



FACULTY-LED  
STUDY ABROAD

## KIIS Slavic Europe: Poland Program, Summer 2026

**CRIM 489 / LEAD 475: NATO and International Security**

**Instructor:** Brian Simpkins, Ph.D., Ed.D.

**Email:** Brian.Simpkins@eku.edu

**Instructor's office hours:** on site and by appointment

*Syllabus subject to change*

**1. Course Description:** This course will examine international security through instruments of state power and collective security using Eastern Europe and Poland as a backdrop. Students will learn the instruments of state power through the DIME concept (Diplomacy, Intelligence, Military, and Economic) and discuss how they are being used today by states in various contexts. Students will also explore alliances and collective security through an examination of the United Nations (UN) Security Council and the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) using Poland and the United States as case studies. Current conflicts and potential regional flashpoints will also be examined including broader international consequences of localized conflicts. The course will conclude with an examination what the future may hold for alliances and international security considering current events.

### 2. Overall KIIS Program Student Learning Outcomes:

#### KIIS Study Abroad Mission Statement:

KIIS provides high-quality education abroad programs for students from all diverse backgrounds that promote deep international learning, are integrated into the curriculum, and encourage critical and creative thinking. Our goal is to help students understand the wider world and develop personal and professional skills for lifelong enrichment. We strive to go beyond generalizations and cultural stereotypes to help foster a nuanced appreciation of the world in which we live.

#### Students participating on KIIS study abroad programs aim to:

- 1) Understand contemporary issues of their host country/countries (i.e. KIIS program location).
- 2) Develop skills to interact comfortably in a global setting.
- 3) Understand other cultures.

Prior to your KIIS study abroad program, and again at the conclusion of your program, KIIS will ask each student to a) answer a few multiple-choice questions, and b) write a short reflective essay (two paragraphs in length) related to the elements detailed above. There is no right or wrong answer, and your responses will not affect your grade in any way. The purpose of the exercise is to help KIIS measure the effectiveness of its study abroad programs.

### 3. Course Objectives and Specific Learning Outcomes:

| Upon successful completion of this course, students will be able to:                                                                                         | How students will practice each outcome:                     | How student achievement of each outcome will be assessed:                                    |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Explain the instruments of state power through the DIME concept (Diplomacy, Intelligence, Military, and Economic) and in relation to international security. | Readings, Class Discussions, Excursions, Individual Research | Pre-Departure Content Review, Current Event Reflections, Excursion Reflections, Vlog Project |
| Apply the DIME concept to appraise current events and responses by states.                                                                                   | Readings, Class Discussions, Excursions, Individual Research | Current Event Reflections, Excursion Reflections                                             |
| Explain the structure of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) and the United Nations (UN) Security Council.                                         | Readings, Class Discussions, Excursions, Individual Research | Independent Research Project                                                                 |
| Examine current conflicts and potential regional flashpoints to identify broader international consequences of localized conflicts.                          | Readings, Class Discussions, Excursions, Individual Research | Current Event Reflections, Independent Research Project, Vlog Project                        |
| Evaluate the future of alliances, collective security, and international security considering current events.                                                | Readings, Class Discussions, Excursions, Individual Research | Independent Research Project, Vlog Project                                                   |

### 4. Major Topics covered in the Course:

- Alliances, Coalitions, and Collective Security
- Asymmetric Conflict
- Instruments of State Power (DIME: Diplomacy, Intelligence, Military, Economic)
- International Law
- International Security
- North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO)
- Regional Flashpoints for Conflict
- United Nations (UN), Security Council

### 5. Required Readings:

Hoehn, A., & Shanker, T. (2023). *Age of danger: Keeping America safe in an era of new superpowers, new weapons, and new threats*. Hachette Books.  
<https://www.hachettebookgroup.com/titles/andrew-hoehn/age-of-danger/9780306829109/>.  
Hard copies and eBook versions can be purchased through various sources.

Additional readings will be provided in electronic format (e.g., PDF) through the class website. The syllabus will also be posted to the class website.

## 6. Graded Assignments:

**Pre-Departure Content Review (25 Points):** To enable effective class discussions, students will fully read the required textbook (Hoehn & Shanker 2023) and additional readings on the DIME concept (Diplomacy, Intelligence, Military, Economic). Students will submit a two-page summary (formatted per APA 7<sup>th</sup> edition) in which with one page provides a summary of the course textbook and the second page explaining the DIME concept. Students may only use and reference the course textbook and the assigned readings for this assignment as outside research is not needed. Students will submit this assignment prior to departure.

**Participation (100 points):** Students will be graded on their active engagement and behavior with out-of-class activities (e.g., guest speakers, tours, excursions, etc.) (10%) and during class sessions (10%) during which students will discuss course content, current events, as well as share insights related to experiences in Poland. Students are expected to attend every class session and participate in all out-of-class activities as directed by the instructor/program director. KIIS requires that any unexcused absence results in a grade reduction. A student's course letter grade will be deducted one full letter grade for any unexcused absence. Students with two or more unexcused absences may be expelled from the program.

**Current Event Reflections (50 points; 25 points each):** Students will be tasked with reading news from local media sources in Warsaw and Krakow to stay up to date on current events associated with Poland and international security. Each week, students will submit a one-page reflection (formatted per APA 7<sup>th</sup> edition) summarizing the articles and connecting them to the course.

**Excursion Reflections (75 points; 25 points each):** Planned excursions during the program include the Nazi Death Camps at Auschwitz, the U.S. Embassy in Warsaw, and the U.S. Consulate in Krakow. Post-excursion, students will develop and submit a two-page reflection (formatted per APA 7<sup>th</sup> edition) addressing specific questions.

