DILEMMAS OF A NUCLEAR-ARMED WORLD

Benoit PELOPIDAS

In memoriam Bastien Irondelle

Language of instruction
English

Spring Semester 2017
2nd year undergraduates

Seminar description
This seminar explores the impact of nuclear weapons on the world we live in. It will allow students to better understand policy issues such as the negotiations with Iran, investments in nuclear weapons “modernisation” worldwide, the possibility of a new nuclear arms race, engagement with North Korea.

It addresses security issues but goes beyond them to address ethical and historical issues. It investigates nuclear weapons as techno-political objects which create new dilemmas for people living under their shadow: the “dilemmas of a nuclear-armed world”. By doing so, it allows students interested in international relations, history as well as sociology of science and technology to include the nuclear weapons factor in their thinking without limiting it to security issues and to get a better grasp of the historicity of those dilemmas.

This seminar will be divided in three parts described below. The first part questions the notion of “dilemmas of a nuclear-armed world” itself (it introduces students to nuclear weapons technologies and questions the existence of such dilemmas in contrast to the normalisation of nuclear weapons in the world), the second one focuses on a series of fundamental dilemmas (the fear dilemma, the value dilemma and democracies nuclear dilemma) and the third one focuses on a set of situated dilemmas. In other words, it investigates the dilemmas created by the presence of nuclear weapons in the world from the point of view of different roles and positions in a given society: the civilian citizen, the member of the military, the nuclear scientist and engineer, the public intellectual. It builds on the extensive and ongoing research of the instructor as well as his experience of the politics of nuclear weapons with policymaking elites and civil society.

Instructor’s biography
Prof. Benoît Pelopidas holds the junior chair of excellence in security studies at CERI (Sciences Po). He is also an affiliate of the Center for International Security and Cooperation (CISAC) at Stanford University and a visiting fellow at Princeton University’s Program on Science and Global Security. He has been awarded two international prizes for his research and a British Academy Rising Star Engagement Award in 2016.

He focuses on the construction of knowledge about nuclear weapons, their past and their future and its ethical and political implications. Empirically, Benoit’s focus is on nuclear “close calls” and French nuclear history.

Over the last seven years, he has been engaging with policymaking elites in the US and Europe as well as civil society groups to advocate innovative nuclear disarmament and arms control policies.
**Course requirements (grading & assessment)**

Students are expected to bring to class a critical and detailed but personal understanding of the readings for the week. They will participate in simulations and will be assessed by a final essay.

**Pedagogical format**

The sessions will be divided into two parts: 1 hour lecture by the instructor on the topic of the day, including 15 to 20 minutes of questions and answers; 1 hour of groupwork, debate in class or policy simulation. Every seminar session will start with a five minute oral presentation of the previous session by one student and a 10 minute discussion of the readings of the week for which a student or group of students will be chosen in week 1.

**Seminar Preparation**

The seminar will be as demanding as it will be rewarding. It will mostly be based on close reading and discussions of the required readings for the week. You will be expected to answer questions about the set reading each week, engage in small group discussions or undertake workshop style tasks in seminars. Therefore, you should come prepared to present some critical thoughts concerning each seminar reading. You will need to have briefly summarised the main features of the content ahead of the seminar in order to engage in discussions with the tutor and other students.

So, ahead of the seminar, it is expected that

1. You plan to have enough time to read and engage critically will all the required readings for the week (read the text once to have a sense of the argument and the way it is articulated, then read it a second time with a view of critiquing it, both from an internal and an external perspective, conceptually, ethically or historically). There is no point in attending the seminar if you have not done at least this reading.

2. You bring an annotated copy of the reading with you as **laptops are not allowed in class, except for students who can document a disability**.

3. Watch the videos associated with the topic of the week

**Background reading**


http://catalogue.sciencespo.fr/ark:/46513/sc0000143600


Version papier : http://catalogue.sciencespo.fr/ark:/46513/sc0000736262
Version électronique : http://catalogue.sciencespo.fr/ark:/46513/sc0001294662


Version papier : http://catalogue.sciencespo.fr/ark:/46513/sc0001232644
Version électronique : http://catalogue.sciencespo.fr/ark:/46513/sc0001294536
Seminar outline

Introductory considerations

Session 1. Nuclear weapons technology and their effects
Session 2. Introduction to a nuclear-armed world: making sense of nuclear vulnerability
Session 3. Which dilemmas? Nuclear normalization

Fundamental dilemmas

Session 4. The fear dilemma: a duty, a requirement of deterrence or a distraction
Session 5. Liberal democracies’ nuclear dilemmas
Session 6. The weapons’ value dilemma: deterrence vs non-proliferation
Session 7. The weapons’ value dilemma: safety vs readiness

