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Decade of Teaching Nuclear Weapons and Arms Control: Lessons for the Future

Our undergraduate course titled “Nuclear Weapons and Arms Control” was created at the University of British Columbia (UBC) in 2014. The course has proven to be a very successful awareness and outreach effort and a model for future nuclear weapons education. From 2014 to 2024, the nearly 1000 students enrolled in the course have engaged in the science and politics of nuclear weapons and arms control and written major research projects on the CTBT. Central to the course model is the continuing multidisciplinary teaching collaboration between the Departments of Political Science (Dr. Allen Sens) and Electrical and Computer Engineering (Dr. Matt Yedlin). The course is unique as it enrolls both Arts and Engineering students working together in groups in a “flipped classroom” environment. We will present the course design and learning outcomes and evaluate student engagement using data from YouTube and student surveys. We propose the development of a version of the course that is accessible to the public, and takes advantage of the potential of Generative AI. Based on our decade of teaching experience, we would like to collaborate with the CTBTO and universities interested in creating satellite versions of our course.

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