

Central European University  
Political Science Department  
2009/2010  
Winter Semester

## Information, Decision Making and Foreign Policy

Instructor: Tamás Meszerics

### AIMS OF THE COURSE

The course intends to acquaint the students with certain aspects of foreign policy analysis. It will emphasize those approaches that focus on the instrumental rationality or lack of it in decision-making groups. It will enable the participants to identify and evaluate the major concepts and models in foreign policy analysis and to test these abstract and/or formal conceptual tools on the examples provided by cases in diplomatic history. The course is accessible through the e-learning website of CEU. The enrolment key can be obtained from the instructor.

### LEARNING OUTCOMES

Ability to use theoretical concepts coming from different subfields in a coherent way  
Ability to apply abstract concepts for the evaluation of empirical phenomena within the topic of foreign policy studies  
Increased argumentative skills within the norms of scholarly debate  
Writing an analytic essay in clear structure and format  
Pointing out the essence of an argument through targeted questions  
Ability to make brief written comments on extensive scholarly texts

### REQUIREMENTS:

Since the course consists of one lecture and one seminar on the same topic every week, **it is essential** that the participants read the compulsory literature as preparation for the seminars. To help this preparation students are required to submit at least two short questions on the readings on the day before the seminar. The questions should be uploaded to the e-learning site of the course 12 hours before the seminar the latest.

Each student is expected to write **three take-home examination papers**. (The questions of the take-home examinations will be uploaded to the e-learning site Friday evenings, and they are to be submitted to the site by the morning of the following Monday the latest.) Students can choose to submit a **position paper** covering three of the recommended readings. The position paper would count as a **substitute for one** (and only one) **of the take-home examination papers** if and only if it is uploaded to the e-learning site of the course before the examination questions are made public on the site.

The instructor will take every effort to screen out cases of plagiarism. These will be dealt with according to university regulations. For definitions please consult the academic honesty section of the relevant university policies.

The final grade will be a composite of the following values:

<b>Take-home examination papers</b>	<b>- 75 % (25% each)</b>
The position paper counts as equal to one of the take-home examinations (i.e. 25 %)	
<b>Questions and comments</b>	<b>- 15 %</b>
<b>In-class activity</b>	<b>- 10 %</b>

## SYLLABUS

### 1. THE NATURE OF FOREIGN POLICY ANALYSIS

Two generations of FPA; problems of the level of analysis; agency – structure debates.

#### Compulsory readings

Carlsnaes, Walter, “Foreign Policy” In: Carlsnaes et. al. (eds.), *Handbook of International Relations* London: Sage, 2006. pp. 331-349.

#### Recommended readings

Garrison, Jean A. (ed.) “Foreign Policy Analysis in 20/20: A Symposium” *International Studies Review* Vol. 5, No. 2 (June 2003) pp. 155-202.

### 2. DECISION-MAKING BY RATIONAL ACTORS

The central concepts and the underlying logic of decision theory and game theory.

#### Compulsory readings

Allison, Graham T. - Philip Zelikow, *Essence of Decision: Explaining the Cuban Missile Crisis*. (2<sup>nd</sup> edition) New York: Longman, 1999. Ch. 1.

#### Recommended readings

Bueno de Mesquita, Bruce, “The End of the Cold War: Predicting an Emergent Property”, *Journal of Conflict Resolution* Vol. 42 No. 2, April 1998. pp.131-155

### 3. TWO-LEVEL GAMES

The rational choice logic of domestic impact on international negotiations

#### Compulsory readings

Putnam, Robert D., “Diplomacy and Domestic Politics: The Logic of Two Level Games” *International Organization*, 42:3 (1988), pp. 427-460.

#### Recommended readings

Trumbore, Peter F. and Mark A. Boyer, 2000, ”International Crisis Decisionmaking as a Two-Level Process,” *Journal of Peace Research* Vol. 37 no. 6, pp. 679-697.

### 4 LIMITS OF RATIONAL DECISION-MAKING

Limits on human understanding, bounded rationality and its consequences

#### Compulsory readings

March, James G., *A Primer on Decision Making*. New York: The Free Press, 1994. Ch. 1. pp. 1-55.

#### Recommended readings

Simon, Herbert A. “Alternative Visions of Rationality” in: Moser, Paul K. (ed.) *Rationality in Action: Contemporary Approaches*. Cambridge: CUP, 1990. pp. 198-204.

## 5. POLITICAL PSYCHOLOGY: RISK-TAKING AND PROSPECT THEORY

Attitudes to risk, misperceptions and cognitive biases in risky foreign policy environments.  
Prospect theory and its limits.

