

# German Foreign Policy and National Security Decision Making

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14 July – 8 August 2025

**CATEGORY** Law & Economics

## COURSE STRUCTURE

You will receive a total of **45 hours of academic lessons** (one lesson equals 45 minutes; 15 hours per week). Lessons will comprise lectures, group work, discussion sessions, and excursions.

## WEEKLY SCHEDULE

HUWISU courses are grouped into different time tracks. Your course will take place in **Track B:**

Monday: 9.00 am – 10.30 am & 11.00 am – 12.30 pm  
Wednesday: 9.00 am – 10.30 am & 11.00 am – 12.30 pm  
Thursday: 1.30 pm – 3.00 pm & 3.30 pm – 5.00 pm

## COURSE LANGUAGE

This course is taught in **English**, including the readings. For the understanding of the texts and the discussions in class, a language-level of B2 (Common European Framework of Reference for Languages) is required.

## TARGET GROUP

**Undergraduate law students and students of other academic** backgrounds with a strong interest in the course topic.

## CREDITS & CERTIFICATES

Participants will receive **6 ECTS** credit points and a certificate if they attend regularly (at least 80% attendance), participate actively and fulfil all course assignments. Additionally, six weeks after the end of the course a Transcript of Records is issued by Humboldt-Universität zu Berlin. All courses are accredited according to the European Credit Transfer System (ECTS).

## CULTURAL ACTIVITIES

You are invited to **join our cultural and social program**. We offer a fine selection of interesting activities that aim to give you an unforgettable stay in Berlin. Through excursions, social gatherings, and sport activities, you have the opportunity to get to know the city, the university, and to meet students from all parts of the world. **Costs for these offers are included in the program fee.** Below, you find examples of previously offered cultural activities. You will be informed about the respective cultural program shortly before the start of the program via email as well as during the course period.



### POLITICAL AND HISTORICAL GUIDED TOURS

- Federal Chancellery (*Bundeskanzleramt*)
- German Parliament (*Bundestag*)
- House of Representatives (*Abgeordnetenhaus*)
- Topography of Terror exhibition
- Political Archive of the Federal Foreign Office

### CULTURAL GUIDED TOURS

- Kreuzberg Tour
- Museum Island (*Museumsinsel*)
- Berlin Cathedral (*Berliner Dom*)
- Daytrip to Potsdam
- Exhibitions

### SOCIAL GATHERINGS

- Welcome Get-Together
- Beach Volleyball
- Farewell Party

## EXPECTATIONS & POLICIES

**Preparation for lively discussions in the classroom:** Be on time, have at least the required readings completed, and points in mind for discussion or clarification.

**Assignments:** Complete all assignments according to the specified requirements on the schedule including handing them over to the lecturer.

**Commitment in class:** Pay particular attention to the lecturer and respect differences of opinions (classmates', lecturers').

**Academic guidelines:** Comply with academic integrity policies (such as no plagiarism or cheating, nothing unethical) especially the academic honor code and the student code of conduct.

**Attendance policy:** No unexcused absences are permitted. Students must follow teachers' instructions to catch up on missed work – to excuse absence please contact the HUWISU office.

## **COURSE DESCRIPTION**

This multidisciplinary course explores the structural evolution of the Federal Republic of Germany's role in the world since the end of World War II to the current *Zeitenwende*. Through an interactive approach, students will be able to contextualize contemporary German foreign policy challenges from their geographic, material, and ideational roots. Furthermore, course activities and assignments are tailored to assist students in becoming foreign policy practitioners fully capable of applying national security decision theories. The curriculum threads together historical cases, international relations scholarship, and security studies in order to provide a holistic understanding of all the constituent parts influencing Germany's external posture. Why is contemporary Germany often referred to as a reluctant leader? What are the unique attributes of German-style foreign policy that are currently undergoing reconsideration by the incumbent *Ampelkoalition*? A critical appraisal of topics such as the institutions shaping elite policy-making, the legacy of the Cold War and reunification, relations with the European Union, and the triangulation between the great powers of the United States, Russia and China offers students the necessary tools to answer these core questions. The complementary emphasis on professional development will allow participants to garner practical skills through simulations, seminar debates, and presentations.

## **COURSE OBJECTIVES AND LEARNING OUTCOMES**

- Identify and assess the evolving trends in German National Security policy while incorporating the appropriate historical, economic and political frameworks;
- Evaluate the German National Security decision-making process, the main stakeholders involved in the bureaucracy and the role civil-society plays as a central pillar of its democracy;
- Analyze and debate how the cotemporary challenges to contested power on the European continent intersect with Germany's strategic security and economic imperatives;
- Gain key skills necessary to operate as an effective foreign policy practitioner through simulations and verbal and written exercises.

