Global & National Security Policy Institute
Course Descriptions for the Professional Master of Science in Global & National Security
Updated 19 March 2026

*GLNS 500 Introduction to Global & National Security (Required)

This introductory course for Global and National Security Program degree programs provides a broad overview of national security policymaking context and the challenges of global security policy, after an overview of basic concepts. Each week, along with the global and national security material, the course teaches approaches to policy analysis and policy writing.

GLNS 510 Cyber Security & National Security

This course will cover the importance of cybersecurity to national policy today. Specifically, we're going to discuss the history of cybersecurity as a strategic weapon,how long it's been recognized as such and why, and recent campaigns where cybersecurity (or the lack thereof) has been used as a weapon. We'll cover studies of recent campaigns conducted by suspected nation-state aligned groups to understand how these kinds of attacks have evolved and how they're executed today. At the end of the course, the students will write a research paper on a cybersecurity topic they select and give a presentation over that topic to the class.

GLNS 511 Introduction to Directed Energy

Directed energy lasers and microwaves are a technology that offers the ability to deliver energy to a target at the speed-of-light with a very deep magazine. Advances in pulsed power technology, batteries, capacitors, and electronics have all contributed towards making directed energy a reality. As directed energy technology transitions from the laboratory to the field, there will be an increasing number of personnel who will be active in the acquisitions process yet have little knowledge about directed energy or related policy issues. This course aims to fill that gap by providing an introduction to directed energy technology for the novice. The target audience includes personnel in acquisitions, those who serve in the military, policymakers, and anyone else interested in learning about the subject.

*GLNS 520 Human Decision Making (Required)

The course will discuss how humans are not rational decision makers, but they are still predictable in the ways they deviate from rationality. The course will cover major models of decision making that account for the interaction of emotion and reason and discuss these well-defined phenomena in the fields of behavioral economics, social psychology, and political science.

530 Environmental Security: Energy

This course explores the major systems that supply energy to modern societies and discusses potential threats to energy availability, reliability, and affordability. Modern societies rely on abundant, reliable (accessible on request), and affordable energy from diverse sources to function. Societal patterns of energy use have serious economic, political, environmental, and defense implications. Consequently, energy security is defined along multiple dimensions, including strategic (with primarily geopolitical and defense components), policy and planning (primarily economic and domestic security components), and sustainability (primarily health, resource, and environmental components). The overarching issues we will address are the threats to energy security posed by the uneven geographic distribution of energy resources, by the international political milieu, by the operation of the global and regional energy markets, by the structure of energy delivery systems, and by environmental disruptions in the local, regional, and global scale. We will focus on the specific nature of these threats to the U.S., and the types of responses the nationmay bring to bear to minimize them.

GLNS 531 Environmental Security: Food & Water

How do we make sure that everyone has enough food and clean water to live a healthy life? We will study the security of food and water supplies at many geographic scales, from individual households to the whole globe. This course is for students who want to learn how environmental, political, and economic conditions impact the capacity of societies to secure food and water supplies. Understanding food and water security is crucial whether you're interested in improving local communities, building robust food and water systems, finding a career in the intelligence industry, or simply improving your knowledge of the geographic processes that feed us.

*540 Globalization & National Security (Required)

This course reviews and assesses the main features, concepts and issues related to the global security environment. In the process, this course surveys global security policies and strategies. Students will be exposed to a number of current threats and opportunities facing US national security interests. This course is designed to help the student develop skillful and articulate responses to diverse sources of information regarding the global security environment. Equally, the aim is to offer the students a broad view of the various decisions, policy challenges, and tasks involved in evaluating, understanding and critically analyzing the global security complex environment. At the end, the course intends to provide the tools for the students to develop their own assessments and evaluation of national security issues.

GLNS 560 Global & Nuclear Security

This course focuses on the main aspects of geopolitical nuclear security, operating in a context of challenges that emanate from rivalries among nuclear powers, technological advances, inadequate global governance of nuclear activity, expanded access to nuclear materials and know-how, and potential nuclear threats from state and non-state actors. It acts to reduce nuclear risks resulting from geopolitical and technological change, gaps in nuclear governance, and regional challenges with a nuclear dimension such as North Korea and Iran. The course will emphasize the understanding and comprehension of the policy and technology aspects of nuclear security along with their application to nuclear threats. Policy will cover the major nuclear arms treaties, arms and export controls, work on nuclear deterrence and threat reduction, and risk mitigation efforts. To understand policy, the course also addresses the scientific aspects of nuclear security, so students will understand requirements and limitations for developing, for safeguarding, and for detecting nuclear weapons and weapons related materials.

