Syllabus

Instructor Contact

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Course Information

Course Name	Topics and Cases in American Foreign Policy
Course ID & Section	INR 4104 - 1
Credit Hours	3
Semester/Year	Fall 2016
Location	PSY 106

Course Description

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 world news stories on 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.

(Note: Apparently there is no supply of new versions of this book, so finding a new one may be difficult. Of course, a used version is more than adequate, and, since we won't be using this until after the midterm, you have time to find a used version on the internet. There are lots of used-book websites, but here's a good one that can be very helpful: DealOz.com. It's a meta-search engine for books, so it will look at lots of used-book stores. The book is also on reserve at the UCF main library; there you can check it out for short periods. I do suggest you work on getting your copy sooner than later; there aren't a lot available even online.)

3. Leguin, U. 2015. *The Dispossessed*. New York: Harper Collins.

4. International news 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	25%
Term Paper	35%
Simulation Activities	10%
Final Exam	30%

You may also receive an additional bonus to your overall grade, up to 5%, based on your participation in class discussions (see note below).

Class discussion is a central component of this class. Students should come to class prepared to discuss the assigned readings and current international events. Class participation can take several forms such as commenting on a topic or asking or answering a question. Based on participation in class discussions, students may earn up to 5% bonus added to their final score in the course. Here's the system I use to keep track of class participation: any time you contribute to class discussion, write down a brief version of what you said on a piece of paper with your name on it and turn it in to me after class**.** That allows me to keep track of how often everyone participates in class. I may also occasionally give pop quizzes or in-class assignments that will count toward your participation bonus, but the majority of the bonus will come from actually participating in class discussion.

Grading Scale

90% or Higher	A
80% to 89.99%	B
70% to 79.99%	C
60% to 69.99%	D
Below 60%	F

Course Calendar

Weeks of August 23 and 30: Read Chapters 1 and 2 in *Groupthink vs. High-Quality Decision Making* ("*GTv.HQDM*")

Week of September 6: Read Chapter 3 in *GTv.HQDM* .

Week of September 13: Read Chapter 4 in *GTv.HQDM.*

Week of September 20: Read Chapter 5 in *GTv.HQDM.*

Week of September 27: Catch up and prepare for midterm.

*****Midterm – Thursday September 29*****

Week of October 4: Read Chapter 6 in *GTv.HQDM*.

Week of October 11: Read Chapter 7 in *GTv.HQDM*.

Week of October 18: Read Chapter 8 in *GTv.HQDM*.

Week of October 25: Read Chapter 9 in *GTv.HQDM*.

Weeks of November 1 and 8: Read pp. v. to 40 in *Presidential Judgment*, and read chapters 1-3 in *The Dispossessed*.

November 15 through 22: Read pages 41 to 88 in *Presidential Judgment*.

<u>Term Paper due at the start of class Tuesday November 22**</u>**

November 29 through December 1: Read pages 89 to 115 in *Presidential Judgment*, and finish reading *The Dispossessed*.

<u>**Final Exam – Tuesday, December 6, 10:00am to noon**</u>

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. <u>Exceptions will be allowed only under extreme, documented circumstances</u>. Under such circumstances, you are required to notify me (or, if I am unavailable, the Department of Political Science) <u>prior to</u> 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.**"**

Electronic versions of term papers must be submitted the same day as the hard copy for purposes of a plagiarism check. Also, to check for authorship and originality, all students must be prepared to orally defend their research papers, including their research strategies and all source material.

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.

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.