**Independent Research Project (100 points):** Students will examine the future of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) and its impacts to U.S. and Poland national security. Students will develop a five-page paper (formatted per APA 7<sup>th</sup> edition) using scholarly and grey literature sources, course readings, and experiences during the program (e.g., excursions, guest speakers, etc.).

**Vlog Project (50 points):** Students will use their mobile devices to document their experiences throughout the program and to develop a summary video to be screened during the last class session of the program. As part of the project, students will complete and incorporate three (3) interviews with local Krakow and Warsaw residents to obtain their thoughts on national and international security issues as they relate to Poland. Students will also provide a reflection of the program to address questions such as what was learned, how can experiences be applied in the future, etc. The expected length of the Vlog is four to six minutes.

### Total Course Points:

Pre-Departure Content Review: 25 Points

Participation: 100 Points

Current Event Reflection 50 Points  
Excursion Reflection: 75 Points  
Independent Research Project: 100 Points  
Vlog Project: 50 Points  
Total Points: 450

### **Grading Scale:**

|       |                  |
|-------|------------------|
| A     | 360 – 400 Points |
| B     | 320 – 359 Points |
| C     | 280 – 319 Points |
| D     | 240 – 279 Points |
| E (F) | 0 – 239 Points   |

Grades will only be rounded up to the next higher grade if the percentage equates to 88.5%, 78.5%, 68.5%, or 58.5%. No exceptions to this policy will be made. Additionally, extra credit will not be offered during the course.

### **7. Generative AI Policy:**

Students are prohibited from using generative AI in any way on any assignment in this course. The use of generative AI in this course will be considered academic dishonesty and would result in a failing grade on the assignment.

### **8. Attendance Policy:**

KIIS program participants are expected to be punctual to and in attendance at all classes, presentations, meetings and required excursions, and to remain with the program for the full academic period. Unexcused absences from classes and/or mandatory meetings will result in a lowering of the student's final grade, as will excessive tardiness. Multiple unexcused absences could result in expulsion from the program. Any absence from an academic class session must be excused for medical reasons.

### **9. Disability Accommodation:**

KIIS will make every reasonable effort to provide accommodations for program participants with special needs or disabilities, but we cannot guarantee that we will be able to do so. Be aware that many foreign countries do not have comprehensive legislation comparable to the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). As a result, businesses and other establishments operating in foreign countries may not be able to provide accommodations.

If you have a disability accommodation need, we recommend you contact your KIIS Campus Representative, <https://www.kiis.org/about-kiis/contact-us/campus-representatives/> early in your program selection process so that s/he has time to discuss any specific needs, including which KIIS programs may be best suited. You also are welcome to contact KIIS Assistant Director, Maria Canning, [maria.canning@wku.edu](mailto:maria.canning@wku.edu), to discuss your disability accommodation needs (e.g. housing, transportation, excursions, class schedule, etc.).

Immediately after acceptance, notify KIIS Admissions and Enrollment Specialist, Haley McTaggart, [haley.mctaggart@wku.edu](mailto:haley.mctaggart@wku.edu), if you have a special need or disability that might

require any form of accommodation abroad. Failure to notify KIIS may prevent you from participating on your KIIS program.

If you require any accommodations abroad, you must provide KIIS Admissions and Enrollment Specialist, Haley McTaggart, an accommodation letter from your home campus' disability accommodation office that lists the accommodations you are eligible to receive. Please do not request accommodations directly from your KIIS Program Director or other KIIS Faculty; the KIIS Office will notify your KIIS Program Director and/or Faculty after we have received your above accommodation letter.

In some cases, you may need to make arrangements for a caregiver to join you on your KIIS program, should your physician, campus disability accommodation office, or KIIS make such a recommendation or require it.

### **10. Title IX / Discrimination & Harassment:**

Recent attention to gender discrimination and sexual harassment at colleges and universities reminds us of the importance of adhering to standards of ethical and professional behavior. KIIS Study Abroad is committed to supporting and encouraging safe and equitable educational environments for our students, faculty, and program directors. Students, faculty, and program directors are required to be civil and treat each other with dignity and respect. As such, harassment and/or discrimination of any kind will not be permitted or tolerated.

Sexual misconduct (sexual harassment, sexual assault, and sexual/dating/domestic violence) and sex discrimination are violations of KIIS policies. If you experience an incident of sex/gender-based discrimination, harassment and/or sexual misconduct, you are encouraged to report it to a) KIIS Assistant Director, Maria Canning (+1-859-200-1000) or KIIS Executive Director, John Dizgun (+1-270-227-2288), b) WKU's Title IX Coordinator, Ena Demir (270-745-6867 / [ena.demir@wku.edu](mailto:ena.demir@wku.edu)) or WKU's Title IX Investigator, Michael Crowe (270-745-5429 / [michael.crowe@wku.edu](mailto:michael.crowe@wku.edu)). Please note that while you may report an incident of sex/gender based discrimination, harassment and/or sexual misconduct to a KIIS program director and/or faculty member, KIIS program directors and faculty are considered "Responsible Employees" of Western Kentucky University and MUST report what you share to WKU's Title IX Coordinator or Title IX Investigator.

If you would like to speak with someone who may be able to afford you confidentiality, you may contact WKU's Counseling and Testing Center, <https://www.wku.edu/heretohelp/> at 270-745-3159.

For more information on KIIS Title IX, see <https://www.kiis.org/students/health-safety/title-ix-clery/>; additional Title IX resources can be found here <https://www.wku.edu/titleix/titleixbrochure2020.pdf>.

Everyone should be able to participate on a KIIS program, attend a KIIS event, or work in a KIIS environment (e.g. KIIS office) without fear of sexual harassment or discrimination of any kind. Be respectful of each other.