Topics and Cases in
American Foreign Policy

Department of Political Science
College of Arts and Sciences at the University of Central Florida

inr4104a - Topics and Cases in American Foreign Policy
David Houghton

Course Home

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Introduction

This is the companion website to INR4104 *Topics and Cases in American Foreign Policy*, Spring 2012. Included here are the course schedule and this course overview, which details the book to be purchased and a breakdown of the course requirements. You will also find a 'Course Mail' function (see menu on left) which I will use to send you announcements and/or other materials between classes. I will also use the 'My Grades' function to post your grades for the Midterms and Final Examination once these become available.

It is absolutely vital that you check this site regularly (especially the course mail and schedule). Without doing this, you will miss any changes, announcements, documents or general messages I post or send to the class as a whole. I recommend that you check your course mail box at least twice per week (more often is better).

Course Description

This class builds upon the material presented in basic introductions to U.S. foreign policy (such as INR 4102), examining classic case studies in more depth than we have time for in an introductory course. The first part of *Topics in American Foreign Policy* will examine at length the various forces and pressures which impact upon those whose job it is to make foreign policy decisions, looking in particular at the part played by organizational, group and individual psychological forces in the formulation of those decisions. We shall describe these general approaches in terms of three theories, each of which captures a different dimension of governmental decision-making: *Homo Bureaucraticus*, *Homo Sociologicus* and *Homo Psychologicus*.

The second part of the course will apply these three theories in considerable detail to a selection of major events/crises in American foreign policy since the 1960s. The six principal case studies will be the Bay of Pigs invasion of 1961, the Cuban missile crisis of 1962, the 1965 Vietnam escalation decisions, the Iran hostage crisis of 1979-81, the Kosovo intervention of 1999 and the decision to invade Iraq in 2003. We will view each event through the lenses of different theories which have been developed in order to understand the process of foreign policy decision-making.

Required Text

There is no textbook to purchase for this course. All of the readings can be accessed for free via this course website (see 'Readings Box'), though you will of course have the expense of printing them out if you choose not to read them on screen.

The main text we will use is my own forthcoming book:

David Patrick Houghton, *The Decision Point* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2013).

Since this will not be published until December of this year and probably not till January 2013, I am going to post the draft chapters as PDF files on this website.

Rules of Assessment

The final grade will be composed of three elements:

- A Midterm I Multiple Choice Examination composed of 50 questions, drawn from the material covered to that point. It will be taken on Wednesday 15 February. This exam is worth 25% of your overall grade.
- A Midterm II Multiple Choice Examination composed of 50 questions, drawn from the material covered since the first Midterm. It will be taken on Friday 16 March. This exam is worth 25% of your overall grade.
- A Final Multiple Choice Examination taken on Thursday 10 December. This is worth 50%, and will consist of 100 questions drawn from all the material covered.

This class is taught face-to-face, so you are in addition expected to be present in class to take notes and engage in discussions. Note that having a day job which conflicts with the course is not considered a valid excuse; if you take on employment which conflicts with the class times, you should drop the course and take another, or else take this course later in a format more conducive to your personal circumstances (eg as a web-only or 'W' course).

Makeup examinations and essay extensions will be offered *only in the very rarest of circumstances*. In order to be eligible to take a makeup exam or get an essay extension, you must give a *convincing written explanation*, backed up with proper medical or other documentation, as to why you were unable to meet the expectations required of other class members. Only where the instructor is fully satisfied that the student could not be expected to complete the original assignment/examination given his or her personal circumstances will any exceptions whatsoever be granted. Note also that any makeup examination *will not necessarily be of the same format as the original exam*.