## **READINGS**

Reading materials will be available via Moodle during the course.

## ASSIGNMENT INFO

In order to be granted 6 ECTS, students are required to attend classes regularly, complete the compulsory reading assignments before the classes and actively participate in the debates during the sessions.

**The final grade will be composed of active participation in the class discussions (25%), German foreign policy news stories reflections (20%), a group presentation (20%) and the final policy memo and presentation (35%). A minimum of 80% class attendance is required. Failure to fulfil one of the mentioned components results in failure of the class.**

## YOUR INSTRUCTOR

**Mr. Aaron Allen** is a senior nonresident fellow at the Center for European Policy Analysis, international affairs lecturer, and freelance journalist. He was most recently a National Security Fellow with the Robert Bosch Stiftung where he worked for the German Coordinator of Transatlantic Cooperation in the Bundestag and Auswärtiges Amt in Berlin. Previously, he worked in the U.S. House of Representatives as a Senior Foreign Policy Advisor, Committee Professional Staff Member, and was the founder and former President of the Foreign Affairs Congressional Staff Association. He holds a master's degree in security studies from Georgetown's School of Foreign Service and a bachelor's degree in history and political science from the University of California, Berkeley.

## COURSE SCHEDULE AND READINGS

### Weekly Schedule

#### Week 1

Class 1.1  
 Wednesday,  
 16 July, 2025

#### Course Overview and Introduction to German Political and National Security Institutions

##### Readings:

- German Basic Law
- Eberwein and Kaise, "Germany's New Foreign Policy: Decision-Making in an Interdependent World"

Class 1.2  
 Thursday,  
 17 July, 2025

#### Germany's Position in the Post-World War II Europe: *Keine Experimente, Ostpolitik, and Missile Protests*

##### Readings:

- Erb, "The Double Consensus: West German Foreign Policy, 1945-1980"
- Erb, "Missiles and Protests: The Early 1980s"

#### Week 2

Class 2.1  
 Monday,  
 21 July, 2025

#### Unification and the Post-Cold War Order

##### Readings:

- Erb, "Uniting Germany and Ending the Cold War, 1985-1990"

#### European Integration: Germany and the European Union \*\*\* Site visit to European House Berlin \*\*\*

Class 2.2  
 Wednesday,  
 23 July, 2025

##### Readings:

- Beichelt and Bulmer "Germany: A German Europe or a Europeanized Germany?"
- Erb, "Uniting Europe: Germany and Integration, 1985-2002."

Class 2.3  
 Thursday,  
 24 July, 2025

#### \*\*\* Site Visit to the Auswärtiges Amt (German Foreign Office) and Bundestag \*\*\*

#### Week 3

Class 3.1  
 Monday,  
 28 July, 2025

#### Security Challenges Case Studies: The Balkans War, NATO Mission to Afghanistan and the Iraq War

##### Readings:

- Baumann and Hellmann, "Germany and the Use of Military Force: 'Total War,' The Culture of Restraint and the Quest for Normality."
- Wagener, "Normalization in Security Policy?" Deployments of Bundeswehr Forces Abroad 1998.- 2004"
- Szabo, "Parting Ways: The German-American Relationship after Iraq"

Class 3.2  
Wednesday,  
30 July, 2025

### **Group Presentations**

Class 3.3  
Thursday,  
31 July, 2025

### **National Security Decision-making Simulation**

## **Week 4**

Class 4.1  
Monday,  
4 August, 2025

### **Navigating the Modern Great Power Relationship Triangle: The United States, the Russian Federation and the People's Republic of China**

#### **Readings:**

- Helwig, "Out of order? The US alliance in Germany's foreign and security policy"
- Yoder, "From Amity to Enmity: German-Russian Relations in the Post Cold War Period"
- Heiduk, "Conflicting Images? Germany and the Rise of China."

Class 4.2  
Wednesday,  
6 August, 2025

### **The German Zeitenwende**

**\*\*\* Site Visit to the German Council on Foreign Relations \*\*\***

#### **Readings:**

- Scholz, Olaf, "Zeitenwende Speech"
- German National Security Strategy

Class 4.2  
Thursday,  
7 August, 2025

### **Final Course and Policy Memo Presentations**

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*The course and its syllabus are subject to change. Last update: 14 March 2023*