

PIA3141: SPIES, INTELLIGENCE AND NATIONAL SECURITY

Effective Term

Semester A 2025/26

Part I Course Overview

Course Title

Spies, Intelligence and National Security

Subject Code

PIA - Public and International Affairs

Course Number

3141

Academic Unit

Public and International Affairs (PIA)

College/School

College of Liberal Arts and Social Sciences (CH)

Course Duration

One Semester

Credit Units

3

Level

B1, B2, B3, B4 - Bachelor's Degree

Medium of Instruction

English

Medium of Assessment

English

Prerequisites

Nil

Precursors

Nil

Equivalent Courses

AIS3141 Spies, Intelligence and National Security

Exclusive Courses

Nil

Part II Course Details

Abstract

Intelligence, defined as the gathering and analysis of information to help illuminate leaders' decisions, is a key component of foreign policy making in many countries. A broad range of threats to national security – economic, military and political – and the advancement of spy technology have fostered states' growing dependence on intelligence in making policy choices. This course examines key issues in the study of intelligence organisations and activities. It explores the three major missions of intelligence: collection-and-analysis; covert action; and counterintelligence. The course sheds light on what is known as the intelligence cycle to analyse the challenges of gathering and assessing information. Particular attention is paid to covert action, the most controversial intelligence activity. The course also covers the problems associated with protecting secrets from foreign spies and terrorist organisations. Finally, it considers the question of intelligence accountability: how a nation can protect its citizens against the possible abuse of power by its own secret agencies.

Course Intended Learning Outcomes (CILOs)

CILOs	Weighting (if app.)	DEC-A1	DEC-A2	DEC-A3
1	To identify and describe key actors and issues in intelligence	x	x	x
2	To analyse the effects of intelligence issues on national security	x	x	x
3	To assess case studies within the issues	x	x	x
4	To develop research and analytical skills	x	x	x

A1: Attitude

Develop an attitude of discovery/innovation/creativity, as demonstrated by students possessing a strong sense of curiosity, asking questions actively, challenging assumptions or engaging in inquiry together with teachers.

A2: Ability

Develop the ability/skill needed to discover/innovate/create, as demonstrated by students possessing critical thinking skills to assess ideas, acquiring research skills, synthesizing knowledge across disciplines or applying academic knowledge to real-life problems.

A3: Accomplishments

Demonstrate accomplishment of discovery/innovation/creativity through producing /constructing creative works/new artefacts, effective solutions to real-life problems or new processes.

Learning and Teaching Activities (LTAs)

LTAs	Brief Description	CILO No.	Hours/week (if applicable)
1	Lecture	the instructor will present concepts and case studies in intelligence studies	1, 2, 3, 4
2	Class discussions	both in-class and in external fora will engage students in debates and explorations	1, 2, 3, 4
3	Oral presentations	Students will work in groups to lead class discussions and structured question and answer sessions on relevant topics	1, 2, 3, 4
4	Research	students use relevant materials to write papers as set by the instructor	1, 2, 3, 4

Assessment Tasks / Activities (ATs)

	ATs	CILO No.	Weighting (%)	Remarks ("- " for nil entry)	Allow Use of GenAI?
1	Attendance and Participation	1, 2, 3, 4	10	Formative	Yes
2	Presentation	1, 2, 3, 4	15	Summative	No
3	Exam (Mid-term and Final)	1, 2, 3, 4	50	Summative	No
4	Research paper	1, 2, 3, 4	25	Formative	Yes

Continuous Assessment (%)

100

Examination (%)

0

Assessment Rubrics (AR)**Assessment Task**

1. Attendance and Participation

Criterion

Active and informed participation in class/class etiquette

Excellent (A+, A, A-)

Excellent demonstration of active and informed participation in class/ excellent class etiquette

Good (B+, B, B-)

Good demonstration of active and informed participation in class/excellent class etiquette

Fair (C+, C, C-)

Adequate demonstration of active and informed participation in class/excellent class etiquette

Marginal (D)

Marginal demonstration of active and informed participation in class/excellent class etiquette

Failure (F)

Poor demonstration of active and informed participation in class/excellent class etiquette

Assessment Task

2. Presentation

Criterion

- Presence and communication (50%)
- Organisation and quality of material presented (50%)

Excellent (A+, A, A-)

Excellent presence and communication
 Excellent organisation and quality of material

Good (B+, B, B-)

Good presence and communication
 Good organisation and quality of material

Fair (C+, C, C-)

Adequate presence and communication
Adequate organisation and quality of material

Marginal (D)

Marginal presence and communication
Marginal organisation and quality of material

Failure (F)

Poor presence and communication
Poor organisation and quality of material

Assessment Task

3. Exam (Mid-term and Final)

Criterion

Quality and demonstration of knowledge gained from readings and lecture notes.

Excellent (A+, A, A-)

Excellent demonstration of knowledge gained from readings and lecture notes.

Good (B+, B, B-)

Good demonstration of knowledge gained from readings and lecture notes.

Fair (C+, C, C-)

Adequate demonstration of knowledge gained from readings and lecture notes.

Marginal (D)

Marginal demonstration of knowledge gained from readings and lecture notes.

Failure (F)

Poor demonstration of knowledge gained from readings and lecture notes.

Assessment Task

4. Term Paper

Criterion

- Quality of writing (grammar, structure and coherence) (25%)
- Application and demonstrated comprehension of theories and approaches covered in the course (15%)
- Demonstration of research and prudent use of research materials in relation to argument (25%)
- Quality and originality of argument (35%)

Excellent (A+, A, A-)

Excellent quality of writing
Excellent application and demonstrated comprehension of theories and approaches covered in the course
Excellent demonstration of research and prudent use of research materials
Excellent and original argument

Good (B+, B, B-)

Good quality of writing
Good application and demonstrated comprehension of theories and approaches covered in the course

Good demonstration of research and prudent use of research materials
 Good and reasonably original argument

Fair (C+, C, C-)

Adequate quality of writing
 Adequate application and demonstrated comprehension of theories and approaches covered in the course
 Adequate demonstration of research and prudent use of research materials
 Adequate articulation of argument/adequate attempt at making an original argument

Marginal (D)

Marginal quality of writing
 Marginal application and demonstrated comprehension of theories and approaches covered in the course
 Marginal demonstration of research and prudent use of research materials
 Marginal demonstration of argument and or originality in argument

Failure (F)

Poor quality of writing
 Poor application and demonstrated comprehension of theories and approaches covered in the course
 Poor demonstration of research and prudent use of research materials
 Poor deployment of or non-existent argument

Part III Other Information

Keyword Syllabus

Intelligence process, intelligence collection and analysis, geospatial intelligence, human intelligence, open source intelligence, signals intelligence, intelligence community, national security, covert action, international intelligence cooperation, counterintelligence, economic espionage, intelligence oversight, cyber-espionage and cyber-security.

Reading List

Compulsory Readings

Title	
1	Johnson, Loch, K. 2012. National Security Intelligence. Cambridge, UK: Polity Press
2	Johnson, Loch, K. ed. 2009. Handbook of Intelligence Studies. Abingdon, Oxon: Routledge
3	Lowenthal, Mark M. 2015. Intelligence: From Secrets to Policy. Los Angeles: Sage
4	Shulsky, Abram N. and Gary J. Schmitt. 2002. Silent Warfare: Understanding the World of Intelligence. Washington, D.C.: Brassey's, Inc.

Additional Readings

Title	
1	Intelligence and National Security (various issues)
2	International Journal of Intelligence and Counterintelligence (various issues)
3	Journal of Intelligence History (various issues)