R 6:00pm-8:50pm, Benedict Hall 205

Instructor: Dr. Cigdem V. Sirin  
Office Hours: R 5:00pm-6:00pm (or by appointment)  
Office Location: Benedict Hall 302  
Office Phone: (915) 747-7971  
E-mail: cigdemsirin@utep.edu  
Class Website: Blackboard through MyUTEP portal

COURSE OVERVIEW

The purpose of this course is to review and analyze the cognitive and affective underpinnings of foreign policy decision making. The discussions will focus on different models of foreign policy decisions. Specifically, we will address three basic aspects: (a) the contents of foreign policy decisions; (b) the processes by which such decisions are made; and (c) the effects of the context (organizational, political, and social) on such decisions.

COURSE OBJECTIVES

I believe, with adequate effort and willingness, all of you are capable of doing well in this course. By the end of this course, you can expect to accomplish the following learning outcomes:

- To define, understand, and apply major concepts, principles, and models of foreign policy decision making
- To recognize and apply major analytical methods and approaches used for the scientific study of foreign policy decision making
- To apply and critique a body of factual knowledge and theories relevant to understanding different foreign policy decisions
- To comprehend and evaluate alternative points of view on historical and contemporary foreign policy decisions

OBJECTIVES FOR PROFESSIONALISM

It is essential that the utmost respect and professionalism be adhered in all exchanges between class members. This is a political science course and we will be discussing at times sensitive and controversial topics. Avoid any unnecessary arguments with other class members, such as political polemical arguments (e.g., negative partisan talking points targeting those of opposing ideological perspectives or particular political figures) or, even worse, personal attacks on others for having different views.
No inappropriate behavior will be tolerated. Unprofessional conduct will be dealt with swiftly through the university and it is at the professor’s full discretion to have a student dropped from the course for any inappropriate behavior.

**REQUIRED COURSE MATERIALS**


These books are available at the UTEP Bookstore and may also be available at online bookstores. If you choose to order your books via an online provider, please be mindful of the delivery time.

**OTHER READINGS**

Apart from the required book, I will also assign several additional book chapters and journal articles as listed in the course schedule section of this syllabus. All these items are available on Blackboard in the “Additional Readings” folder.

**GRADING POLICY**

Your final grade in this class will be based on the following requirements:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Course Requirements</th>
<th>Due Dates</th>
<th>Weight</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Midterm Exam</td>
<td>10/24 @ 11pm</td>
<td>25%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Research Paper</td>
<td>12/12 @ 11pm</td>
<td>30%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Research topic decision</td>
<td>09/19 @ 11pm</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>One-page proposal</td>
<td>10/17 @ 11pm</td>
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<tr>
<td>Project Presentations</td>
<td>12/05</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Class Participation</td>
<td>All meetings</td>
<td>35%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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All grades (including the final grade) are based on the following distribution of points:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Points</th>
<th>Letter</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>≥ 89.50</td>
<td>A</td>
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<tr>
<td>79.50-89.49</td>
<td>B</td>
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<tr>
<td>69.50-79.49</td>
<td>C</td>
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<tr>
<td>59.50-69.49</td>
<td>D</td>
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<tr>
<td>≤ 59.49</td>
<td>F</td>
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I do not change grades. If you are concerned about your grade, please come and see me during my office hours so that I can give you feedback and suggestions on how to improve your performance in the class.
MIDTERM EXAM

There is a take-home midterm exam for the course. The exam will be in essay format and questions will be based on the readings and class discussions. The midterm exam will constitute 25% of your final grade.

Exams should be submitted electronically by the designated due date and time via “SafeAssign” (embedded in Blackboard), which is an online originality checking service made available by UTEP. Exams submitted late will lose 10 points (1 letter grade) per day (including weekends).

