

# SIS-689: Foreign Policy: Theories of Decision-Making

<b>Instructor:</b>	Dr. Guy Ziv	<b>Meeting Time:</b>	TH 5:30 p.m. – 8:00 p.m.
<b>E-Mail:</b>	ziv@american.edu	<b>Classroom:</b>	EQB 203
<b>Office:</b>	EQB 100B (The Old SIS Building)	<b>Office Hours:</b>	TUE 1:45 p.m. – 2:20 p.m., 4:00 p.m. – 5:45 p.m. TH 1:45 p.m. – 5:45 p.m. & by appointment

## Overview

This seminar examines theories about how states formulate foreign policy. The focus is on the decision-making process, including theories about individual rationality and cognition, information processing, risk taking, group dynamics, and bureaucratic politics, as well as the influence of domestic societal factors. The various theoretical approaches are applied to historical cases of international crises and intelligence failures, drawn primarily but not exclusively from American foreign policy.

## Course Objectives

This course aims to provide you with an overview of the core theoretical approaches within the foreign policy decision-making scholarship; an understanding of the contributions and limitations of each approach; the ability to apply theories to key foreign policy events in post-World War II American diplomatic history (e.g., the Cuban Missile Crisis); and hone your skills in critical thinking, research, writing, leadership in group discussions, and presentation.

## Learning Outcomes

By the end of the semester, you should be able to do the following:

1. Describe the primary theoretical approaches, identifying key similarities and distinctions among them.
2. Appraise the strengths and limitations of these theories.
3. Identify evidence that supports or eliminates a particular approach as a way of understanding an event.
4. Research a foreign policy event and select the theories that best fit the case given the evidence.
5. Lead a group discussion.
6. Present research findings in a clear, concise, professional, and convincing manner.

## Required Readings

- Graham Allison and Philip Zelikow, *Essence of Decision: Explaining the Cuban Missile Crisis*, Second Edition (New York: Longman, 1999).
- Irving L. Janis, *Groupthink*, Second Edition (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1982).
- Richard C. Snyder et al., *Foreign Policy Decision-Making (Revisited)* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2002).
- David A. Welch, *Painful Choices: A Theory of Foreign Policy Change* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2005).
- Articles will be accessible on Blackboard under "Course Documents."
- In addition to the assigned readings, you are expected to monitor news pertaining to foreign policy.

### **Academic Integrity Code Statement**

Standards of academic conduct are set forth in the University's Academic Integrity Code. By registering, you have acknowledged your awareness of the Academic Integrity Code, and you are obliged to become familiar with your rights and responsibilities as defined by the Code. Violations of the Academic Integrity Code will not be treated lightly, and disciplinary actions will be taken should such violations occur. Please see me if you have any questions about the academic violations described in the Code in general or as they relate to particular requirements for this course.

### **Emergency Preparedness**

In the event of an emergency, American University will implement a plan for meeting the needs of all members of the university community. Should the university be required to close for a period of time, we are committed to ensuring that all aspects of our educational programs will be delivered to our students. These may include altering and extending the duration of the traditional term schedule to complete essential instruction in the traditional format and/or use of distance instructional methods. Specific strategies will vary from class to class, depending on the format of the course and the timing of the emergency. Faculty will communicate class-specific information to students via AU e-mail and Blackboard, while students must inform their faculty immediately of any absence. Students are responsible for checking their AU e-mail regularly and keeping themselves informed of emergencies. In the event of an emergency, students should refer to the AU Student Portal, the AU Web site ([www.prepared.american.edu](http://www.prepared.american.edu)) and the AU information line at (202) 885-1100 for general university-wide information, as well as contact their faculty and/or respective dean's office for course and school/college-specific information.

### **Laptop Policy**

Any potential benefits derived from using a laptop in this class are outweighed by the potential distractions – to you, to fellow students, and to the professor. You are asked, therefore, to refrain from using a laptop in this class. If you find this policy to be problematic for your particular needs, please discuss this matter with the professor during the first week of classes.

### **Blackboard**

The required articles will be available on Blackboard. You will need to retrieve the recommended readings on your own, assuming you are writing a paper on a relevant topic and want to gain greater insight into that topic. The syllabus, including any updated versions to the syllabus, will be available on Blackboard. Important announcements about the class and about internship/employment opportunities will be posted on Blackboard as well. You are therefore asked to log onto Blackboard throughout the week so that you do not miss out on timely information.

### **Criteria for Evaluation**

- Class Participation: 20%
- Review Essay: 25%
- Discussion Co-Leader: 15%
- Case Study Research Paper: 40%

### **Class Participation**

You are expected to attend class regularly and on time; come prepared having done the assigned readings; and participate actively in class discussions. To do well in the participation component of the class, you are asked to develop arguments that engage the readings for that week and not just express your opinion. In addition, you are expected to help lead class discussions; each graduate student will be responsible for co-leading a discussion session in the course of the semester. ***Unexcused absences will negatively impact your grade*** unless these absences are excused by official documentation, such as a physician's note. Please keep in mind that we meet only once a week, so it is important that you do your best to make it to every session. If, however, you are going to miss a class for whatever reason, please provide 24 hours notice, in writing.

