



Praise for NPEC's Public Policy Fellowship

Thank you for the program. It provided me with historical and academic insights of the nuclear enterprise and a technical understanding of nuclear weapons.

Katherine Leggiero

Policy Advisor for Extended Deterrence in the Indo-Pacific, U.S. Office of Under Secretary for Policy

I was able to focus some time on understanding the history and current issues within the nuclear community. So often our day-to-day work diverts us from that strategic thinking that is needed to properly plan our actions within our portfolios. Several of the topics were very relevant to my current Division scope.

Amy Lautenschlager

Chief of Advanced Studies and Analysis Division, U.S. Air Force Nuclear Weapon Center

I benefited most from being exposed to a diverse array of topics and people in the nuclear world throughout your course. Specifically, it has been my experience working for multiple federal agencies and serving in the military that we sometimes become siloed (no pun intended) in our own work as professionals. We may become subject matter experts in one area of the nuclear enterprise, or we may be surrounded by others with similar experience. Despite that, it is crucial for leaders in the military and federal government sectors to collaborate across these boundaries. Your course was an outlet for us to do so. These are not easy topics, but what you and your staff at NPEC provided us was a channel to work together.

Marshall Pennock

Analyst, U.S. Government Accountability Office

I really enjoyed the course and got a lot out of it. The big things I took away from the course were the development and types of nuclear power plants as well as their strengths and weaknesses. I also learned a lot about the time lines for nuclear weapons development and fielding [a critical JCPOA assumption].

Richard LaRiviere

Deputy Division Chief, Nuclear Force Development, U.S. Air Force

I thought that it was well organized (the order of the lecture topics), well researched (I appreciated the lecture notes and additional resources provided outside of the lectures), and the two hour lectures worked well for me on most days (long enough to dig into the content, but not so long that I had many issues balancing work requirements with the course).

Josiah Hennig

Institutional Training Branch Chief, US Army Nuclear and Countering Weapons of Mass Destruction Agency

What I got most out of the course was a very in-depth introduction into the many facets of the nuclear issue: how nuclear energy is created and stored, how it can be used to make weapons, how warfare has developed and will continue to develop in a way that is very threatening to civilians, and how this all plays into nuclear policy. Through the class I was able to read articles and passages that I likely would not have otherwise. I was also able to sit in on a number of seminars with an intriguing variety of voices in the nuclear policy sphere. I definitely intend on digging deeper into nuclear policy through NPEC and my own research as well.

David Ottoson
Intelligence Analyst, Federal Bureau of Investigations

The course provided a timely refresher on reinforcing the history and development of US nuclear weapons and nuclear energy basics. In particular, I learned about the advancements in nuclear power technology. Additionally, the Energy Economics: Nuclear and Non-nuclear seminar broadened my understanding of the US energy economy and emerging technology.

Claude Lambert
US Space Command Joint Task Force Space Defense Director, Strategy, Plans, and Policy Directorate, US Army

By attending this course, I gained a much greater understanding of the evolution of public policy relating to nuclear energy and nuclear weapons. The background on these topics starting from WWII onwards helped me understand how these weapons were deployed to support different military strategies over time. I also learned relevant technical information related to this field, which helped me understand some of the major challenges in implementing effective nonproliferation treaties. A few things that I found particularly interesting are as follows. Improvements in precision guidance and increases in weapon yields act in opposition to one another because improvements in guidance reduce the yield required to destroy a target. I also learned a lot about the pros and cons of nuclear power as a future source of green energy. Prior to the course, I had thought that nuclear power was the best green-energy option, but after reviewing the details and considering the significant safety and proliferation risks, in addition to frequent cost and schedule overruns on nuclear power projects, I now think that nuclear power is not a particularly attractive option. It appears to have major safety and proliferation risks and also appears to be more expensive than most of the alternatives. I was also surprised to learn that most of the new/advanced nuclear reactor designs appear to suffer from similar shortcomings as older reactor designs and also don't appear to be financially viable, at least not without significant government subsidies.

Robert Flicek
Senior Member, Technical Staff, Sandia National Laboratories

Let me say that the class was fantastic. Prior to the fellowship my knowledge of nuclear issues was pretty one-dimensional. There were nuclear weapons, a treaty or two, and vague guidance on when/how the U.S. might use them. Done. I'd never considered the implications seemingly tangential issues such as civil nuclear power (outside of environmental concerns), the economics of nuclear power, or the electric grid. Drawing the connection between civil and military nuclear applications was especially eye opening for me. Also, as a non-STEM person, learning about bomb design, the enrichment process and power plant design was completely new. Truthfully I did wonder how useful the technical information would be for me in my work but all of the learning brought so much depth and understanding to issues I encounter on the job. I just really loved the whole class.

Felicia Lopez
Senior Attorney, GAO

One part of the course that was very helpful was to hear the political and international side of nuclear weapons. The technical side of the weapons is very interesting in itself, but the international and political ramifications of the weapon is perhaps more complex. Learning about the many steps required to make a weapon and how nuclear power plants are very relevant this process was also very enlightening.

Daniel Richardson
Research Engineer, Sandia National Laboratories

First, it was a pleasure to take this course with the NPEC and it certainly deepened my understanding of nuclear history, technology, and arms. My takeaways from the course are as follows: The trends in nuclear proliferation, civil or otherwise, present a significant challenge for U.S. policymakers. In some cases, such as Iran and North Korea, nonproliferation objectives may not be realized and the policy goalposts must shift. But where they can be, U.S. policymakers should think creatively about how to bargain effectively to limit vertical or horizontal proliferation and promote strategic stability. Finally, the lecture on space weapons was a helpful introduction to a complex but critical policy issue that will hopefully become a top agenda item during discussions with allies, partners, and adversaries alike.

