

Maritime Security POGO 750 Section 003

Joe Petrucelli

Fall 2025

Class Meeting Day(s) and Time(s) and Modalities: Hybrid - Wednesdays 7:20 pm- 10:00 pm
with occasional remote class as noted in syllabus

Instructor Contact Information:

Email (preferred): jpetruce@gmu.edu

Cell/text: 703-589-6031

Office hours: Before class by appointment

Course Description/Overview:

This course will explore the role of the world's maritime spaces in national security. We will begin by reviewing the "rules of the game," or the national and international law that governs the sea and the maritime tools (navies, other security forces, and trade) that operate on and govern these commons. We will then examine the stakes: the ways in which the sea is used for the extraction of resources, and both the lawful and illicit transport of goods people, and information.

Course Learning Outcomes:

Students having taken this course will be able to:

- Exhibit an understanding of the national and international law governing maritime spaces.
- Be able to discuss the role of maritime security forces, and demonstrate an understanding of naval forces, and how they can be used in support of national security.
- Be able to knowledgeably discuss commercial interests in the maritime world, including:
 - Fishing
 - Extraction of natural resources (oil, gas, minerals)
 - Generation of energy
 - Global trade
 - Undersea cables and other infrastructure
- Be able to discuss threats to these interests, such as:
 - IUU fishing
 - Harassment or attacks on sea-based infrastructure
 - Smuggling
 - People

- Commercial goods
- Weapons
- Piracy
- Current threats to maritime trade and security

Grading Schema:

Individual grades will be entered into Canvas as a numerical percentage and automatically averaged for the final numerical grade. The letter grade range will be as follows: B+ = 87-89%, B = 84-86%, B- = 80-83%; I do round up at .5 or higher.

Grade Weights:

Your grade in this course will be comprised of class contribution and a final paper, due at the start of the final class session on Wednesday 03 December. The grades will be weighted as follows:

- Class Participation (25%)
 - This includes in-class debates and presentations
- Mid-Term Policy Memos (30%)
- Final Research Paper (45%)

Grading-related Policies:

Class contribution (25%): Students will be assessed for their constructive contribution to in-class discussions, including the degree to which their discussion reflects a familiarity with the readings and applies concepts from the readings. Please note that the grade is based on constructive contribution, not the number of times that a student speaks. While it is difficult to contribute constructively without speaking, dominating class discussion when others wish to speak can also undermine constructive contribution. This grade includes selected in-class debates and pre-class discussion boards.

Mid-Term Policy Memos (30%): In lieu of a mid-term paper or exam, roughly at the mid-term of the course, students will submit policy memos on selected topics. These should be short (~1 page) succinct memos summarizing policy implications of real world maritime security issues. I will provide 3 topics at the beginning of class, allowing students to select two to analyze, and students will have until the end of the week to submit 2 papers for grading.

Final paper (45%): Each student will write a research paper of 3,000-5,000 words addressing a policy topic related to maritime security. To compensate for the time spent researching and writing this paper, we will not have class on 06 November.

Paper topics are due to me NLT the start of class Wednesday 03 December. The paper topic proposal should be a paragraph that identifies that topic and your main argument,

Your paper should have a strong thesis statement that clearly identifies the question you are asking and the position you support. Each paragraph should have a topic sentence that clearly spells out the purpose of the paragraph. These topic sentences should each be traceable back to your thesis statement. The paper should end with a conclusion that both summarizes and examines further implications.

Your final paper is due to me NLT the start of class Wednesday 03 December.

Papers should consult a variety of sources beyond the class syllabus, and must be footnoted as appropriate, using Chicago Manual of Style type footnotes (footnotes, not endnotes or in-text parenthetical references; complete notes, not author-year format). If you have questions about appropriate paper topics, please consult with me prior to the due date for paper topics.

We will conduct a detailed review of what is expected in the final paper in the second class session.

Academic Standards

Academic Standards exist to promote authentic scholarship, support the institution's goal of maintaining high standards of academic excellence, and encourage continued ethical behavior of faculty and students to cultivate an educational community which values integrity and produces graduates who carry this commitment forward into professional practice.

As members of the George Mason University community, we are committed to fostering an environment of trust, respect, and scholarly excellence. Our academic standards are the foundation of this commitment, guiding our behavior and interactions within this academic community. The practices for implementing these standards adapt to modern practices, disciplinary contexts, and technological advancements. Our standards are embodied in our courses, policies, and scholarship, and are upheld in the following principles:

- **Honesty:** Providing accurate information in all academic endeavors, including communications, assignments, and examinations.
- **Acknowledgement:** Giving proper credit for all contributions to one's work. This involves the use of accurate citations and references for any ideas, words, or materials created by others in the style appropriate to the discipline. It also includes acknowledging shared authorship in group projects, coauthored pieces, and project reports.

