



M.A. (DLB)0720 – The Russia-Ukraine War Under Trump Era: New Strategic Implications for India

Elective – Spring 2026

Course Information

Course Duration: 15 weeks

Credit Hours: 60 hours

Meetings: Online meeting during the week from previous appointments

Location: **TBA**

Prerequisites: None

Equivalent Courses: **NA**

Exclusive Courses: **NA**

Instructor Information

Instructor: Associate Prof.(Dr.) Swasti Rao

Biography:

Dr. Swasti Rao is a geopolitical expert, Commentator and Author. She is an Associate Professor of international relations at the Jindal School of International Affairs, and the Associate Dean for Global Initiatives, O.P. Jindal University, Haryana, India. Before joining Jindal, she has been Fellow at the Manohar Parrikar Institute for Defence Studies and Analyses, India's premier strategic think tank under Ministry of Defence. At MP-IDSA, Dr. Rao had worked on projects for Ministry for External Affairs and Ministry of Defence on European geopolitics and geo-economics. Her research project at MP-IDSA has been on **Conflicts in Europe amidst Shifting Power Structures and Europe's Indo Pacific outreach.**

Dr. Rao has also been an academic, teaching courses on **International Politics, Conflict and Research Methodology** at one of India's largest and oldest central

universities, **Aligarh Muslim University**. She has contributed to syllabus development for Political Science at **IGNOU** and collaborated with the **National University of Educational Planning and Administration (NUEPA)** on compiling resources for international relations and research methodology for higher education teachers.

Additionally she has held an adjunct position at the Tokai University, Japan. She is a contributing editor for India's leading media house, **The Print** and *Non- Resident Fellow* at **Eastern Circles**, Paris.

Recognized as a "*Geopolitical Expert*" by the **Government of Uttar Pradesh, India**, for the **G20 Summit** in 2023, Dr. Rao was also honored as one of the **under-40 Young Leaders** by EICBI for substantiating India-Europe relations. She is affiliated with the EU-India Women's Council and serves as a reviewer for the peer reviewed publications by **National Maritime Foundation (NMF)**, India, and **Royal United Services Institute (RUSI)**, London.

She is also a **geopolitical advisor** to the **Uttar Pradesh Government** on developing the "**UP Defence Industrial Corridor**" a key undertaking of the Ministry of Defence, Govt. of India.

An alumnus of **JNU, India**; **Tsukuba University, Japan** and *Institut des hautes études de défense nationale(IHEDN)*, France; she is a recipient of the prestigious **Japanese Education Ministry Fellowship (MEXT)** in 2011 and the '**Okita Memorial Scholarship**' in 2010 from ICCR.

She qualified the **University Grants Commission's National Eligibility Test in International and Area Studies** in 2007.

She is a widely published author. Her latest publications are with Routledge, World Scientific Publishers, Palgrave Macmillan and Pentagon Press. Her work on the **Ukraine war** is soon to be compiled in a book, '**Ukraine Untold**' by Harper Collins, India.

A regular commentator on IR across national and international media platforms, she writes a weekly expert's column that discusses key aspects of the geopolitical security from an Indian perspective. She has been representing India at the flagship EU Security Dialogue, **The Schuman Forum**, held at the European Parliament at Brussels since March 2023 among other international foras.

She has hundreds of academic engagements at national and international conferences, workshops and panel discussions to her credit.

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Phone: NA

Office: TBC

Office Hours: Online meetings during the week from previous appointments.

Homepage:

1. Course Description

The course offers students a profound analytical insight into the multifaceted strategic repercussions of the Russia-Ukraine conflict under Donald Trump, the first major conventional

war since World War II. Initially anticipated to be a swift three-day campaign, the war is now approaching its fifth year, challenging the assumption that modern warfare would be brief and decisive. In its protracted duration, the conflict has precipitated a global crisis of food, fuel, and fertilizer, while reshaping the strategic calculus of major world powers. The course of this war has significantly altered after Donald Trump became the US President the second time in January 2025. Trump's insistence on mediating on global conflicts has often seen him push for a hurried solution to the Russia - Ukraine war with a significantly altered policy on Russia and Europe, landing punitive tariffs on India for purchasing Russian oil– a policy widely regarded as unfair and knee jerk.