Matthew Mai
Associate Editor, The National Interest

Nice flow to move through the beginning of nuclear fission to weapon and energy use. I learned about the thoughts and concerns of the scientists and policy makers even before the first use. Again, good history. What was most important for me to learn was the change in the knowledge base of all countries. The thought that information or even material access can be controlled to prevent a meaningful nuclear event has become OBE. You convinced me that those motivated can obtain both and do it very quickly. Most importantly, I appreciate that technology, my background, can't assuage all concerns. We must have policy and diplomacy. Finally, it does appear that the future of weapons is limited because of the effectiveness of precision conventional explosives and perhaps cyber. Not sure this makes the world safer.

Gilbert Theroux
Systems Engineer, Sandia National Laboratories

I learned a great deal. In particular I had very little understanding/knowledge of how nuclear reactors and weapons are designed and operated. This course was incredibly valuable at getting a good baseline knowledge on this topic. I've already used the information I learned in this course to better understand products I'm reading at work and expect my notes from the course to be useful reference material for me for many years to come.

Sara Baratta
All Source Analyst, U.S. Defense Intelligence Agency

The main items I got out of the course was in the links between civil nuclear power efforts and their potential for proliferation. Most interesting was some of the factors that drove the various non-proliferation efforts over the last 70 years. The primary benefit as a defense analyst is to see parallels in previous nuclear efforts and how those efforts could be replicated.

James Wink
Senior Intelligence Analyst, U.S. Defense Intelligence Agency

Thank you for a great fellowship. The courses provided me with a well-rounded understanding of nuclear policy, specifically with respect to the science and history behind how today's policies have developed.

Katherine McLaughlin
Intelligence Officer, U.S. Defense Intelligence Agency

I found the series of lectures covering nuclear energy basics to be of particular value for me. I really appreciated the discussions on the different bomb designs and understanding how the technology progressed over time. I also really liked that you brought in other experts for the Monday lectures, which allowed this fellowship to cover a wide array of topics.

Marissa Bopp
Intelligence Officer, U.S. Defense Intelligence Agency

I loved the progression of the class, how you provided historical context on how strategy evolved from city busting to precision bombing. I found the sections on the advent of CEP and the nuclear yield revolution very interesting. I never realized what happens during an air burst vs a ground burst, which are relevant to my nuclear verification responsibility. The discussion on the various nuclear deterrence philosophies was also thought provoking, as well as the lessons learned from our failures in staging and consolidating ships and aircraft when left in us as sitting ducks. The lecture on fission, fusion and the bomb was my favorite because I finally understood how the physics package works; I was fascinated learning how much energy is released when atoms are transmuted. Lastly, I really liked the sections on nuclear energy production and the proliferation risks associated with the nuclear industry. Overall, I was extremely pleased to be part of the fellowship and to have obtained such a rich library of content that I can use throughout my career.

Vinson Lewis

F-16 Deputy Program Manager for Nuclear Matters, Air Force Nuclear Weapons Center, Air Delivered Capabilities Directorate

As far as what I got out of the course, I think I got a much better understanding of a lot of high level parts of nuclear policy on both the domestic and international fronts. I think my favorite part was the weekly guest lectures and getting to hear from and interact with different experts each week with different areas of expertise. I think the only thing I would want to change or see more of is possible additional time for guest lectures (make them slightly longer) and possibly to do some additional in person sessions. Although I am someone who benefited from the remote option while being away on a campaign I also think some hybrid or additional in person options could be a good way to get additional engagement.

Ben Kamens

Digital Director, Trudy Busch Valentine for Senate

I got much more out of the course than expected. I'd expected to learn about nuclear technologies and policy topics which may have commonality with civil space interests. I learned there is more in common than I'd expected between military nuclear and civil space nuclear challenges & opportunities. I'd not realize the extent to which small modular reactor interests and power reactor design may intersect with military and nonproliferation concerns. In addition, I gained a greater appreciation for current nonproliferation policy issues and also the way the military and defense students in the course think and what they inquire about. Regarding the format of the course: I personally thought the virtual format is great. I was able to fully both listen and participate, and the variety of students and lecturers available remotely was impressive. Your approaches of making time after each session for more questions and discussion, and also having guest lectures both enhanced learning for me.

Michele Gates

Special Assistant to the Director, NASA

The most beneficial aspect of your course was learning the status of the nuclear issues. It is difficult to keep current with all issues even when your job is closely related to some. I appreciated listening to you and the participants with the different perspectives. Information on current nuclear threats by state and nonstate actors was very important.

Craig Odekirk

Program Manager, Air Force Nuclear Weapons Center/ Sentinel

I am very grateful for the chance I had to participate in the NPEC Public Policy Fellows program. It has been intense, with much reading and many hours attending class -- unfortunately not in person but via Zoom, however I also have to recognize that since I live and work in Italy, I would have not been able to join the program in person for two months: thus, unfortunate events turned out into an opportunity for me personally. I remember when in summer 2018 I read a couple of books -- *The Atomic Bazaar* by William Langewiesche, and the collection of plays titled *The Bomb: A Partial History*, by the Tricycle Theatre -- and I wanted to learn more about the topic. I am grateful that three years later my path crossed with NPEC and its Founder and Executive Director. Prof. Sokolski is both an encyclopedia on the topic (and always up to date to the very latest developments, along with a special look towards the future), but he is also a very accessible and kind person. And an excellent professor. The staff he assembled is also very professional and competent.

