.

Job search plan--10%
Each student will prepare a job search plan by identifying 5 kinds of positions that they would be interested in, identify steps necessary to qualify for those positions, and identify 20 institutions/companies who might conceivably hire them for one of those positions. Document with job ads in appendiix.

Recommendation Brief (as a team) 10%
Students will present a 5 minute brief that ends with a specific policy recommendation.

Participation—10%
Participation grade includes attendance in class, participation in activities, preparation for class discussion/activities, and engagement with topics.

Assignment Schedule

Due Date	Assignment Name	Assignment Type	Points

Due Date	Assignment Name	Assignment Type	Points
	Academic Activity Quiz	Quiz	1
	Participation	Assignment	10
2/9/26	Informational Interview 1	Assignment	10
2/16/26	Linked In	Assignment	5
2/9/26	Resume	Assignment	5
3/2/26	Policy Analysis Memo	Assignment	10
3/9/26	Informational Interview 2	Assignment	10
2/16/26	Op Ed	Assignment	10
4/10/24	Informational Interview 3	Assignment	10
5/4/26	Recommendation Brief	Assignment	10
3/30/26	Mini-podcast	Assignment	10
4/27/26	Job Search Plan	Assignment	10

Grading Scale

Grading
Grades are assigned to both individual pieces of work and cumulatively. The grade scale I use for both is below (note that “g” refers to the numerical grade you receive). I do not usually curve grades, but reserve the right to do so if I deem it necessary. All material is graded on its own terms, rather than through comparison with other students’ work.

Grades in my PhD courses can be interpreted in the following way:

A 93 or better	High-quality professional work

A- 90-92.99	Professional work
B+ 88-89.99	Near professional quality work
B 83-86.99	Quality is acceptable
B- 80-82.99	Quality is marginally acceptable
C 70-79.99	Quality is problematic
D 60-69.99	Quality is not acceptable for graduate work
F 59.99 or below	Fail

Policies for Course Grade

Late Papers

Assignments are to be turned in by class time on the day they are due. They should be in hard copy unless unforeseen circumstances prevent printing them in or handing them in a timely manner. For every 24 hours that pass thereafter, 5% of credit is lost, to a maximum of 40% lost.

Artificial Intelligence (AI) Use Policy

AI can be used to proofread work. Assignments which the instructor believes are largely the product of AI may receive a 0.

Disability Access & Accommodations

The University of Central Florida is committed to providing equal access to all students with disabilities (ADHD, learning disabilities, Autism, chronic medical conditions, physical disabilities, etc.). To receive consideration for reasonable disability-related course accommodations, disabled students must contact Student Accessibility Services (SAS) and complete the steps required for SAS to review accommodation requests. More information can be found on the UCF Student Accessibility Services website under the Start Here tab or by contacting SAS directly (Ferrell Commons 185; sas@ucf.edu; Phone - 407-823-2371).

Approved accommodations are shared with course instructors via the SAS Course Accessibility Letter. Implementing certain accommodations may require discussion about specific considerations of the course design, course learning objectives, and the individual academic and course challenges experienced by the student. While students with disabilities or chronic health needs are also encouraged to discuss any course concerns with professors in addition to contacting SAS, professors are not required to facilitate disability-related adjustments to the course unless the professor has received a Course Accessibility Letter from SAS that outlines approved accommodations.

Academic Integrity

Students should familiarize themselves with UCF's Code of Conduct at Student Conduct and Integrity Office. According to Section 1, "Academic Misconduct," students are prohibited from engaging in:

1. Academic misconduct is defined as any submitted work or behavior that obstructs the instructor of record's ability to accurately assess the student's understanding or completion of course materials or degree requirements (e.g., assignment, quiz, and/or exam). Examples of academic misconduct include but are not limited to: plagiarism, unauthorized assistance to complete an academic exercise; unauthorized communication with others during an examination, course assessment, or project; falsifying or misrepresenting academic work; providing misleading information to create a personal advantage to complete course/degree requirements; or multiple submission(s) of academic work without permission of the instructor of record.
2. Any student who knowingly helps another violate academic behavior standards is also in violation of the standards.
3. Commercial Use of Academic Material. Selling of course material to another person and/or uploading course material to a third-party vendor without authorization or without the express permission of the University and the instructor of record. Course materials include but are not limited to class notes, the instructor of record's slide deck, tests, quizzes, labs, instruction sheets, homework, study guides, and handouts.
4. Soliciting assistance with academic coursework and/or degree requirements. The solicitation of assistance with an assignment, lab, quiz, test, paper, etc., without

authorization of the instructor of record or designee is prohibited. This includes but is not limited to asking for answers to a quiz, trading answers, or offering to pay another to complete an assignment. It is considered Academic Misconduct to solicit assistance with academic coursework and/or degree requirements, even if the solicitation did not yield actual assistance (for example, if there was no response to the solicitation).