RESEARCH PAPER

The purpose of this course is to introduce you to major issues and theories on foreign policy decision making. An important part of this goal is to help you develop the analytical skills necessary to grasp these dynamics. As such, you will write a research paper that provides a critical analysis of the topic of your choosing by expanding on the material discussed in class. The research paper will constitute 30% of your final grade.

Specifically, you will choose a major foreign policy event (past, recent, or still ongoing). First, you will explain major decisions taken within such event by using different levels of analysis (individual, domestic, interstate, and global). Next, you will apply various models of decision making (such as rational actor, prospect theory, bureaucratic politics) to explain such decisions taken in that policy event. When applying various levels of analysis and models of decision making, you should explicitly state which level of analysis and which decision making model fits better to explain such event and for what reasons. In doing so, you should refer to scholarly work to make your case and substantiate your arguments.

- Topics must be approved by me. You should inform me about your paper topic by e-mail by 09/19 @11pm at the latest or you will lose 5 points.
- A one-page proposal is due on 10/17 @11pm (submit on Blackboard). This is worth 5% of the research paper grade.
- The paper should be double-spaced; 10-15 pages long (not counting the front sheet and references); typed in 12-point Times New Roman font; with 1-inch margins, and numbered. Papers that are single-spaced, too long or too short, not numbered, that use wider or narrower margins, or which use very large or very small fonts to stay within the page limit will lose 10 points.
- There should be no more than two extensive quotations (in excess of three lines of text)
- Make sure you are aware of the scholarly pitfalls of plagiarism, which are discussed in detail in the document on academic misconduct (available on Blackboard). Specifically, whenever you use an idea or information from another source, you must give credit to the author by properly citing her/him within the text. Not doing so constitutes an act of plagiarism, which will result in a score of zero for the paper.
- The formatting of your paper should follow the American Political Science Association (APSA) style. Specifically, you are required to carefully read the document on citation and reference requirements (also available on Blackboard) and employ these formatting rules for your research paper. Accordingly, please note the following:
  Inaccurate citation/reference format = 5-40% penalty (depending on severity)
- You must provide at least fifteen scholarly sources (academic books and articles) or you will lose 5 points for each missing source. If you are unclear about what constitutes a scholarly book or article, please ask! (For example, Wikipedia is NOT a scholarly source, nor are magazines and newspapers such as the Economist or the New York Times).
- Grades will also be based on the clarity of the writing (i.e., lack of spelling and grammar errors, organization, appropriate tone of writing). Please note that The University Writing Center (UWC) provides writing assistance to all UTEP students. The UWC is located on the second (ground) floor of the library in Room 227 Library, phone: (915) 747-5112.
- You are welcome to come and discuss your paper progress during my office hours or by appointment.
- The research paper should be submitted electronically by the designated due date and time via “SafeAssign.” Papers submitted late will lose 10 points (1 letter grade) per day (including weekends).

**PROJECT PRESENTATIONS**

Each student will present their research paper in class, which will constitute 10% of their final course grade. The presentations should use PowerPoint and should not exceed 15 minutes (plus 5 minutes of Q&A).

**CLASS PARTICIPATION**

Class participation grade will comprise 35% of your course grade and will be based on the following criteria:

(a) participation in seminar discussions (15%)
(b) performance as a discussion leader (10%)
(d) weekly talking points (10%)

I expect everyone to attend class on the scheduled dates and times. Keep in mind that class participation is more than just attending the class meetings—you should come to class alert, be willing to ask and answer questions, and contribute intellectually to class discussions. To do so, you should complete the assigned readings before each class meeting. Exams will cover material from the readings and the lectures, so doing just one or the other will leave you at a disadvantage.

Only those students who prepare well-written weekly talking points, attend class regularly, and actively participate in and effectively lead class discussions will receive full credit (100) for their class participation grade. You will be asked to sign an attendance sheet at each class meeting and it is your responsibility to make sure to sign-in. *After one unexcused absence, I will begin to deduct 10 points from your participation grade for each absence thereafter. If you arrive late and request to sign-in at the end of the class meeting, I will deduct 5 points from your participation grade for each incident of tardiness after one late arrival. The same policy will apply to incidents of leaving class early* (Note that if you leave the class early, the time of your
departure will be recorded). The class participation portion of the grade is non-negotiable and left solely to the discretion of the instructor.