### **Discussion Leaders**

You will have an opportunity to co-lead a class discussion with three or four other students. Your group will come up with a list of questions, based on the week's readings, to be presented to the class. In addition to moderating the discussion, your group will be responsible for providing preliminary answers to your questions after having discussed them prior to the class meeting.

### **Review Essay**

You are expected to submit a book-review-style essay synthesizing and critiquing three of the readings in a given week's topical section. At least one of these readings must be a book or book chapter assigned either as required reading or listed as a "recommended" reading for that week. Your paper should be 5-6 double-spaced pages (12-point, Times New Roman font). Your essay, which should focus on one of the first four sets of readings (any of the topics until and including cognitive approaches), is due on **Thursday, October 6<sup>th</sup>**. Please make sure you have printed it out *and* stapled it before handing it in. Do not submit this paper electronically. You do not need a cover sheet for this assignment, nor do you need a bibliography, however, you should obviously refer to the specific readings you are critiquing.

### **Case Study Research Paper**

You will be expected to come up with a topic for a case study by **Thursday, October 13<sup>th</sup>** and obtain approval from the instructor to write about this case. Throughout the semester – particularly during the second half – you will research your case, which should either illustrate one theoretical approach discussed in class or try to demonstrate why one of these approaches offers a better explanation than another with respect to this case. You are encouraged to consult the recommended readings listed on this syllabus to enhance your understanding of the theoretical approach (or approaches) you are analyzing. As noted above, the recommended readings will not be uploaded on Blackboard, so you are expected to retrieve the books/articles on your own. Your paper should be approximately 20 double-spaced pages (12-point, Times New Roman font) including a bibliography. You can use either APA or Chicago style as long as you are consistent. Please send your completed paper via email to [ziv@american.edu](mailto:ziv@american.edu) by **Thursday, December 8<sup>th</sup>**. (You may submit a hard copy as well if you wish.)

# Outline of Topics

## 1. Thursday, 9/1: Introduction

- Introductions and Overview of Course Objectives, Topics and Expectations
- Scheduling Discussion Leaders and Student Presentations

## 2. Thursday, 9/8: Realism, Rationality & The Systemic Level of Analysis

- A Review of IR Theory
- The Rationalist Approach to Foreign Policy Decision-Making

### Readings:

- Allison and Zelikow, Ch. 1 & 2
- Jack Snyder, "One World, Rival Theories," *Foreign Policy* (Nov./Dec. 2004): 52-62.
- Stephen M. Walt, "International Relations: One World, Many Theories," *Foreign Policy* (Spring 1998): 29-35.
- Recommended: John J. Mearsheimer, *The Tragedy of Great Power Politics* (New York: Norton 2001).
- Recommended: Miles Kahler, "Rationality in International Relations," *International Organization*, Vol. 52, No. 4 (Autumn 1998): 919-941.

## 3. Thursday, 9/15: Bureaucratic Politics & The Domestic Level of Analysis

- Graham T. Allison's Bureaucratic Politics Model
- Critiques of the Bureaucratic Politics Model

### Readings:

- Allison and Zelikow, Ch. 3 & 5. Skim Ch. 4, 6, & 7.
- Stephen D. Krasner, "Are Bureaucracies Important? (Or Allison Wonderland)," *Foreign Policy*, 7 (Summer 1972): 159-179.
- Edwards Rhodes, "Do Bureaucratic Politics Matter? Some Disconfirming Findings from the Case of the U.S. Navy," *World Politics*, 47, 1 (October 1994): 1-41.
- Recommended: Morton Halperin, *Bureaucratic Politics and American Foreign Policy* (Washington, DC: Brookings, 1974).
- Recommended: Robert Art, Bureaucratic Politics and American Foreign Policy: A Critique," *Policy Sciences*, Vol. 4 (1973): 467-90.
- Recommended: Jonathan Bendor and Thomas Hammond, "Rethinking Allison's Models," *American Political Science Review* 86 (2): 301-322.
- Recommended: Howard J. Wiarda, Beyond the Pale: The Bureaucratic Politics of the United States Policy in Mexico," *World Affairs*, Vol. 162, No. 4 (Spring 2000): 174-192.