Responses to Academic Dishonesty, Plagiarism, or Cheating

Students should also familiarize themselves with the procedures for academic misconduct in UCF's student handbook, *The Golden Rule*. UCF faculty members have a responsibility for students' education and the value of a UCF degree, and so seek to prevent unethical behavior and respond to academic misconduct when necessary. Penalties for violating rules, policies, and instructions within this course can range from a zero on the exercise to an "F" letter grade in the course. In addition, an Academic Misconduct report could be filed with the Office of Student Conduct and Academic Integrity, which could lead to disciplinary warning, disciplinary probation, or deferred suspension or separation from the University through suspension, dismissal, or expulsion with the addition of a "Z" designated on one's transcript.

Being found in violation of academic conduct standards could result in a student having to disclose such behavior on a graduate school application, being removed from a leadership position within a student organization, the recipient of scholarships, participation in University activities such as study abroad, internships, etc.

Let's avoid all of this by demonstrating values of honesty, trust, and integrity. No grade is worth compromising your integrity and moving your moral compass. Stay true to doing the right thing: take the zero, not a shortcut.

Title IX

Title IX prohibits sex discrimination, including sexual misconduct, sexual violence, sexual harassment, and retaliation. If you or someone you know has been harassed or assaulted, you can find resources available to support the victim, including confidential resources and information concerning reporting options at Let's Be Clear and UCF Cares.

For more information on access and community engagement, Title IX, accessibility, or UCF's complaint processes contact:

- Title IX – ONAC – Office of Nondiscrimination & Accommodations Compliance & askanadvocate@ucf.edu
- Disability Accommodation – Student Accessibility Services – Student Accessibility Services & sas@ucf.edu
- Access and Community Engagement (including the Ginsberg Center for Inclusion and Community Engagement, Military and Veteran Student Success, and HSI Initiatives)
- UCF Compliance and Ethics Office – Compliance, Ethics, and Risk Office & complianceandethics@ucf.edu
- The Ombuds Office is a safe place to discuss concerns.

Reporting an Incident or Issue

If you believe you have experienced discrimination by any faculty or staff member, contact the Office of Nondiscrimination & Accommodations Compliance via the ONAC website or at 407-823-1336. You can also choose to report using the UCF Integrity Line either anonymously or as yourself at 1-855-877-6049 or by using the online form. UCF cares about you and takes every report seriously. For more information see the Reporting an Incident or Issue Webpage.

Deployed Active-Duty Military Students

Students who are deployed active-duty military and/or National Guard personnel and require accommodation should contact their instructors as soon as possible after the semester begins and/or after they receive notification of deployment to make arrangements.

Campus Safety

At UCF's Public Safety and Police, safety is the top priority. Emergencies on campus are rare, but if one should arise, it's important to be familiar with some basic safety and

security concepts.

- In an emergency, always dial 911.
- Every UCF Classroom has an Emergency Procedure Guide posted on a wall near the door, which will show you how to respond to a variety of situations. This guide can also be found online here.
- In the event of an active threat, remember **AVOID, DENY, DEFEND**. Choose the best course of action and act immediately. Watch the video here to learn more.
    - **AVOID**. Pay attention to your surroundings and have an exit plan. Get as much distance and as many barriers between you and the threat as quickly as possible.
    - **DENY**. When avoiding is difficult or impossible, deny the threat access to you and your space. Lockdown by creating barriers, turning the lights off and remaining quiet and out of sight. Make sure your phone is silenced, but do not turn it off.
    - **DEFEND**. When you are unable to put distance between yourself and the threat, be prepared to protect yourself. Commit to your actions, be aggressive and do not fight fairly. Do whatever it takes to survive.
- For emergencies on campus, UCF will utilize the UCF Alert system. All UCF students, faculty, and staff are automatically enrolled to receive these email and text alerts, however, it's a good idea to frequently ensure your contact information is up to date.

Financial Aid Accountability

All instructors are required to document students' academic activity at the beginning of each course. In order to document that you began this course, please complete this activity by the end of the first week of classes or as soon as possible after adding the course. Failure to do so may result in a delay in the disbursement of your financial aid.