**Discussion Leader Duty**
During the course of the semester, each student will have the opportunity to lead the seminar discussions. Specifically, the discussion leaders will briefly present and critique that week’s readings to set the stage for class discussion on the topic. The leaders are also expected to comment on other students’ talking points.

**Weekly Talking Points**
Beginning from the second week of the semester, each student will be required to submit two “talking points” on each week’s readings. These talking points will help shape the seminar discussions, so they should be the most interesting questions or arguments that the student has identified based on the week’s readings. They should be submitted in the form of a short paragraph outlining the question or argument. Each talking point should refer to one or more specific sections of the weekly readings (with appropriate page references). Each talking point should refer to a different chapter or article from the weekly readings. Talking points less than 200 words or in excess of 500 words and/or that arrive late will not be accepted. The talking points must be submitted on Blackboard by **Wednesday @ 11pm** each week that the class meets.

**EXCUSED ABSENCES**
I will excuse absences and late work only when a student participates in an official university-recognized activity, observes a recognized religious holiday of her/his faith that happens to coincide with a class session, is called to and participates in active military service for a reasonably brief period, or confronts a medical emergency. To be excused, you must notify me in writing prior to the date of absence. That said, in cases where advance notification is not feasible (e.g. a medical emergency), you must provide notification as soon as possible following your absence. Such notification must include an explanation of why notice could not be sent in advance. You must also provide satisfactory documentation verifying the reason for the absence. In case of an illness, a doctor’s note is the proper documentation required.

*For my records, you should e-mail me a scanned copy of the documentation that verifies the reason for your absence (if you don’t have access to a scanner, you can take a photo of the documentation). Documentation that is not provided in a timely manner will not be accepted.* Please do not ask me to excuse absences for minor illnesses or scheduling conflicts. I am aware that students have other interests and obligations, but you should nevertheless make this class a priority. If you are likely to have recurring conflicts, please take another course that better fits your schedule.

See academic regulations in UTEP Undergraduate Catalogue for a list of excused absences: [http://academics.utep.edu/Default.aspx?tabid=54418](http://academics.utep.edu/Default.aspx?tabid=54418). According to UTEP Curriculum and Classroom Policies, “When, in the judgment of the instructor, a student has been absent to such a degree as to impair his or her status relative to credit for the course, the instructor may drop the student from the class with a grade of “W” before the course drop deadline and with a grade of “F” after the course drop deadline.”
CLASSROOM AND E-MAIL PROTOCOL

Chatting, e-mailing, internet browsing, or any activity not related to official class activity is prohibited. The best way to contact me is via UTEP e-mail. I will make every attempt to respond to your e-mail within 24 hours of receipt during weekdays. I will respond to weekend messages by Monday at the latest. When e-mailing me, please put the course number in the subject line. In the body of your e-mail clearly state your question. At the end of your e-mail, be sure to put your first and last name, and your university identification number.

ACADEMIC DISHONESTY AND MISCONDUCT

Academic misconduct and dishonesty is prohibited and is considered a violation of the UTEP Handbook of Operating Procedures. This includes, but is not limited to cheating, collusion, and plagiarism. Cheating may involve copying from or providing information to another student and possessing unauthorized materials during a test. Collusion involves collaborating with another person to commit any academically dishonest act.

Plagiarism is commonly defined as passing off the ideas, works, writing, etc., of another person as your own. Accordingly, you are committing plagiarism if you copy the work of another person and turn it in as your own work, even if you have the permission of that person. If you are unsure whether a citation is required, err on the side of caution and provide one. A document detailing different forms of plagiarism is provided on Blackboard. Here is an informative webcast on plagiarism: http://www.plagiarism.org/resources/webcasts. Just as the Internet has made it easier to find material, it has also made it easier to trace the source of any written work. All written work submitted for this course will be checked by the instructor for originality via SafeAssign—an online originality checking service made available by UTEP.

