

Strategic Decisions - INTA 6002

Fall 2019

Mondays 3:00 – 5:45 pm

DM Smith 203

Dr. Rachel Elizabeth Whitlark

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Office Hours Wednesdays 1:00 – 2:00 pm and Fridays 12:30 – 1:30pm; and by appointment

Course Description

This course provides students with an introduction to theories of foreign policy decision-making. It is not a thematic course, per se, but instead concentrates on how we should approach the academic study of foreign policy. The focus is on different levels of analysis, paying particular attention to the micro and individual level. We will also discuss how these factors relate to the more standard international relations scholarship. The course will have a special (though not exclusive) emphasis on U.S. foreign policy and we will discuss why this is the case throughout the semester. To that end, we will also explore the application of the theories investigated to certain important historical and contemporary cases.

Learning Objectives

- Students will be able to analyze “what is doing the work” in studies of foreign policy and/or international politics (e.g., is it individuals, structure, or some combination of both?).
- Students will be familiar with the major literatures and debates in the field of foreign policy decision-making.
- Students will be able to understand how foreign policy decision-making relates to other strands of theoretical and empirical research in international relations (such as realism, liberalism, and constructivism).
- Students will be able to think about how foreign policy decision-making research would proceed empirically and should be able to apply their knowledge to a foreign policy problem.

Course Readings

This course draws on scholarly articles, book chapters, and books for each week’s readings. Some will be made available through the course Canvas website; most are also accessible through the University Library’s electronic databases.

Students are required to purchase one book for this course. It is available through the university bookstore as well as through a variety of online retailers.

- Jervis, Robert. *Perception and Misperception in International Politics: New Edition*. Princeton University Press, 1979. (The 2017 revised edition should be fine also, just be sure you cover all relevant content from the 1979 version).

The professor maintains discretion to modify readings and topics as necessary. The reading assigned for each session is to be learned **PRIOR** to coming to class. The workload can be significant and fast-paced, and students should plan accordingly.

Course Requirements

Participation – 25%

This is a graduate seminar in which class participation and student engagement is vital to the success of the class. Students are expected to come to class prepared to critically engage with the assigned materials. I will also call on students regularly during class discussions as well as solicit questions and perspectives throughout.

Memos, Discussion Questions, and Leading Class Discussion – 20%

Students will be required to lead class discussion multiple times throughout the semester, based on the number of students enrolled. When it is their turn to lead, students are expected to open the session by providing an overview of the assigned materials, have a variety of discussion questions to explore, and be prepared to keep the conversation moving.

In addition, in the weeks they are signed up to lead discussion, students must submit a 2-page response memo synthesizing and analyzing the readings for that week, plus a list of approximately 4-5 questions for discussion. The memo should not summarize the readings, but should discuss how the readings relate to each other, the issues they highlight, and their theoretical and empirical strengths and weaknesses.

- When you are not leading, you are responsible for submitting a 1-page memo analyzing one reading or one issue raised by a sub-set of the readings and offering two questions for discussion.

This means that students will submit a memo for every session of the semester, either 2 pages with 4-5 questions if you are leading discussion, or 1 page with 2 questions for discussion. All students should email their memos and discussion questions to the entire class by Sunday at 12:00 pm on the day before the relevant seminar. Students should be sure to read each other's memos in preparation for the week's discussion.

Oral Presentation of Final Paper – 10%

In the final class session, students will make a presentation of no more than 15 minutes on their final paper.

Final Paper – 45%

A final paper is required and is due **Monday, December 9th at 12:00 noon**. Regardless of which of the following three options you choose, all students must meet with the professor no later than **Wednesday, October 30th** to discuss your paper topic and the approach. The paper may take one of three forms:

- *Applied Essay*. A paper of 20 to 25 pages that assesses a specific foreign policy decision using theories of decision-making, including but not necessarily limited to ones discussed throughout the semester. The paper will introduce the relevant theories, discuss their observable implications, and analyze the empirical episode in order to identify which theory or theories offers the most traction for understanding it.

OR

- *Research Design/Proposal.* This option entails completing a proposal for a paper that you (hopefully) will one day complete. It could be the foundation for a journal article, a dissertation, a master’s thesis, conference paper, etc. Think of this as the first half of a research project – everything up to the results. The proposal should be about 25 pages long, demonstrate a solid understanding of the topic at hand, and that you have a research plan to empirically investigate the research question on the table. Components of the paper will include an introduction, literature review, research question, a potential theory, hypotheses, and a research design (including operationalization, measurement, research methodology and plan, etc.). You should select the research plan best suited to the topic selected.