## 4. Thursday, 9/22: Personality Traits & The Individual Level of Analysis

- The Structure-Agency Debate
- The Role of Personality in Foreign Policy Decision-Making

### Readings:

- Daniel L. Byman and Kenneth M. Pollack, "Let Us Now Praise Great Men: Bringing the Statesmen Back In," *International Security*, Vol. 25, No. 4 (Spring 2001): 107-146.
- Fred Greenstein, "The Impact of Personality on the End of the Cold War: A Counterfactual Analysis," *Political Psychology*, Vol. 19, No. 1 (March 1998): 1-16.

- Richard C. Snyder et al., *Foreign Policy Decision-Making (Revisited)* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2002): pp. 1-20, 141-144
- Guy Ziv, "Shimon Peres and the French-Israeli Alliance, 1954-1959," *Journal of Contemporary History*, Vol. 45, No. 2 (April 2010): 406-429.
- Recommended: Fred Greenstein, "The Impact of Personality on Politics: An Attempt to Clear Away the Underbrush," *The American Political Science Review*, Vol. 61, No. 3 (September 1967): 629-641.
- Recommended: Margaret G. Hermann and Joe D. Hagan, "International Decision Making: Leadership Matters," *Foreign Policy*, No. 110 (Spring 1998): 124-137.
- Recommended: Alex Mintz, "How Do Leaders Make Decisions: A Polyheuristic Perspective," *Journal of Conflict Resolution*, Vol. 48, No. 3 (February 2004): 3-13.

#### 5. Thursday, 9/29: MOVIE

- **Note**: Due to the Rosh Hashanah holiday, I will not conduct class this evening; instead, you will watch the movie "Thirteen Days" during normal class time. If you, too, observe this holiday, however, you are asked to watch this film on your own.

#### Readings:

- Catch up on previous weeks' readings and/or read ahead.

#### 6. Thursday, October 6: Cognitive Approaches

- Cognitive Structure and Beliefs
- Learning and Foreign Policy
- Analogical Reasoning
- **Review essay is due today.**

#### Readings:

- Akan Malici and Johnna Malici, "When Will They Ever Learn?" An Examination of Fidel Castro and Kim Jong-Il's Operational Code Beliefs," *Psicologia Politica*, No. 31 (2005): 7-22.
- Jack S. Levy, "Learning and Foreign Policy: Sweeping a Conceptual Minefield," *International Organization*, Vol. 48, No. 2 (Spring 1994): 279-312.
- Robert Jervis, "Hypotheses on Misperception," *World Politics*, Vol. 20, No. 3 (April 1968): 454-479.
- Guy Ziv, "Cognitive Structure and Foreign Policy Change: Israel's Decision to Talk to the PLO," *International Relations* [forthcoming]
- Recommended: Robert Jervis, *Perception and Misperception* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1976).
- Recommended: Akan Malici, *When Leaders Learn and When They Don't: Mikhail Gorbachev and Kim Il Sung at the End of the Cold War* (Albany: SUNY Series in Global Politics, 2009).
- Recommended: Benjamin E. Goldsmith, *Imitation in International Relations: Observational Learning, Analogies, and Foreign Policy in Russia and Ukraine* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2005).
- Recommended: Janice Gross Stein, "Political Learning by Doing: Gorbachev as Uncommitted Thinker and Motivated Learner," *International Organization*, Vol. 48, No. 2 (Spring 1994): 153-183.
- Recommended: Yuen Foong Khong, *Analogies at War: Korea, Munich, Dien Bien Phu, and the Vietnam Decisions of 1965* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1992).

- Recommended: Stephen Benedict Dyson and Thomas Preston, "Individual Characteristics of Political Leaders and the Use of Analogy in Foreign Policy Decision Making," *Political Psychology*, Vol. 27, No. 2 (April 2006): 265-288.

#### 7. Thursday, October 13: Groupthink

- Causes, Symptoms, and Remedies for Groupthink
- Criticisms of Groupthink Case-Based Research
- **Email paper topic by noon today.**

##### Readings:

- Janis, *Groupthink*, Ch. 1-2, 6, 8-11.
- James Esser, "Alive and Well After 25 Years: A Review of Groupthink Research," *Organizational Behavior and Human Processes*, Vol. 73, No. 2/3 (1998): 116-141.
- Recommended: Mark Schafer and Scott Crichlow, *Groupthink vs. High-Quality Decision Making in International Relations* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2010).
- Recommended: Paul 't Hart, Eric K. Stern, and Bengt Sundelius, Eds. *Beyond Groupthink: Political Group Dynamics and Foreign Policy-making* (Ann Arbor: The University of Michigan Press, 1997).