Any act of academic misconduct and dishonesty attempted by a UTEP student is unacceptable and will not be tolerated. Violations will be taken seriously and will be referred to the Dean of Students Office for possible disciplinary action. Students may be suspended or expelled from UTEP for such actions. Refer to http://studentaffairs.utep.edu/Default.aspx?tabid=4386 for further information.

COPYRIGHT STATEMENT FOR COURSE MATERIALS

All materials used in this course are protected by copyright law. The course materials are only for the use of students currently enrolled in this course and only for the purpose of this course. They may not be further retained or disseminated.

AMERICANS WITH DISABILITIES ACT (ADA)

The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) is a federal anti-discrimination statute that provides comprehensive civil rights protection for persons with disabilities. Among other things, this legislation requires that all students with disabilities be guaranteed a learning environment that provides for reasonable accommodation of their disabilities. If you require specific accommodations and support services, please contact the Center for Accommodations and Support Services (CASS). Please keep in mind that accommodations need to be requested at least two weeks (or a month if advance planning, such as the acquisition of books-on-tape, is
required) prior to the beginning of the semester. Here is the contact information for CASS: web: http://sa.utep.edu/cass/; phone: (915) 747-5148; fax: (915) 747-8712; e-mail: cass@utep.edu; location: UTEP Union Building East Room 106.

**UTEP TECHNICAL SUPPORT**
The University of Texas at El Paso offers complete technical information and Help Desk support at: http://issweb.utep.edu/techsupport/.
COURSE SCHEDULE AND READING ASSIGNMENTS*

I. INTRODUCTION AND PREMISES

08/29 Course Introduction and Overview

09/05 Introduction to the Study of Foreign Policy Decision Making

Mintz and DeRouen. 2010. Chapter 1. “Who Study Foreign Policy from a Decision-Making Perspective?”

II. LEVELS, MODELS, AND METHODS OF ANALYSIS

09/12 Levels of Analysis in Foreign Policy Decision Making


09/19 Models of Decision Making: Part I - Rational Actor Models, Bounded Rationality, and Prospect Theory

Mintz and DeRouen. 2010. Chapter 4. The Rational Actor Model.
09/26 Models of Decision Making: Part II - Alternatives to Rational Models and Prospect Theory


10/03 Methodologies in Foreign Policy Decision Making


III. BUILDING BLOCKS OF INFORMATION PROCESSING AND DECISION MAKING

What do we know about our world and how is it organized?

10/10 Ingredients of Cognition: Part I - Schemata, Images, and Beliefs

Fiske and Taylor. Chapter 4. “Social Categories and Schemas.”


10/17 Ingredients of Cognition: Part II - Operational Codes, Cognitive Maps, Analogies, and Political Information


• Take-home midterm exam distributed in class on 10/17, due by 10/24, 11pm

IV. DECISION MAKING PROCESSES

10/24 Perceptions, Problem Representation, and Inferences


10/31  *Attributions and Other Forms of Reasoning in Formation of Attitudes*


11/07  *Emotion, Affect, and Their Implication for Information Processing*


V.  **CONTEXT OF DECISION MAKING: INFLUENCES, LIMITATIONS, AND BIASES**

11/14  *Psychological, Cultural, Domestic, and International Influences*


11/21  *Organizational Limitations and Group-based Biases in Decision Making*

VI. PROJECT PRESENTATIONS AND CONCLUSIONS

11/28 Thanksgiving Holiday – University Closed

12/05 Project Presentations and Conclusions


*Research Paper Due: 12/12/2019 @ 11pm*

*Note: This is a provisional schedule of our course. With advanced notice, I may introduce specific changes based on progress in class.*