

AMERICAN COLLEGE PROGRAM



Université de Fribourg - Universität Freiburg

International Security Studies Program – Summer 2025

12 ECTS Credits (European Credit Transfer and Accumulation System)

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I. Program Description

The program introduces students to the broad topic of international security. The course includes an historical overview of international security, examines pressing global security challenges, and assesses the role of the United Nations and other organizations in preventing conflict and resolving international security issues.

The overarching goal is to go beyond the classroom and engage with real-world security practitioners. We have an impressive lineup of guest speakers and site visits at globally significant institutions. Each site visit is more than a public tour and quick photo-op; we have extended behind-the-scenes meetings with the experts, politicians, members of the military, and practitioners at the forefront of their field.

This course includes a significant, policy-focused, research and writing component. The analytical skills honed in this program provide a strong foundation for future study or careers in government or international security.

By completing the course students will:

- Broadly understand contemporary challenges in international security
- Understand how European-based organizations address collective threats
- Have an improved ability to critically analyze arguments about international security
- Learn about the wide range of professional opportunities in the international security field
- Understand the interconnections among nations and of America's role in global security
- Become more comfortable navigating new cultural environments

By the end of the program students will have a broad foundation for future studies in international security, global diplomacy, and other careers in government at home and abroad. Along the way you will collect a lifetime of memories from our time traveling through Switzerland, France, and Belgium.

II. Course Materials

Students will have to purchase and read two books before the start of the program:

- Ian Bremmer's *Superpower: Three Choices for America's Role in the World*
- (Penguin 2015)
- William Spaniel's *What Caused the Russia-Ukraine War (And How Will it End)* (Independent 2022)

Additional readings, including journal articles and readers for site visits, are on the course web page. Students are expected to complete all assigned reading and assignments before each session.

III. Program Format and Process

I challenge you to find a more engaging and informative way to learn more about the topic of climate change, all while enjoying a memorable summer in Europe. That said, this program is emphatically not a vacation. We distill half a semester of credit into three weeks, along with assignments before and after our time in-country. It is essential that you come prepared for every session, and are ready to enthusiastically engage in class discussions, round tables, and site visits.

The course is divided into three components. The first module is online, and includes reading two books, writing assignments and a short paper exploring themes from the reading. Students must be completed and all assignments submitted before arriving in Switzerland. Details in the following section.

Each of our three weeks abroad is roughly dedicated to understanding the present, past, and future of the climate change and society. A typical day will involve a morning seminar or roundtable, lunch, and a second session in the afternoon. "Hot Takes," based on the day's assigned reading, will be due by midnight before each session. Several days we will leave campus for site visits including the United Nations in Geneva, the Swiss parliament in Bern, and a tour—and shared meal—at a mountain fortress. During site visits, in addition to the tours and discussion provided by our hosts, we will conclude the day with a discussion period to collectively reflect on the experience.

During the middle week, we leave Switzerland for an extended trip through France and Belgium. Our visits include, but is not limited to:

- The Council of Europe in Strasbourg
- Hackenberg Fortress on the former Maginot Line
- The United Nations in Brussels
- NATO Headquarters in Brussels

For the CoE, UN, and NATO please wear formal dress. For the visit to Hackenberg, have something warm to wear as the fortress can be chilly. To maximize our time in each city after our site visit, we will have a series of lectures during the bus ride.

Beyond the classroom and site visits, part of the value of being abroad is... being abroad. The course is structured to give you maximum flexibility on your own time. Provided you submit your assignments in a timely manner, the weekends are left free for you to explore Switzerland on your own. You can visit a lakeside jazz festival, overnight in the alps, or visit any number of beautiful and historically significant cities. If you are on the fence about whether to come, I suggest you Google “Swiss Chocolate Train.” You can thank me later.

The third component is a policy-focused essay to be submitted in August after our time in-country ends. Details of this assignment, expectations, and timing guidelines will be discussed in class and posted to the course page.

