

OBSERVE, INTERACT, EXPERIENCE, SIMULATE

2026 NATO Field School Syllabus
Undergraduate: POL 484-12 and Graduate: POL 880-6

OUR AMBITION FOR YOU

The NATO Field School (NFS) offers an innovative method of student learning by engaging and observing professionals and experts in their working environment and by student immersion in the decision tasks that political, diplomatic, and military personnel face. This apprenticeship-like program creates a cohort of transatlantic students from across the NATO Alliance and by preparing students for entry careers in foreign affairs, the defence and security sectors, international organizations, commerce, and careers in the private sector.

Besides academic study, students are educated in practical and professional problem-solving by simulating international crisis resolutions and strategic communications mentored by professional experts. The program begins with a week of online teaching and then continues in person at multiple locations in Europe and includes multiple short and experiential modules led by experts, senior officials, and visiting professors. Students will meet with Canadian, European, and NATO diplomatic and military leaders in privileged settings to pursue their analysis and questions. The comprehensive and diverse nature of the program develops a new learning community for students, a non-traditional classroom experience, and innovative internationalization training to prepare the next generation of NATO decision makers at home and in the multilateral setting.

The NATO Field School's holistic and integration strategy creates a student cohort that has multiple sources of academic knowledge and experience. As part of NFS, we

also strive to foster a professional network tending to students' interests and put them in touch with experts and career opportunities within their chosen field.
After the NFS, we continue to engage alumni through our NFS Alumni Club network (NAC), which we use to advertise a variety of academic and career opportunities within security and defence as well as some internships exclusively offered to NFS alumni.

The NFS offers 12 undergraduate or 6 graduate credits (POL 484 or POL 880). In addition to tuition, students pay a Program fee that includes extra instruction and curriculum costs for expert modules and simulations, accommodation in Italy, Brussels, Germany, and the Baltics, airfare in Europe, ground transportation, breakfast, and some group meals.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES AND OUTCOMES

Completing the NATO Field School prepares you with cognitive, evaluative, and experiential skills concerning defence, security, armed forces, NATO, the security and defence domains of the European Union, and the diplomacy of international security and collective defence.

In terms of knowledge concerning Defence, Armed Forces, and NATO, you will learn:

- What NATO is, why it was formed, why the USA and Canada joined European Allies to establish the Alliance, how it matters today, and what its current challenges are. Special attention will be on the axiomatic changes to the Alliance pursued by the current US Administration and how this impacts European and Canadian security.
- How the Alliance works, including the role of the political and military organs such as the North Atlantic Council, the Military Committee, SHAPE, and SACEUR.
- Why Allies, including Canada's security and defence policy exist in a multilateral format, including the United Nations, NORAD, NATO, and Canadian security and trade relations with the European Union.
- Why many European Allies and Canada would pursue similar politico-military dynamics in an Alliance not led centrally by the United States.
- What determines Allies' security and defence policy, and how it is formulated.
- How democratic constitutional governments connect policy goals, defence planning and international military operations.
- How the rules-based-international order developed after World War II extends into the basic regime features of the Atlantic Alliance and how it is specified in the 1949 Preamble to the Treaty.
- How national objectives, international legal principles and conventions work.

- How to optimize collective defence and cooperation in crisis decision making.
- How legal opinion and interpretation informs the politico-military decision process.
- How defence budgets, capabilities, and operations are linked.
- How training and military readiness with Allies and Partners affects Allies' objectives.
- What personnel and equipment challenges exist within NATO and European Union states' armed forces.
- How allied armed forces prepare, train, and conduct operations together.
- How NATO and the European Union work with likeminded partners that are not NATO members such as the Partners across the Globe (e.g., Japan, South Korea, Australia, also called the Indo-Pacific Partners, or IP4).
- How the EU, the UN, and other organizations work with NATO.
- How different geographic areas in the NATO area bring out different emphases in policy and action. How Eastern flank and Southern flank, and now Arctic and High Northern flank issues are competing for the NATO agenda.