Finally, please note that ***no extra credit*** will be offered in this course; by continuing with the course, you are agreeing to abide by its rules of assessment and agreeing to accept the marks/grades assigned to your work. The grading scheme will be as follows:

A 90 or above
A- 88-89
B+ 86-87
B 82-85
B- 80-81
C+ 78-79
C 73-77
C- 70-72
D+ 67-69
D 63-66
D- 60-62
F Below 60

Academic Honesty

Cheating of any kind on an examination or other class component will result at least in an "F" for that assignment (and may, depending on the severity of the case, lead to an "F" for the entire course) and may be subject to appropriate referral to the Office of Student Conduct for further action. See the UCF Golden Rule for further information. I will assume for this course that you will adhere to the academic creed of this University and will maintain the highest standards of academic integrity. In other words, don't cheat by giving answers to others or taking them from anyone else. I will also adhere to the highest standards of academic integrity, so please do not ask me to change (or expect me to change) your grade illegitimately or to bend or break rules for one person.

Schedule
Spring 2012

- The following readings may be subject to change as the course proceeds, but all will be made available online via the 'Readings Box' on this website.

Date	Class	Reading/Activity
Monday January 9	**Introduction To The Course I**	Summary of course requirements.
Wednesday January 11	**Introduction To The Course II**	Birds-eye view of the material covered in the course.
Friday January 13	**No Class Held**	Class cancelled, but you should read Chapter 1 of Houghton, *The Decision Point* for next week's classes.
Monday January 16	**Martin Luther King Holiday**	No class held.
Part I: Theories		
Wednesday January 18	**Foreign Policy Traditions and *Homo Economicus***	Houghton, *Decision Point*, Chapter 1; Chris Alden and Annon Aran, *Foreign Policy Analysis: New Approaches* (New York: Routledge, 2012), chapter 2 (see 'Alden and Aran' in Readings Box).
Friday January 20	**Levels of Analysis**	Houghton, *Decision Point*, Chapter 1; James Rosenau, 'Pre-Theories and Theories of Foreign Policy', in Rosenau, *The Scientific Study of Foreign Policy* (New York: Nicols, 1980) (see Rosenau in Readings Box).
Monday January 23	***Homo Bureaucraticus I***	Houghton, *Decision Point*, Chapter 2.
Wednesday January 25	***Bureaucraticus II***	Houghton, *Decision Point*, Chapter 2.
Friday January 27	***Homo Sociologicus I***	Houghton, *Decision Point*, Chapter 3.
Monday January 30	***Sociologicus II***	Houghton, *Decision Point*, Chapter 3.
Wednesday February 1	***Homo Psychologicus I***	Houghton, *Decision Point*, Chapter 4.
Friday February 3	***Psychologicus II***	Houghton, *Decision Point*, Chapter 4.
Part II: Case Studies		
Monday February 6	**Bay Of Pigs I**	Video, *The Bay Of Pigs* and discussion; Houghton, *Decision Point*, Chapter 5.
Wednesday February 8	**Bay Of Pigs II**	Houghton, *Decision Point*, Chapter 5; Roderick Kramer, 'How Could I Have Been Stupid? Revisiting the Bay of Pigs and