GLNS 561 Nuclear Safeguards & Nonproliferation

This course focuses on methods and technologies associated with nuclear materials safeguards and protection. It emphasizes the understanding and comprehension of the technical aspects of nuclear safeguards along with application of these aspects to nuclear materials detection, tracking, and accounting. The course will focus on the role of safeguards in the nuclear fuel cycle and will introduce tools and methods, as applied to key nuclear facility types. The course will be presented in the context of Department of Energy (DOE) and International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) approaches to nuclear materials safeguards -- materials tracking (detection), accounting, physical protection, and containment. Lectures in key technology application areas will be built around information provided by subject matter experts from Los Alamos and Sandia National Laboratories, as well as other sources.

*GLNS 570 Fundamentals of National Security Law (Required)

This course surveys the national security law construct of the United States. Constitutional issues such as separation of powers, preservation of civil liberties in light of rapidly evolving surveillance and other collection technologies, and U.S. obligations to other nations under treaty and custom, all play a critical role in the creation of effective national security legislation and policy, and in trying to anticipate and avoid unintended consequences of such legislation. The underlying Constitutional issues continue to

inform ongoing national debate about the balance—for those who avow such a balance exists—between national security and civil liberties.

GLNS 575 Global Health Security: Threats, Policies, & Politics

The primary goal of this course is to introduce the student to global health and security policy issues. This course will provide an overview of the actors, drivers, and policies that shape the increasingly complex global health landscape. This will offer a framework for analyzing the national and supra-national issues that affect public health research and capacity-building. This course focuses on Global Health Security Policy from understanding how different countries approach this given public health laws, legislation, and disease surveillance.

GLNS 576 Global Health Security: Climate, Disease, and Public Health

This course focuses on bridging science with policy as related to the Global Health Security agenda. This course will encourage students to develop an understanding, critical thinking, its broad national security implications and objectives from a historical, technology, and epidemiologic perspective. Both GLNS575 and GLNS576 are different—you can take one without the other—and complement one another to get a full understanding of how the Global Health Security agenda is part of national security.

*GLNS 580 American National Security Policy & Process (Required)

Formerly titled as: Issues in American National Security

The purpose of this course is to help you build a theoretical understanding of American foreign and national security policy. We begin with a discussion of America's grand strategy informed by the major theoretical traditions in the international relations field. Then we examine the institutional structures of and participants in the foreign policy process. Finally, these theoretical and institutional approaches will be used to analyze a variety of contemporary issues in American national security policy. The major assignment for the course, will be an analysis of U.S. policy toward the Ukraine War and a set of policy recommendations for the next steps in U.S. policy toward the conflict.

GLNS 590 U.S. Latin America Strategic Partnership

This course reviews and assesses the main features, concepts and issues related to the global security environment, paying heed to the U.S.-Latin America dimension. In the process, this course surveys U.S-Latin America security policies and strategies. Students will be exposed to several current threats and opportunities facing U.S.'s national security interests in Latin America. This course is designed to help students develop skillful and articulate responses to diverse sources of information regarding the global security environment. Equally, the aim is to offer the students a broad view of the various decisions, policy challenges, and tasks involved in evaluating, understanding and critically analyzing the global security complex environment. The course intends to provide tools for students to develop their own assessments and evaluations of national security issues related to the U.S.-Latin America dimension.

GLNS 595 (Topics) Deterrence & Global Security

This course introduces students to issues of deterrence in global and national security. Deterrence has been a foundational concept of US strategy from the nuclear balance of terror policies of the 1950s to the Biden administration's emphasis on integrated deterrence. In those intervening years, the concept and associated policies have evolved in how scholars and policymakers understand, employ, or assess it. The basic premise of rational deterrence is to use a threat of force to prevent another party from acting in a way you don't want. There are many applications from this premise, from child rearing to criminal justice to international territorial disputes to the strategic threat to destroy the entire planet. Given the latter, the stakes of the debates are extremely high, whether one is a national security practitioner, a global peace

advocate, or an informed citizen. National and global security professionals must be not only conversant in these concepts, policies, and debates but also be able to think critically about them**.**

GLNS 595 (Topics) AI & Social Impact

This course covers AI, Ethics, Policy, and Privacy. The class covers the newly established AI framework, risk management, national and global policy development and implementation, ethics, privacy, use of AI technology in society, and global security concerns.

GLNS 595 (Topics) Intelligence & National Security Policy Analysis

Intelligence is the business of helping decisionmakers identify the key questions they need answered to drive their decisions—then orchestrating the process of getting & delivering those answers. This course introduces graduate students to the Intelligence process, principles, and product, then explores the structured analytic techniques that help analysts detect & mitigate the influence of bias & obstacles to critical thinking. Graduate students will lead the application of techniques to selected cases, critique of the process & their team's performance, and exercises that practice writing & briefing the results, and discuss lessons learned.

