

## Government 390 Presidential Foreign Policy Decision Making

Spring 2008  
TTh 2:40-4  
Class Location: Judd B6  
Office Hours: Th 1-2, F 11-noon,  
and by appointment

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### Course Description

In the realm of foreign policy, good choices can avoid or win wars while poor choices can lead to disaster. Although analysts consistently evaluate the quality of United States presidential foreign policy decision making, the fundamentals of good and poor judgment remain controversial. With a focus on the U.S. presidency since World War II, this course considers the effects of both individual and group level decision processes in determining the quality of foreign policy choices. The majority of the course focuses on these issues through the intensive discussion of case studies written by the students in the course.

### Requirements and Course Grading

Grades will be based on a case study paper (25%), an analytical paper (25%) and participation (50%). Class periods will be devoted to discussion of the readings -- Students must come to class prepared to discuss the day's assigned reading.

Incompletes will be allowed only for significant and verifiable personal emergencies (e.g., serious personal illness, death in the family).

### Case Study Paper

Deadlines and Late Penalties: Students will be assigned a case of presidential foreign policy decision making. This paper is due **Monday, March 3 at noon.**

Since the 20-page case description will be used for class discussion it must be complete in terms of substance, structure, and style.

*Excused late papers* will be allowed only for significant and verifiable personal emergencies (e.g., serious personal illness, death in the family). *Unexcused late papers* will be penalized one full letter grade (e.g., B+ to C+) for each day it is late (from the due time to 24 hours is one grade step) up to a maximum 3 full grade deduction. Please inform me through e-mail that your paper will be late under this provision. No unpenalized extensions will be granted due to the pressures of academic life (such as work due in other classes).

Format and expectations: These papers should describe the content and process of foreign policy deliberations in the case. Expectations and illustrations will be discussed in class and examples of previous papers will be placed on the Blackboard.

Papers will be evaluated based upon clarity of presentation, organization, and quality of analysis.

The case study should be 20 single-sided, double-spaced pages in length.

Footnotes and bibliography should be included and the style should conform to the style outlined in: Kate L. Turabian, A Manual For Writers of Term Papers, Theses, and Dissertations, 6th ed. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1996). This book is available for examination from the Olin Library reference desk and can be ordered through Broad Street Books or Amazon.com. Examples of citation formatting are available through: <http://dfoyle.web.wesleyan.edu/citations.html/>

Papers should use 12 point font and 1-inch margins. All pages should be numbered. Multiple sources must be used and all those used should be cited. Papers that do not conform to the above specifications will be deducted between 1/3 to a full grade depending on the size of the infraction.

Students are bound by the honor code and should consult the Student Handbook on plagiarism and expectations in that regard. If still in doubt, consult the instructor.

How to turn in your work: Post your paper on the course Blackboard in the specified location by the deadline. If I have not received your paper by the deadline, I will e-mail you to that effect.

### Analytical Paper

Topic: A 10-page, single-sided, double-spaced paper should analyze your assigned case. It should address the question: Did decision makers in your case exercise good judgment? Why or why not? Each paper should clearly define the student's standard of good judgment as a basis of this exercise.

Deadlines and Late Penalties: Excused (no penalty) late papers and incompletes will be allowed only for significant and verifiable personal emergencies (see rough draft above) at the instructor's discretion. No unpenalized extensions will be granted due to the pressures of academic life (such as work due in other classes).

Unexcused late papers will be penalized one letter grade (e.g., B+ to B) for each day it is late (from the due time to 24 hours is one grade step). Please inform me through e-mail that your paper will be late under this provision. After 7 days, the penalty converts to a full 3 letter grade penalty.

Where and how to turn in your work: This paper is due May 12 at noon. It must be posted to the course Blackboard by that time in the specified location. If I have not received your paper by the deadline, I will e-mail you to that effect.

### Participation

Participation will be evaluated based upon the student's contribution to discussion, responsiveness to other students and quality of insight. Class attendance is a basic requirement of the participation grade.

The participation grade will be divided into two halves: one grade for class periods 1-13 and one grade for class periods 14-26.

As part of participation, you should prepare a list of five discussion questions for your case. These questions are due with your case study. These questions should be directed at the issues that you feel get to the critical analytical aspects of the case (e.g., Why did Nixon have a restricted circle of advisors in this case?) and should move beyond basic descriptive questions (e.g., What action was taken in this case?).

### Readings

The following books are available for purchase at Broad Street Books:

Stanley A. Renshon and Deborah Welch Larson, eds. Good Judgment in Foreign Policy (Good Judgment)

John P. Burke and Fred I. Greenstein, How Presidents Test Reality

The above books are on reserve at Olin Library.