Marco Tantardini

Advisor to the Chair of the Italian inter-Ministerial Committee for Space Policy, Italian Government

It was an absolute pleasure having you preside over this course, and being a student under your direct tutelage. What intrigued me the most is how we managed to cover topics at the 10,000-foot policy level, to the very technical aspects in two short months. That's nearly impossible in academia! We also had a very good range of professionals with whom we could network, especially at a time of great distance and remote activity. I hope to use this knowledge and understanding in future policy areas.

Craig Stafford
Foreign Affairs Officer, U.S. Department of State

I never knew anything about Nuclear Policy and benefited from these courses. These courses can be very technical, and the videos came in handy for times I needed a refresher.

Kenny LaSalle
Policy Advisor, Office of Representative Tony Cárdenas

I just wanted to thank you for a really great program. I thoroughly enjoyed it and learned a lot. I found I learned the most about the significant limitations of verification regimes, the technical aspects of nuclear capabilities and the surprisingly short transition from a civil program to a weapons program, the evolution of arms control systems, and the theory behind all of this. I also really enjoyed the guest lectures - my favorite by far was the recent guest lecture about denuclearization of Libya. Hearing from practitioners about the efforts they undertake is always one of my favorite experiences.

Yaniv Barzilai
Foreign Service Officer, U.S. Department of State

I learned about the technological, political and policy developments in nuclear history that brought us to the point where we are today of having nearly 14,000 nuclear weapons across the planet. I also learned about the basics of energy in terms of fission, fusion, bomb designs, and nuclear fuel making. Lastly, I learned about nuclear terrorism and the potential opportunities for arms control.

Disha Banik
Legislative Assistant, U.S. Representative and House Democratic Caucus Chair Hakeem Jeffries

While I am a student a nuclear deterrence theory, proliferation, and nuclear terrorism (essentially the security fields), I am not as strong on the technical aspects of the field – particular fields of commercial power. I think this is the area I learned the most in particularly with regard to how these can be tied into the proliferation arena. I think one of the more striking discoveries in area that I am somewhat familiar with dealt with the threshold of nuclear material that may be considered “dangerous” may be lower than we give it credit for.

Daniel Hooey
Analyst, U.S. Department of Defense

This fellowship has been a really valuable experience. I have learned so much from you, from the readings, and from the guest lecturers. Every session has added to my understanding of the subjects. Thank you so much for your and for sharing all of this information with us.

Danielle Lewis
Oceania Analyst, U.S. Defense Intelligence Agency

Thank you so much for this opportunity. I learned more than I could have ever expected, and these last few months have been so much more enjoyable with these classes and the war game. With everything going on in 2020, this fellowship gave me something to look forward to that wasn't work-related or the stress of COVID-19. I have saved all your youtube videos, and along with the readings and my notes, I know I'll be referring to them in the years to come.

Conner Swett
HillVets Fellow, Office of Congresswoman Kendra Horn

While the lectures covered a number of different topics I had hoped to learn about, I wanted to note specifically my appreciation of the content related to nuclear science and the history of arms control/nonproliferation. For several years, I've been looking for a succinct and accessible, but sufficiently in-depth explanation of the science behind nuclear weapons and nuclear energy, as well as a backgrounder on the history of arms control and nonproliferation. These are not exactly topics covered by any continuing legal education that I've been able to find, and the reading materials I've perused are either too brief and surface-level or too in-depth and scattered across a multitude of sources. Your lectures and the guest presentations have been the perfect answer to my interest in that regard. So thank you, once more, for the opportunity to take part.

Michael Shaughnessy
Senior Attorney, U.S. Government Accountability Office

The privilege and pleasure of attending your class was all mine! Thank you again for a most interesting and educational experience that provided all kinds of great food for thought and knowledge that I can put to good use at the State Department.

Judd Stitzel
Senior Advisor, Task Force 231, Bureau of International Security and Nonproliferation, U.S. State

Thank you for a great program. As a Navy Lieutenant and a veteran of the War in Afghanistan, learning about the destructive power of these types of weapons was extremely informative and sobering. As a DOJ attorney with an interest in national security, I benefitted most from your discussion points related to Iran.

Patrick Darcey
Attorney Advisor, U.S. Department of Justice

I would thank you very much for the course, it was excellent. Obviously, it would have been so much nicer to be participating in the course in person and meeting all the people involved. That would have given us a different perspective and a more familiar opportunity to engage in discussion. For me, the online environment may not have been most conducive to that. I think one of the downsides in online learning is that you are interrupted more often and sometimes called to do urgent work while being on course. But it is what it is during the covid times and we can only appreciate the efforts you made in making sure that the course will be carried out despite these extraordinary times. I learned a lot of the historical perspective and development of the thinking in the field of deterrence.

Mari Etelapaa
Defense Counselor, Embassy of Finland

I really appreciate this fascinating course gave me comprehensive understanding nuclear weapons from wide points of views. Especially I was impressed by your lecture on history and thinking about the new arms race. I am covering U.S nuclear policy as a Washington Correspondent of Japan's newspaper. And I covered ICBM launch test last February and interviewed several high ranking officials . But to be honest I didn't understand bigger picture of this extremely important issues. If possible, I'd like you to make more opportunities participants can hear other student (especially U.S government official)'s voice more especially based on their experience for the future.

Takashi Watanabe
Washington Bureau Correspondent, Asahi Shimbun

It was an incredibly comprehensive course delivered in a way that was intellectually challenging, while respecting the broad backgrounds of participants. I enjoyed the guest presentations, which provided a variety of perspectives and practical examples to complement the lectures. You were very ably supported on tech and logistics which is all important as we work from home. The course has turned me into a nuclear nerd!