OR

- *Review Essay.* This option entails selecting three or four books to review in article form, with the goal of making a theoretical point through the process of the review itself. Examples can be found within *World Politics* and *International Security*. Students must discuss the books they select as well as argument they will advance by the October deadline.

Course Grades

Despite rampant grade inflation in U.S. higher education, this course will not be curved.

I use a traditional grading scale: 100-90 A | 89-80 B | 79-70 C | 69-60 D | 59-0 F

Course assignments total 100 points.

There are no make-up assignments or additional work to be done, so please do not ask.

Point Breakdown

Participation 25%

Memos, Discussion Questions, Leading Class Discussion 20%

Oral Presentation 10%

Final Paper 45%

Total 100 %

Class Discussion Policy

This class is a forum for personal growth, curious discussion, and lively intellectual debate. It is crucial that the spirit of discussion remain open, honest, and respectful even when we disagree. We will always be polite with each other and recognize that even those with whom we disagree have something to contribute to the conversation. Your reflections or suggestions on how to ensure an inclusive learning environment for you individually or for other students are always welcome.

University Diversity Statement

This course is offered by the Ivan Allen College of Liberal Arts. The Ivan Allen College supports the Georgia Institute of Technology’s commitment to creating a campus free of discrimination on the basis of race, color, religion, sex, national origin, age, disability, sexual orientation, gender identity, or veteran status. We further affirm the importance of cultivating an intellectual climate that allows us to better understand the similarities and differences of those who constitute the Georgia Tech community, as well as the necessity of working against inequalities that may also manifest here as they do in the broader society. If you have any concerns about inclusive diversity in this course, please don’t hesitate to raise them to the instructor.

Academic Integrity and University Statement on Plagiarism

According to the Georgia Tech Student Affairs Policy handbook, “Plagiarism” is the act of appropriating the literary composition of another [person], or parts of passages of his or her writings, or language or ideas of the same, and passing them off as the product of one’s own mind. It involves the deliberate use of any outside source without proper acknowledgment. Plagiarism is scholarly misconduct whether it occurs in any work, published or unpublished, or in any application for funding. There is a zero-tolerance policy for plagiarism and penalties will be doled out per university regulations. The GT Honor Code is available online at <http://policylibrary.gatech.edu/student-affairs/academic-honor-code>

Writing Services

If you are concerned about your writing, or seek to improve it, I highly recommend contacting the GT Communication Center located in Clough Commons 447 <http://www.communicationcenter.gatech.edu/>

HINT: Anyone who reads this recommendation and thinks they are above continuously learning to improve their writing should think again.

Students with Disabilities

Georgia Tech is committed to providing accommodation for all students with disabilities through the Office of Disability Services (<http://disabilityservices.gatech.edu/>). Any student in this course who has a disability that may prevent them from fully demonstrating their abilities should contact me as soon as possible to discuss necessary accommodations to ensure full participation and facilitate their educational opportunities. Students with disabilities must be registered with the Disability Services Program prior to receiving accommodations in this course and provide appropriate documentation attesting to their registration. The Disability Services Program is located in Smithgall Student Services Building, phone 404-894-2564 or TDD only 404-894-1664.

Additional Student Resources

The Center for Academic Success (success.gatech.edu/) offers a variety of academic support services to help students succeed academically at Georgia Tech (e.g. tutoring, peer-led study groups, study skills, etc.). The Division of Student Life (studentlife.gatech.edu) – often referred to as the Office of the Dean of Students – offers resources and support for all students in the Tech community. The Counseling Center (<http://counseling.gatech.edu/>) offers free mental health services, as well as stress management and wellness workshops to all currently enrolled students. They are located in Smithgall, 2nd Floor, Suite 210.

Technology Policy

Laptop Computers

There is growing evidence that electronic devices hinder learning for you and for those around you. First, recent studies have indicated that students who take longhand notes do better on conceptual questions than those taking notes on laptops. Second, not surprisingly, there is a tendency for anyone to multitask – checking email, watching videos, reading websites, etc. I am guilty of this myself in meetings. This multitasking inhibits learning. Third, and perhaps most importantly, use of a laptop, cell phone, or tablet can distract those around you, including the professor, and inhibit their learning. For discussion on these points, see, for example:

<http://www.washingtonpost.com/news/national/wp/2014/08/26/ditch-the-laptop-and-pick-up->

[a-pen-class-researchers-say-its-better-for-note-taking/](#) and
<http://chronicle.com/blogs/linguafranca/2014/08/25/why-im-asking-you-not-to-use-laptops/>

For this reason, I strongly encourage you to take notes by hand and consider printing out the assigned readings. If you must use laptops, do so only to refer to the reading materials.

