



Course Syllabus

From Diplomacy to Deception: Influence through Strategic Narratives

Från diplomati till vilseledning: påverkan genom strategiska narrativ

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| Course Code | 2SS083 | Main Field of Study | Political Science: Security Studies |
| Valid from Semester | Spring 2024 | Department | Department of Political Science and Law |
| Education Cycle | Advanced level | Subject | Political Science |
| Scope | 7.5 | Language of Instruction | The teaching is conducted in English. |
| Progression | A1F | Decided by | The Research and Education Board's Course Syllabus Committee at the Swedish Defence University |
| Grading Scale | Fail, Pass, Pass with Distinction | Decision date | 2023-06-13 |
| Revision | 1.1 | | |

Entry Requirements

Bachelor's degree of 180 credits, of which 90 credits are in Political Science or another relevant subject. English proficiency equivalent to English 6 or English B is also required.

Course Content and Structure

The aim of the course is to offer the student opportunities to acquire deeper knowledge on the influence of strategic narratives in the sphere of security and an ability of independently study strategic narratives. It offers opportunities for students to acquire deeper knowledge in different theoretical assumptions within narrative research, which serves a foundation to the research on strategic narratives. The course provides ample opportunities for the student to critically value how actors use strategic narratives to influence others; from more accepted practices such as diplomacy and soft power to deception. Finally, the course provides the student with the ability to value different methods and research schemes, in order to be able to judge their applicability on an independently chosen research problem.

The course consists of three main parts: one addresses the theory of knowledge within narrative research and how it forms as a basis for research on strategic narratives; one addresses the projection of strategic narratives and one addresses the efficacy of strategic narratives; that is the reception of strategic narratives by different audiences. The course offers the student ample opportunities to gain deeper knowledge in methodological issues, with numerous examples of how one can study and measure projection and reception of strategic narratives in the domain of security, risk and war.

Intended Learning Outcomes

Upon completion of the course the student should be able to:

Knowledge and understanding

- in depth account for and distinguish between different theoretical assumptions about language and communication that underpin research on strategic narratives,

Competence and skills

- identify and discuss ethical and political dilemma by problematizing the scientific study, and the use of, strategic narratives,

Judgement and approach

- in depth value different theoretical frameworks and methods within the field with regard to their applicability on a given research problem.

Type of Instruction

Seminars



Assessment

From Diplomacy to Deception: Influence through Strategic Narratives

Scope: 7.5

Grading Scale: Fail, Pass, Pass with Distinction

The course is examined through a written take-home examination, and through active participation in the seminars.

If a student is absent from more than one seminar, the student has to take an oral examination at the end of the course.

The examiner may decide to request supplementary assignments in order to achieve a passing grade on the course. Examination papers submitted after the closing date will not be graded unless special circumstances exist that are acceptable to the examiner. Supplementary assignments shall be submitted no later than three working days after the result and supplementary assignment for the examination in question have been notified, unless special circumstances exist that are acceptable to the examiner.

Grading

Grading is done according to a three-point grading scale: Fail (U), Pass (G), Pass with distinction (VG). Grading criteria are provided at the start of the course.

To achieve the grade Pass (G), the student has to achieve a pass on the seminars and the written take-home examination. To achieve a the grade Pass with distinction (VG) the student must, in addition to the demands for a Pass (G), achieve a Pass with distinction on the written take-home examination.

Restrictions in Number of Examinations

There is no limit on the total number of examination opportunities.

Restrictions Concerning Degree

The course cannot be included in a degree with another course whose content fully or partially corresponds to the content of this course.

Transitional Provisions

When the course is no longer offered or when the course content has changed substantially, the student has the right to be examined once per semester during a three-term period in accordance with this syllabus.

Miscellaneous

- An evaluation of the course will be made upon completion of the course, conducted by the Course Convenor. The evaluation is the basis of eventual changes to the course.
- If the Swedish Defence University has formally decided that the student is entitled to receive special educational support.

