Once coined the “final frontier,” space is now an essential component of the modern economy. The globalized world, powered by a limitless proliferation of internet of things technologies, relies heavily on satellites orbiting our planet. Yet, the space domain is also critical to military power. Space provides critical military capabilities including overhead reconnaissance, communications, and battlefield positioning. This military and economic dependence on space makes it an attractive target driving weaponization of the domain which is evident in increasingly aggressive rhetoric and the growing proliferation of anti-satellite (ASAT) capabilities.

As a result, both states and private actors are rushing to gain an advantage in space whether it be for military power and security or for purely economic gains. As the number of space actors increases and space-based technologies and military capabilities accelerate, the difficulties of establishing an accepted rules based order in space are daunting. How does the United States preserve its military and economic prosperity in the space domain without escalating into conflict or compromising its relative advantage?

Below are the topics for discussion, along with some key readings to facilitate debate.

**Relative Space Power-Military and Economic Advantage**
To what extent are states currently competing for primacy in space? Is there a great power advantage in space or is space becoming increasingly democratized? Who are the new or rising actors in space and to what extent do they affect the space dynamic? What does a position of relative advantage in space look like for a state? How do alliance and alignment dynamics impact states’ ambitions in space?

**Readings (in priority order):**


**Space as a Warfighting Domain**
What are the greatest military threats in the space domain? How does the US Space Force maintain its competitive edge in space? What are the space lessons learned from Ukraine? How should the Department of Defense think about innovation and warfighting in the space domain?
SCUSA 74 Roundtable Topic: The Politics and Economics of Space

Readings (in priority order):


Commercial Actors in Space
More than 50% of operational satellites in orbit are launched for commercial purposes, and space tourism continues to grow. What is the appropriate role of private actors in the space domain? How does the international community regulate the use of space from private actors? What is the responsibility of private actors who operate in space during times of conflict? How does the United States capture the innovation of the private sector in space and deter private companies from contributing to adversary capabilities?

Readings (in priority order):


Deterrence and Applying International Relations Theory to Space
What does deterrence look like in space? What are the obstacles and opportunities for preventing escalation in space? To what extent have space capabilities affected traditional coercion theory? How can the U.S. deter costly actions in space? What is the efficacy of space operations in compellence? To what extent can space capabilities affect a state’s ability to assure allies?

Readings (in priority order):
Defining Acceptable Norms of Behavior in Space
Given the increasing number of actors in space, space governance is ever more important. What norms should govern space conduct of states? What are the incentives and obstacles to the creation of space norms? To what extent is space a common good?

Readings (in priority order):


*The readings have links but you may encounter a pay wall. If so, access the readings through your institution’s library.