

**The History and Costs of U.S. Nuclear Weapons  
An Intensive Weekend Seminar—April 11-13, 2008**

WKS 523, 1 Credit

Instructor: Stephen I. Schwartz

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**Course Description:**

This workshop explores how and why the United States spent more than \$6 trillion to build some 70,000 nuclear weapons during the cold war, conduct more than 1,000 nuclear tests, and deploy and maintain a worldwide network of delivery systems, sensors, and communications assets capable of unleashing (or defending against) unimaginable devastation. Key developments and turning points in the history of the nuclear weapons program will be discussed, and the human health, environmental, and economic costs of the testing, production, and deployment of U.S. nuclear weapons will be quantified and assessed. Basic knowledge of nuclear weapons is helpful but not essential. This course includes select historical film clips, the award-winning documentary "Paul Jacobs and the Nuclear Gang," and special guest lectures by Ray Kidder, a former longtime senior physicist at Lawrence Livermore National Laboratory, and prize-winning author Richard Rhodes (*The Making of the Atomic Bomb*, *Dark Sun*, and *Arsenals of Folly*).

Students are expected to attend all sessions and to participate in discussions throughout the workshop. A short exam will be given on the final day.

**Suggested Reading:**

Stephen I. Schwartz, Ed., *Atomic Audit: The Costs and Consequences of U.S. Nuclear Weapons Since 1940* (Brookings Institution Press, 1998).

See also the companion web site for the book:

[www.brookings.edu/projects/archive/nucweapons/weapons.aspx](http://www.brookings.edu/projects/archive/nucweapons/weapons.aspx)

Other useful web sites:

National Security Archive—The Nuclear Vault:

[www.gwu.edu/~nsarchiv/nukevault/](http://www.gwu.edu/~nsarchiv/nukevault/)

PBS, The American Experience, "Race for the Superbomb":

[www.pbs.org/wgbh/amex/bomb/index.html](http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/amex/bomb/index.html)

*Linking Legacies: Connecting the Cold War Nuclear Weapon Weapons Production Process to Their Environmental Consequences* (Department of Energy, 1997):

[www.em.doe.gov/Publications/linklegacy.aspx](http://www.em.doe.gov/Publications/linklegacy.aspx)