

Government 59
Foreign Policy and Decision Making

Dartmouth College
Winter 2019

Prof. Jeff Friedman
Office hours: Mondays, 3:30-5:30pm
Silsby 224

MWF 10:10-11:15
x-period: Th 12:10-1:05
[Classroom TBA]

This course examines conceptual, political, psychological, and organizational challenges in foreign policy decision making. Throughout class discussions and course assignments, we will evaluate how well practitioners grapple with these challenges. Case studies include escalation in Vietnam, assessments of Iraq's weapons of mass destruction programs, and the raid on Osama bin Laden's compound. As we analyze and critique foreign policy, we seek to develop broader intuitions for making better decisions in everyday contexts.

The course spans three units. Unit 1 surveys conceptual lenses in the study of decision making from the standpoints of cost-benefit analysis, organizational behavior, domestic politics, culture, and psychology. Unit 2 surveys tools for foreign policy analysis, including intelligence, threat perception, and political forecasting. Unit 3 examines how that analysis is used and misused when making and executing policy decisions.

Readings:

All of the required reading for this course is available online, and there are no texts required for purchase.

Requirements:

- Class participation (7 percent)
- Policy memo (5 pp.), due [date] (20 percent). Choose any major foreign policy decision and describe one way in which that decision could have been improved.
- Final paper (10-12 pp.), due [date] (40 percent). Choose any major foreign policy decision. Describe how that decision could have been improved and explain why decision makers were unable to realize or address this flaw in their policy. The paper will ideally extend of the research that students conducted in their policy memos.
- Paper prospectus (2 pp.), due [date] (3 percent)
- Hour exam on [date] (30 percent)

Unit 1. Perspectives on Foreign Policy Decision Making

The Raid on Abbottabad

Graham T. Allison, “How It Went Down,” *Time* 179 (May 2012), pp. 34-41

Robyn M. Dawes, *Rational Choice in an Uncertain World* (Harcourt Brace, 1988), pp. 2-14

Analysis vs. Intuition I: The Contested Place of Logic in Strategy and Plans

Richard K. Betts, “Is Strategy an Illusion?” *International Security*, vol. 25, no. 2 (Fall 2000), pp. 5-22.

Radiolab podcast, “Dealing with Doubt,” Season 11, Episode 5 (20 mins.):
<http://www.radiolab.org/story/278173-dealing-doubt/>

The Rational Actor Model and the Cuban Missile Crisis

Graham T. Allison, “Conceptual Models and the Cuban Missile Crisis,” *American Political Science Review*, vol. 63, no. 3 (September, 1969), 689-718

Domestic Politics and Escalation in Vietnam

Andrew J. Polsky, “Staying the Course: Presidential Leadership, Military Stalemate, and Strategic Inertia,” *Perspectives on Politics*, vol. 8, no. 1 (March 2010), pp. 127-139

Leslie H. Gelb, “Vietnam: The System Worked,” *Foreign Policy*, no. 3 (Summer 1971), pp. 140-167

Skim: Fredrik Logevall, “Lyndon Johnson and Vietnam,” *Presidential Studies Quarterly*, vol. 34, no. 1 (March 2004), pp. 100-112

Psychology, Emotion, and the Vietnam War

Daniel Kahneman and Jonathan Renshon, “Why Hawks Win,” *Foreign Policy*, no. 158 (January/February 2007), pp. 34-38

Heuristics, Biases, and Bureaucracy

Kevin Woods, James Lacey, and Williamson Murray, “Saddam’s Delusions: The View from the Inside,” *Foreign Affairs*, vol. 85, no. 3 (May/June 2006), pp. 2-26

Bureaucratic Politics and the Goldwater-Nichols Act

Morton H. Halperin, *Bureaucratic Politics and Foreign Policy* (Brookings, 1974), pp. 26-62.

Cultural Misperceptions & Class discussion of Unit 1

Cass R. Sunstein, "On the Divergent American Reactions to Terrorism and Climate Change," *Columbia Law Review*, vol. 107, no. 2 (March 2007), pp. 503-557

Unit 2. Analysis

Analysis vs. Intuition II: Actuarial versus Clinical Judgment

Robyn Dawes, "The Robust Beauty of Improper Linear Models," *American Psychologist*, vol. 34, no. 7 (July 1979), pp. 571-582.

Optional: Michael Lewis, *The Undoing Project* (Norton, 2017), pp. 168-176.

Principles of Risk Assessment

Gerd Gigerenzer, *Calculated Risks* (Simon & Schuster 2002), pp. 3-7, 26-29, 55-60, 201-210.

Paul Slovic, *The Perception of Risk* (Earthscan, 2000), pp. 104-120, 151-153.

The Practice of Risk Assessment

Paul Slovic, "The More Who Die the Less We Care" in Erwann Michel-Kerjan and Paul Slovic eds., *The Irrational Economist: Making Decisions in a Dangerous World* (Basic Books, 2010), pp. 30-40.

John Morrall, "A Review of the Record," *Regulation* (November/December 1986), pp. 25-34

Communicating Uncertainty

Sherman Kent, "Words of Estimative Probability," *Studies in Intelligence* (Fall 1964), 13pp.

Thomas Wallsten, "The Costs and Benefits of Vague Information" in *Insights in Decision Making: A Tribute to Hillel J. Einhorn*, ed. Robin M. Hogarth (Chicago, Ill.: University of Chicago Press, 1990), pp. 28-41.