Cell phones and other electronic devices

All cell phones and other devices that make noise must be silenced and put away as soon as class begins.

Caveat

Note that if computers become a distraction, I will unilaterally discontinue their use.

Email Policy

As a matter of policy, I will cease responding to emails at approximately 9pm and, may take up to 36 hours to reply to correspondence. To facilitate conducting business via email, please be sure to write your emails professionally and include all relevant information when emailing. Keep in mind that for extensive or nuanced substantive matters, an in-person meeting may be more productive.

Course Outline: Subject and Readings Schedule

To reiterate: Students are expected to have read and analyzed each day's readings **BEFORE** they arrive in class for that session.

Week 1

Monday, August 19, 2019

Introduction and Course Overview

Week 2

Monday, August 26, 2019

How Should We Study Foreign Policy Decision-Making?

- Daniel Byman and Kenneth Pollack, "Let Us Now Praise Great Men: Bringing the Statesman Back In," *International Security* 25 (Spring 2001), 107-146.
- Graham T. Allison and Morton H. Halperin, "Bureaucratic Politics: A Paradigm and Some Policy Implications," *World Politics* 24 (Spring 1972), 40-79.
- Chaim D. Kaufmann, "Out of the Lab and into the Archives: A Method for Testing Psychological Explanations of Political Decision Making," *International Studies Quarterly* 38 (December 1994), 557-586.
- James D. Fearon, "Domestic Politics, Foreign Policy, and Theories of International Relations," *Annual Review of Political Science*, 1 (1998), 289-313.
- James M. Goldgeier and Philip E. Tetlock, "Psychology and International Relations Theory," *Annual Review of Political Science*, 4 (2001), 67-92.
- Valerie M. Hudson, "Foreign Policy Analysis: Actor-Specific Theory and the Ground of International Relations," *Foreign Policy Analysis*, 1, no. 1 (2005), 1-30.

Week 3

Monday, September 2, 2019

Labor Day – No Class

Week 4

Monday, September 9, 2019

Liberalism, Realism, and Constructivism

- David Patrick Houghton, "Reinvigorating the Study of Foreign Policy Decision Making: Toward a Constructivist Approach," *Foreign Policy Analysis* 3 (2007), 24-45.
- Colin Elman, "Horses for Courses: Why Not Neorealist Theories of Foreign Policy?" *Security Studies* 6 (1996), 7-53.
- Kenneth N. Waltz, "International Relations is Not Foreign Policy," *Security Studies* 6, no. 1 (1996), 54-57.
- James M. Goldgeier and Philip E. Tetlock, "Psychology and International Relations Theory," *Annual Review of Political Science* 4 (2001), 67-92.
- Robert Snyder, "Bridging the Realist/Constructivist Divide: The Case of the Counterrevolution in Soviet Foreign Policy at the End of the Cold War," *Foreign Policy Analysis* 1 (2005), 55-71.
- Margaret G. Hermann and Charles W. Kegley, "Rethinking Democracy and International Peace: Perspectives from Political Psychology," *International Studies Quarterly* 39, no. 4 (1995), 511-533.

Week 5

Monday, September 16, 2019

Bounded Rationality

- Robert Axelrod, "Schema Theory: An Information Processing Model of Perception and Cognition," *American Political Science Review* (1973), 1248-1266.
- Herbert A. Simon, "Human Nature in Politics: The Dialogue of Psychology with Political Science," *American Political Science Review* 79 (1985), 293-304.
- Gerd Gigerenzer and Daniel G. Goldstein, "Reasoning the Fast and Frugal Way: Models of Bounded Rationality," *Psychological Review* 103 (1996), 650-669.
- Philip E. Tetlock, "Theory-Driven Reasoning about Possible Pasts and Probable Futures: Are We Prisoners of Our Preconceptions?" *American Journal of Political Science* 43 (1999), 335-366.
- Alan Gerber and Donald Green, "Misperceptions about Perceptual Bias," *Annual Review of Political Science* 2 (1999), 189-210.
- Yaacov Vertzberger "Foreign Policy Decision-makers as Practical-Intuitive Historians: Applied History and its Shortcomings," *International Studies Quarterly* 30 (1986), 223-247.