## CLASS SCHEDULE

### I. The Nature of Good Judgment

1. January 24                   How to Write a Case and Introductory Discussion
  
2. January 29                   What is Good Judgment?  
  
  Preface, Larson, Renshon, in Good Judgment, pp. vii-57
  
3. January 31                   Policy Making and Expert Judgment  
  
  Case Choices  
  
  Philip E. Tetlock, Expert Political Judgment, pp. 1-24, 67-120  
  (Blackboard)  
  Haass, George in Good Judgment, pp. 247-70
  
4. February 5                   Judgment in Action  
  
  Larson, Farnham in Good Judgment, pp. 127-90 (Berlin Blockade,  
  Reagan and Gorbachev)
  
5. February 7                   Individual Decision Making Processes  
  
  Valerie Hudson, Foreign Policy Analysis pp. 37-53. (Blackboard)  
  Richard Pious, "Why Do Presidents Fail?" Presidential Studies Quarterly  
  December 2002, pp. 724-742 (Blackboard).  
  Dean Keith Simonton, Presidential IQ, Openness, Intellectual Brilliance,  
  and Leadership: Estimates and Correlations for 42 U.S. Chief  
  Executives," Political Psychology December 2006, pp. 511-526  
  (Blackboard).
  
6. February 12                 Selecting Leaders With Good Judgment  
  
  Renshon in Good Judgment, pp. 61-102  
  Eugene Robinson, "An Egghead for the Oval Office" Washington Post,  
  May 31, 2007 (Blackboard)  
  Michael Ignatieff, "Getting Iraq Wrong" New York Times Magazine,  
  August 5, 2007 (Blackboard)  
  Paul Krugman, "Substance over Image" New York Times, February 26,  
  2007 (Blackboard).  
  Jeff Zeleny, "As Candidate, Obama Carves Antiwar Stance," New York  
  Times, February 26, 2007 (Blackboard).

7. February 14 Decision Making Process and Good Judgment

Herek, Janis, and Huth, "Decision-Making During International Crises: Is Quality of Process Related to Outcome?" Journal of Conflict Resolution Vol. 31 (June 1987). (Blackboard)  
Schafer and Crichlow, "The *Process-Outcome* Connection in Foreign Policy Decision Making: A Quantitative Study Building on Groupthink," International Studies Quarterly Vol. 46 (March 2002). (Blackboard)  
Hudson, Foreign Policy Analysis, pp. 65-101 (Blackboard)

## II. Vietnam and Good Judgment

8. February 19 Eisenhower and Vietnam

Burke and Greenstein, pp. 1-115

Read for main points.

9. February 21 Johnson and Vietnam

Burke and Greenstein, pp. 118-300

Read for main points and comparison with Eisenhower.

10. February 26 Perspectives on Good Judgment

Fredrick Logevall, "Lyndon Johnson and Vietnam," Presidential Studies Quarterly, March 2004, pp. 100-112. (Blackboard)  
Selections from McNamara, In Retrospect (Blackboard)  
*Fog of War* (movie). (Blackboard)

11. February 28 Good Judgment: First Evaluations

Harris, The Survivor, pp. 242-243. (Blackboard)

**Monday, March 3, 20-Page Case Due at noon on Blackboard. Post discussion questions as well (see participation section above)**

## III. Cases

12. March 4 Case #1 Kennedy, Bay of Pigs, 1961

13. March 6 Case #2 Truman, Decision to Use the Atomic Bomb 1945

### Spring Break

14. March 25 Case #3 Kennedy, Cuban Missile Crisis, to Blockade Decision, 1962

15. March 27 Case #4 Kennedy, Cuban Missile Crisis, Blockade Decision until crisis end, 1962
16. April 1 Case #5 Ford, Mayaguez Crisis 1975; Case #6 Carter, Iran Hostage Rescue 1980
17. April 3 Case #7 Reagan, Iran-Contra Affair (presidential level activity) Summer 1985-  
March 4, 1987
18. April 8 Case #8 Truman, Korean War Entry June 1950; Case #9 Truman, Korea  
Crossing the 38<sup>th</sup> Parallel Fall 1950
19. April 10 Case # 10 George H.W. Bush, Gulf War 1990-1991
- 20. April 15 No Class – I'm out of town giving a talk for Wesleyan**
- 21. April 17 No Class – I'm out of town giving a talk for Wesleyan**
22. April 22 Case #11 Eisenhower, Taiwan Straits Crisis 1954-1955, Case #12 Nixon, North  
Vietnamese Spring Offensive 1972
23. April 24 Case #13 Clinton, American Embassy Attacks 1998
24. April 29 Case #14 George W. Bush, September 11, War on Terror, Afghanistan 2001
25. May 1 Case # 15 George W. Bush, Iraq War 2003

### V. Conclusions

26. May 6 Summing Up Discussion

Good Judgment, pp. 309-20

**Analytical paper is due May 12 at noon.**