Through this course, students will explore the war's profound implications for India, particularly its energy security, defense imports, and the evolving strategic dynamics of the Russia-China alliance. Additionally, the conflict has underscored the limits of India's pivotal role on the global stage, as it has unfolded alongside the Trump administration's preoccupation with the West Asian Theatre at the cost of US engagement on the Indo Pacific. Trump's shift, likely to be temporary, will have profound implications on India's strategic partnerships. The course analyses the scenarios of the endgame in Ukraine and their likely impact on India's strategic outlook, priorities and challenges.

2. Course Intended Learning Objectives(Aim)

The primary aim of this course is to equip students with the analytical skills needed to comprehend the rapidly evolving strategic landscape and India's role within it. This understanding is vital for grasping global shifts and India's efforts to forge strategic partnerships with major powers while maintaining a delicate balance between traditional allies and emerging partners.

3.

Course Intended Learning Outcomes	Teaching and Learning Activities	Assessments/ Activities
Knowledge and Understanding	Lecture and Discussion	Group-discussions Class participation, Group presentation, Debates Mid-term exam End-term, Exam
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. <i>Causes of the Russia- Ukraine war</i> 2. <i>India's stand : Neutrality, passive vs active</i> 3. <i>Shifting global dynamics</i> 4. <i>3 F Crisis: Food , Fuel and Fertilizer</i> 		

<p>5. <i>India and Energy Security</i></p> <p>6. <i>India and defence industry re-routing</i></p> <p>7. <i>India and return of Donald Trump</i></p> <p>8. <i>China and Russia strategic deepening and implications: Trump's reverse Nixon-Kissinger on Russia</i></p> <p>9. <i>War and Merging theatres: Trump's preoccupation with West Asia</i></p> <p>10. <i>War: Cost vs. Opportunity : India's evolving Military and Energy policy</i></p>		
<p>Professional and Practical skills</p> <p>1. <i>Identifying structural causes of the war and their entwined nature</i></p> <p>2. <i>Evaluate implications of the war on the world and specially on the Global South under Trumpian Disorder</i></p> <p>4. <i>Evaluate the cost and opportunity for India</i></p> <p>5. <i>Distinguishing between rhetoric</i></p>	<p><i>Lecture and Discussion</i></p>	

<i>and reality by triangulated analysis</i>		
<i>Critical Thinking and Intellectual Skills</i> <i>1. How to assess War fighting in the 21st century</i> <i>2. Analyzing performance of weapons</i> <i>3. India's defence industry modernization and evolving defence philosophy</i> <i>4. India's role as a mediator: partial mediation vs total mediation</i> <i>5. How to assess India's evolving foreign policy</i>	<i>Lectures and analysis of war time events through field work findings</i>	

3. **Keyword Syllabus-** Russia Ukraine War, Security Dilemma, India's old and new partners, Strategic convergence, Defence Industry reliance and procurement, Energy Crisis, Global South, Food Crisis, Merging of Security Theatres, Reverse Nixon-Kissinger

4. Session Plan

Module	Week	Readings	Weekly Contact Hours
1. Structural causes of the Russia Ukraine war	1	To be distributed before and after lectures	Lecture – 3 hrs Office hrs – 1 hr
2. <i>India's stand : Neutrality , Passive vs Active</i>	2	Same as above	Lecture – 3 hrs Office hrs – 1 hr
3. <i>Shifting global dynamics: Complex Global (dis)Order</i>	2	Same as above	Lecture – 3 hrs Office hrs – 1 hr

4. <i>3 F Crisis: Food , Fuel and Fertilizer</i> <i>Do sanctions work ?</i>	3	Same as above	Lecture – 3 hrs Office hrs – 1 hr
5. <i>India and Energy Security: traditional vs Evolving</i>	4	Same as above	Lecture – 3 hrs Office hrs – 1 hr
6. <i>India and defence industry re-routing : Long term goal vs imminent security challenges</i>	5	Same as above	Lecture – 3 hrs Office hrs – 1 hr
	6	<i>Revision/ Guest Speaker</i>	Lecture – 3 hrs Office hrs – 1 hr
	7	Mid Term Exam	
7. <i>India and return of Donalnd Trump: New Challenges to US- India Partnerships from Trump's approach to Ukraine war</i>	8	Same as above	Lecture – 3 hrs Office hrs – 1 hr
8. <i>China and Russia strategic deepening and implications: Trump's</i>	8	Same as above	Lecture – 3 hrs Office hrs – 1 hr