In terms of knowledge and experience in Simulations, you will acquire and practice the following skills:

- How to absorb material at strategic, operational, and tactical levels
- How to prepare policy briefs at the strategic level
- How to represent your position, interest, and policy
- How to follow and use organizational procedures as used in NATO
- How to understand complementary and competitive interests
- How to understand multilateral compromise and cooperation
- How to convey and defend positions and interests in strategic communication
- How consensus decision-making, red lines, silence procedures, non/white papers, communiqués, and strategic communication form part of the negotiation process.

In terms of overall skills, you will:

- Enhance the ability to think strategically and analyze core texts on NATO, strategic policymaking, and critical issues on how to secure Europe, Canada and a post-2025 transatlantic alliance.
- Formulate one's national position in writing and speaking, negotiate respectfully with other national positions represented by peers and learn how to use effective procedure techniques to achieve objectives and obtain consensus.
- Carry out independent, in-depth research using a wide range of sources, appropriate referencing, and bibliographic methods.

- Learn to work effectively in teams and exhibit effective presentation and strategic communication skills.
- Gain experience, and confidence to apply for a variety of Co-Ops, internships and entry-level positions, including with the CANDEL at NATO-HQ, NATO Defense College, the Strategic Communications Centre of Excellence in Riga, and various other national and international opportunities.

NATO FIELD SCHOOL IN-FIELD STAFF



Dr Alexander Moens Field School Director
moens@sfu.ca



Julia Reinhard Program Coordinator
julia_reinhard@sfu.ca



Daria Furtak
Development Officer
dariamfurtak@gmail.com

STRUCTURE OF THE PROGRAM

The NATO Field School is organized into 4 types of Learning and Skills Development:

1. **Academic**: Lectures, Afternotes, and discussions in class or as group discussions.
2. **Interactive/Experiential**: Briefings, seminars, panels, base and training visits, interactions with Military and Diplomatic personnel and field trips (historical and cultural excursions).
3. **Multilateral Negotiation**: Simulation in problem solving, consensus formation, and multilateral decision making. The first major exercise, the NMDX is a 4-day professional simulation led by NATO Defense College Mentors with SFU as Faculty Advisors. The second simulation is the 3-day NSX NATO Summit Negotiation exercise, assisted by professional NATO staff and mentors, conducted at NATO Headquarters in Brussels.
4. **Professional Communication**: through various activities that involve policybrief writing, podcasts, discussion moderation, conference engagement, Strategic Communication, and press conference skills.

How to Get Started on the NATO Field School even before classes start? By reading the following:

Jens Stoltenberg, *On My Watch*, WW Norton, 2025.

> *This is our Textbook that must be read before May 4. Your questions for SG Stoltenberg are due on the on May 4 at start of class.*

Carlo Massala, *If Russia Wins: A Scenario*, Atlantic Books, 2025.

Sten Rynning, *NATO: From Cold War to Ukraine, a History of the World's Most Powerful Alliance, Yale University Press, 2025.*

Keir Giles, *Who Will Defend Europe?: An Awakened Russia and a Sleeping Continent, Hurst & Co, 2024.*

PROGRAM OUTLINE

You will receive 8 Weekly Schedules sequentially that detail each briefing, guest, or event. The 8-weeks are full time, and you will not be able to take other courses or do other work.

May 4 – May 8. Half-day online teaching, high-level briefings, and simulation training (via Zoom 9:00-1200 Pacific Time, unless indicated earlier start) The 2026 NATO Field School will begin May 4 at 9:00 AM Pacific Time (PST) via Zoom. Classes *that week* are each day from Monday through Friday from 9:00am till 12:00pm (Pacific Time) unless we specify earlier start for some briefings. You will get lectures on NATO

and Euro-Atlantic Security, High-Level Briefings on things military and diplomatic as well as Simulation Training.

May 11 – June 26 Full time, Monday-Friday In-Field
Students arrive in Tallinn, Estonia, no later than May 11 (which for North America means a May 10 departure)
The NFS program continues in person in Tallinn on May 12 at 9:00 AM in the conference room of the Hotel. The program finishes on June 26 in Brussels after a full day of in-field activities. Your first day to travel home will be June 27. During the in-field portion of the program, the NFS will conduct full-time programming based out of Tallinn, Riga, Wiesbaden, Rome, and Brussels.

