

Central European University  
Political Science Department  
2010/2011  
Fall 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:

**It is essential** that the participants read the compulsory literature as preparation for the class sessions. To help this preparation students are required to submit at least two short questions on the readings on the day before the class. The questions should be uploaded to the e-learning site of the course 12 hours before the class the latest.

Each student is expected to write **two 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>- 70 % (35% each)</b>
The position paper counts as equal to one of the take-home examinations (i.e. 25 %)	
<b>Questions and comments</b>	<b>- 20 %</b>
<b>In-class activity</b>	<b>- 10 %</b>

## SYLLABUS

### Topic 1 (September 22, 29)

#### RATIONAL ACTORS: GAMES AND DECISIONS

The central concepts and the underlying logic of decision theory and game theory; two-level games and the logic of domestic-international interactions

##### 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.

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

##### 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

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.

### Topic 2 (October 6, 13) LIMITS ON RATIONALITY, POLITICAL PSYCHOLOGY AND PROSPECT THEORY

Limits on human understanding, bounded rationality and its consequences. 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

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

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.

### Topic 3 (October 20, 27) WHO DEFINES THE NATIONAL INTEREST? BUREAUCRATIC DECISIONS IN THE FOREIGN POLICY PROCESS

Bureaucratic institutions as policy tools and policy makers. Allison and the Cuban Missile Crisis

##### 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. 3 & 5.

##### Recommended 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

**Topic 4 (November 3, 10) WHOSE INTEREST? HUMANITARIAN INTERVENTIONS AND PEACE PROCESSES – THE CASE OF BOSNIA**

The nature and problems of humanitarian intervention as a case of multi-dimensional policy problem. The Bosnian crisis and the negotiation of the Dayton Accords

**Compulsory Readings**

Council on Foreign Relations, *Humanitarian Intervention: Crafting a Workable Doctrine*. New York: Brookings Institution Press, 2000.

Shattuck, John H. F., *Freedom on Fire: Human Rights Wars and America's Response*. Cambridge MA: Harvard University Press, 2003. Chapters 3-6.

**Recommended readings**

Holbrooke, Richard, *To Win A War*. New York: Norton 1998, Chapter 21

Chollet, Derek, *The Road to the Dayton Accords: A Study of American Statecraft*. Houndmills, Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2005. Chapters 8-9

**Topic 5 (November 17, 24) GROUP DECISIONS AND GROUP PROCESSES**

Affective aspects of decision-making, hot-cognition, group dynamics. Group decisions and their manipulation.

**Compulsory readings**

Janis, Irving L., *Groupthink*. (2nd ed.) Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1982 Bay of Pigs pp. 14-47; Missile Crisis pp. 132-158.

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**

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

**Topic 6 (December 1, 8) 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

Jervis, Robert, *Why Intelligence Fails: Lessons from the Iranian Revolution and the Iraq War*. Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2010. Ch 2.

**Recommended Readings**

Meszerics, Tamás and Levente Littvay, "Pseudo-Wisdom and Intelligence Failures" *International Journal of Intelligence and CounterIntelligence*, Volume 23 Issue 1, (March 2010) pp. 133 - 147.