International Relation / Political Science (IRPS)
Academic year 2019 - 2020

Foreign Policy Analysis
RI-SP045- Autumn- 6 ECTS

Course Description
Introduction to the study of how states make and carry out policy pertaining to the "external" world. Theories of decision-making and its antecedents, of agenda structuring, and of interactions among policy makers. Approaches include rational choice analysis; cognitive, developmental, and social psychology; and organizational behavior. This course is both a survey of the FPA subfield and an introduction to how to reason, in written form, about FPA-related questions specifically and political science questions more generally.

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Syllabus
Course Requirements
This course provides a survey of one of the subfields of international relations: foreign policy analysis. Claims about foreign policy are presupposed implicitly in most statements about international relations by scholars, policy makers, or journalists, but are rarely questioned; the purpose of this course is to slow down and start to think more explicitly about those claims. As such, the course is a) an introduction to the various theories we have about how foreign policy is made; b) a way of learning how to theorize about foreign policy by extending theories to different "cases" in foreign policy or comparing them systematically; and c) to learn something about how to think in political science by constructing written arguments about particular foreign policy theories.

As the course description above indicates, students will be introduced to a wide variety of topics on how states make and carry out policy that pertains in one way or another to the "external" world (the scare quotes are because the distinction between external and internal is debatable). Specifically, we will cover four clusters of topics in the course: how state actors reason and make decisions (to the extent that they in fact decide to do or not do something, a factual matter that is anything but obvious); the background factors that contour and to some degree structure state actions/non-actions; the role that organizations play in modern (particularly post-1945) foreign policy making; and the role that
groups play. The idea is to walk through a set of ideas sufficiently so that students begin to understand the complexity of sentences such as "Russia did X" or "this was Trump's concern." Note: this syllabus is updated regularly throughout the semester; log in often to the course web site to see if the readings for the upcoming weeks have been revised.

Each week, there will be a handful of articles and/or book chapters to read, available for download either through standard journal portals or via login to the course moodle (to be discussed the first week in class). Students should come to class having done the readings and thought about them. In addition, there will be four extremely short (2 pages) papers to write and a take-home/open-book exam at the end of the semester. Each paper will count for 15% of the course grade (if there is improvement, I will count later papers more) and the final exam for 40%. Please note that for any given week, there will be anywhere from a few to over a dozen other readings on the syllabus. Those readings are optional and while I certainly do not expect you to go through them during the semester, my hope is that if your curiosity is piqued by one or more of the topics we cover, you'll go through the optional readings some months from now, say in the summer.

The way we develop and evaluate theories in international relations/political science is by thinking through concrete examples (and, of course, writing carefully about them, which is one of the reasons for the multiple small papers). However, since there are so many interesting examples in the field of foreign policy analysis, it would be helpful for us to have a common, albeit small, set of such examples to which we can refer. As a start, I suggest that everyone familiarize him/herself with the basic chronology of the 1914 crisis, the Cuban missile crisis, and the 2003 invasion of Iraq. Please note that although a plurality of the examples cited in the course will pertain to the United States, that is for purely practical reasons: the U.S. has a lot more written about its foreign policy than most other countries. But beyond that, this is not a course in the foreign policy of the United States or of any other country: it’s a course on how to explain various features of foreign policy.

It should be noted, for better or worse, that foreign policy analysis as an academic subfield has from its inception been focused on decisions. For this reason, some awareness of the general literature on decision making would be welcome (though it is absolutely neither required nor assumed in addition to the course readings, in particular those for class session 2); I would recommend that over the next year (i.e., going beyond the semester) students buy and read James G. March, A Primer on Decision Making: How Decisions Happen, New York: Free Press 1994. Similarly, and again for better or worse, foreign policy as an academic subfield has for the last several decades borrowed heavily from the subfield of political psychology; again, although I am neither assuming nor requiring any knowledge of that subfield beyond the required readings in the course, I would recommend that over the next year students buy and read Rose McDermott, Political Psychology in International Relations, Ann Arbor: U of Michigan P 2004. I would also recommend that, if you want to keep up on the field, you browse through recent issues of two journals: Foreign Policy Analysis [FPA] and Political Psychology [PP].

**Course Schedule**

1. September 17

**Course introduction; levels of analysis; FPA as a subfield; political psychology**

J. David Singer, "The Level-of-Analysis Problem in International Politics," *World Politics* [WP] 14,1 (1961): 77-92. **NOTE:** this piece and the two others for this week should be read by the end of the semester.

