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

Instructor: Dr. Cigdem Sirin (Phonetic: Cheedém Shirin / Pronouns: She|Her|Hers)
Office Hours: T 4:00pm-5:00pm (also available virtually via Zoom 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 socio-economic) 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 utmost respect and professionalism be adhered in all exchanges between class members. This is a political science course and we will be at times discussing sensitive and controversial topics. In our discussions, 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 and/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


OTHER READINGS

Apart from the required books, 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 “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>10/23 @ 11:59pm</td>
<td>25%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Research Paper</td>
<td>12/04 @ 11:59pm</td>
<td>30%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Research topic decision</td>
<td>09/18 @ 11:59pm</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>One-page proposal</td>
<td>10/09 @ 11:59pm</td>
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<tr>
<td>Project Presentations</td>
<td>11/29</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Class Participation</td>
<td>All meetings</td>
<td>35%</td>
</tr>
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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>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>79.50-89.49</td>
<td>B</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>69.50-79.49</td>
<td>C</td>
</tr>
<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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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 09/18 @11:59pm at the latest or you will lose 5 points.
- A one-page proposal is due on 10/09 @11:59pm (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.

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 (minimum 200-maximum 500 words). 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. The talking points must be submitted on Blackboard by Sunday @ 11:59 pm each week that the class meets.

EXCUSED ABSENCES AND EXCUSE FOR LATE WORK

I will excuse absences and late work when a student participates in an official university-recognized activity, observes a recognized religious holiday of their 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, please notify me in writing prior to the date of absence if possible. That said, in cases where advance notification is not feasible (e.g. a medical emergency or lack of childcare), please provide notification as soon
as possible following your absence. *If available,* please also provide satisfactory documentation verifying the reason for the absence (such as a doctor’s note) for my records.

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**

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.

**DIVERSITY**

It is my intent that students from all diverse backgrounds and perspectives be well served by this course, that students’ learning needs be addressed both in and out of class, and that the diversity that students bring to this class be viewed as a resource, strength, and benefit. It is my intent to present materials and activities that are respectful of diversity: gender, sexuality, disability, age, socio-economic status, race/ethnicity, religion, and culture. Your suggestions are encouraged and appreciated. Please let me know ways to improve the effectiveness of the course for you personally and/or for other students.

**ACCESSIBILITY**

It is my goal to create a learning experience that is as accessible as possible. If you anticipate any issues related to the format, materials, or requirements of this course, please meet with me outside of class so we can explore potential options. Students with disabilities may also wish to work with the Center for Accommodations and Support Services (CASS) to discuss a range of options to removing barriers in this course, including official accommodations. Please visit their website for contact and additional information: [http://sa.utep.edu/cass/](http://sa.utep.edu/cass/). If you have already been approved for accommodations through the CASS, please meet with me so we can develop an implementation plan together.

**LAND ACKNOWLEDGEMENT STATEMENT**

As members of the University of Texas at El Paso community, we acknowledge that we are meeting on unceded Indigenous land. We would like to recognize and pay our respects to the Indigenous people with long ties to the immediate region: Lipan Apache, Mescalero Apache, Piro, Manso, Suma, Jumano, Ysleta del Sur Pueblo, Piro/Manso/Tiwa Indian Tribe of the Pueblo of San Juan de Guadalupe, and Tortugas Pueblo. We also acknowledge the nations whose territories include present day Texas: the Carrizo & Comecrudo, Coahuiltecan, Caddo, Tonkawa, Comanche, Alabama-Coushatta, Kickapoo, and the peoples of Chihuahua and northern Mexico from whom most/many of our students descend, such as the Rarámuri, Tepehuan, Wixarrika and Nahuatlaca peoples. Finally, we recognize all of the American Indian and Indigenous Peoples
and communities who have been or have become a part of these lands and territories here in Paso del Norte, on Turtle Island. The University of Texas at El Paso honors your history and cultures and we seek greater awareness of the myriad ways in which your legacy can guide us in fruitful partnerships and mutually fulfilling relationships.