Madeline Courvisanos
First Secretary Political, Australian Embassy

The NPEC Fellowship provided an intensive, comprehensive introduction to the history, empirical facts, and major issues and challenges in the realm of nonproliferation writ large. As a result, I now have the background knowledge and tools to pose and seek answers to the type of informed, critical questions that form the basis of sound policy decision-making.

Judd Stitzel
Senior Advisor, Task Force 231, Bureau of International Security and Nonproliferation, U.S. State

This course was superb and certainly challenged several of the notions I had about the merits of nuclear power and deterrence. I'm grateful for this opportunity and benefitted from the most substantial intellectual consideration of these issues that I've had since grad school. The issues surrounding tactical and strategic nuclear weapons, and nuclear energy are, perhaps, more critical now than in recent years past. We must do all we can to mitigate nuclear proliferation, a point driven home by the simulated attack on the NCR.

Lyle Goode
Foreign Service Officer, U.S. Department of State

To have such a deep-dive on the history of nuclear issues, including analysis of future issues, is unique. This is one of those rare opportunities to really spend time thinking about the policy implications of a particular technology that will be useful for years to come.

Anonymous

The course was fascinating! Your presentations were very intriguing, highly organized, and detailed. Your delivery of the topics was very entertaining. As a result of the course, I feel more enlightened with respect to how US politicians make decisions with respect to Nuclear Policy based on past, present, and future events. The cohort participants were very friendly and professional, and I am thankful for the opportunity to participate.

Leslie Fields
U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission

I enjoyed the discussion and learned quite a bit more about the process involved in setting, maintaining, and adapting nuclear policy. The information gleaned gives me a more well-rounded understanding of the “N” part of the CBRN mission I participate in at the DoD. I enjoyed the overview of the general topics and through the progression from design basics (for weapons and power systems) to policy and challenges were good.

Justin Hurt
CBRN Operations, Munitions, and Materials, U.S. Army

The most useful topic for me was the overview of the NPT (instead of three pillars, one pillar with two ‘struts’) and future prospects (Japan, Korea mulling NPT exist?).

Evan Karlik
U.S. Navy

I am really appreciative for your course, I have learned a lot through it. From my background, nuclear energy policy was much interesting. Moreover, lectures about improvement of military strategy and nuclear weapons are really helpful and broadened my horizon.

Keisuke Katori
Asahi Shimbun

I didn't miss a single a seminar this fall and the experience was excellent. Being rather new to this field, it was exactly what I needed to excel professionally. What I liked best about the course were the slides, I thought they were really great. You were too (of course).

Alex Khauslender
Headquarters, Department of the Army

I really enjoyed the class, events, and Mr. Sokolski's perspective on the issues facing us in nonproliferation. The things I learned in the class will be invaluable as I move forward with my career at DoD and will allow me to provide better policy recommendations to my principals. I have already recommended the fellowship to about 4 others who work within my office.

Cody Lauer
Threat Reduction and Arms Control

I really enjoyed learning the history on a topic I had very little previous knowledge in. I think that you are a great speaker with a passion for teaching. I recently took a new position and work for DHS FEMA. I will definitely pass along to my colleagues the information regarding the NPEC fellowship for 2020.

Kevin Marshall
FEMA, U.S. Department of Homeland Security

I thoroughly enjoyed your course and feel much better equipped in my role here at State. The sessions on the nuclear fuel cycle significantly improved my understanding, and I have already relied on the course material for my day-to-day work.

Gregory McLean
U.S. Department of State

It was an honor to be a fellow of the NPEC’s Public Policy. During the course, my favorite part was learning about history and background of nuclear non-pro and arms control. Unfortunately, we are still facing same challenges as what happened long time ago. Because of that, knowing history and background was good lesson leaning for me.

Yukari Sekiguchi
Embassy of Japan

I appreciate the course and your insights. I definitely took a lot out of it and would recommend this to colleagues. The high points of the course were historical analysis--particularly as it relates to the origins of the Cold War. I also enjoyed the section on treaties.

Rohin Sharma
Defense Threat Reduction Agency

Thanks for a great class. I appreciated all of the classes and notes online which made it easier to review the class or make up one if we missed it.

Jared Stefani
Graduate Student, Georgetown University

What I liked best:

- Absolutely the number one feature: provision of written materials that guided and provided context to classes. Importantly, these resources are **INVALUABLE** for reviewing when nuclear issues come up.
- In-depth lectures that developed foundation to properly understand public policy considerations.
- Instructor expertise – both experiential and theoretical.
- Commitment to provide all of the above in 11 separate classes, something I first thought would be difficult to complete. FYI – I attended all 11 classes – and am grateful that I did.
- Creation of a collegial atmosphere with a broad mix of congressional, executive, military, and international participants.
- Follow-up dinners and other events. It develops a commitment to stay on top of these issues – and a sense of enduring collegiality among the participants.
- Weekly updates and reminders.
- The brownies! (game changer)

Frank Tedeschi
Office of Sen. Mike Rounds

The readings were very accessible and the quizzes provided the perfect means for review. I also found the lectures very engaging and informative; I learned more about nuclear policy in the span of 11 weeks than in my entire graduate experience.