July 6 – July 31 (Online, asynchronous): During this period, students will complete NFS assignments and can virtually consult NFS teaching staff for support. All final assignments are due on July 31, and only extensions for exceptional circumstances will be considered.

Short Term Mentors In-Field



Toms Rostoks is an Associate Professor in international relations at the Department of Political Science, University of Latvia. He is also a Senior Researcher at the Centre for Security and Strategic Research at the National Defence Academy of Latvia. Recently, he has co-edited with Nora Vanaga the book "Deterring Russia in Europe" (Routledge, 2018). His articles have recently appeared in the Journal of Baltic Studies (2017), Journal on Baltic Security (2016) and Infinity Journal (2016).



Patrick Andrews fulfilled 19 years with NATO in the International Staff Operations Division at NATO HQ. Since, he has been asked to lead on the rewrite of the NATO Response System and before in NATO military appointments. He is a versatile senior operations manager with proven high-level crisis management, policy, planning, capacity building, and exercising experience in demanding and complex roles in international environments.



Ted Whiteside took on the role of acting Assistant Secretary General for Public Diplomacy NATO. Before taking on that role, he was Secretary of the North Atlantic Council, and Director of the NATO Ministerial and Summit Task Force in Brussels. He was awarded the Meritorious Service Medal by the Governor General of Canada for the negotiations conducted with the Federal Republic of Germany



Soren Knudsen retired as a colonel in the Danish Army in the Autumn of 2021. The first half of his 42 years long career Aide de Camp to the General in Command of the Danish Army; Instructor of War Studies at the Royal Danish Army Officers Academy and Staff Officer in Defence Command Denmark. The latter half of his career included positions as the Deputy Head of Mission at the Danish Embassy and a Faculty Advisor until 2024 in different positions at the NATO Defence College (NDC).



Dr. Luca Ratti is an Associate Professor in History of International Relations with the Department of Foreign Languages, Literatures and Cultures and Adjunct Professor in International Relations with the Department of Political Sciences at the University of Rome III. He is also an adjunct faculty member at the American University of Rome. He received his PhD in International Relations from University of Wales at Cardiff.



Dr. Mark Webber is a Professor of International Politics at the University of Birmingham, UK, a Non-resident Senior Fellow at the NATO Defence College, Rome, and a Fellow of the Academy of Social Sciences. Mark has worked extensively on NATO, European security and transatlantic relations.



Oana Lungescu is Distinguished Fellow at the Royal United Services Institute (RUSI) and Senior Adviser at the European Policy Centre (EPC). The longest serving NATO Spokesperson (2010-2023) and the first woman to hold the post, she directed alliance communications during the most turbulent period in a generation, providing strategic advice to two Secretaries General – Jens Stoltenberg and Anders Fogh Rasmussen.



Colonel (Retired) Dr. Ian Hope is a distinguished Canadian senior officer and scholar whose experience spans operational command, strategic studies and NATO policy-analysis. He currently serves as Historical Adviser to the Supreme Allied Commander Europe at Supreme Headquarters Allied Powers Europe(SHAPE) in Casteau,Belgium.



Dr. Elis Vllasi is Senior Director of Academic Operations and Teaching Associate Professor in the College of Emerging and Collaborative Studies, at the University of Tennessee, Knoxville, USA. His work focuses on grey zone warfare, including Russian and Chinese influence operations, disinformation, and the strategic use of emerging technologies. His research examines Russian WMD narratives and China's exploitation of open science ecosystems in Western countries.



Jim Stokes became the Director of Nuclear Policy in November 2023. He was responsible for developing and implementing NATO nuclear policy, organizing exercises, and providing decision support to the Secretary General and Allied leaders on all aspects of nuclear deterrence. Prior to NATO, Mr. Stokes had a long career within the U.S. Department of Defense, holding positions in the Office of the Secretary of Defense, Naval Special Warfare Command, and the Office of the Chief of Naval Operations.

NATO FIELD SCHOOL EXPECTATIONS AND CODE OF CONDUCT

The NATO Field School operates with high expectations for our common conduct as we will be working, interacting, and travelling together for weeks.