- **Uniqueness of Work:** Ensuring that all submitted work is the result of one's own effort and is original, including free from self-plagiarism. This principle extends to written assignments, code, presentations, exams, and all other forms of academic work.

Violations of these standards—including but not limited to plagiarism, fabrication, and cheating—are taken seriously and will be addressed in accordance with university policies. [The process for reporting, investigating, and adjudicating violations is outlined in the university's procedures here.](#) Consequences of violations may include academic sanctions, disciplinary actions, and other measures necessary to uphold the integrity of our academic community.

The principles outlined in these academic standards reflect our collective commitment to upholding the highest standards of honesty, acknowledgement, and uniqueness of work. By adhering to these principles, we ensure the continued excellence and integrity of George Mason University's academic community.

Student responsibility: Students are responsible for understanding how these general expectations regarding academic standards apply to each course, assignment, or exam they participate in; students should ask their instructor for clarification on any aspect that is not clear to them.

Accommodations for Students with Disabilities

Disability Services at George Mason University is committed to upholding the letter and spirit of the laws that ensure equal treatment of people with disabilities. Under the administration of University Life, Disability Services implements and coordinates reasonable accommodations and disability-related services that afford equal access to university programs and activities. Students can begin the registration process with Disability Services at any time during their enrollment at George Mason University. If you are seeking accommodations, please visit the [Disability Services website](#) for detailed information about the Disability Services registration process. Disability Services is located in Student Union Building I (SUB I), Suite 2500. Email: ods@gmu.edu. Phone: (703) 993-2474.

Student responsibility: Students are responsible for registering with Disability Services and communicating about their approved accommodations with their instructor in advance of any relevant class meeting, assignment, or exam.

FERPA and Use of GMU Email Addresses for Course Communication

The Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) governs the disclosure of education records for eligible students and is an essential aspect of any course. **Students must use their GMU email account** to receive important University information, including communications related to this class. Instructors will not respond to messages sent from or send messages regarding course content to a non-GMU email address.

Student responsibility: Students are responsible for checking their GMU email regularly for course-related information, and/or ensuring that GMU email messages are forwarded to an account they do check.

Title IX Resources and Required Reporting

As a part of George Mason University's commitment to providing a safe and non-discriminatory learning, living, and working environment for all members of the University community, the University does not discriminate on the basis of sex or gender in any of its education or employment programs and activities. Accordingly, **all non-confidential employees, including your faculty member, have a legal requirement to report to the Title IX Coordinator, all relevant details obtained directly or indirectly about any incident of Prohibited Conduct** (such as sexual harassment, sexual assault, gender-based stalking, dating/domestic violence). Upon notifying the Title IX Coordinator of possible Prohibited Conduct, the Title IX Coordinator will assess the report and determine if outreach is required. If outreach is required, the individual the report is about (the "Complainant") will receive a communication, likely in the form of an email, offering that person the option to meet with a representative of the Title IX office.

For more information about non-confidential employees, resources, and Prohibited Conduct, please see University Policy 1202: [Sexual and Gender-Based Misconduct and Other Forms of Interpersonal Violence](#). Questions regarding Title IX can be directed to the Title IX Coordinator via email to TitleIX@gmu.edu, by phone at 703-993-8730, or in person on the Fairfax campus in Aquia 373.

Student opportunity: If you prefer to speak to someone confidentially, please contact one of Mason's confidential employees in [Student Support & Advocacy \(SSAC\)](#), Counseling and [Psychological Services \(CAPS\)](#), [Student Health Services \(SHS\)](#), and/or the [Office of the University Ombudsperson](#).

Course Outline (Note that this may change and the Canvas syllabus is authoritative)

Required books to purchase:

There are no books required for purchase. All required reading is accessible via Canvas.

Recommended books for extra credit:

Ian Urbina, *Outlaw Ocean*

Sebastian Bruns, *US Navy Strategy and Naval Security: The Evolution of American Military Power*

Josh Tallis, *The War for Muddle Waters: Pirates, Terrorists, Traffickers, and Maritime Insecurity*

Ken Hagan, *This People's Navy: The Making of American Seapower*

Week	Date	Topic
1	27 Aug	Course Overview
2	3 Sept	Maritime Law
3	10 Sept	Maritime Strategy and Threats
4	17 Sept	Navies
5	24 Sept	Land Power & Amphibious Power at Sea
6	1 Oct	Global Trade
7	8 Oct	Mid-Term Assignment
8	15 Oct	Piracy
9	22 Oct	Seabed and Arctic
10	29 Oct	Smuggling and Efforts to Stop It
11	5 Nov	Research Project
12	12 Nov	Fishing: Legal and Illegal
13	19 Nov	South China Sea
14	3 Dec	Course Conclusion