Topics and Cases in
American Foreign Policy

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

inr4104 - Topics and Cases in American Foreign Policy
David Houghton

Course Home

Instructor Contact

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Introduction

This is the companion website to INR4104 *Topics and Cases in American Foreign Policy*, Fall 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, although other cases will be examined more briefly early on to illustrate the differences between the three approaches. 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

The required textbook to purchase for this course is my own *The Decision Point*, published this year. All other 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.

David Patrick Houghton, *The Decision Point: Six Cases in U.S. Foreign Policy Decision-Making* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2012).

There is a link to the Amazon.com website entry here, as well as a link to the publisher's website here.

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 Thursday 4 October. 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 Thursday 1 November. This exam is worth 25% of your overall grade.

- A Final Multiple Choice Examination taken on Tuesday 11 December from 10am to 12.50pm. 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 Dishonesty and Other Classroom Misconduct

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 that will not apply to everyone. Note that the instructor reserves the right to deduct points from the overall score of students who are disruptive in class.

Schedule
Fall 2012

The following readings may be subject to change as the course proceeds, but all articles and chapters not in the textbook will be made available online via the 'Readings Box' on this website.

Date	Class	Reading/Activity
Tuesday 21 August	**Introduction To The Course**	Summary of course requirements and overview of course content.
Thursday 23 August	**No Class Held**	Instructor out of town, but you should read Chapter 1 of Houghton, *The Decision Point* for next week's classes.
Part I: Theories		
Tuesday 28 August	**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).
Thursday 30 August	**Levels of Analysis**	Houghton, *Decision Point*, Chapter 1.
Tuesday 4 September	***Homo Bureaucraticus I***	Houghton, *Decision Point*, Chapter 2.
Thursday 6 September	***Bureaucraticus II***	Houghton, *Decision Point*, Chapter 2.
Tuesday 11 September	***Homo Sociologicus I***	Houghton, *Decision Point*, Chapter 3.
Thursday 13 September	***Sociologicus II***	Houghton, *Decision Point*, Chapter 3.
Tuesday 18 September	***Homo Psychologicus I***	Houghton, *Decision Point*, Chapter 4.

Thursday 20 September	***Psychologicus II***	Houghton, *Decision Point*, Chapter 4.

Part II: Case Studies

Tuesday 25 September	**How Could I Have Been So Stupid? Bay Of Pigs I**	Video, *The Bay Of Pigs* and discussion; Houghton, *Decision Point*, Chapter 5.
Thursday 27 September	**Bay Of Pigs II**	Houghton, *Decision Point*, Chapter 5; Roderick Kramer, '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); Janis, *Groupthink*, Chapter 2 ('Janis I' in the Readings Box).
Tuesday 2 October	**Revision Session I**	No new reading assigned.
Thursday 4 October	**Midterm Examination I**	50 multiple choice questions. Bring a brown scantron and pencil.
Tuesday 9 October	**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 remains the best visual account of the missile crisis, and it is currently available on YouTube (in four segments) here; Houghton, *Decision Point*, Chapter 6.
Thursday 11 October	**Cuban Missile Crisis II**	Houghton, *Decision Point*, Chapter 6; Irving Janis, *Groupthink*, Chapter 6 ('Janis II' in the Readings Box).
Tuesday 16 October	**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).
Thursday 18 October	**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.
Tuesday	**Vietnam II**	Read Houghton, *Decision Point*, Chapter 7.

23 October

Thursday 25 October	**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). If time allows, we may also watch a couple of segments from 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. You can watch the entire movie for free here.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.
Tuesday 30 October	**Revision Session II**	No new reading.
Thursday 1 November	**Midterm Examination II**	50 multiple choice questions. Bring a brown scantron and pencil.
Tuesday 6 November	**Iran Hostage Crisis I: Disaster in the Desert**	Video, *The Man Who Changed the World* (BBC documentary) and discussion. You can find this online here. Also read Houghton, *Decision Point*, Chapter 8. There is a good Fox News video on the hostage crisis here.
Thursday 8 November	**Iran Hostage II**	Video, extract from the documentary *Iran and the West*, available here; Houghton, *Decision Point*, Chapter 8. Also 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).
Tuesday 13 November	**Kosovo I: A War from the Air**	Videos, extract from BBC documentary *Blair: The Inside Story*, available online here and extract from PBS Frontline documentary *War In Europe*, available online here; Houghton, *Decision Point*, Chapter 9.

Thursday 15 November	**Kosovo II**	Houghton, *Decision Point*, Chapter 9.
Tuesday 20 November	**Iraq : A War of Choice**	Video, PBS Frontline *The War Behind Closed Doors*, which you can view online here; Houghton, *Decision Point*, Chapter 10.
Thursday 22 November	**Thanksgiving**	No class held – enjoy the holiday.
Tuesday 27 November	**Iraq II**	Houghton, *Decision Point*, Chapter 10. There is a video on the marginalization of General Eric Shinseki here, and an interview with Daniel Kahneman on 'thinking fast and slow' here.
Thursday 29 November	**Conclusions/Revision Session III**	Houghton, *Decision Point*, Chapter 11.
Tuesday 11 December	**Final Examination, 10am-12.50pm**	Comprehensive final exam. Bring a brown scantron and pencil.