#### 8. Thursday, October 20: Prospect Theory

- Expected Utility Theory vs. Prospect Theory

##### Readings:

- David A. Welch, *Painful Choices: A Theory of Foreign Policy Change* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2005): Ch. 1-4, 6.
- Recommended: Jack S. Levy, "Prospect Theory and International Relations: Theoretical Applications and Analytical Problems," *Political Psychology*, Vol. 13, No. 2 (June 1992): 283-310.
- Recommended: Daniel Kahneman and Amos Tversky, "Prospect Theory: An Analysis of Decision under Risk," *Econometrica*, Vol. 47, No. 2 (March 1979): 263-292.
- Recommended: Jonathan Mercer, "Prospect Theory and Political Science," *Annual Review of Political Science*, Vol. 8 (June 2005): 1-21.
- Recommended: Rose McDermott, *Risk-Taking in International Politics: Prospect Theory in American Foreign Policy* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2001).
- Recommended: Barbara Farnham, *Avoiding Losses/Taking Risks: Prospect Theory and International Conflict* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1994).

#### 9. Thursday, October 27: Domestic Politics

- Two-Level Games
- The Role of Domestic Politics in U.S. Foreign Policy

##### Readings:

- Robert Putnam, "Diplomacy and Domestic Politics: The Logic of Two-Level Games," *International Organization*, Vol. 42, No. 3 (Summer 1988): 427-460.
- John J. Mearsheimer and Stephen Walt, "The Israeli Lobby and US Foreign Policy." Available on-line: <http://mearsheimer.uchicago.edu/pdfs/A0040.pdf>
- Benny Morris, "And Now for Some Facts," *The New Republic*, 234, 17 (2006), pp. 23-29: <http://spme.net/cgi-bin/articles.cgi?ID=434>

- Will H. Moore and David J. Lanoue, "Domestic Politics and U.S. Foreign Policy: A Study of Cold War Conflict Behavior," *The Journal of Politics*, Vol. 65, No. 2 (May 2003): 376-396. Link: <http://mailer.fsu.edu/~whmoore/garnet-whmoore/research/Moore%26Lanoue.JOP.pdf>
- Recommended: Jerel A. Rosati, Joe D. Hagan, and Martin W. Sampson III, Eds. *Foreign Policy Restructuring: How Governments Respond to Global Change* (Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 1994).
- Recommended: Eugene Wittkopf and James M. McCormick, Eds. *The Domestic Sources of American Foreign Policy: Insights and Evidence* (Oxford: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, 2007).
- Recommended: Ole R. Holsti, *Public Opinion and American Foreign Policy* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2004).
- Recommended: Jeffrey W. Knopf, *Domestic Society and International Cooperation: The Impact of Protest on U.S. Arms Control Policy* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998).

#### 10. Thursday, November 3: Crisis Decision-Making

- Case Studies: The Iran Hostage Crisis (1979), the U.S.-Panama Crisis (1989)

##### Readings:

- Thomas C. Wiegale, "Decision-Making in an International Crisis: Some Biological Factors," *International Studies Quarterly*, Vol. 17, No. 3 (September, 1973), pp. 295-335.
- Gina Marie L. Hatheway, "The U.S.-Panama Crisis: Lessons in Effectiveness of Coercive Diplomatic Measures," in David Abshire, Ed. *Triumphs and Tragedies of the Modern Presidency: Seventy-Six Case Studies in Presidential Leadership* (Washington, D.C.: Center for the Study of the Presidency, 2001): 212-216. Link: [http://www.thepresidency.org/storage/documents/US\\_Panama\\_Crisis.pdf](http://www.thepresidency.org/storage/documents/US_Panama_Crisis.pdf)
- B. Raman, "Decision-making in Foreign Policy," South Asia Analysis Group Notes and Updates. Link: <http://www.southasiaanalysis.org/%5Cnotes%5Cnote86.html>
- Recommended: Pierre Allan, *Crisis Bargaining and the Arms Race: A Theoretical Model* (Cambridge: Ballinger, 1983).
- Recommended: Alexander L. George, Ed., *Avoiding War: Problems of Crisis Management* (Boulder: Westview, 1991).

#### 11. Thursday, November 10: Wrap-Up Discussion & Movie

- An Assessment of the competing theoretical approaches to foreign policy decision-making
- Film: The Fog of War

##### Readings:

- Stephen M. Walt, "Where Do Bad Ideas Come From?" *Foreign Policy* (January/February 2011). Link: [http://www.foreignpolicy.com/articles/2011/01/02/where\\_do\\_bad\\_ideas\\_come\\_from](http://www.foreignpolicy.com/articles/2011/01/02/where_do_bad_ideas_come_from)
- Leslie H. Gelb, "Robert McNamara," *Time* (July 20, 2009): <http://www.time.com/time/magazine/article/0,9171,1909627,00.html>

#### 12. Thursday, November 17: Student Presentations

- Student Presentations & Critiques

#### 13. Thursday, 11/24: THANKSGIVING – NO CLASS

**14. Thursday, 12/1: Student Presentations (Cont'd)**

- Student Presentations & Critiques

**15. Thursday, 12/8: Student Presentations (Cont'd)**

- Student Presentations & Critiques
- **Submit Papers**