IV. Evaluations and Grading

Remember, this program is rigorous for-credit academic course. Students must submit all the requires assignments by their posted deadlines to receive a passing grade. Students will receive separate grades for the core and the elective. Both use the following non-curved grading system:

98-100 A+ 87-89: B+ 77-79: C+ 67-69: D+ <60: F

94-97 A 84-86: B 74-76: C 64-66: D

90-93 A- 80-83: B- 70-73: C- 60-63: D-

Remember that it is critical to submit your work in a timely manner. This includes assignments due before and after our time in Switzerland. Failure to submit all pre-departure assignments before arrival in-country will result in a minimum of 20% penalty. No pre-departure work will be accepted after July 7. The final essay is due by midnight August 17.

V. Assignment Weights

Class Participation (20%) Attendance and active participation in class and during site visits are critical. “Outstanding” class participation would include attendance at all classes and site visits, thoughtful and insightful contributions during class and discussion sessions, and demonstrating respect when offering different perspectives. Typically, thoughtful and insightful contributions will include a demonstrated understanding of the readings and / or lecture material and a critical analysis of the material (as opposed to simply repeating it back).

Hot Take Forum (15%) Before each class you are expected to submit a “hot take” response of approximately 1-2 pages, double spaced. The post should make clear you have engaged the work’s main arguments. The posts do not have to rise to the level of polished essays but they should reflect an effort to make a coherent set of points using clear and effective prose. You will respond to eight prompts during the course. Each Hot Take will be due at midnight and based on the next day’s reading.

Exam #1 (15%) At the end of the first week the midterm exam will cover Bremmer’s Superpower, as well as readings and lectures from the first module of the course.

Exam #2 (15%) At the end of the third and final week, you will sit for your final exam. It will cover the readings, lectures, and material learned during site visits since the mid-term exam with an emphasis on the elective course topics.

Pre-departure assignments (15%) Prior to our arrival in country, students are required to submit short—approximately 5 double-spaced pages—book reports on Bremmer’s *Superpower* and Spaniel’s *What Caused the Russia-Ukraine War*.

Final policy essay (20%) The final product of your research will be a policy memo of roughly 15 pages, double-spaced. More information about the assignment is available on the course page. Late submissions will incur a significant penalty.

VI . Social and Academic Conduct

1. The Code of Student Conduct

We are a small group, and we will spend a lot of time together over our three weeks abroad. It is critical that we remain respectful of others in and out of the classroom. From our pre-departure orientation to our time abroad, students remain bound by the University of Fribourg’s honor code and code of student conduct. Failure to adhere to our community guidelines so can result in disciplinary action or removal from the program.

2. Use of AI Writing Tools is Strictly Prohibited

The use of AI writing programs in this course is strictly prohibited. Your work needs to be yours... not the product of a slick algorithm. The book report, both exams, and the final essay will all be tested for the hallmarks of AI text generation. Any submission with a high probability of AI use will require a discussion with me and, potentially, referral to the honor council for violating course policies.

3. Academic Integrity & The Honor Code

Remember that, even while abroad, you remain bound by the academic standards both of your home institution *and* the University of Fribourg. Participants in the American College Program pledge not to cheat, plagiarize, steal, or lie in matters related to academic work. Any violation of academic integrity an “F” both for the assignment and the course grade. Any appeal for a failing grade due to plagiarism or academic dishonesty will be referred to the University of Fribourg Honor Council for arbitration.

4. Proper Attire & Deportment

We have a unique opportunity to visit some of the world’s preeminent international institutions. During our site visits formal attire is required. Students are expected to be attentive and engaged. Failure to act professionally and respectfully will result in removal from future site visits.

5. Students with Disabilities

Students with disabilities who seek accommodations in a course should reach out with appropriate documentation prior to the start of the program. All appropriate accommodations can be made for writing assignments and exams.

VII. Course Schedule

Note: The course schedule will likely change before—and during—our time in Switzerland. That said, while our exact lineup of guests and the order of site visits may change, the assignments and due dates will remain consistent. Refer to the accompanying document for the current version of the course schedule. In country readings and assignments will be posted in late June.