Week 6

Monday, September 23, 2019

Bureaucracies and Organizations: A First Cut

- Charles Lindblom, "The Science of Muddling Through," *Public Administration Review* (Spring 1959), 79-88.
- Michael D. Cohen, James G. March, and Johan P. Olsen, "A Garbage Can Model of Organizational Choice," *Administrative Science Quarterly* 17 (1972), 1-25.
- Graham T. Allison and Morton H. Halperin. "Bureaucratic Politics: A Paradigm and Some Policy Implications," *World Politics* 24 (1972), 40-79.
- Morton H. Halperin, "The Decision to Deploy the ABM: Bureaucratic and Domestic Politics in the Johnson Administration," *World Politics* 25 (October 1972), 62-96.
- Robert J. Art, "Bureaucratic Politics and American Foreign Policy: A Critique," *Policy Sciences* 4 (1973), 467-490.
- Stephen D. Krasner, "Are Bureaucracies Important? (Or Allison Wonderland)," *Foreign Policy* (Summer 1971), 159-179.

Week 7

Monday, September 30, 2019

Rosh Hashana – No Class

Week 8

Monday, October 7, 2019

Bureaucracies and Organizations: The Next Wave

- Jonathan Bendor and Thomas H. Hammond, "Rethinking Allison's Models," *American Political Science Review* 86 (June 1992), 301-322.
- David A. Welch, "The Organizational Process and Bureaucratic Politics Paradigms: Retrospect and Prospect," *International Security* 17 (Fall 1992), 112-146.
- Elizabeth Kier, "Culture and Military Doctrine: France between the Wars," *International Security* 19, 4 (Spring 1995), 65-93.
- Deborah D. Avant, "The Institutional Sources of Military Doctrine: Hegemons in Peripheral Wars," *International Studies Quarterly* 37, 1993, 409-430.

- Daniel W. Drezner, “Ideas, Bureaucratic Politics, and the Crafting of Foreign Policy,” *American Journal of Political Science* 44 (October 2000), 733-749.
- Amy B. Zegart, “September 11 and the Adaptation Failure of U.S. Intelligence Agencies,” *International Security* 29 (Spring 2005), 78-111.
- Jonathan Monten and Andrew Bennett, “Models of Crisis Decision Making and the 1990-91 Gulf War,” *Security Studies* 19, 3 (2010), 486-520.

Week 9

Monday, October 14, 2019

Fall Break – No Class

Week 10

Monday, October 21, 2019

Groupthink and Prospect Theory (Note: Don't panic, many of these are less than 10 pages long.)

- Irving Janis, *Groupthink: Psychological Studies of Policy Decisions and Fiascoes*, 2nd ed., (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1982), Chapter 10 (Available on Canvas).
- Paul t'Hart, "Irving L. Janis' Victims of Groupthink," *Political Psychology* 12 (1991), 247-277.
- Jean A. Garrison, “Foreign Policymaking and Group Dynamics: Where We’ve Been and Where We’re Going,” *International Studies Review* 5 (2003), 177-83.
- Eric Stern and Bengt Sundelius, “The Essence of Groupthink,” *Mershon International Studies Review* 38 (April 1994), 101-107.
- Daniel Kahneman and Amos Tversky, “Choices, Values, and Frames,” *American Psychologist* 39 (April 1984), 341-350.
- Daniel Kahneman, Jack L. Knetsch, and Richard H. Thaler, “The Endowment Effect, Loss Aversion, and Status Quo Bias,” *Journal of Economic Perspectives* 5 (Winter 1991), 193-206.
- Barbara Farnham, “Roosevelt and the Munich Crisis: Insights from Prospect Theory,” *Political Psychology* 13 (June 1992), 205-235.
- Jonathan Mercer, “Prospect Theory and Political Science,” *Annual Review of Political Science* 8 (June 2005), 1-21.
- Robert Jervis, “The Implications of Prospect Theory for Human Nature and Values,” *Political Psychology* 25/2 (2004), 163-176.

Note: If you are interested in the original articulation of Prospect Theory, see Daniel Kahneman and Amos Tversky, “Prospect Theory: An Analysis of Decision Under Risk,” *Econometrica* 47 (1979), pp. 263-291.

Week 11

Monday, October 28, 2019

Individual Leaders I: Problems of Perception

- Robert Jervis, *Perception and Misperception*. 1979.

Week 12

Monday, November 4, 2019

Individual Leaders II: Beliefs and Attributes

- Jonathan Renshon, “Stability and Change in Belief Systems: The Operational Code of George W. Bush,” *Journal of Conflict Resolution* 52, 6 (December 2008), 820-849.