What you should expect:

- To have variation in every day.
- To be always punctual, prepared, and adaptable, including in virtual mode.
- To follow dress code requirements in all locations.
- To use formal (but not stilted) language in all interaction.
- To be alert, use situational awareness, and ready to follow instructions.
- To operate under Chatham House Rule, meaning that you cannot attribute information (ex. quote the name or rank of speaker or contact person or the source of the information) outside the NATO Field School.
- To not post on social media any NFS contents without permission from NATO Field School Staff.
- To have limited access to mobile phones or electronics at secure locations
- To have your passport with you on all days, except when told to leave it in hotel.

For further logistical information, including the dress code, code of conduct, Chatham House Rule, please consult the **NFS Handbook.**

PROGRAM ASSIGNMENTS (please consult Canvas for detailed assignment descriptions)

1. **Textbook Assignment (J. Stoltenberg, *On My Watch*) before week 1 of the NFS (250 words, 5%). Formulate three questions for SecGen Stoltenberg based on the reading of his book. Explain in a short paragraph each why you chose that question.** You will submit your assignment no later than May 4 at 9:00 on Canvas. The best questions will be selected for the Q & A session following former Sec-Gen Stoltenberg's briefing.
2. **Academic and Experiential Participation (25%):** Students are evaluated on engagement and demonstrated understanding of the program materials, including required readings, lectures, and briefings and interaction with stakeholders. Questions, reflections, comments, consistent and punctual attendance are all part of this participation. *This mark is not simply based on how often and how many questions you ask or how often you comment in class. Rather it is based on a holistic assessment of your overall learning as we interact on a daily basis.*

3. **Multilateral Negotiation Performance (25%):** During the two major simulations (NSX and NMDX), students will be evaluated on the following criteria:
    a. Showing strong familiarity with the simulation documents
    b. Constructive engagement with the simulation
    c. Effectively representing their assigned role
    d. Display skills in multilateral decision-making processes and outcomes. Assignments during simulation training may be graded and will be part of the mark.
4. **Analytic Personal Report (APR) composed of max. 2000 words (25%).** The plan is that you make daily or weekly notes for yourself and that you use these to write this Report in July, after the in-field portion. In this APR you will explain what key learning points, central themes and/or critical issues were most important to you in the NFS experience. As you discuss these themes you will explain what new cognitive knowledge and understanding you gained on them. Finally, how this experience influenced your thinking and assessment of these themes. It is strongly recommended that you keep a weekly diary of key themes, issues, events and learning points that will help you write the essay. *This report will be due on July 31 on Canvas.*
5. **Group Assignments (20%):**
   NFS students will be placed in Undergraduate and Graduate Working Groups (WG) for the duration of the program. These WG's will take their name from a letter of the NATO phonetic alphabet (Alpha, Bravo, Charlie, etc.). Undergraduate students will complete one Podcast per WG. Graduate students will complete one Conference Paper/Policy Brief per WG.

    a. **UNDERGRADUATE: Podcast:** There will be six WG Topics formulated for the program based on the range of topic experiences in field. Students in each WG will select the topic from the given list by NFS Staff. It will be on a first come first serve basis. Each week the WGs should meet to discuss and assign work on their topic in order to make steady progress. The WG conducts an interview with the designated person while in field that week. Each WG will decide how to structure its podcast episode, and how to divide the tasks required to make the podcast amongst themselves. For more detailed instructions on how to produce their podcast, see the Assignment Description document on Canvas.

    b. **GRADUATE**: **NATO Policy Briefs and Student-Engagement Conference (NSEC) June 19:** There will be approximately four graduate student WG's

who will each produce a Policy Brief of 2500 words max. The four topics are provided by the NFS based on the experiences in field and will be posted on Canvas before May 4. Each WG will choose its topic (first come, first served). Each week the WGs should meet to discuss and assign work on their topic in order to make steady progress. Each WG will seek an opportunity to meet with an academic and practitioner to discuss their topic while we are in field. During the NATO Student Engagement Conference (June 19) experts on the four topics will give presentations. After the end of in-field NFS, each WG will finish their policy briefs before the deadline. The two best NSEC papers will be nominated by the NFS staff for publication in the Canadian Military Journal or the Journal of Military and Strategic Studies.

ASSIGNED READINGS

During the May 4 —June 26 segment of the NFS, the readings will be paced so that they match the program in the field. After June 26, the pace and volume of readings are determined by the final assignment you need to finish and based on each WG's research topic.