GLNS 595 (Topics) Ethics for National Security & Intelligence Professionals

While they're grounded in moral philosophy—and might produce a code of conduct—ethics are really a form of reflective practice for designing an acceptable course of action based on a set of prioritized design criteria—which may be in conflict. This course introduces a decisionmaker's ethical framework to guide this practice, then gives you structured practice applying that framework to cases examining contemporary ethical choices from across the spectrum of contexts in which intelligence & national security decisionmaking is undertaken, aiming to strengthen ethical outcomes in fields where the impact of our choices may be felt by all.

GLNS 595 (Topics) Cyber, Risk, Ethics, & Law

This course is designed to complement the other cyber, policy, and law courses in this program. Each functional area will be explored in more detail using two recent case studies involving the legal aspects of cybersecurity. The intent of this course is to expand on the core principles involved in analyzing decisions through legal and ethical processes and developing risk-informed decisions for various stakeholder groups. The course deploys a multidisciplinary approach to survey international legal and ethical issues and the subsequent U.S. policy responses to mitigate risks to the homeland. While most of the interaction will be asynchronous online discussions, analyzing and forming national cybersecurity policy is inherently a human, interactive, and when properly done, a nuanced process involving judgements of value to different stakeholders. To meet the course objectives, the course is structured in a series of scenarios of increasingly complexity. This methodology is designed to parallel the legal and policy-making process that lawyers, judges, government department heads and the U.S. Congress contend with on a daily basis. Many of the topics evaluated might evoke strong responses based on perspectives acquired prior to the class.

GLNS 595 (Topics) Astrostrategic Policy and the History of Space Conflict

This course offers a comprehensive exploration of international space policies, treaties, and their critical role in shaping global and national security. Students will analyze the historical and geopolitical events that led to the development of major space agreements and evaluate the implications of the adherence and violation on international stability. Through case studies, policy analysis, and strategic evaluation, students will gain the tools to apply space policy knowledge to modern challenges, assess the risk of emerging technologies and threats, and develop informed recommendations that bolster global and national security initiatives.

GLNS 595 (Topics) Bioterrorism and Global Security

This course offers comprehensive exploration grounded in international affairs and the rapidly evolving intersection of security, AI, and biotechnology. It will examine how biological threats reshape diplomacy, deterrence, global governance, and strategic competition among major powers—while directly impacting core U.S. national security interests. Analyze emerging risks driven by artificial intelligence, synthetic biology, gene editing, and democratized biotech innovation—technologies redefining both vulnerability and resilience. Through global case studies we will explore how the U.S., its allies, and others prepare for next-generation bio-enabled threats.

GLNS 595 (Topics) Indo-Pacific Security & Strategy

With the rise of China and the recognition of Asia as the future epicenter of geopolitical and economic competition in the 21st Century, the United States has, for several administrations, attempted to make the Asia-Pacific region, now called the Indo-Pacific, the "priority theater." This course reviews the historical patterns that have shifted geopolitics to Asia and the challenges that creates for U.S. foreign policy and the U.S. position in Asia. The course will cover many of the challenges that plague diplomats, strategists, and planners in the region, including the rise of China (and associated disputes China has over the status of Taiwan, the border with India/Tibet, the South China Sea, and the defense of Japan), the nuclearization of North Korea, and the difficulty of coalition-building in the region. As a point of departure, the course examines how national security strategy translates to theater strategy at the Geographic Combatant Command level (i.e., the Indo-Pacific Command (INDOPACOM)) and the country-level (i.e., Ambassadors and Embassies in the region). Students will have the opportunity to research a solution (or set of possible solutions) to a regional problem with the aim to aid policymakers and strategists.

GLNS 595 (Topics) Study Abroad (upcoming/expected: Taiwan Summer 2027)

This four-week faculty-led study abroad course includes country-specific instruction on the history, politics, economics, and culture of the given country, daily trips to cultural sites, and a local guest lecture series about the security concerns for the country. The first two weeks walk through a chronological exploration of the country's history, politics, economics, and culture, coupled with visits to sites of cultural activities and discussions about how the country's history affects it today. The second two weeks begin to explore the security landscape in the country from global, regional, and local lenses. The curriculum emphasizes how locals view security issues and includes content on how the US views its security interests in the region. Students will prepare a policy analysis presentation applying course material to a security topic. In the presentation, students will identify a current global, US, or host-country-specific policy relevant to that country, then evaluate whether the policy is prudent given the information learned through the study abroad course material, class discussions, field trips, and guest lectures.