Elizabeth Wright
Research Trainee, Center for the Study of Weapons of Mass Destruction

I am happy to pass along my strong endorsement of the quality of your seminar. As I mentioned to you at the beginning of the course, as a State Department Foreign Service Officer for 25 years and then in my current role as the Director for Asian Affairs at the Department of Energy, I've engaged... w/o a grounded understanding of the substantive underpinnings of the topic...So when you told me about your course, I jumped at the opportunity, and the course fulfilled my expectations and needs. It also piqued my interest in further learning, a real credit to your presentation and passion for the subject. I really appreciated your spot-on sense on how to design a course for busy government officials. You identified the key topics we all need to understand. You presented the substance w/ the right balance of historical context, current day policy relevance, and context on the differing perspectives of specific foreign governments and the different agencies on the issue and the corresponding implications. You didn't load us up on required reading, but gave us terrific bibliographies for those topics we wanted to delve into more on our own. I learned a lot, and the course will make me a more thoughtful policy-maker when I engage on these issues w/ my NNSA and ISN colleagues.

Alan Yu
Director of Asian Affairs – Office of International Affairs, Department of Energy

I relish the opportunity to learn from an expert and it was great to get Henry's view on these topics. As a non-scientist (I am an Operations Research Analyst by trade), I enjoyed and was able to understand the technical pieces due to the manner in which he explained them.

*Gordon Jaquith,
Office of the Secretary of Defense- Cost Assessment and Program Evaluation (CAPE) Office*

I highly recommend adopting the NPEC course for those concerned with identifying problems and assessing potential solutions in nuclear policy. The seminars by Henry Sokolski considerably improved my knowledge of topics related to nuclear energy, weapons, and deterrence as well as my awareness of contemporary issues in this field. More so than for other matters, in-depth familiarity with the technical characteristics is important for good nuclear control policies. Mr. Sokolski's discussions addressed key aspects such as nuclear reactor design, nuclear weapon-making, and the history and premises of the non-proliferation regime which I found particularly helpful. His comments regarding the Nonproliferation Treaty (NPT), the IAEA, and safeguards/protocol was also very valuable in helping form a solid foundation with which to evaluate problems and potential solutions for issues we confront today.

*CDR Jack McKechnie
U.S. Navy*

The NPEC course provides an excellent foundational knowledge on the history and technical specifications of nuclear weapons, and policy implications of nuclear proliferation. For my own personal experience, the course was most valuable in discussing comparisons between nuclear weapons and city busting bombing campaigns to put into perspective the destructive force presented by nuclear weapons vice conventional weapons, the proliferation risk of different types and components of nuclear power, and the history of use of nuclear weapons (including for "peaceful" purposes). I was also given the opportunity to explore more in-depth the number of times that nuclear weapons were threatened to be used and the near misses of their use; prior to this course, my exposure to these final two items was almost non-existent. This course is incredibly valuable as a primer for understanding the very big issue that is nuclear proliferation.

*Justin Dunicliff
U.S. Department of Defense: National Defense University*

Mr. Sokolski happens to be one of the most entertaining individuals I've ever met. Thank you for letting me attend the course.

*Maggie Ybarra
The Washington Times*

I had a wonderful time. It was a great learning experience that has benefitted me greatly. I hope to stay in touch and please pass my thanks to the entire NPEC staff for all your work to make this happen.

*Rory Stanley
Office of Sen. Maria Cantwell- Senate Committee on Energy and Natural Resources*

Great content. It presented a well-informed view of the insecurities of the nuclear fuel cycle. This is a fellowship where I felt I actually learned something and wasn't simply lined up with political speakers.

*Christopher O'Connor
State Department - Bureau of International Security and Nonproliferation (ISN)*

I appreciated the scope of the course. Because of the extensive topics it covers, I felt like I received a liberal arts education in the nuclear world. Not just nonproliferation regimes but also nuclear terrorism and nuclear economics and the science behind it all. As a policy influencer, that is a huge benefit; I can now pursue my own separate lines of inquiry with some steady footing. So much of life is understanding enough of a subject to begin to know how to ask the right questions, and now I can. That's the crux of how I benefited and what the course provides.

Ryan Uyehara
Office of Rep. Ami Bera

Although I have a fair amount of experience working on nonproliferation policy issues, the course provided me with a solid understanding and review of the basics of nuclear policy that is rarely found outside of a government setting. This background has already proven helpful in my interactions with interagency colleagues, and will no doubt better equip me as I play my small role in advancing U.S. nonproliferation objectives.

As important, class sessions were a useful venue for informal discussions between branches of government on some of the most pressing security challenges facing the nation. Sadly, these opportunities are all too rare these days, given the press of business. All of which is to say thank you to NPEC and to you for the work you do educating those of us engaged in various levels and to various degrees in nuclear policy advising and implementation. I have no doubt that what we have learned helps us make more well-informed, smarter, better decisions.

Constantinos Nicolaidis
East Asia Team Chief - Bureau of International Security & Nonproliferation, State Department

The fellowship was an overall great experience. I had limited experience with nonproliferation prior to the fellowship and feel that after the program I can confidently brief my boss on issues relating to nonproliferation.

Andrew Waldeck
Office of Rep. Mike Rogers- Chairman of the Subcommittee on Strategic Forces

Henry is an invaluable resource to any staff member because of his experience in government and the private sector and I am constantly reaching out to him to pick his brain on issues of the day and policy decisions before the Congress. NPEC also brought together a variety of differing viewpoints and did not shy away from ideas that ran counter to his own.

Deborah Mazol
Office of Rep. Andy Biggs

After more than a two decade long nuclear holiday on the part of the military, academics, and the American public, this country has finally rediscovered the importance of nuclear deterrence. In the second decade of the Twenty-First century the NPEC Public Policy Fellowship program is necessary to redress the lack of knowledge and understanding of nuclear deterrence. The task is to develop the next generation of strategic thinkers to deal with the challenges of deterrence in a multipolar regional threat environment. The NPEC, Public Policy Fellowship Program has made an excellent start in the development of the next generation of "strategic thinkers."

