POLISCI 242 | POLISCI 342 | INTLPOL 232

Foreign Policy Decision Making in Comparative Perspective

Term: Spring 2019
Units: 3 units
Instructor: Michael McFaul, mcfaul@stanford.edu
Teaching Coordinator: Bronte Kass, bkass@stanford.edu
Time: Mondays 2:30 pm – 4:20 pm
Location: Encina West 106

Course Description

This seminar will examine how countries and multilateral organizations make decisions about foreign and international policy. The hypothesis to be explored in the course is whether individuals, bureaucracies, and interest groups shape foreign policy decisions. That hypothesis will be tested against other more structural explanations of how countries and organizations behave in the international system. After a brief review of the academic literature in the first part of the course, the seminar will focus on several cases studies of foreign policy decision-making by the United States (Bush, Obama, Trump), China, Russia, Iran, and the United Nations. Specifically, we will seek to explain:

- The U.S. (or Bush administration) decision to invade Iraq;
- The U.S. (or Obama administration) decision to expand the war in Afghanistan;
- The U.S. (or Trump administration) decision to engage directly with Kim Jong-un on denuclearization negotiations;
- The Chinese decision to launch One Belt, One Road;
- The Russian decision to invade Ukraine;
- The Iranian decision to sign the JCPOA;
- The United Nations Security Council decision to intervene in Libya, but not Syria.

Office Hours

Friday afternoons and by appointment only. Please schedule with Mahlorei Bruce Apalis, mahlorei@stanford.edu.

Assignments

We will meet once a week for two hours. Students are expected to attend every class session and complete all required readings before each session. Students with an excused absence...
must notify the course assistant in writing before the start of class. More than one excused absence will affect class participation grading. Students must attend each class prepared to interview our guest speakers in the first hour and to discuss the readings and engage in discussion in the second hour. This course is not a lecture class. Sessions will be highly participatory.

Beginning on April 15th, two students (or two groups of students) will prepare a short paper (5-8 pages) on the outcome to be discussed, one arguing that individuals, institutions (regimes), or bureaucratic politics produced the foreign policy outcome and the other arguing that realist or structuralist explanations offer a better explanation for the outcome in question. These papers will be posted every Friday and are to be discussed and debated on the following Monday.

In the hour before our discussion of these papers, we will have a guest expert on the foreign policy outcome in question for that week. During this hour, students will be expected to ask questions that will then help inform the subsequent discussion in the second hour. Guests are not being asked to “lecture.” All students need to come to class with at least one question (if you have poor questions, you will generate a poor discussion, and vice versa.)

In addition to this short group paper, everyone will write a final paper (10-12 pages), explaining one of the decisions examined in the course. Final papers will be due on June 10th at 9 am.

Evaluation

25%: class participation.
25%: short paper and presentation.
50%: final paper.

Technology Policy

The use of laptops, tablets, mobile phones, and any recording devices is prohibited during seminar discussions. This condition is important to me. If you cannot abide by it, please do not take this class.

Course Materials

Readings will be posted on Canvas, available to order through the bookstore, or for reference with the Green Library course reserves.
COURSE SCHEDULE

April 1: Introduction

Get ahead on the readings now!

April 8: Review of Theories

Required Readings:


Recommended Readings:


Krasner, Stephen. “Are Bureaucracies Important (Or Allison Wonderland).” *Foreign Policy*, no. 7 (Summer 1972): 159-179.


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**April 15: The Chinese Decision to Launch One Belt One Road**

**Guest Speaker: Professor Jean Oi**

**Required Readings:**

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**Recommended Readings:**


April 22: The U.S. Decision to escalate the war in Afghanistan (2009)

Guest Speaker: Ambassador Karl Eikenberry

Required Readings:


Recommended Readings:


April 29: The U.S. decision to invade Iraq

Guest Speaker: Professor Condoleezza Rice

Required Readings:


Baker, Peter. “‘Afghanistan was too easy,’” “A brutal, ugly, repugnant man,” “‘You could hear the hinge of history turn’” and “‘Maybe we’ll get lucky.’” In Days of Fire: Bush and Cheney in the White House, 188-269. New York: Doubleday, 2013.

Recommended Readings:


May 6: The UN decision to not use force in Syria (but use force in Libya)

Guest Speaker: Professor Jeremy Weinstein
Required Readings:


Recommended Readings:


May 13: The Iranian decision to sign the JCPOA

**Guest Speaker: Professor Abbas Milani**

**Required Readings:**


Recommended Readings:


May 20: The Russian decision to invade Ukraine

Guest Speaker: Professor Kathryn Stoner

Required Readings:


Recommended Readings:


May 27: Memorial Day – no classes

June 3: The U.S. decision to negotiate directly with Kim Jong-un
Guest Speaker: Dr. H.R. McMaster

Required Readings:


Recommended Readings:


Hecker, Siegfried S., Robert L. Carlin, and Elliot A. Serbin. “Update of North Korea’s nuclear and missile capabilities in 2018.” Center for International Security and