2. September 24

_Reasoning/decisions 1: Optimizing vs. satisficing; prospect theory_


3. October 1

Reasoning/decisions 2: Analogies and cases; precedents; narratives


4. October 8

Reasoning/decisions 3: Crises; emotions; physiology


5. October 15

**Backgrounds 1: Personality and upbringing; beliefs and operational code; motivated reasoning**


Hulda Thórisdóttir and John T. Jost, "Motivated Closed-Mindedness Mediates the Effect of Threat on Political Conservatism," PP 32,5 (2011): 785-811. OPTIONAL: Jost has written extensively on these matters and his papers over the last 6 years or so are worth browsing (note in particular the piece with David M. Amodio, "Political Ideology as Motivated Social Cognition: Behavioral and Neuroscientific Evidence," Motivation and Emotion 36,1 [2012]: 55-64); see also the review chapter by Charles S. Taber and Everett Young, "Political Information Processing," in OH, as well as the chapter by Stanley Feldman ("Political Ideology"), also in OH; and see, more recently, his presidential address to the International Society of Political Psychology: "Ideological Asymmetries and the Essence of Political Psychology," PP 38,2 (2017): 167-208. Given the elections and referenda of the last few years, the political applicability of the research program is of obvious interest (though the identification of emotion is a bit more complicated than one might assume). For a bit more of theoretical perspective, see the short round-up piece is Patrick W. Kraft, Milton Lodge, and Charles S. Taber, "Why People Don't Trust the Evidence: Motivated Reasoning and Scientific Beliefs," Annals 658 (March 2015): 121-33; and a look back at the original piece by Milton Lodge and Charles S. Taber, "The Automaticity of Affect for Political Leaders, Groups, and Issues: An Experimental Test of the Hot Cognition Hypothesis," PP 26,3 (2005): 455-82 is definitely worthwhile. Direct applications to FPA are scarcer, though now see Richard K. Herrmann, "How Attachments to the Nation Shape Beliefs About the World: A Theory of Motivated Reasoning," IO 71,2017: S61-S84. Note that what is lurking in the background is one of the most famous hypotheses in the history of political psychology, the "authoritarian personality": e.g., Stanley Feldman and Karen Stenner, "Perceived Threat and Authoritarianism," PP 18,4 (1997): 741-70; John Levi Martin, "The Authoritarian Personality, 50 Years later: What Lessons are There for Political Psychology?" PP 22,1 (2001): 1-26; though also Michael A. Milburn, Miho Niwa, and Marcus Patterson, "Authoritarianism, Anger, and Hostile Attribution Bias: A Test of Affect Displacement," PP 35,2 (2014): 225-43.

6. October 22

**Backgrounds 2: Culture and identity; gender, race, and ethnicity; violence**


7. October 29

**Backgrounds 3: Public opinion; regime type; mass and elite media**

publication online 2017. The unfortunately (because the key concept mostly scants the relational and embedded nature of the phenomenon) named literature on "roles" in foreign policy does contain two very nice papers on what in this course we’re calling the issue of permeability: see Christian Cantir and Juliet Kaarbo, "Unpacking Ego in Role Theory: Vertical and Horizontal Role Contestation and Foreign Policy," Kaarbo and Cantir, "Agents in Structures: Insights From Cases of Internal Role Contestation," chs. 1 and 11 in Cantir and Kaarbo, eds., Domestic Role Contestation, Foreign Policy, and International Relations, New York and London: Routledge 2016, and, most recently, Kaarbo, “Prime Minister Leadership Style and the Role of Parliament in Security Policy," British J of Politics and International Relations 20,1 (2018): 35-51. Note that the above literatures are focused on the potential effects of public opinion on foreign policy making (including the substance of foreign policies adopted or implemented); they are not concerned with the apparently related question of the influence of events, or policies, on public opinion itself. As you might imagine, the advent of Trump has given a major impetus to this and you only have to do a cursory search on Google Scholar to find a large and growing literature on that question. I would single out the “mood” sub-literature as among the more interesting strand in that regard.


**NOTE:** It is worthwhile browsing around the most recent (2018) Chicago Council on Global Affairs survey of public opinion, America Engaged: American Public Opinion and US Foreign Policy (summary and link to full report on https://digital.thechicagocouncil.org/america-engaged?_ga=2.200682222.1346017405.1540126721-230084557.1540126721 ). Similarly, there is regular reporting of European attitudes on public opinion regarding foreign policy, for example Catarina Thomson, Jason Reifler, and Thomas Scotto, “Perceptions on NATO and Defence Policy,” University of Exeter: https://ore.exeter.ac.uk/repository/bitstream/handle/10871/32003/Perceptions%20on%20NATO%20and%20Defence%20Policy.docx?sequence=1&isAllowed=y

8. November 5

*Organizations 1: Cybernetics; routines*

9. November 12

**Organizations 2: Garbage can models; networks**


10. November 19

**Organizations 3: Professionalization; state-building**


11. November 26

Groups 1: Leaders; coalitions; advisors


12. December 3
Groups 2: Social pressures; groupthink; polarization


13. December 10

Groups 3: Loyalty/conformity/obedience; identification; bureaucratic politics


14. December 17

**Final exam** (put online at 10.00 on December 17, due at noon on December 19)