MGIMO University  
School of Government and International Affairs  

Grand Strategy  

Undergraduate Course Syllabus  

Instructor  
Dr. Vladimir A. Zhdanov
This syllabus is designed in accordance with the MGIMO Educational Standard for the Bachelor Program in International Affairs.

Author_______________________ Dr. Vladimir A. Zhdanov

Director MGIMO Library__________Marina Reshetnikova
PART 1:
INSTRUCTOR INFORMATION AND COURSE DESCRIPTION

1.1 General information
• Full course title: Grand Strategy
• Type of course: Elective
• Level of course: B.A.
• Year of study: 2nd
• Number of ECTS credits allocated: 1
• Name of the instructor: Dr. Vladimir A. Zhdanov
• E-mail: zhdanov.v@my.mgimo.ru

1.2 Course aims and learning outcomes
This elective course examines the theoretical and historical evolution of Grand Strategy (policy for integrating all instruments of power—diplomatic, informational, military, and economic—to advance national security) by providing a survey of the major academic approaches to its study. The course starts with a survey of the theoretical heritage of the field's founding fathers (Sun Tzu, Thucydides, Machiavelli, and Clausewitz) and proceeds with an analysis of the grand strategies of the present day's leading powers.

Learning outcomes
By the end of this course students should be able to understand the processes, developments and dynamics related to international conflicts from a historical and contemporary perspectives, compare the approaches to strategic studies and the current explanations of Grand Strategy by the major players of modern world politics.

1.3 Course requirements and grading plan

Course requirements
Students are required to attend no less than 80% of classes and be prepared for class discussions. Reading of the required materials and active engagement in class discussions is mandatory.

Grading plan
Grading is on a Pass/Fail basis.
Two 25-minute in-class tests – 50% each.
Participation in class discussions – additional 10%.
Required reading materials in the form of the instructor’s handouts (about 7-8 single spaced pages) will be uploaded to the corresponding Google Classroom site.
PART 2. COURSE CONTENT

2.1 Types of work

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Types of work</th>
<th>Academic hours</th>
<th>ECTS credits</th>
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<tr>
<td>Total</td>
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<td>2</td>
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<tr>
<td>Total for lectures and discussions</td>
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<tr>
<td>Lectures</td>
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<tr>
<td>Discussions</td>
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<td>Homework</td>
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<td>Reading assignments</td>
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<td>Preparation for the first test</td>
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<tr>
<td>Preparation for the second test</td>
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2.2 Course content and readings by topic

**Topic 1: Introduction (lecture and discussion)**
The grand strategy paradigm (the Classicist and International Relations interpretations). Grand strategy as a plan. Grand strategy as an organizing principle. Grand strategy as a pattern of behavior. Security as the preservation of sovereignty, safety, territorial integrity, and power position. The fundamental importance of grand strategy to successful statecraft.

**Required readings:** Handout

**Suggested readings:**


**Topic 2: The Historical Background of Grand Strategy (lecture and discussion)**

The founding fathers: Sun Tzu, Kautilya, Thucydides, Machiavelli, Clausewitz.

**Required readings:** Handout

**Suggested readings:**


**Topic 3: The Modern U.S. Grand Strategy (lecture and discussion)**


**Required readings:** Handout

**Suggested readings:**


**Required readings:** Handout

**Suggested readings:**


**Required readings:** Handout

**Suggested readings:**


**Topic 6: The Modern Grand Strategy of China (lecture and discussion)**

The historical continuities of Chinese grand strategy. China's strategy-making institutions and processes. The Belt and Road Initiative as an external manifestation of Chinese grand strategy.

**Required readings:** Handout

**Suggested readings:**


**Topic 7: The Modern Grand Strategy of Asian Great Powers (lecture and discussion)**

The grand strategy of India. British colonial heritage. The persistence of key security challenges. A pivot in a new triangle (the USA, China, and India). Strategic links with the USA. Secessionist movements and insurgencies. India's strategy-making institutions, processes, and instruments.

The grand strategy of Japan. “Increasingly severe security environment and complex national security challenges.” Japan’s strategy-making institutions, processes, and instruments. Alliance with the USA and partnerships in the region.

**Required readings:** Handout

**Suggested readings:**


**Topic 8: The future of Grand Strategy (lecture and discussion)**


**Required readings:** Handout

**Suggested readings:**


**Readings**