Most readings can be found as e-copies on SFU Online Library (SFUOL), SFU Canvas (Canvas), Google Scholar, internet search, or simply by clicking on the reading link [where available].

Pre-reading: Students must have read the following book before we start on May 4 (see above deadlines).

Jens Stoltenberg, *On My Watch*, WW Norton, 2025. *This is our Textbook that must be read before May 4.* Your assignment, which includes the questions for former SG Stoltenberg, are due on the on May 4 at start of class on Canvas.

Week 1: May 4-8 (Online Week)

Sten Rynning, NATO: *From Cold War to Ukraine, a History of the World's Most Powerful Alliance*. Yale University Press, 2024.

Mark Webber, "NATO 101: A Guide to the Alliance's Purpose, Structure and History," Section 1: Introduction to NATO (2024 edition) on Canvas.

Text of the Washington Treaty, NATO Online.

Baltic Amber Simulation Training Documents (Canvas)

Moens, Alexander. *How NATO's Values and Functions Influence its Actions*. NDC Fellowship Monograph 7. May 2016. [Ch. 1, 2.1].

Part 1 in Jochen Rehrl (ed.), "Handbook on CSDP: The common security and defence policy of the European Union." 4th Edition. Federal Ministry of Defence, Republic of Austria. (2021) (Canvas or Online).

Week 2: May 12-17 (Estonia and Helsinki)

Must Read before May 13: "Ämari Air Base: Information Package for Visiting Units" (Canvas, NFS-Only Confidential)

Seth G. Jones, "Russia's Shadow War Against the West," *CSIS Briefs*, March 18, 2025, Online, about 20 pages.

Lange- Ionatamišvili, E., Lindgren, J., Palmer, A., Pamment, J., Svetoka, S. Countering Information Influence Operations in the Nordic-Baltic Region. Riga:
NATO Strategic Communications Centre of Excellence

Laura Kayali, et al., "Europe is under attack from Russia, why is it not fighting back? *Politico.eu*, November 25, 2024.

Week 3 and 4: Latvia (May 18 – 26) and Germany (May 27 – May 31)

Maris Andzans, "Six years down, many more to come," MLI Commentary, December 20, 2023.

Pamment, James, and Anneli Lindvall Kimber. "Fact-checking and debunking: a best practice guide to dealing with disinformation." (2021). Pages 5-40.

Must Read before May 28 NSATU visit: "NATO's Support for Ukraine," NATO.int

Must Read before May 29 European Space Agency Briefing:
João Reis, "European union defense and security strategy for space and groundbased systems against hybrid threats,"*Acta Astronautica*,Volume 225, 2024 (Online or Canvas)

Week 5 and 6: Italy (June 1 – June 12)

Students should read a general introduction into KFOR, especially the "about KFOR" section: https://jfcnaples.nato.int/kfor

Students will be reading the NMDX Exercise scenario and instructions prior to the start of NMDX at NDC on June 8

Week 7 and 8: Brussels (June 13 – June 26)

Students will be reading the NSX Exercise scenario and instructions prior to the NSX start on June 22.

Moens, Alexander. *How NATO's Values and Functions Influence its Actions*. NDC Fellowship Monograph 7. May 2016. [Ch. 1, 2.1].

Must Read before June 15: Mark Webber, "NATO 101: A Guide to the Alliance's Purpose, Structure and History," Section 2: NATO Structure and Committees Introduction to NATO (2024 edition) on Canvas.

Must Read before June 22: "NATO: Defence Expenditure of NATO Countries" (20142024) (on Canvas), 16 pages.

Must Read before June 15, "NSX Instructions, Scenario and Lead-in (Canvas, NFSOnly Confidential) andMDX Lead-in and Scenario Readi (to be posted on Canvas).

European Commission, Joint White Paper for European Defence Readiness 2030, March 19, 2025. Online, 23 pages.

Overall Resource Readings for Topic Understanding

Fiona Hill and Angela Stent, "The Kremlin's Grand Delusions," *Foreign Affairs*, February 15, 2023. (Canvas).

Michael Newton, "Ukraine and NATO: Bridging the Gap between War and Accession, Centre for European Policy Analysis," July 29, 2025 (cepa.org).