Dr. Willie Curtis
Professor, U.S. Naval Academy

I found the course very useful because it provided a systematic overview of the development of nuclear technology (especially the military applications) and nuclear policy. I'm not sure whether that would be available from any other source. Moreover, the reading lists and other supplementary material allowed participants to go much deeper into subjects that they found particularly relevant to them.

Janne Jokinen
Embassy of Finland

Thank you for the opportunity to participate in the NPEC fellowship program. I'm not exaggerating when I say it was an absolutely rewarding experience. Is it indicative of a twisted mind that I attended every session (and both optional dinnertime discussions)? Perhaps. But I found the material and the lectures so compelling that I genuinely would have felt cheated to miss any of them... Sometimes it's not easy to convince experts in the nuclear field to talk to a reporter. Already, I'm seeing a difference in their willingness to talk with me because, after some conversation, it becomes apparent to them that I'm not as clueless about the topic as they first imagined. That might not have been the case just a few months ago before I took your course.

Patrick Malone
Center for Public Integrity

The NPEC course on nuclear weapons and arms control was extremely useful for me. It gave valuable insights into the history of nuclear weapons and informed about the basics of nuclear technology and military strategies (the functioning of deterrence etc.). The level of detail was well calibrated: participants had to do at least the basic readings in order to be able to follow. On the other hand the course was not too technical.

Ruediger Bohn
German Embassy

The NPEC Fellowship offers novices and above a relaxed and engaging setting to expand their understanding of issues related to nuclear proliferation, including nuclear energy. The independent, recommended readings provide a range of views on key issues, present new ideas and introduce participants to some of the science behind all things nuclear. Classroom presentations and discussion ensure that participants are able to absorb and apply the principles and information learned. Throughout the course, there are opportunities to stretch from the specifics of a historical situation or nuclear application to thinking about the potential strategic impacts of nuclear weapons and nuclear energy

Stacie Oliver
Senate Foreign Relations Committee – Staffer on Nuclear Policy Issues for Chairman Senator Corker

Thanks again for putting on this fellowship. I have a growing interest in the topics discussed and working to formalize my understanding and this class was a great first step.

Aaron Allen
Office of Rep. Juan Vargas - Committee on Foreign Affairs

The NPEC Public Policy Fellowship taught me to think about the future of nuclear weapons, ask the correct research questions, and frame my thinking in a way that allows for valuable analysis and objectivity. I gained an even deeper appreciation of nuclear weapons and nuclear energy history, but also recognized that there is no guarantee that what we have seen happen in the past will occur similarly in the future.

Stephanie Papa
Program and Research Administrator, John Hopkins SAIS

As a participant of the 2014/2015 NPEC Public Policy Fellowship, I gained incredible experience and expertise in the field of nuclear energy and non-proliferation. The knowledge I honed have [*sic*] proved to be tangible assets in my work and in the interactions I have had with US officials. Being able to understand but also to explain to my counterparts the magnitude and the implications of the issues we are facing has allowed me to develop and submit actionable recommendations and decisions. I am very grateful to you for your leadership and your commitment to the NPEC.

The NPEC Public Policy Fellowship is an experience I will strongly recommend to anyone involved in non-proliferation policy development. Your insightful expertise in this sector should be shared with the broadest audience.

Edouard Gheerbrant
French Embassy

Given that I had minimal background in the study of nuclear energy & weapons, I found tremendous value in each of the NPEC fellowship lectures... A huge benefit of participating in these fellowships is talking with folks you would otherwise never meet—and you manage to gather a fairly wide distribution of government employees for the fellowship.

Lisa Harst
Strategic Partnerships Associate, Children's Advocacy Centers of Texas

In the wake of the Iran deal, NPEC's Public Policy Fellowship changed my perspective of the history of proliferation and how this history has affected the world's approach to conflict over time. I found the sessions on nuclear physics and bomb design particularly helpful and am confident that this understanding of the nuclear weaponization process has helped me to provide more in-depth, comprehensive analysis to my member on nuclear issues. If you want a competitive edge over other staffers on nuclear processing issues and weapons development, I highly recommend this course!

Katie McCabe
Office of Sen. David Perdue- Committee on Foreign Relations

I very much enjoyed the course, I thought the material flowed naturally and gave me a foundation to critically examine news surrounding proliferation and nuclear energy in general... the portions that covered the physical science aspects were enlightening.

Ken Ballato
Office of Rep. Patrick McHenry

This fellowship was enlightening and thought provoking. What I found to be most useful to me were the discussions on the mindset that led to the development of nuclear weapons, the evolution of weaponry and nuclear power, and the modern discussion on the politics of nuclear policy.

Sarah Nezamuddin
Assistant to the Director for Political Affairs - Embassy of Saudi Arabia

I haven't seen any other syllabus this thorough and interesting on nuclear policy, online or off.

Dr. Colin Duek
George Mason University

Your framing of the issues and their interconnection make a compelling case that slowly builds over the course of the 10 weeks. I've always been interested in learning "how" people think through problems, which can be just as informative as the material itself. With that in mind, the most valuable part of your lecture was your perspective and the long history you bring to the nonproliferation argument...

