INR 4104, Section 2
Topics and Cases in American Foreign Policy
3 credit hours
Spring 2012

Professor Mark Schafer
Office: 314A Howard Phillips Hall, (407) 823-3328
Office Hours: Mondays, Wednesdays, and Fridays 1:00 to 2:30 pm, and by appointment.

UCF Catalog Description: *General or intensive analysis of problems or aspects of U.S. foreign policy. Issues may include September 11th, homeland security, counter-terrorism, policymaking and decision-making and intelligence*.

Course Overview

Rather than focusing on the history of, or specific patterns in American foreign policy, this class focuses more on the *process* of foreign policy decision making (FPDM). In this class we want to understand *how* policies get made. Inherent in this topic is the question of how the process of decision making might be improved.

Anyone who has ever discussed international relations and foreign policy can tell you that some decisions or outcomes are poor and others are excellent. Likewise, when we stop and think about it, we can assume that sometimes the processes leading to decisions can be better or worse. We *cannot* assume -- and history strongly supports this -- that a leader always follows a thorough and rational decision-making process that leads to the best policy. Given this, our task is to look at the process, understand weaknesses and limitations of decision making, and look for both positive and negative patterns.

Why is it appropriate to study the process? Because the stakes in the process are incredibly high. States make such foreign policies as sending aid, initiating embargoes or boycotts, increasing or decreasing trade, developing new weapons systems, making or breaking alliances, starting war, and making peace. Quite often foreign policies deal with matters of life and death and can fundamentally alter the course and structure of global relations. We need to ask about such things as: What factors matter in the process? When do they matter and why? Are there ways to improve the process of making foreign policy?

There are three particular areas that are central to the organization and structure of this course. The first area is learning the material theoretically and empirically through readings and lectures. The second area is experiential learning through doing. A major part of this class will be participation in a simulated foreign policy decision-making process throughout the semester. The third area is application of the material; you will choose a foreign policy decision from history and write a formal research paper on that case in which you apply the material you have learned in the rest of the class. By the end of the semester you will have studied the material, participated in the process of foreign policy decision making, and applied the material to an important historical example.

As with all my classes, we will focus part of our attention on current events in international politics. This will give us real-time applications of the theoretical and empirical material we are covering in the rest of the class. Students are *required* to read Associated Press ("AP") world news stories. These can be accessed for free by way of yahoo.com, which I'll show you in class early in the semester.

Required Readings

1. Schafer, M., and S. Crichlow. 2010. *Groupthink versus High-Quality Decision Making in International Relations*. New York: Columbia University Press.

(Note: Since I am the co-author on the book above, to eliminate any financial conflict of interest in using this book, I will contribute to the UCF Foundation the amount of all royalties I receive for this book that are purchased for this course.)

2. Lobel, A. (ed.) 2001. *Presidential Judgment: Foreign Policy Decision Making in the White House.* Hollis, NH: Hollis Publishing.

3. Leguin, U. 1994. *The Dispossessed*. New York: Eos (Harper Collins).

4. AP wire stories, accessed through yahoo.com

Course Objectives

There are two broad sets of objectives for this class. The first is for you to gain knowledge about international relations in general and foreign policy decision-making processes in particular. The second objective is for you to further develop your academic skills in several areas: reading, writing, speaking, and thinking critically.

Course Requirements

Midterm	15%
Term Paper	30%
Simulation Activities	10%
Miscellaneous assignments and quizzes	10%
Class Participation	10%
Final Exam	25%

Course Calendar

Weeks of January 9 and 18: Read Chapters 1 and 2 in *Groupthink vs. High-Quality Decision Making* ("*GTv.HQDM*")

Week of January 23: Read Chapter 3 in *GTv.HQDM* .

Week of January 30: Read Chapter 4 in *GTv.HQDM*.

Week of February 6: Read Chapter 5 in *GTv.HQDM*.

Week of February 13: Catch up and prepare for midterm.

*****Midterm – Friday February 17*****

Week of February 20: Read Chapter 6 in *GTv.HQDM*.

Week of February 27: Read Chapter 7 in *GTv.HQDM*.

Week of March 12: Read Chapter 8 in *GTv.HQDM*.

Week of March 19: Read Chapter 9 in *GTv.HQDM*.

Weeks of March 26 and April 2: Read pp. v. to 40 in *Presidential Judgment*, and read chapters 1-3 in *The Dispossessed*.

Weeks of April 9: Read pages 41 to 88 in *Presidential Judgment*.

****Term Paper due at the start of class Friday April 13****

April 16 through April 23: Read pages 89 to 115 in *Presidential Judgment,* and finish reading *The Dispossessed*.

*****Final Exam – Monday, April 30, 10:00am to noon*****

Policies

I welcome and encourage questions, comments and discussion either in or out of the classroom. I love teaching and I love what I teach, so remember my door is open!

Any papers or assignments must be turned in on or before the due date. Emailed papers will not be accepted unless previously arranged with me due to dire circumstances. Exams and quizzes may not be rescheduled or postponed. Exceptions will be allowed only under extreme, documented circumstances. Under such circumstances, you are required to notify me (or, if I am unavailable, the Department of Political Science) prior to the date or as soon as possible if prior notice is impossible.

Late papers are generally not accepted. If I accept a late paper because of circumstances, I will deduct 10% from the paper grade for every day it is late, up to a maximum of 75% deduction.

I cannot respond to grade inquiries by email.

Cell phones, pagers, and other such things that might go off and make noise in our class are not permitted in class.

As reflected in the UCF Creed, integrity and scholarship are core values that should guide our conduct and decisions as members of the UCF community. Plagiarism and cheating contradict these values, and so are very serious academic offenses. Penalties can include a failing grade in an assignment or in the course, or suspension or expulsion from the university. All work you submit must be your own scholarly and creative effort. UCF's Golden Rule defines plagiarism as follows: "**whereby another's work is used or appropriated without any indication of the source, thereby attempting to convey the impression that such work is the student's own.**"

The University of Central Florida is committed to providing reasonable accommodations for all persons with disabilities. This syllabus can be made available in alternate formats upon request. Students with disabilities who need accommodations in this course must register with Student Disability Services, Ferrell Commons Room 132, phone (407) 823-2371, TTY/TDD only phone (407) 823-2116. After that, the student should contact the professor to request accommodations.

Third parties may be selling class notes and other materials from this class without my authorization. Please be aware that such class materials may contain errors, which could affect your performance or grade. Use these materials at your own risk.