Personnalized dilemmas

Session 8. The dilemmas of the scientists and weapons designers
Session 9. The dilemma of the intellectual. Be an insider or a public intellectual?
Session 10. The dilemmas of the civilian citizen
Session 11. The dilemma of the military

Session 12. Final dilemmas

Introductory considerations

Session 1. Nuclear weapons technology and their effects

Required readings


Suggested readings
Session 2. Introduction to a nuclear-armed world. Making Sense of Global Nuclear Vulnerability

Required readings


Suggested readings


Please do not hesitate to ask if you want to read more on the science of nuclear weapons.

http://gl5sm8uv5q.search.serialssolutions.com/?V=1.0&N=100&tab=JOURNALS&L=GL5SM8UV5Q&S=T_W_A&C=Contemporary+Security+Policy


http://gl5sm8uv5q.search.serialssolutions.com/?V=1.0&N=100&tab=JOURNALS&L=GL5SM8UV5Q&S=T_W_A&C=Contemporary+Security+Policy


http://gl5sm8uv5q.search.serialssolutions.com/?V=1.0&N=100&tab=JOURNALS&L=GL5SM8UV5Q&S=T_W_A&C=Science+and+Global+Security


http://catalogue.sciencespo.fr/ark:/46513/sc0001295849


3 éditions :

http://catalogue.sciencespo.fr/ark:/46513/sc0001249122
http://catalogue.sciencespo.fr/ark:/46513/sc0001256103
http://catalogue.sciencespo.fr/ark:/46513/sc0001294856


http://gl5sm8uv5q.search.serialssolutions.com/?V=1.0&N=100&tab=JOURNALS&L=GL5SM8UV5Q&S=T_W_A&C=Bulletin+of+the+Atomic+Scientists

Session 3. Which dilemmas? Nuclear normalization

Required readings


http://catalogue.sciencespo.fr/ark:/46513/sc0000020191

Suggested readings


Videos: *I Live in Fear* (Akira Kurosawa 1954)

I strongly recommend you watch this movie in advance as it will be directly relevant, both for this week and the next.

**Fundamental Dilemmas**

**Session 4: The fear dilemma: a duty, a requirement of deterrence or a distraction**

Required readings


- [Link](http://catalogue.sciencespo.fr/ark:/46513/sc0001294799)

Suggested readings

Videos:
A time-lapse of every nuclear explosion

Last Week Tonight with John Oliver: Nuclear Weapons, 27 July 2014

Session 5. Liberal Democracies’ nuclear dilemmas

This session will be different from the others in the course as all the students will be asked to provide a 2-3 minutes oral commentary on Lewis Mumford, “Gentlemen: You are Mad!”, Saturday Review of Literature, March 2, 1946, pp. 5-7 to start the conversation.

Required readings
Suggested readings

  
  http://catalogue.sciencespo.fr/ark:/46513/sc0001151821
  http://catalogue.sciencespo.fr/ark:/46513/sc0001295699

  
  http://catalogue.sciencespo.fr/ark:/46513/sc0001212227

  
  http://catalogue.sciencespo.fr/ark:/46513/sc0000184539

  
  http://catalogue.sciencespo.fr/ark:/46513/sc0000566932

  Edition 2008 en commande

  
  http://gl5sm8uv5q.search.serialssolutions.com/?V=1.0&N=100&tab=JOURNALS&L=GL5SM8UV5Q&S=T_W_A&C=The+Bulletin+of+the+Atomic+Scientists+

  
  http://catalogue.sciencespo.fr/ark:/46513/sc0000042361

  
  http://catalogue.sciencespo.fr/ark:/46513/sc0001273279

  
  http://catalogue.sciencespo.fr/ark:/46513/sc0000954071

  
  http://catalogue.sciencespo.fr/ark:/46513/sc0001223667

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Version électronique: [http://catalogue.sciencespo.fr/ark:/46513/sc0001294662](http://catalogue.sciencespo.fr/ark:/46513/sc0001294662)


Recommended video: short lecture by H. Bruce Franklin at Rutgers University (2011) about *War Stars*

**Session 6. The weapons’ value dilemma: deterrence vs non-proliferation**

**Required readings**


**Suggested Readings**


- Special issue of *Contemporary Security Policy* (2013) on “Valuing and devaluing nuclear weapons”.
Session 7. The weapons’ value dilemma: safety vs readiness

Required readings
  http://gl5sm8uv5q.search.serialssolutions.com/?V=1.0&N=100&tab=JOURNALS&L=GL5SM8UV5Q&S=I_M&C=01622889
  3 éditions :
  http://catalogue.sciencespo.fr/ark:/46513/sc0001249122
  http://catalogue.sciencespo.fr/ark:/46513/sc0001256103
  http://catalogue.sciencespo.fr/ark:/46513/sc0001294856