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. 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.

ALTERNATE MEANS OF SUBMITTING WORK IN CASE OF TECHNICAL ISSUES

I strongly suggest that you submit your work with plenty of time to spare in the event that you have a technical issue with the course website, network, and/or your computer. I also suggest you save all your work (answers to discussion points, quizzes, exams, and essays) in a separate Word document as a back-up. This way, you will have evidence that you completed the work and will not lose credit. If you are experiencing difficulties submitting your work through the course website, please contact the UTEP Help Desk. You can email me (cigdemsirin@utep.edu) your back-up document as a last resort.

SOFTWARE REQUIREMENTS

You will need the following software on your computer to efficiently work in this course (your computer may already have some of these programs installed):
• **Microsoft Office.** If you do not have a word-processing software, you can download Word and other Microsoft Office programs (including Excel, PowerPoint, Outlook and more) for free via UTEP’s Microsoft Office Portal. Click the following link for more information about Microsoft Office 365 and follow the instructions.

**RESOURCES FOR ASSISTANCE**

UTEP provides a variety of student services and support:

**Technology Resources**
- **UTEP Help Desk:** If you encounter technical difficulties beyond your scope of troubleshooting, please contact the Help Desk as they are trained specifically in assisting with technological needs of students.

**Academic Resources**
- **UTEP Library:** Access a wide range of resources including online, full-text access to thousands of journals and eBooks plus reference service and librarian assistance for enrolled students.
- **University Writing Center (UWC):** Submit papers here for assistance with writing style and formatting, ask a tutor for help and explore other writing resources.
- **Math Tutoring Center (MaRCS):** Ask a tutor for help and explore other available math resources.
- **History Tutoring Center (HTC):** Receive assistance with writing history papers, get help from a tutor and explore other history resources.
- **RefWorks:** A bibliographic citation tool; check out the RefWorks tutorial and Fact Sheet and Quick-Start Guide.

**Individual Resources**
- **Military Student Success Center:** Assists personnel in any branch of service to reach their educational goals.
- **Center for Accommodations and Support Services:** Assists students with ADA-related accommodations for coursework, housing, and internships.
- **Counseling and Psychological Services:** Provides a variety of counseling services including individual, couples, and group sessions as well as career and disability assessments.
COURSE SCHEDULE AND READING ASSIGNMENTS*

I. INTRODUCTION AND PREMISES

08/23 Course Introduction and Overview

08/30 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

09/06 Levels of Analysis in Foreign Policy Decision Making


09/13 Annual Meeting of the American Political Science Association (APSA) – No class.

• Work on identifying your research project topic (due by 09/18 @11:59pm) and your one-page research proposal (due by 10/09 @11:59pm).

09/20 Models of Decision Making: Part I - Rational Actor Models, Bounded Rationality, and Prospect Theory

Mintz and DeRouen. 2010. Chapter 4. The Rational Actor Model.


09/27 Models of Decision Making: Part II - Alternatives to Rational Models and Prospect Theory


10/04 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?

10/11 Ingredients of Cognition: Part I - Schemata, Images, and Beliefs

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


10/18 Ingredients of Cognition: Part II - Operational Codes, Cognitive Maps, Analogies, and Political Information


- Take-home midterm exam distributed in class on 10/18, due by 10/23, @11:59pm

IV. DECISION MAKING PROCESSES

10/25 Perceptions, Problem Representation, and Inferences


Associates


11/01 Attributions and Other Forms of Reasoning in Formation of Attitudes


11/08 Emotion, Affect, and Their Implication for Information Processing


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

11/15 Psychological, Cultural, Domestic, and International Influences


11/22 Organizational Limitations and Group-based Biases in Decision Making


VI. Project Presentations and Conclusions

11/29 Project Presentations and Conclusions


- Research paper due by 12/04 @11:59pm

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