Reading List

From Diplomacy to Deception: Influence through Strategic Narratives

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| Course Code | 2SS083 |
| Revision | 1.1 |
| Reading List Valid from Date | 2023-10-16 |
| Reading List Decided Date | 2023-10-16 |

- Braddock K and Horgan J (2016) Towards a Guide for Constructing and Disseminating Counternarratives to Reduce Support for Terrorism. *Studies in Conflict & Terrorism* 39(5): 381-404.
- Burke K (1964) Definition of Man. *The Hudson Review* 16(4): 491-514.
- Callahan K D M and Olshfski D (2006) War narratives: framing our understanding of the war on terror. *Public Administration Review* 66(4): 554-564.
- Colley T (2017) Is Britain a force for good? Investigating British citizens' narrative understanding of war. *Defence Studies*, 17(1): 1-22.
- Crilley R, Gillespie M, Willis A (2020) Tweeting the Russian revolution: RT's #1917LIVE and social media re-enactments as public diplomacy. *European Journal of Cultural Studies* 23(3):354-373.
- Deverell E, Wagnsson C & Olsson E K (2020) Destruct, direct and suppress: Sputnik narratives on the Nordic countries. *The Journal of International Communication* 27 (1): 15-37.
- Edenborg E (2022) Disinformation and gendered boundary making: Nordic media audiences making sense of 'Swedish decline'. *Cooperation and conflict*. [Online] 57 (4): 496-515.
- Freedman L (2006) Networks, culture and narratives. *Adelphi Papers* 45(379): 11-26.
- Hagström L and Gustafsson K (2021): The limitations of strategic narratives: The Sino-American struggle over the meaning of COVID-19. *Contemporary Security Policy* 10.1080/13523260.2021.1984725
- Hagström L and Gustafsson K (2019) Narrative power: how storytelling shapes East Asian international politics. *Cambridge Review of International Affairs* 32(4): 387-406.
- Hellman M and Wagnsson C (2017) How can European states respond to Russian information warfare? An analytical framework. *European Security* 26(2):153-170.
- Hoyle A, van den Berg H, Doosje B, Kitzen M (2021) Portrait of liberal chaos: RT's antagonistic strategic narration about the Netherlands. *Media, War & Conflict*. doi:10.1177/17506352211064705
- Kachur D (2022) Manifestations of Russian formal and informal strategies in Southern and Eastern Africa, 2000-2022. *The South African journal of international affairs*. [Online] 29 (4): 509-534.
- Khaldarova I (2021). Brother or 'Other'? Transformation of strategic narratives in Russian television news during the Ukrainian crisis. *Media, War & Conflict*, 14(1), 3-20.
- Livingston J and Nassetta, J (2018) Framing and Strategic Narratives: Synthesis and Analytical Framework. *SAIS Review of International Affairs* 38 (2): 101-110.
- Miskimmon A O'Loughlin B Roselle L (2018) Forging the World. *Strategic Narratives and International Relations*. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan press. (chapters 1, 2, 9, 12)
- van Noort C and Colley T (2021) How do strategic narratives shape policy adoption? *Review of International Studies* 47(1): 39-63.
- Oschatz C and Klimmt C (2016) The effectiveness of narrative communication in road safety education: A moderated mediation model. *Communications* 41(2): 145-165.
- Patterson M and Monroe KR (1998) Narrative in Political Science. *Annual Review of Political Science* 1:315-331.
- Ringsmose J and Börgensen B (2011) Shaping Public Attitudes Towards the Deployment of Military Power: NATO, Afghanistan and the Use of Strategic Narratives. *European Security* 20 (4): 505-528.



- Sadler N (2018) Narrative and interpretation on Twitter: Reading tweets by telling stories. *New Media & Society* 20(9):3266-3282.
- Somers M R (1994) The Narrative Constitution of Identity: A Relational and Network Approach. *Theory and Society* 23(5): 605-649.
- Szostek J (2018) Nothing Is True? The Credibility of News and the Conflict in Ukraine. *The International Journal of Press/Politics* 23(1): 116–135.
- Trevisan F Bello B Vaughan M, Vromen A (2020) Mobilizing personal narratives: The rise of digital “story banking” in U.S. grassroots advocacy. *Journal of Information Technology & Politics*. 17(2): 146-160.
- Wagnsson C & Lundström M (2022) Ringing True? The persuasiveness of narratives in malign information influence. *Media War and Conflict*, 1-18.
- Wagnsson C and Barzanje C (2021) A framework for analysing antagonistic narrative strategies: A Russian tale of Swedish Decline. *Media, War and Conflict* 14 (2) 239–257.
- Wellings, BK, Wilson, Burton B & Martin H (2018) Narrative Alignment and Misalignment: NATO as a Global Actor as Seen from Australia and New Zealand. *Asian Security* 14(1): 24-37.
- Wright K and Bergman Rosamond A (2021) NATO’s Strategic Narratives: Angelina Jolie and the alliance’s celebrity and visual turn. *Review of International Studies* 47(4): 443-466.