POLS 4933-201: SPECIAL TOPICS- PSYCHOLOGY OF INTERNATIONAL DECISION-MAKING

Session: Spring 2012
Instructor: Nara, Suguman
Office Hours: MWF: 11.50 am-12.30 pm
MW evenings: 7.20 pm-9.20 pm
TR: 3.20 pm-5.20 pm
Class Meets in: PY 209
Time: MWF 11.00am-11.50am

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Course Description

The course combines international politics with the subject of political decision-making. A portion of the class will discuss key concepts of international relations while the other will focus on decision-making in detail. Together, the two parts will analyze and explain the how and why of international political decision-making. While there is no prerequisite of a Psychology class, basic knowledge of human psychology will be useful and the instructor expects students to read and understand basic psychological theories.

Course Objectives

Upon completion of this course, students are required to have a grasp of the above. At the end of the course students are required to be able to identify key concepts and terms in this course. Further, the student should exhibit an ability to apply these in explaining development within the field. In addition, students are also required to understand and analyze political events and trends. Hopefully, what has been learned may give you a better understanding of what happens in your everyday life, for example, the questions posed by political scientists, etc. The reading assignments should prepare you for graduate level courses in political science and government. The writing assignment/term paper is designed to improve both your scholarly writing skills as well as research skills.

Required Texts


Other Supplementary Texts

The instructor will recommend books, articles, and other reading materials in the course of the semester.
**Some Important Expectations**

Each member of the class will show due respect for one another. Ideas may be challenged, but individual attacks are unacceptable. **I will not tolerate rude and/or abusive language in class. A student who makes fun of the instructor directly or indirectly, for example, in the form of a slang or a jargon will be dealt with seriously.** I will also not tolerate any other unacceptable behavior in class, for example, the habit of talking to others when the instructor is talking, or while another student is engaged in a discussion with the instructor. Whistling while class is in session is another example of distracting behavior. It is impossible to list all disturbing behavior so it is naturally expected of you, as members of institutions of higher learning to understand what constitutes appropriate behavior or otherwise.

In keeping with the theme of respect, all students must adhere to the code of academic conduct in order to maintain appropriate and acceptable conduct when class is in session. In addition, students are also required to understand the seriousness of plagiarism in the academic world. Failure to do so, as evidenced by plagiarism or other honor violations will result in a failing grade or more serious consequences.

No person will be discriminated based on age, race, religion, national origin, sex, or disability. (Any student with a disability certified by the University disability office should notify the instructor immediately for proper arrangements to be made).

**Course Evaluation**

Exam: 40%

Attendance: 20% (You are allowed two absences). You will lose 3 percentage points for each additional absence. The instructor reserves the right to deduct attendance points for students who are regularly late for class, leave the class while class is in session, or interruptive. If you are late, it is your responsibility to find out what announcements you missed. Although I sometimes repeat important announcements, it is solely your responsibility to find out missed information. The instructor is not responsible for repeating announcements already made in class, nor respond to emails about missed announcements.

Participation: 20%. I refer to any form of participation which is negatively distracting, inappropriate, or rude, negative participation. Students who commit negative participation are at risk of losing some or all participation points
and face other appropriate actions. Other examples of negative participations are lying to the instructor, sleeping in class, regular grinning, and regular silent giggles. If you are grinning or giggling when a joke is not cracked, you may be busy conducting negative non-verbal communication with other students, reading/sending text messages, or other undesirable conduct. In any case these behaviors are considered negative participation. Because there is a long list of negative behaviors, whenever there is a dispute on what constitutes negative participation, the instructor reserves the right to decide. You are at a risk of losing some or all of your participation points if you are unable to provide a correct answer when asked in class or if you did not prepare an assignment to be discussed in class.

Presentation/Term Paper:

20% A scholarly paper directly connected to the presentation. The objective is to ensure ability to write a quality paper and the ability to understand search techniques, correct style of scholarly writing, avoiding plagiarism, etc. Papers must adhere strictly to requirements- Page numbering, Paper length, Introduction and Conclusion, Scholarly style, stapled (not clips), and not late. Failure to follow this can result in either reduced paper grade or failure (Will be discussed in greater detail in class).

Make-ups

Make-up exams will only be given if you miss an examination due to official reasons, for example, a medical emergency. Official proof is required.

Course Overview

This serves as a general outline of the course topics and flow. You should expect some modifications. There may be a guest lecture in the middle of the semester. Another guest lecture may be somewhere around the end of the semester.

Week 1: Introduction. What is Politics? Government and its Functions

Week 2: Ideologies: Democracy, Communism, Socialism, and Libertarianism.

Week 4: International System and Power Politics

Week 5: Decision-Making Theories, Ch 11 in Textbook

Week 6: Guest Lecture

Week 7: Chapter 11 (contd)

Week 8: Rational Choice Theory, Game Theory, Prospect Theory, and Competing Theories Applied to Decision-Making

Week 9: Spring Break

Week 10: Movie week

Week 11: War and Decision-making: The Older Theories of Conflict and War, Ch 5 in Textbook

Week 12: Easter Break/Probable Guest Lecture

Week 13: War and decision-making: Microcosmic Theories of Violent Conflict, Ch 6 in Textbook

Week 14: War and decision-making: Macrocosmic Theories of Violent Conflict, Ch 7 in Textbook

Week 15: Presentations

Week 16: Presentations