		Vietnam Decisions 25 Years Later: How Well Has the Groupthink Hypothesis Stood the Test of Time?', *Organizational Behavior*, 73: 236-71, 1998 (see Readings Box).
Friday February 10	**Bay Of Pigs III**	Houghton, *Decision Point*, Chapter 5; Janis, *Groupthink*, Chapter 2 (‘Janis I’ in the Readings Box).
Monday February 13	**Revision Session I**	No new reading assigned.
Wednesday February 15	**Midterm Examination I**	50 multiple choice questions. Bring a brown scantron and pencil.
Friday February 17	**To the Brink: Cuban Missile Crisis I**	Video, *At The Brink* and discussion. This is Volume 5 of an old PBS series called *War and Peace In The Nuclear Age*. This is unavailable in the library and there is no transcript of this video on the web as far as I'm aware, but it remains the best visual account of the missile crisis; Houghton, *Decision Point*, Chapter 5.
Monday February 20	**Cuban Missile Crisis II**	Houghton, *Decision Point*, Chapter 5; Irving Janis, *Groupthink*, Chapter 6 (‘Janis II’ in the Readings Box).
Wednesday February 22	**Missile Crisis III**	Read Richard Neustadt and Ernest May, 'A Success Story' from the book *Thinking in Time*, and Stephen Krasner, 'Are Bureaucracies Important? (Or Allison in Wonderland)", *Foreign Policy*, 7:159-79, 1972(Or Allison Wonderland)' (see 'Neustadt' and 'Krasner' in the Readings box).
Friday February 24	**An Agonizing Decision: Escalation in Vietnam I**	We will watch a portion of the PBS documentary *LBJ*, available online here. You will need to click on the stars above the video to advance each segment; read Houghton, *Decision Point*, Chapter 7.
Monday February 27	**Vietnam II**	Read Houghton, *Decision Point*, Chapter 7.
Wednesday February 29	**Vietnam III**	Read Janis, *Groupthink*, chapter 5 and David Barrett, 'The Mythology Surrounding Lyndon Johnson, His Advisers and the 1965 Decision to Escalate the Vietnam War', *Political Science Quarterly*, 103: 637-663, 1988 (see ‘Janis III’ and 'Barrett' in the Readings Box).
Friday March 2	**Vietnam IV**	Read Houghton, *Decision Point*, Chapter 7. We will watch a couple of segments from the HBO film, *The Path To War*. There is a website about the film at http://www.hbo.com/films/pathtowar/. We’ll also look at part of the Errol Morris film *The Fog Of War*, featuring the late Robert S. McNamara, who had some interesting things to say about the genesis of the Vietnam War in the years before he died. There is an amusing web site relating to the film at http://www.sonyclassics.com/fogofwar. Also worth looking before or after viewing the film

		is http://www.choices.edu/fogofwar.
Monday March 5	**Spring Break**	No class held.
Wednesday March 7	**Spring Break**	No class held.
Friday March 9	**Spring Break**	No class held.
Monday March 12	**Iran Hostage Crisis I: Disaster in the Desert**	Video, *Ayatollah Khomeini* (History Channel) and discussion; read Houghton, *Decision Point*, Chapter 8.
Wednesday March 14	**Revision Session II**	No new reading.
Friday March 16	**Midterm Examination II**	50 multiple choice questions. Bring a brown scantron and pencil.
Monday March 19	**No Class Held**	Instructor at conference in Washington DC. Extra reading TBA.
Wednesday March 21	**Iran Hostage II**	Houghton, *Decision Point*, Chapter 8.
Friday March 23	**Iran Hostage III**	Read Steve Smith, 'Groupthink And The Hostage Rescue Mission', *British Journal of Political Science*, 15: 117-23, 1985 and Steve Smith, 'Policy Preferences and Bureaucratic Position: The Case of the American Hostage Rescue Mission', *International Affairs*, 61: 9-25, Winter 1984/1985 (see 'Smith I' and 'Smith II' in Readings Box).
Monday March 26	**Kosovo I: A War from the Air**	Video presentation (TBA); Houghton, *Decision Point*, Chapter 9.
Wednesday March 28	**Kosovo II**	Houghton, *Decision Point*, Chapter 9.
Friday March 30	**Kosovo III**	Houghton, *Decision Point*, Chapter 9.
Monday April 2	**No Class Held**	Instructor at conference in San Diego.
Wednesday April 4	**No Class Held**	Instructor at conference in San Diego.
Friday April 6	**Iraq I: A War of Choice**	Video, PBS Frontline *The War Behind Closed Doors*, which you can view online here; Houghton, *Decision Point*, Chapter 10.
Monday April 9	**Iraq II**	Houghton, *Decision Point*, Chapter 10.
Wednesday April 11	**Iraq III**	Houghton, *Decision Point*, Chapter 10.

Friday April 13	**Iraq IV**	Houghton, *Decision Point*, Chapter 10.
Part III: Assessment		
Monday March 16	**The Three Perspectives Revisited**	Houghton, *Decision Point*, Chapter 11.
Wednesday March 18	**Conclusions**	No new reading.
Friday March 20	**Revision Session III**	No new reading.
Monday 30 April	**Final Examination, 1-3.50pm**	Comprehensive final exam. Bring a brown scantron and pencil.