Kevin Kuhn
Science Advisor - Environmental Protection Agency

Really enjoyed the class. For me, the most beneficial aspects were the technical descriptions of how to make a nuclear weapon and also the way you showed how destructive air power was in World War II without using nuclear weapons. My background gave me a good amount of insight into the politics surrounding nuclear weapons, but the technical descriptions of how one is actually made put the political theory in context.

Ike Crews
Office of Rep. Pete Sessions

I found the historical background reading, especially in the earlier part of the class, to be extremely helpful in setting the topic and pace of the class. I enjoyed the actual lectures and the fact that “taking notes” was actually discouraged so that one could listen attentively;

Hagir Elawad

Director - Congressional Affairs Office, Embassy of the United Arab Emirates

The NPEC Fellowship provided me with a deeper understanding of the technical aspects of nuclear proliferation, the history of and challenges to the international nonproliferation regime, and emerging threats such as the rise of new nuclear powers or the threat of nuclear terrorism. The knowledge and insights gained through Mr. Sokolski's seminars will be invaluable as I grapple with these issues in future diplomatic assignments. Thanks to Mr. Sokolski's seminars, I will approach these problems with a more nuanced grasp of their history and a realistic understanding of the prospects for their solution.

Matthew Cenzer

U.S. Department of State - Bureau of International Security and Nonproliferation (ISN)

I thoroughly enjoyed the course, and found it to be useful in providing a broader context for thinking about nuclear nonproliferation issues and particularly the potential proliferation implications of civil nuclear developments worldwide... I found your point of view to be a useful counter narrative that we in the government need to hear and consider. I also enjoyed having the opportunity to get to know some congressional staffers that follow these issues, as well as the Embassy participants.

Seth Maddox

U.S. State Department - Bureau of International Security and Nonproliferation (ISN)

I thoroughly enjoyed the course. As many seminars and classes as there are in DC on nuclear weapons, I have not seen any that explore the physics and mechanics behind nuclear weapon designs, the ease with which a state could transition from nuclear power to nuclear weapons, and the economics underlying nuclear energy like yours. More fundamentally, you offer insight and perspective that is compelling and does not fit in of the categories that seemingly all of the nuclear experts or nuclear scholars belong in... Outside of nuclear weapons issues, your course also reaffirmed to many of us why public service is important and how can we make it more meaningful.

Robert Wilson

Senior Defense Analyst - Government Accountability Office

I took Secretary William Perry's class last year and after that I was confident that I knew quite a lot. Your class showed me that I knew so little! Your knowledge of information, theory and events is impressive, but the number of acquaintances and friendships you have in this area is amazing. As I map out what I want to cover in 2018 I will have better shovel to dig in on nuclear having taken your course and attended the side events you invited us to.

Timothy Gardner

Correspondent, Reuters

Thank you, Henry. Enjoyed the class. Glad you are trying to educate the Hill folks on these issues. It is an important mission. We will let people here at State ISN know about your course.

Matt Brechwald

Foreign Affairs Advisor, State Department, Bureau of International Security and Nonproliferation

I found the online readings and weekly updates to be particularly helpful. You and your team do a great job translating technical subject matter in a way that can be useful to policy makers. As I mentioned previously to you and Leon, I manage a Task Force on Anti-terrorist financing and non-proliferation for my boss, and NPEC resources have been invaluable.

Jaclyn Cahan
Counsel, Office of Rep. Stephen Lynch

Any civil servant working in nuclear matters can benefit immensely from the NPEC Fellowship. I haven't seen anything else like it offered in the D.C. area and I would recommend it to anyone whose work touches on nuclear matters.

Robert Grace
Senior Analyst, Nuclear Weapons and Nonproliferation, U.S. Government Accountability Office

Thank you for an engaging and thought-provoking experience, even if it may have interfered with my sleep at times.

Harry W. Baumgarten
Legislative Counsel, Office of Rep. Yvette D. Clarke

I came into the fellowship with only a basic understanding of aspects of non-proliferation, so the course was EXACTLY what I needed to help me understand not only how nuclear weapons are made and used, So, from my perspective, the course did everything I had hoped it would do to prepare me to understand what I'm reading when different opinions are presented -- your class also invited me to challenge authority when it comes to accepted norms of deterrence, nuclear weapons, proliferation (and non-proliferation), and research more when something just doesn't seem right -- or seems too easy.

CDR Daniel G. Straub
U.S. Navy

I got an in-depth view of the various angles and perspective on Non Proliferation. The study material provided with the course was worth reading. The group of students who were selected for the fellowship was from varied background and the networking among the students and sharing each others areas of work and views on the topic was also a knowledge gainer. There could had be no venue for the classes better than what you had blocked.

Sumit Goswami
Diplomat, Indian Embassy

Thank you again for offering the fellowship. I was really impressed by your professional & technical credentials-- your ability to articulate your own experiences really lent your lectures much more credibility than someone with far less "real world" experiences, e.g. many nuke academics. Again, let me extend my appreciation for your time and access. It is a shame this course isn't mandated!

Ryan West
Legislative Correspondent, Office of Sen. Lisa Murkowski

The course was, first and foremost, useful in connecting professional interested in the non-proliferation topic from various branches of the US Government, international partners, and private organizations. As I'm sure you are no stranger to the Hill, the operating environment is who you know is just as important as what you know. Secondly, the overview of the basic science, and basic components, involved with nuclear weapons was highly educational. Covering material refinement gave further background on the development/production chain involved with potential nuclear threats. While I am not an expert in nuclear science by any means, I do work to support USSOCOM funding, and USSOCOM is the overall DOD coordinator for the Counter-WMDs enterprise. Your course allowed me to gain some foundational knowledge in material and policy concerns, which I can apply in advocating for USSOCOM's CWMD funding requirements with Congress.