Overview of Intelligence Analysis

Richard K. Betts, "Analysis, War, and Decision: Why Intelligence Failures are Inevitable," *World Politics*, vol. 31, no. 1 (October 1978), pp. 61-89

"Intelligence Failures" and Organizational Reform

Amy B. Zegart, "September 11 and the Adaptation Failure of U.S. Intelligence Agencies," *International Security*, vol. 29, no. 4 (Spring 2005), pp. 78-111

Richard A. Posner, "The 9/11 Report: A Dissent," *New York Times Book Review*, August 29, 2004, 3pp.

How Good is Our Judgment and How Can We Tell?

Philip Tetlock and Daniel Gardner, *Superforecasting: The Art and Science of Prediction* (Crown, 2015), pp. 46-72

Class Discussion // The 2002 NIE on Iraq's Weapons of Mass Destruction

National Intelligence Estimate 2002-16HC, *Iraq's Continuing Programs for Weapons of Mass Destruction* (October 2002), pp. 5-9

Robert Jervis, "Reports, Politics, and Intelligence Failures: The Case of Iraq," *Journal of Strategic Studies*, vol. 29, no. 1 (February 2006), pp. 3-52

Analyst's Toolkit: Simulations, Forecasting, Decision Making in Groups

Michael C. Horowitz and Philip E. Tetlock, "Trending Upward: How the Intelligence Community Can Better See into the Future," *Foreignpolicy.com*, 6 September 2012, 11pp.

Adam Meirowitz and Joshua A. Tucker, "Learning from Terrorism Markets," *Perspectives on Politics*, vol. 2, no. 2 (June 2004), pp. 331-336

Learning, Adaptation, and Bayesian Analysis

Daniel Kahneman, *Thinking, Fast and Slow* (FSG 2011), pp. 209-222

Gerd Gigerenzer, *Calculated Risks*, pp. 39-48, 115-117, 124-126

Military Doctrine and Strategic Assessment

Theodore Hill, “Knowing When to Stop: How to Gamble if You Must – the Mathematics of Optimal Stopping. *American Scientist*, vol. 97, no. 2 (March/April 2009), pp. 126-131

Stephen Walt, “Cutting Losses in Wars of Choice: Obstacles and Strategies” in Stephen Van Evera and Sidharth Shah eds., *The Prudent Use of Power in American National Security Strategy* (Tobin Project, 2010), pp. 132-156

Class Discussion of Unit 2 and Hour Exam Review

There is no assigned reading for this class.

Hour Exam

Unit 3. Execution

Uses of History in Decision Making

William Inboden, “Statecraft, Decision-Making, and the Varieties of Historical Experience: A Taxonomy,” *Journal of Strategic Studies*, Vol. 37, No. 2 (April, 2014), pp. 291-318

Jeffrey Record, “Retiring Hitler and ‘Appeasement’ from the National Security Debate,” *Parameters*, vol. 38, no. 2 (Summer, 2008), pp. 91-101.

Adversarial Collaboration: Red Teams, Devil’s Advocates and the Iraq Surge

Alexander L. George and Eric K. Stern, “Harnessing Conflict in Foreign Policy Making: From Devil’s to Multiple Advocacy,” *Presidential Studies Quarterly*, vol. 32, no. 3 (September 2002), pp. 484-508

Shadow Prices and the U.S. Defense Budget

Cindy Williams and Gordon Adams, *Buying National Security: How America Plans and Pays for Its Global Role and Safety at Home* (Routledge, 2010), pp. 1-7, 93-119, 221-244

Foreign Policy Decision Making in the Age of WikiLeaks

Henry Farrell and Martha Finnemore, “The End of Hypocrisy,” *Foreign Affairs*, vol. 92, no. 6 (November/December 2013), pp. 22-26

Michael Hayden, “What Edward Snowden Did,” *CNN Opinion*, 19 July 2013, 2pp.

Optional: Bill Keller, “Dealing with Assange and the WikiLeaks Secrets,” *New York Times Magazine*, 26 January 2011, 17pp.

Paper Workshop

No assigned readings: read each others’ memos and prepare feedback.

Accountability, Delegation, and Defensive Decision Making

Gerd Gigerenzer, *Risk Savvy: How to Make Good Decisions* (Viking, 2014), pp. 43- 66

Tetlock and Gardner, *Superforecasting*, pp. 81-104

Rational Decision Making in Foreign Policy and Your Life

Tetlock and Gardner, *Superforecasting*, pp. 105-127

Gerd Gigerenzer, *Risk Savvy: How to Make Good Decisions* (Viking, 2014), pp. 1-16

Course policies:

(The course website contains more details on policies, expectations, and student resources.)

Grades for written work. Work that is “about the quality expected” in a midlevel course will receive a B+. In order to receive a higher grade, students must demonstrate that they fully grasp major course concepts and that they can use those concepts effectively.

Academic honesty. Students are responsible for understanding Dartmouth’s rules on academic honesty.

Class attendance is not mandatory, but you should let me know in advance if you cannot attend.

Extensions. All of the written assignments for this class are posted to the course website. Please do not ask for an extension unless you have encountered an unforeseeable emergency.

Late submissions. Late submissions receive a one-grade penalty (e.g., A- to B-) which recurs every 24 hours.

Students who may need disability-related academic adjustments and services for this course are encouraged to see me privately as early in the term as possible.