Class Schedule

Class meetings:

12 January

Introduction the course // Networking

Recommended:

APSA 2024-25 APSA EJobs Report: The Political Science Job Market
https://apsanet.org/wp-content/uploads/2025/12/2024-2025-eJobs-Report.pdf

Kristi DePaul, What to Say when You're Reaching out to Someone on LinkedIn. *Harvard Business Review*, 2020.
https://www.bridgingthegapproject.org/digital-programming/v/ht6fp7hdzrc4rretejpyyh725gaet3

Informational Interviewing
https://www.linkedin.com/learning/informational-interviewing

Professional Networking and Influence
https://www.linkedin.com/learning/professional-networking-and-influence

26 January

Developing a Professional Resume

Kristi DePaul, How to Get Your Resume Noticed, *Harvard Business Review*, 2020

APSA Panel: Turning Your Academic CV into a Resume https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=F7uo1rJQ9Is

Recommended

Jane Heifetz, How to Use Your LinkedIn Profile to Power a Career Transition, *HBR* 2015

Boris Groysberg and Eric Lin, Can a More Detailed LinkedIn Profile Boost Your Salary? *HBR*, 2023.

9 February *Resume, Interview 1 Report Due*

Writing for the Public

George Orwell, Politics and the English Language, 1946

3 Opinion pieces (each) from the New York Times, Atlantic, Foreign Policy, Washington Post, Wall Street Journal, Economist, National Interest, and Guardian

3 articles from Foreign Affairs or a comparable journal

William Strunk and EB White, *Elements of Style*

Writing in Plain Language
https://www.linkedin.com/learning/writing-in-plain-language/why-write-in-plain-language

Recommended:

Benjamin Dreyer, *Dreyer's English*, 2020

16 February *Linkedin, Op Ed Due*

Writing for decision-makers

Selection from *Communicating with Intelligence*

Selection from Barbara Minto, *The Persuasion Pyramid*

Recommended Reading:

Brenda Seaver, From the Ivory Tower to the CIA, *PS*, 2016

2 March *Policy Analysis Memo*

Designing a Briefing

Selection from *Communicating with Intelligence*

Joanna Garner et al. Common Use of PowerPoint versus the Assertion-Evidence Structure, *Technical Communication*, 2009.

Micro-Presentations: Saying More in Less Time

https://www.linkedin.com/learning/micro-presentations-saying-more-in-less-time

Creating and giving business presentations

https://www.linkedin.com/learning/creating-and-giving-business-presentations-21424823

Storytelling to Influence Leadership and Decision-makers

https://www.linkedin.com/learning/storytelling-to-influence-leadership-and-decision-makers

9 March *Informational Interview 2 Due*

Media Training

LInkedin Learning: Media Training Essentials, Section 2 (During the Interview)

https://www.linkedin.com/learning/media-training-essentials

Additional materials as directed.

30 March *"Podcast" due*

Working in Government

James Goldgeir and Tamara Wittes, *Foreign Policy Careers for PhDs*. Georgetown.

13 April *Informational Interview #3 Due*

Working in Public Policy, but Not the Government

Christopher Rastrick, Thinking about Trump: American Think Tanks and their New Political Reality https://onthinktanks.org/publication/thinking-about-trump-american-think-tanks-and-their-new-political-reality/

Lee Drutman, On the Value of Fox-like Thinking, and How to Break into the Washington Policy Community, *PS*, 2016

FFRDC's—A Primer. MITRE Corporation. https://www.mitre.org/sites/default/files/2023-02/FFRDCs-A-Primer.pdf

Congressional Research Service, Federally Funded Research and Development Centers: Background and Issues for Congress. https://crsreports.congress.gov/product/pdf/R/R44629

Possibly of Interest:

https://onthinktanks.org/jobsboard/

https://onthinktanks.org/open-think-tank-directory/

Recommended:

Ben Freeman, Defense Contractor Funded Think Tanks and Dominate Ukraine Debate, Quincy Brief #41

27 April *Job Search Plan*

The Private Sector

Olivia Lau and Ian Yohai, Using Quantitative Methods in Industry, *PS*, 2016

Maria Robson, Risk Analysis Beyond Government Agencies. *JEAIS*, 2018

Recommended:

Maria Robson Morrow, Private Sector Intelligence: On the Long Path of Professionalization, *Intelligence and National Security*, 2022.

4 May

Deliver Recommendation Briefings