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

Instructor Contact

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Introduction

This is the companion website to INR4104 *Topics and Cases in American Foreign Policy*, Spring 2013. 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

The main text we will use is my own book:

David Patrick Houghton, *The Decision Point* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2012).

All author profits from the sale of this book to UCF students will be donated to charity. Other readings will occasionally be used as well, and these will be posted as PDF files on this website (see 'Readings Box' 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 13 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 15 March. This exam is worth 25% of your overall grade.
- A Final Multiple Choice Examination taken on Monday 29 April from 1.00-3.50pm. 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 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 that will not apply to everyone.

Schedule of Classes and Readings

The following readings may be subject to change as the course proceeds, but any additional articles/book chapters I add will be made available online via the 'Readings Box' on this website.

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Date	Class	Reading/Activity
Monday January 7	**Introduction To The Course I**	Summary of course requirements.
Wednesday January 9	**Introduction To The Course II**	Birds-eye view of the material covered in the course.
Friday January 11	**No Class Held**	Class cancelled, but you should read Chapter 1 of Houghton, *The Decision Point* for next week's classes.
Part I: Theories		
Monday January 14	**Foreign Policy Traditions and *Homo Economicus***	David Patrick Houghton, *The Decision Point*, Chapter 1.
Wednesday January 16	**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).
Friday January 18	***Homo Bureaucraticus I***	Houghton, *Decision Point*, Chapter 2.
Monday January 21	***MLK Day***	No class held, university closed.
Wednesday January 23	***Bureaucraticus II***	Houghton, *Decision Point*, Chapter 2.
Friday January 25	***Homo Sociologicus I***	Houghton, *Decision Point*, Chapter 3.
Monday January 28	***Sociologicus II***	Houghton, *Decision Point*, Chapter 3.
Wednesday January 30	***Homo Psychologicus I***	Houghton, *Decision Point*, Chapter 4.
Friday February 1	***Psychologicus II***	Houghton, *Decision Point*, Chapter 4.

Part II: Case Studies

Monday February 4	**Bay Of Pigs I**	Video, *The Bay Of Pigs*; Houghton, *Decision Point*, Chapter 5.
Wednesday February 6	**Bay Of Pigs II: How Could I Have Been So Stupid?**	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).
Friday February 8	**Bay Of Pigs III**	Houghton, *Decision Point*, Chapter 5; Janis, *Groupthink*, Chapter 2 ('Janis I' in the Readings Box).
Monday February 11	**Revision Session I**	No new reading assigned.
Wednesday February 13	**Midterm Examination I**	50 multiple choice questions. Bring a brown scantron and pencil.
Friday February 15	**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.
Monday February 18	**Cuban Missile Crisis II**	Houghton, *Decision Point*, Chapter 6; Irving Janis, *Groupthink*, Chapter 6 ('Janis II' in the Readings Box).
Wednesday February 20	**Cuban Missile Crisis III**	Houghton, *Decision Point*, Chapter 6; also 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 22	**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 25	**Vietnam II**	Read Houghton, *Decision Point*, Chapter 7.
Wednesday February 27	**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.
Friday March 1	**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.
Monday March 4	**Spring Break**	No class held, university closed.
Wednesday March 6	**Spring Break**	No class held, university closed.
Friday March 8	**Spring Break**	No class held, university closed.
Monday March 11	**Iran Hostage Crisis II**	Houghton, Chapter 8.
Wednesday March 13	**Revision Session II**	No new reading.
Friday March 15	**Midterm Examination II**	50 multiple choice questions. Bring a brown scantron and pencil.

Monday March 18	**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).
Wednesday March 20	**Kosovo I: A War from the Air**	Videos, extract from PBS Frontline documentary *War In Europe*, available online here and extract from the movie *The Special Relationship*; Houghton, *Decision Point*, Chapter 9.
Friday March 22	**Kosovo II**	Houghton, *Decision Point*, Chapter 9.
Monday March 25	**No Class Held**	Instructor at conference.
Wednesday March 27	**No Class Held**	Instructor at conference.
Friday March 29	**Kosovo III**	Houghton, *Decision Point*, Chapter 9.
Monday April 1	**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.
Wednesday April 3	**Iraq II**	Houghton, *Decision Point*, Chapter 10.
Friday April 5	**Iraq III**	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

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Monday April 8	**Killing Bin Laden**	Video, 'Inside the Situation Room' from NBC's *Rock Center With Brian Williams*; reading to be announced.

Part III: Assessment

Wednesday April 10	**The Three Perspectives Revisited**	Houghton, *Decision Point*, Chapter 11.
Friday April 12	**Conclusions**	No new reading.
Monday April 15	**Final Revision Session**	No new reading.
Monday 29 April	**Final Examination, 1.00-3.50pm**	Comprehensive final exam. Bring a brown scantron and pencil.

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