Introduction:
Our goal in this seminar is to anchor the study of foreign policy to the reality of human decision making. Specifically, we will explore strategies for integrating cognitive insights into foreign policy analysis. Foreign policy outcomes are the direct result of human choices; ultimately, it is individuals who act. The governing model of decision making currently deployed in international relations, whether implicit or explicit, comes to us from economics. Here, states, elites, leaders, and domestic pressure groups are assumed to be substantively and procedurally rational, and theories concerning state behavior begin from this premise.

However, across the social sciences, we are in the process of a profound break with the past. The empirical study of human decision making in the fields of cognitive psychology, behavioral economics, and neuroscience have produced important and novel insights into the mechanisms human decision making. Most importantly, deviations from classical rationality are now understood to be predictable and stable aspects of human choice. Foreign policy decisions should, therefore, be patterned and explainable even when they are not strictly rational. This proposition sits as the core motivation in the drive to develop a new approach to foreign-policy analysis broadly termed “behavioral international relations.”

In applying this approach to the study of foreign policy decision making, critical questions emerge: Which psychological models of decision making are most appropriate and useful in the study of foreign policy? How do we incorporate cognitive models into our existing foreign policy frameworks? When we use cognitive models what, if anything, do we learn about foreign policy that we didn't already know?

In addition to the kinds of work that are typical in a graduate seminar, this class also includes a unique opportunity for you to obtain practical experience in designing and implementing a live decision-making experiment grounded in cognitive science - i.e. You will conceive, design, and implement a live experiment on a random sample of adults.

Assignments and Grading:

Weekly Summaries (20%) - Weekly summaries are due at the beginning of each class. These summaries provide a brief (500-word maximum) overview of each of the assigned readings. The model for these assignments is akin to an annotated bibliography.

- For guidance see on how to construct a proper annotated bibliography see: https://sites.umuc.edu/library/libhow/bibliography_tutorial.cfm

Review Essays (20%) - You will write (3) analytical essays (approximately 2,000 words). These essays are to be synthetic and critical. The model for these assignments is akin to a literature
review in which you use assigned and supplemental readings to, for example, make an affirmative argument, derive a research question, critique an established theory/concept. There are four opportunities for critical essays identified in the reading list below.


Seminar Presentation (10%) - Each student will be responsible for leading two seminar discussions. Combined these presentations will account for 10% of your grade.

Participation (10%) - Your active participation is necessary for a successful seminar. The participation grade has two components. The first requires consistent engagement in class discussions regarding the material, the second pertains the quality of your constructive comments about each student’s research.

Research Funding Proposal (35%) - The funding proposal should focus on some aspect of foreign policy in a manner that explicitly incorporates a cognitive model of decision making and motivated by the relevant academic literature (approximately 5,000 words, not including budget references, or supplemental materials). The proposal must be responsive to the specifics of a funding call that I will circulate in class along with a rubric of necessary components. There are no other requirements with respect topic or methodological approach.

Research Proposal Presentations (5%) - Each student will present the results of their research to the class. Throughout the course, you will be asked to update the class on your progress. These updates will serve as a primary source of feedback and constructive criticism on your project.

Academic Integrity Statement and Policy

The UGA Student Honor Code states: “I will be academically honest in all of my academic work and will not tolerate academic dishonesty of others.” A Culture of Honesty, the University’s policy and procedures for handling cases of suspected dishonesty, can be assessed here: https://honesty.uga.edu. Any student caught cheating or plagiarizing will be referred to Judicial Affairs, as required by university policy.

All course work must be done on an individual basis, including exams, unless the syllabus clearly indicates that the assignment is team graded.

Mental Health and Wellness Resources:

- If you or someone you know needs assistance, you are encouraged to contact Student Care and Outreach in the Division of Student Affairs at 706-542-7774 or visit https://sco.uga.edu. They will help you navigate any difficult circumstances you may be facing by connecting you with the appropriate resources or services.
- UGA has several resources for a student seeking mental health services (https://www.uhs.uga.edu/bewelluga/bewelluga) or crisis support (https://www.uhs.uga.edu/info/emergencies).
If you need help managing stress anxiety, relationships, etc., please visit BeWellUGA (https://www.uhs.uga.edu/bewelluga/bewelluga) for a list of FREE workshops, classes, mentoring, and health coaching led by licensed clinicians and health educators in the University Health Center.

Additional resources can be accessed through the UGA App.

Please note that faculty and staff are obligated to report any knowledge of sexual assault and/or relationship violence to UGA’s Equal Opportunity Office.

Course Schedule:

All readings are available on-line, unless otherwise indicated.


Week 1 (1/8): Introduction to Class, and to Rationality

• MLK Jan 15th

Week 2 (1/22): Foundations: Behavioral International Relations and Foreign Policy


Supplemental:

Week 3 (1/29): Early Cognitive Approaches
Michael Shapiro, Matthew Bonham (1973) “Cognitive Processes and Foreign Policy Decision Making” *International Studies Quarterly* 17:2 147-174


**Week 4: (2/5): Personality/Operational Code**


**Supplemental:**

**Critical Essay #1:** Critically evaluate the degree to which the early cognitive approaches and personality/operational code studies meet the goals set forth by the behavioral IR approach? Where do they fall short? How can these shortcomings be addressed, if at all?

**Week 5: (2/12): Legal and Moral Framing on Foreign Policy Preferences**


**Week 6: (2/19) Gender, Sex, and Foreign Policy Preferences**


**Supplemental.**

**Week 7 (2/26): Populism and Foreign Policy Preferences**


Supplemental


**Critical Essay #2** Argue for or against the following proposition: The academic study of foreign policy preferences is conceptually and theoretically coherent.

**MARCH 4 SPRING BREAK**

**Week 8: (3/11): Group/Social Identity**


**Supplemental**
- Emile Bruneau and Rebecca Saxe “Attitudes Toward the Outgroup are Predicted by Activity in the Precuneus in Arabs and Israelis” *Neuroimage* v.52 n4 2010.
- Belle Derks and Michael Inzlicht “The Neuroscience of Stigma and Stereotype Threat” *Group Processes and Intergroup Relations* v.11 n.2 2008
- Elizabeth Phelps and Laura Thomas. “Race, Behavior and the Brain: The Role of Neuroimaging in Understanding Complex Social Behaviors” *Political Psychology* v.24 n.4 2003

**Week 9 (3/18) Status Seeking**

(note: This week it is particularly important to familiarize yourself with the supplemental readings)


Supplemental:

**Micro Foundations:**
- Rebecca Saxe, Johannes Haushofer “For Love or Money: A Common Neural Currency for Social and Monetary Reward” *Neuron, Volume 58, Issue 2, 24 April 2008, Pages 164-165*

**Status and Realism**

Week 10: 3/25: Trust

Aaron Hoffman. “A Conceptualization of Trust in International Relations” *European Journal of International Relations* v.8 n.3 2002


Supplemental
- Paul Zak et al “The Neuoeconomics of Distrust: Sex Differences in behavior and Physiology” *The American Economic Review* v.95 n.2 2005

**Critical Essay #3:** To what extent can/are human dispositions with respect to identity, trust and status manipulated by political leaders.
Week 11 (4/1) Loss Aversion


Supplemental: Micro Foundations

Week 12 (4/8) Prospect Theory, Framing, and Risk


Supplemental:

**Week 13 (4/15) Evolutionary Psychology and Conflict**


Supplement: Additional overviews

**Critical Essay #4**: How well do we understand risk-taking and conflict?

**Week 14: 4/22**
Research Presentations (A)

**Week 15: 4/29**
Research Presentations (B)