- Rachel Elizabeth Whitlark, “Nuclear Beliefs: A Leader-Focused Theory of Counter-Proliferation,” *Security Studies*, 26(4) (2017), 545-574.
- Marcus Holmes and Keren Yarhi-Milo, “The Psychological Logic of Peace Summits: How Empathy Shapes Outcomes of Diplomatic Negotiations,” *International Studies Quarterly* (2016), 1-16.
- Maryann E. Gallagher and Susan H. Allen. “Presidential Personality: Not Just a Nuisance,” *Foreign Policy Analysis* 10 (2014), 1-21.
- Todd S. Sechser, “Are Soldiers Less War-Prone than Statesmen?” *Journal of Conflict Resolution*, 48, no. 5 (2004), 746-774.
- Richard K. Herrmann, and Jonathan W. Keller, “Beliefs, Values, and Strategic Choice: U.S. Leaders’ Decisions to Engage, Contain, and Use Force in an Era of Globalization,” *Journal of Politics*, 66, no. 2 (2004), 557-580.
- Michael C. Horowitz and Allan C. Stam. “How Prior Military Experience Influences the Future Militarized Behavior of Leaders,” *International Organization* 68 (2014) 527-559.

Week 13

Monday, November 11, 2019

Case Study: Explaining the Decision to Attack Iraq

- Andrew Flibbert, “The Road to Baghdad: Ideas and Intellectuals in Explanations of the Iraq War,” *Security Studies* 15 (2006), 310-352.
- Michael Mazarr, “The Iraq War and Agenda Setting,” *Foreign Policy Analysis* 3 (2007), 1-23.
- Chaim Kaufmann, “Threat Inflation and the Failure of the Marketplace of Ideas: The Selling of the Iraq War,” *International Security* 29 (Summer 2004), 5-48.
- Robert Jervis, “Reports, Politics, and Intelligence Failures: The Case of Iraq,” *Journal of Strategic Studies* 29 (February 2006), 3-52.
- Vaughn P. Shannon, and Jonathan W. Keller. “Leadership Style and International Norm Violation: The Case of the Iraq War,” *Foreign Policy Analysis* (2007), 79-104.

Week 14

Monday, November 18, 2019

The Cutting Edge (of the field) – Part I

- Emilie Hafner-Burton, S. Haggard., D. Lake, & D. Victor, “The Behavioral Revolution and International Relations,” *International Organization*, 71, S1 (2017) S1-S31.
- Brian C. Rathbun, J. Kertzer, & M. Paradis, “Homo Diplomaticus: Mixed-Method Evidence of Variation in Strategic Rationality,” *International Organization*, 71, S1 (2017), S33-S60.
- Richard K. Herrmann, “How Attachments to the Nation Shape Beliefs About the World: A Theory of Motivated Reasoning,” *International Organization*, 71, S1 (2017), S61-S84.
- Sungmin Rho & M. Tomz, “Why Don't Trade Preferences Reflect Economic Self-Interest?” *International Organization*, 71, S1 (2017), S85-S108.
- Joshua Kertzer, “Resolve, Time, and Risk,” *International Organization*, 71, S1 (2017), S109-S136.

Week 15

Monday, November 25, 2019

The Cutting Edge (of the field) – Part II

- A. Burcu Bayram, “Due Deference: Cosmopolitan Social Identity and the Psychology of Legal Obligation in International Politics,” *International Organization*, 71, S1 (2017), S137-S163.

- Dustin Tingley, “Rising Power on the Mind,” *International Organization* 71, S1 (2017), S165-S188.
- Jonathan Renshon, J. Lee, & D. Tingley, “Emotions and the Micro-Foundations of Commitment Problems,” *International Organization*, 71, S1 (2017), S189-S218.
- Elizabeth Saunders, “No Substitute for Experience: Presidents, Advisers, and Information in Group Decision Making” *International Organization*, 71, S1 (2017), S219-S247.
- Janice Gross Stein, “The Micro-Foundations of International Relations Theory: Psychology and Behavioral Economics.” *International Organization*, 71, S1 (2017), S249-S263.
- Robert Powell, “Research Bets and Behavioral IR.” *International Organization*, 71, S1 (2017) S265-S277.

Week 16

Monday, December 2, 2019

LAST DAY OF CLASS

- *In-Class Presentations*

Final Paper Due

Monday, December 9, 2019

12:00 Noon

Hard copy to the professor’s office and electronic copy via email.