Lt. Col. Ming Xu
Specialist in Legislative Affairs, U.S. Special Operations Command

I greatly appreciated the opportunity to participate in the NPEC fellowship. As a researcher/reporter for a Japanese news outlet in Washington, I frequently assist our correspondents in covering issues related to nuclear deterrence, nuclear proliferation, and nuclear power. Through this course, I feel I have gained a much greater familiarity with the historical background and controversies surrounding all of these areas. At the same time, the course has piqued my interest in several areas about which I plan to do further reading. This is facilitated by the fact that your course materials are so well footnoted.

Scott Stewart
Researcher-Reporter, The Sankei Shimbun

- The variety of topics across the nuclear policy spectrum was very helpful for me in better understanding nuclear weapons as a whole.
- I enjoyed having a majority of the classes held at the Capitol.
- The various backgrounds of the other students provided me with multiple opportunities to network and engage in discussion with fellows who come from a different perspective of nuclear policy (Congress, think tank, etc.).
- I found the readings and the course lectures exceptional, given I enjoy the learning aspect of the fellowship and this experience helped me with determining my future for potentially pursuing a PhD.

Aaron Richards
Policy Analyst, Scientific Applications International Corporation

Given my background as more of a generalist than any kind of specialist, I appreciated the course's historical context and your behind-the-scenes takes on what is largely glossed over in the headlines (the sins of my tribe). I wasn't up on the 19th and early 20th century theories of warfare, and was duly horrified to learn of how we've arrived at our current predicament. Also, given your technical expertise and seats at various policy tables, it was also crucial (even entertaining, at times) to learn that most of what I'd assumed was, essentially, wrong. Your course has enriched my thinking and, I'm certain, will enhance my reporting on non-proliferation issues. I'm more at ease with the subject in general, and have a better understanding of its technical underpinnings.

Dorothy Parvaz
Senior Producer for Human Rights Section, Aljazeera

I truly enjoyed the fellowship and your instruction. I thought the pace and content was just right, a methodical approach that gave the basics and then built on those. You made many complex subjects very easy to understand and I appreciate that. The course was useful in my current position and I'll recommend it to my colleagues.

LCDR Justin Nadolny
Military Aide, Office of the Vice President of the United States

The course is tailored in a sequential and comprehensive manner, covering all aspects of the subject and wide spectrum of opinions. You were awesome in maintaining in an impartial approach to contentious issues. As a Pakistani diplomat I felt comfortable attending the course with participants of various backgrounds and associations. I benefited a great deal in understanding the political, economic, and scientific dimensions of nuclear policy. Thank you for the opportunity to take this course. I think this is a valuable contribution to promoting understanding and cooperation in this area.

Shah Khan
First Secretary (Political), Embassy of Pakistan

From the course, I gained an understanding of the broad range of topics, issues and factors that affect nuclear non-proliferation policies and decisions. As a member of the military, it helps to understand the reasoning behind the policies that ultimately drive the tactical and operational decisions.

LTCR Eric Hui
Military Federal Executive Fellow, RAND Corporation

I can say that as a Congressional staffer, I encounter a lot of undefined jargon and mushy policy concepts. It was refreshing to have an experience with Mr. Sokolski that was so rooted in science, economics, and history. For all the attention Iran, North Korea, and related non-proliferation topics receive in Congress, until I took this course, I was not aware of how much underlining knowledge I was missing. The lectures on the mechanics of enrichment, weaponization, and inspection were eye-opening. I hope that as new Members and staff come to the Hill, they too will have the opportunity to learn this material and apply it as they work to improve US efforts in this area.

Scott Cullinane

Professional Staff Member, House Subcommittee on Europe, Eurasia, & Emerging Threats

Technically – I have a much better understanding of nuclear weapons, nuclear power plants, and reprocessing, the benefit being that I can follow proliferation/non-proliferation discussions much better now that I have more facts and don't have to assume the one side of the argument I am hearing is totally accurate; I have had more in-depth discussions and gotten a lot more out of them due to the background information I learned in the seminar. Policy/Strategy – I better understand past decisions (good ones and bad ones) from the readings and lectures; however, if I were to rank what I learned more, I would say technical aspects over Policy/Strategy.

CAPT Budd Bergloff

Federal Executive Fellow, Center for Strategic and Budgetary Assessments

I benefited from the course by having a setting to help keep me up to speed on nonproliferation issues. Additionally, I benefited by learning how to talk about nonproliferation issues from a broader lens than “warheads, missiles, and centrifuges,” which is all the general public seems to know or care about. Because of what I learned in the course, I can now better explain to a lay person the proliferation risks posed by Japan's plutonium stockpile, or potentially selling reactors to Saudi Arabia. I learned about all the different aspects of nuclear weapons, fissile material production, and the role of nuclear power in nuclear weapons production that I never learned how to talk about it in a non-academic way. Now that problem has been addressed.

John Ashley

Legislative Aide, Senate Committee on Veterans' Affairs

I personally enjoyed the course and benefitted the most from both the historical background of proliferation and the introduction to the mechanics of nuclear weapons. The greater historical and strategic discussion on nuclear deterrence and proliferation issues would benefit the AF/DoD the most. Particularly, the first couple weekly lessons that reach back to WWII and the development of strategic bombing as a concept in warfare. I believe this historical context would be a useful background for the actual operators/personnel involved with our nuclear arsenal. Thanks again for the fellowship. It was very enjoyable.

Mike Gancio

Clerk, Strategic Forces subcommittee, House Armed Services Committee