### Compulsory Readings

McDermott, Rose, *Risk-Taking in International Politics. Prospect Theory in American Foreign Policy*. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2001. pp. 15-75 (Chapters 2-3)

### Recommended readings

Jervis, Robert, "The Drunkard's Search" in: Iyengar, Shanto and William J. McGuire (eds.) *Explorations in Political Psychology*. Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1993. pp. 339-360.

## 6. GROUPTHINK

Affective aspects of decision-making, hot-cognition, group dynamics

### Compulsory readings

Janis, Irving L., *Groupthink*. (2nd ed.) Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1982

Bay of Pigs pp. 14-47; Missile Crisis pp. 132-158.

### Recommended readings

Kowert, Paul A., "Leadership and Learning in Political Groups: The Management of Advice in the Iran-Contra Affair" *Governance* vol. 14, No. 2 (2001) pp. 201-232.

## 7. THE BUREAUCRATIC POLITICS APPROACH

Allison and the Cuban Missile Crisis. Models II and III and alternative interpretations

### Compulsory Readings

Allison, Graham T., "Conceptual Models and the Cuban Missile Crisis" *American Political Science Review* Vol. 63, No. 3 (September 1969) pp. 689-718.

### Recommended readings

Allison, Graham T. – Philip Zelikow, *Essence of Decision: Explaining the Cuban Missile Crisis*. (2<sup>nd</sup> edition) New York: Longman, 1999. Ch. 3 & 5.

## 8. TESTING FPA THEORIES ON THE GULF WAR (I)

The 1990-91 Gulf War as a test case; applying the Government Politics Model

### Compulsory Readings

Yetiv, Steve A., "Testing the Government Politics Model: US Decision Making in the 1990-1991 Persian Gulf Crisis" *Security Studies* Vol 11 No. 2 (Winter 2001) pp.50-84

### Recommended Readings

Holland, Lauren, "The U.S. Decision to Launch Operation Desert Storm: A Bureaucratic Politics Analysis" *Armed Forces & Society* Vol. 25. No. 2. (1999)

## 9. TESTING FPA THEORIES ON THE GULF WAR (II)

Groupthink; the use of historical analogies

### **Compulsory readings**

Yetiv, Steve A., "Groupthink and the Gulf Crisis" *British Journal of Political Science* Vol. 33 No. 3 (July 2003) pp. 419-442

MacDonald, Scott, "Hitler's Shadow: Historical Analogies and the Iraqi Invasion of Kuwait" *Diplomacy and Statecraft* Vol. 13 No. 4 (December 2002) pp. 29-59

### **Recommended readings**

Yetiv, Steve A., *Explaining Foreign Policy: U.S. Decision-Making and the Persian Gulf War*. Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2004.

## **10. MANIPULATION OF FOREIGN POLICY DECISIONS**

Manipulation as a morally neutral concept; the preconditions of manipulation; manipulative strategies in groups

### **Compulsory readings**

Maoz, Zeev, "Framing the National Interest: The Manipulation of Foreign Policy Decisions in Group Settings" *World Politics* Vol. 43 (October 1993) pp. 77-110.

### **Recommended readings**

Riker, William, "Political Theory and the Art of Heresthetics" in: Ada W. Finifter (ed.) *Political Science: The State of the Discipline*. Washington D. C.: The American Political Science Association, 1983. pp. 47-67.

## **11. INTELLIGENCE AND FOREIGN POLICY**

Functions and structures of intelligence communities; are intelligence failures unavoidable?

### **Compulsory Readings**

Betts, Richard, *Enemies of Intelligence*. New York: Columbia University Press, 2007. Ch 2-3 and Ch 5

### **Recommended Readings**

Davies, Philip H. J., "Intelligence Culture and Intelligence Failure in Britain and the United States" *Cambridge Review of International Affairs* Vol. 17. No. 3. (October 2004) pp. 495-520.

## **12. SYNTHESIS OR ECLECTICISM? 'POLIHEURISTIC' THEORY**

Advantages and shortcomings of combining rationalist and behavioral analysis

### **Compulsory Readings**

Mintz, Alex, "Applied Decision Analysis: Utilizing Poliheuristic Theory to Explain and Predict Foreign Policy and National Security Decisions" *International Studies Perspectives* Vol. 6, No. 1. (January 2005) pp. 94-98.

Brulé, David J., "Explaining and Forecasting Leaders' Decisions: A Poliheuristic Analysis of the Iran Hostage Rescue Decision" *International Studies Perspectives* Vol. 6, No. 1. (January 2005) pp. 99-113.

### **Recommended Readings**

Stern, Eric, "Contextualizing and Critiquing the Poliheuristic Theory" *Journal of Conflict Resolution* Vol. 48 No. 1 (February 2004) pp. 105-126