



King's University College's Critical Security Studies program to be first in Canada

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London, ON – This fall, King's University College will be offering a new Critical Security Studies diploma and certificate program, the first of its kind in Canada, allowing students to study such diverse topics as terrorism, war and peace, security and dystopias.

"In the world around us, we hear about the fragility of security and how the state reacts to that fragility. The American President is regularly tweeting about security. Students have an awareness of this preoccupation with security and are looking for ways in interpret, analyse and understand this. Critical Security Studies helps stock their analytical toolbox," says Dr. Benjamin Muller, Associate Professor in the Department of Political Science and program coordinator of Social Justice & Peace Studies.

"As a field, Critical Security Studies has been around since the fall of the Berlin Wall, and as a discipline, it was a response to the Cold War," says Dr. Muller. "But, as far as I know, there is nothing else like this in Canada, offering an undergraduate certificate in Critical Security Studies."

Both the certificate and diploma programs require students to take five of the offered courses. The certificate program can be taken by undergraduate students while the diploma program can be taken by post-graduate students. Initially a certificate course, Dr. Muller and Dr. Derek Silva, Assistant Professor in the Department of Sociology, were encouraged by King's to also offer it as a diploma program.

Dr. Muller says successful graduates of the course could work with CSIS, the RCMP, CBSA, NATO or Interpol, as well as a number of NGOs and in academia. Critical Security Studies has also drawn interest from those who want to study non-government agency advocacy, the legal field, border security, Canadian Air Transport Security Authority (CATSA) aviation security, or environmental or Indigenous issues.

In addition to teaching Political Science/Sociology 3387 F/G Surveillance, Security and Society this May as an intersession course, Dr. Muller will also be teaching Political Science 3361 F/G American Borders and Borderlands again in 2020. Last February, Dr. Muller and Dr. Silva took students from the American Borders and Borderlands course on an experiential learning trip to the Arizona/Sonora, Mexico border.

"It was a great experience for the students, a bigger experience than they expected," says Dr. Muller. The students noticed that on the U.S. side "it looks like a warzone" with barbed wire and a

military presence while things seemed more normal on the Mexican side. While not every course will include travel, there will be elements of experiential and hands-on learning in many.

In 2005, Dr. Muller received his PhD in International Studies from Queen's University Belfast, UK. He has authored multiple peer-reviewed books, articles, and chapters on issues related to borders, sovereignty, technology, and identity.

Dr. Silva received his PhD in Sociology from the University of South Carolina, USA. He has authored a number of edited collections and peer-reviewed journal articles on issues related to terrorism and radicalization, knowledge mobilization, social media, hockey and national identity, and the role of expertise in "scouting" prospective athletes.

King's is a publicly-funded Catholic post-secondary institution which provides general and honors degree programs in the liberal arts, social sciences, management, and a master's degree in social work. It is positioned in the top rank of institutions of higher learning in Canada for the high quality of its teaching faculty and student experience. Institutionally autonomous, King's is academically-affiliated with Western University, and King's graduates receive a Western University degree. King's is open to students of all faith backgrounds, with its community centered on the values of social justice, equality and the education of the whole person.

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