University of Georgia

INTL 4260: Decision Making in International Relations

Spring 2017, M W F 10:10 A.M. -11:00 A.M.

Peabody Hall 219A

Instructor: Filip Viskupić
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Office Hours: By appointment

Course Description and Objectives

How do individuals and groups make decisions in international relations and foreign policy? What psychological factors affect the decision-making process? This course will introduce models that examine decision-making in international relations, including rational choice, prospect theory, organizational theory and many others. We will discuss these models in depth and identify their strengths and weaknesses. We will also apply these models to several cases of the US foreign policy.

Readings

There is only one required book for this class; the rest of the readings will be available online or on the eLC.


Evaluation

Participation (20%)

In order to get the most out of this class, you must attend regularly and participate often. The class will follow a seminar-style format. Participation entails thoughtfully asking questions, answering questions, providing feedback to classmates’ questions, etc. A student’s participation is assessed by the quantity and quality of comments, questions and answers. Just attending the class does not yield any participation points.
Note: This is a reading-intensive class. Having done the readings is essential to participate successfully in class. You should bring a paper or electronic copy of the readings to class to facilitate discussion. I will lecture only when necessary. We will spend most the class discussing the assigned readings. There is no extra credit in class.

In order to facilitate effective reading, please try to answer the following questions for each assigned piece:

- What is the author’s main argument?
- What evidence does the author use to support his or her argument?
- What are the strengths and weaknesses of the author’s analysis? Do you agree or disagree with the author?
- How does the argument relate to other work we have discussed in class?

Exams (40%)

There will be two closed-book exams that will cover readings, lectures and class discussions. All of it is fair game. The second exam is cumulative.

Please note that make-up exams will only be given for university approved absences, such as university sanctioned events (sports/conference), a documented medical excuse (you must have some sort note from a doctor or the health center), or proof of the death of a deceased direct relative. You must email me the documentation one week before the exam.

Final Analytical Paper (40%)

Students will be responsible for writing one 8 page double-spaced (1-inch margins) analytical paper in response to a prompt provided by me. The goal of this exercise is to demonstrate your ability to apply the concepts and theories that we will study throughout the course. You will have a choice between several questions, which you will receive on March 20. The paper will be due at the beginning of the final class on April 26 in hard copy form.

Grade Appeals

Requests for re-grades of exams may be made no less than 5, and no more than 14, days after receiving a graded assignment. I will not consider requests for re-grades outside this window. All re-grade requests must explain why the original grade was inaccurate and include a copy of the original assignment. All requests will result in the assignment being re-graded in its entirety, and I reserve the right to adjust the grade either up or down.
Grading
Students will be graded on all coursework according to the following scale:

A 93 and above
A- 90-92
B+ 88-89
B 83-87
B- 80-82
C+ 78-79
C 73-77
C- 70-72
D 60-69
F 59 and below

Absences
Attendance for this class is not mandatory. Having said that, I still expect that you will attend and actively participate in every class. If you are unable to attend a class you are responsible for getting any notes or class announcements from another student. I will not provide any lecture notes or presentation slides from class meetings. I will also not respond to email questions whose answers are contained in the syllabus.

Class etiquette
Cell phones, MP3 players, and other noise-making devices must be silenced and put away during class. Frequent disruptions may result in a reduction of participation grade.

Laptops are allowed for note taking only, and not surfing the web. I reserve the right to ban laptops from the classroom if this rule is violated.

Academic honesty
All University of Georgia students must abide by the UGA academic honesty policy, “A Culture of Honesty”, which can be accessed at www.uga.edu/honesty. All academic works must meet
the standards contained in the “A Culture of Honesty”. Please don’t cheat. If caught, cheating will very likely lead to failing the course and severe penalty by the University.

Disability and Health Related Issues

Students that require a disability accommodation should first register with the University Disability Resource Center. After that they should make an appointment and speak with me as soon as possible.

Class Schedule (This schedule is for planning only and is subject to change)

Week 1- Introduction (Jan. 6)

Syllabus

Week 2- Why Study Decision Making in IR? (Jan. 9-13)


Week 3- Rational Actor Model (Jan. 16-20)

Monday, Jan. 16- Martin Luther King Jr. Day- NO CLASS


**Week 4- Group Decision Making** (Jan. 23-27)


**Week 5- Cognitive Biases** (Jan. 30- Feb. 3)


**Week 6- Analogical Reasoning** (Feb. 6- Feb. 10)


**Week 7 Prospect Theory** (Feb. 13- Feb. 17)


**Week 8- Exam** (Feb. 20- Feb. 24)

Feb. 20 and 22 - Review

Feb. 24- EXAM

**Week 9- Personality** (Feb. 27- Mar. 3)


**Spring Break** (Mar. 6- Mar. 10)

NO CLASSES
**Week 10- Age, Experience and Illness** (Mar. 13- Mar. 17)


**Week 11- Neuroscience & Unexplained Territory** (Mar. 20- Mar. 24)

Monday, Mar. 20-Final paper questions will be distributed


**Week 12- Implications for IR theory?! & Exam** (Mar. 27- Mar. 31)


Friday, Mar. 31- EXAM

**Week 13 – Case study: Cuban Missile Crisis** (Apr. 3- Apr. 7)

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Friday, Apr. 7- TBD (Away at conference)

**Week 14- Case study: Iran Hostage Crisis** (Apr. 10- Apr. 14)


**Week 15- Case study: Iraq War** (Apr. 17- Apr. 24)


**Week 16- Wrap up** (Apr. 24- Apr. 26)

Apr. 26- ANALYTICAL PAPER DUE IN CLASS