FACING NUCLEAR WEAPONS CHALLENGES IN A WORLD OF RAPID CLIMATE CHANGE

Professor: **Benoît Pelopidas**
Language of instruction: **English**
Number of hours of class: **2,5h**

Objective of the Course

This course will provide students with tools to assess the validity of claims regarding nuclear weapons to which they will be exposed. It will also offer a framework for thinking about possible nuclear futures, which will be illustrated with untapped primary sources from global nuclear history and analysis of current events. Finally, it will connect the risks associated with nuclear weapons to other existential risks.

Summary

This session explores the impact of nuclear weapons on the world we live in with a forward-looking approach. Students will better understand policy issues such as the nuclear dimensions of the wars in Ukraine and the Middle East, the crises with North Korea and Iran, current investments in nuclear weapons “modernisation” worldwide, the nuclear implications of a second Trump presidency, the politics of nuclear deterrence, non-proliferation and crisis management in the current era.
It will also engage with the most recent and possible future sources of change, such as the war in Ukraine, processes of modernization of all existing nuclear arsenals, the radicalisation of the Pope’s position vis-à-vis nuclear weapons and the entry into force of a Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons.

Professor's Biography

Benoît Pelopidas is the founding director of the "Nuclear Knowledges" program at Sciences Po (CERI) (formerly chair of excellence in security studies) and an affiliate of the Center for International Security and Cooperation (CISAC) at Stanford University.

Nuclear Knowledges is the first scholarly research program in France on the nuclear phenomenon which refuses funding from stakeholders of the nuclear weapons enterprise or from antinuclear activists in order to problematize conflicts of interest and their effect on knowledge production. It offers conceptual innovation and unearths untapped primary sources worldwide to grasp nuclear vulnerabilities and rethink possibilities in the realm of nuclear weapons policies.

Key findings focus on the role of luck in the avoidance of past nuclear disasters and how to learn from them, European citizens' attitudes towards and knowledge about nuclear weapons, the development and deployment of French nuclear weapons and the lack of consistency and credibility of the associated strategy.

Benoît and the Nuclear Knowledges team have been awarded five international prizes for his research on the scoping of publicly available nuclear choices and the most prestigious scholarly grants in Europe (including one from the European Research Council).