Recommended readings
  http://catalogue.sciencespo.fr/ark:/46513/sc000109837
  http://gl5sm8uv5q.search.serialssolutions.com/?V=1.0&N=100&tab=JOURNALS&L=GL5SM8UV5Q&S=T_W_A&C=Annual+Review+of+Sociology

Personnalized Dilemmas

Session 8. The dilemmas of the scientists

Required Readings
http://catalogue.sciencespo.fr/ark:/46513/sc0000241642

Suggested readings
http://catalogue.sciencespo.fr/ark:/46513/sc0001247877
Version papier : http://catalogue.sciencespo.fr/ark:/46513/sc0001232644
Version électronique : http://catalogue.sciencespo.fr/ark:/46513/sc0001294536
http://catalogue.sciencespo.fr/ark:/46513/sc0000374681
http://gl5sm8uv5q.search.serialssolutions.com/?V=1.0&N=100&tab=JOURNALS&L=GL5SM8UV5Q&S=T_W_A&C=American+Ethnologist+
http://catalogue.sciencespo.fr/ark:/46513/sc0000109837
- Eric Schlosser, *Command and Control*. New York, Allen Lane, 2013. 3 éditions :
http://catalogue.sciencespo.fr/ark:/46513/sc0001249122
http://catalogue.sciencespo.fr/ark:/46513/sc0001256103
http://catalogue.sciencespo.fr/ark:/46513/sc0001294856
http://gl5sm8uv5q.search.serialssolutions.com/?V=1.0&N=100&tab=JOURNALS&L=GL5SM8UV5Q&S=T_W_A&C=Nonproliferation+Review+

Videos:

Copenhagen by Howard Davies (2002).

The Day after Trinity, a documentary directed by John Else (1981)

Session 9. The dilemma of the intellectual. Be an insider or a public intellectual?

Required Readings

  Reims : http://catalogue.sciencespo.fr/ark:/46513/sc0001192065

Supplemented readings

Session 10. The dilemmas of the civilian citizen

Required readings

  Version papier: [http://catalogue.sciencespo.fr/ark:/46513/sc0000736262](http://catalogue.sciencespo.fr/ark:/46513/sc0000736262)
  Version électronique: [http://catalogue.sciencespo.fr/ark:/46513/sc0001294662](http://catalogue.sciencespo.fr/ark:/46513/sc0001294662)

  [http://gl5sm8uv5q.search.serialssolutions.com/?V=1.0&N=100&tab=JOURNALS&L=GL5SM8UV5Q&S=T_W_A&C=Security+Studies](http://gl5sm8uv5q.search.serialssolutions.com/?V=1.0&N=100&tab=JOURNALS&L=GL5SM8UV5Q&S=T_W_A&C=Security+Studies)

Supplementary readings

**On the dilemmas of the feminist**

  Version papier: [http://catalogue.sciencespo.fr/ark:/46513/sc0000736262](http://catalogue.sciencespo.fr/ark:/46513/sc0000736262)
  Version électronique: [http://catalogue.sciencespo.fr/ark:/46513/sc0001294662](http://catalogue.sciencespo.fr/ark:/46513/sc0001294662)

  Version papier: [http://catalogue.sciencespo.fr/ark:/46513/sc0000736262](http://catalogue.sciencespo.fr/ark:/46513/sc0000736262)
  Version électronique: [http://catalogue.sciencespo.fr/ark:/46513/sc0001294662](http://catalogue.sciencespo.fr/ark:/46513/sc0001294662)

  [http://gl5sm8uv5q.search.serialssolutions.com/?V=1.0&N=100&tab=JOURNALS&L=GL5SM8UV5Q&S=I_M&C=0020-8833](http://gl5sm8uv5q.search.serialssolutions.com/?V=1.0&N=100&tab=JOURNALS&L=GL5SM8UV5Q&S=I_M&C=0020-8833)

**On the dilemmas of the believer**

  Version papier: [http://catalogue.sciencespo.fr/ark:/46513/sc0000736262](http://catalogue.sciencespo.fr/ark:/46513/sc0000736262)
  Version électronique: [http://catalogue.sciencespo.fr/ark:/46513/sc0001294662](http://catalogue.sciencespo.fr/ark:/46513/sc0001294662)

Session 11. The dilemma of the military

Required Readings

Recommended readings

Movie: prologue of The Nuclear Tipping Point by General Colin Powell

Session 12. Final dilemmas

Have a second look at
Required reading
