

**Course Code: SS-831**

**Title: Comparative Strategic Cultures of Asia (Elective)**

**Credit Hours: 3**

### **Course Objectives**

This course is intended to introduce the concept of strategic culture to students seeking to deepen their understanding of international relations and security studies and broaden their theoretical and methodological tool sets. The course seeks to explore strategic cultures from the perspective of the general (that is, how entire states can be said to possess strategic cultures, and how does this evidence themselves through their foreign policies and ways of defending themselves in the event of threat), but also the individual (how people feel secure in the context of their place in society and the political and social systems). It is expected that students will be able to assess the nature of security in all of its main facets through the lens of strategic culture. To achieve this, we will be moving from the macro to the micro in a number of ways, both formally in lectures/lecture-based discussions, and in the context of tutorials besides research assignments and presentations.

### **Learning outcomes**

- A general familiarisation with the concept of strategic culture.
- A critical understanding of theoretical aspects related to strategic culture.
- A competent knowledge of how the strategic cultures are defining the geopolitics, conflicts, and security framework globally.
- An understanding of the impact of different strategic cultures on the transient world system.
- A reasonable prediction of the future trends in the study of strategic culture, based on the analyses of historical and current dynamics.

### **Course Contents**

**Week 1 – Introduction to Strategic Culture as a Concept**

- Theoretical foundations: Alastair Iain Johnston, Colin Gray, Jack Snyder.
- Strategic culture vs. strategic doctrine.

### **Week 2 – Methodologies in Comparative Strategic Culture Studies**

- Approaches to comparison.
- Cultural, historical, and institutional variables.

### **Week 3 – Colonial Legacies and State Formation**

- South and West Asian experiences of empire and colonialism.
- Implications for postcolonial security thinking.

### **Week 4 – Strategic Culture of Pakistan**

- Partition legacies, ideology, civil–military relations.
- Evolution of nuclear posture and statecraft.

### **Week 5 – Strategic Culture of India**

- Civilizational roots, Nehruvian idealism vs. realist turn.
- Nuclear doctrine and regional security behaviour.

### **Week 6 – Strategic Culture of Iran**

- Persian imperial legacies, Islamic Revolution.
- Resistance doctrine, proxy strategies, and regional posture.

### **Week 7 – Strategic Culture of the Gulf States**

- Small states' survival strategies.
- Rentier state politics, alliances, and military modernisation.

### **Week 8 – Strategic Culture of Israel**

- Holocaust memory, regional isolation, and existential security.
- Doctrine of deterrence and pre-emption.

### **Week 9 – Strategic Culture of Turkey**

- Ottoman legacies and Kemalist ideology.
- Civil–military balance, NATO membership, and regional ambitions.

### **Week 10 – Religion, Ideology, and Identity in Strategic Cultures**

- Islam, Hinduism, Judaism as identity-shaping factors.
- Role of sectarian and ethnic divides in shaping strategy.

### **Week 11 – Role of Nuclearisation in Strategic Cultures**

- South Asia: Pakistan and India.
- Israel’s opaque posture, Iran’s nuclear ambitions.

### **Week 12 – Alliances and External Influences**

- US security guarantees in West Asia.
- Soviet, Chinese, and American influence in South Asia.

### **Week 13 – Internal Security and Strategic Cultures**

- Terrorism, insurgencies, and their impact on statecraft.
- Examples: Pakistan’s counterterrorism, Iran’s IRGC, India’s insurgencies.

### **Week 14 – Regional Security Complexes**

- South Asia: India–Pakistan rivalry.
- West Asia: Iran–Saudi–Israel triangle.
- Interlinkages between both regions.

### **Week 15 – Comparative Case Studies**

- Kargil conflict (1999).
- Iran–Iraq War.
- Arab–Israeli wars.

### **Week 16 – Future Trajectories of Strategic Cultures in South and West Asia**

- Hybrid warfare, cyber threats, and AI.
- Regional multipolarity and great power competition.

- Student research presentations.

### Course Requirements

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| • Quiz                       | 15 marks |
| • Assignment                 | 15 marks |
| • Mid-term exam              | 20 marks |
| • Final project/presentation | 15 marks |
| • Final term exam            | 35 marks |

### Recommended Readings

- Colin S. Gray, "Comparative Strategic Culture," *Parameters*, (Winter 1984)
- Adda Bozeman, *Politics and Culture in International History* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1960)
- Jack L. Snyder, "The Concept of Strategic Culture: Caveat Emptor" in Carl G. Jacobsen, ed., *Strategic Power: The United States of America and the USSR* (London: Macmillan Press, 1990)
- Ken Booth, "The Concept of Strategic Culture Affirmed" in Carl G. Jacobsen, ed., *Strategic Power: The United States of America and the USSR* (London: Macmillan Press, 1990)
- Colin S. Gray, *Modern Strategy* (Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press, 1994), chapters 1, 5, 6
- Peter J. Katzenstein, "Introduction: Alternative Perspectives on National Security," in *The Culture of National Security: Norms and Identity in World Politics* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1996)
- Ronald L. Jepperson, Alexander Wendt, and Peter Katzenstein, "Norms, Identity and Culture in National Security," *The Culture of National Security: Norms and Identity in World Politics* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1996)
- Michael J. Mazarr, "Culture in International Relations," *The Washington Quarterly*, Spring 1996, available at [www.globalpolicy.org/gloabliz/cultural/cultur2.htm](http://www.globalpolicy.org/gloabliz/cultural/cultur2.htm).

- Darryl Howlett, "Strategic Culture: Reviewing Recent Literature" Strategic Insights, Volume IV, Issue10(October2005), available at [www.ccc.nps.navy.mil/si/2005/Oct/howlettOct05.asp](http://www.ccc.nps.navy.mil/si/2005/Oct/howlettOct05.asp)
- John Glenn, Darryl Howlett, and Stuart Poore, ed. Neorealism Versus Strategic Culture, chapters 1, 2, and 3. (London: Ashgate, 2004)
- John S. Duffield; Theo Farrell; Richard Price; Michael C. Desch, "Isms and Schisms: Culturalism versus Realism in Security Studies" International Security, Vol. 24, No. 1(Summer 1999) pp. 156-180
- Jeannie Johnson, "Strategic Culture: Refining the Theoretical Construct" (2006)
- Alastair Iain Johnston, "Thinking About Strategic Culture" International Security, vol. 19 (Spring 1995)
- Theo Farrell, "Constructivist Security Studies: Portrait of a Research Program" International Studies Review (2002)