<i>reverse Nixon-Kissin ger on Russia</i>			
9. <i>War and Merging theatres: Trump's preoccupatio n with West Asia & Implications for Indo Pacific</i>	9	Same as above	Lecture – 3 hrs Office hrs – 1 hr
	10	<i>Guest Speaker Lecture</i>	Lecture – 3 hrs Office hrs – 1 hr
10. <i>War: Cost vs. Opportunity : India's evolving Military and Energy policy</i>	11	Same as above	Lecture – 3 hrs Office hrs – 1 hr
	12	<i>Students presentation</i>	Lecture – 3 hrs Office hrs – 1 hr
	13	<i>Students Presentation</i>	Lecture – 3 hrs Office hrs – 1 hr
	14	<i>Guest Lecture</i>	Lecture – 3 hrs Office hrs – 1 hr
11.	15	<i>Wrapping up Lecture</i>	Lecture – 3 hrs Office hrs – 1 hr
	16	<i>Final Exams</i>	
		<i>Total Contact during Semester</i>	60 hrs

5. Learning and Teaching Methods

- Overall, the course includes 45 hours of lectures (1 lecture per week), and 15 office hours (1hr per week)
- Methods used to Teach Course: Lectures, in-class discussions and footage from the war and primary data
- Students must ensure that they are able to attend the weekly lecture and be involved into the different class activities such as group-discussions, group-activities or debates.

6. Scheme of Evaluation and Grading Evaluation breakup

Student Assessment Methods	Assessment Weights
End Term Exam (Q&A)	30%
Quiz (2)	30%
Case Presentation	30%
Class participation	10%

Student Assessment Methods Assessment Weights Final Assessment (Take home - Research Paper) Quiz (2 quizzes) 30% 30% Case Presentation 30% Class Participation 10%

- Class participation: Active participation and regular attendance is required for this class. You are expected to actively engage in class discussions.
- Mid-term exam: It will take place in the 7th week. It consists of Q&A questions.
- Case Presentation: Students will present in groups of 5 for 25 minutes on the 12th & 13th
- End Term: It consists of an end term question paper

7. Grade Definition : Standard policy of the University
8. Academic Integrity : Standard policy of the University
9. Participation/Attendance Policy : Standard policy of the University
10. Use of Phone/ Texting /laptop: Mobiles are not allowed. Laptops are permitted in class solely for academic purposes: personal use is discouraged and subject to penalties.
11. Course Material- No mandatory textbook for the course. However, useful linking materials/readings will be recommended to students after every lecture according to each topic.

Recommended references

- ***Our Enemies Will Vanish: The Russian Invasion of Ukraine's War of Independence*** by Yaroslav Trofinov, Penguin Random House, pub 2024
- ***Ukraine War: Military Perspectives and Strategic Reflections*** , ed. Abhay Kumar Singh and Vivek Chadha , Pentagon Press, pub 2024
- ***The Torture Camp on Paradise Street by Stanislav Aseyev***, Nina Murray and Zenia Tomkins , Harvard University Press, pub 2020.
- ***The Death of Soldier by his sister by Olesya Khromeychuk***, Monoray, pub 2022
- ***How the West Brought War to Ukraine*** by Benjamin Abelow, Siland Press, pub 2022
- ***Overreach: The Inside Story of Putin and Russia's war Against Ukraine***, Harper Collins UK, pub 2023

- ***War in Ukraine: Making Sense of a Senseless Conflict*** by Medea Benjamin and Nicolas J.S. Davies, Or Books, pub 2020
- ***Ukraine: Russia's War and the Future of the Global Order*** by Michael Cox, LSE Press, 2023
- Article: ***What is in out Interest", India and the Ukraine War*** , by Ashely J. Tellis, Carnegie Endowmnet for International Peace , 25 April, 2022.
- **Article : Interests trump principles and values: India's neutrality in the Russia-Ukraine war , Raj Verma, Contemporary Security Policy, 11 August 2024.**
- Reports by OSINT (Open Source Intelligence)
- Reports by SIPRI (Stockholm International peace research Institute)
- Reports by World Bank
- Reports by Institute for the Study of War (ISW)