Rob Huebert, "Understanding Arctic Security: A Defence of Traditional Security Analysis," in W. Greaves and Lackenbauer *Breaking Through*, 2021. (SFU Online)

Alexander Sorg, "Force de L'Europe: How Realistic is a French Nuclear Umbrella?" Commentary, War on the Rocks, March 24, 2025.

Julian K. Melchior, "The Lessons of Ukraine's Drone Warfare, *Wall Street Journal*, November 5, 2025. (On Canvas)

Alexander Lanoszka, *Military Alliances in the Twenty-First Century*, 2022

Timothy Andrews Sayle, *Enduring Alliance*, 2019

Stanley R. Sloan, *Defense of the West: Transatlantic Security from Truman to Trump.* Manchester University Press, 2nd edition, 2020.

Thomas Juneau et al., (Eds.) *Canadian Defence Policy in Theory and Practice*, 2020, especially chapters 5, 6, 10 and 18.

Mark Webber et al., *What's Wrong with* NATO *and How to Fix it*, 2021.

Joseph Jockel and Joel Sokolsky, *Canada in* NATO 1949-2019, 2021.

Rehrl, Jochen, "Handbook on CSDP: The common security and defence policy of the European Union." Volume I, 4th Edition. Federal Ministry of Defence, Republic of Austria. (2021).

Peter Apps, *Deterring Armageddon: A Biography of Nato*. Wildfire. June 2024.

Alexander Lanoszka, Alexander, Christian Leuprecht, and Alexander Moens (eds). Lessons from the Enhanced Forward Presence, 2017-2020. NDC Research Paper No.14. NATO Defense College – Rome, November 2020.

COURSE POLICIES Grading
This course will use the SFU Political Science grading scale [click here].

Formatting Written Assignments
All written work turned in for this class **must be**: single-space, 1-inch (2.54 cm) margins on all sides, typed in 12-point Times New Roman, black font, pages

numbered, word count noted, in Chicago Style citation format, turned in on time and via Canvas. Word count excludes the bibliography and footnotes. All files must be submitted in MS Word (.doc) format only, using file name scheme, "POL484_Assignment Name,_Committee (e.g., POL484_Integrated Committee Paper_Alpha). If you are a graduate student, use POL880 instead of POL484.

All due dates for this course use Pacific Standard Time (PST). If you are in a different time zone, be sure to submit on time in PST time.

Late Policy for Assignments
All coursework is expected to be submitted on time. Penalties for late work will apply. In case of medical emergency or other extenuating reason contact Teaching Staff at earliest opportunity.

Plagiarism and Artificial Intelligence such as ChatGPT
The bottom line is pretty simple: Your thinking, analysis, writing and sourcing should be your own. Copying and pasting or taking other people's or AI's work and making it look like your own is what you need to always avoid for that is, essentially the equivalent of lying and stealing. Therefore, when you do research, it should be you doing the research and not another human agent or AI program. When you use a source in your own words, you still need to reference that source by means of an endnote. And when you quote a literal piece or small passage (for example because it is very good, very funny, or very controversial) you put it into proper quotation marks and reference it. Do not use ChatGPT at all until the intellectual world figures out how to deal with it. Traditional Google searches and search engines are ok.

Plagiarism: "What is it and How to Avoid it"
Plagiarism involves using another author's words without attribution or otherwise presenting another person's work as one's own. It is a fraudulent and serious academic offence that will result in a severe academic penalty. Also, close paraphrasing of another author's work & self-plagiarism, including submitting the same, or substantively the same, work for academic evaluation more than once, are unacceptable practices that will result in a severe academic penalty.

The university policies on academic honesty are available [click here]. The Political Science Department's interpretation of this policy can be found [click here]. All students are responsible for familiarising themselves with these policies. A helpful SFU Library tutorial on plagiarism is available [click here]. On how to avoid plagiarism click here.

Academic Freedom, Respect, and Inclusiveness

Simon Fraser University and the NATO Field School promote the values of academic freedom, openness to diverse views, professional courtesy, respect and sensitivity to all informed and civil conversation and points of view. We commit to fostering a program that is welcoming, respectful, and inclusive.