Course description and goals
This is a graduate seminar at the intersection of International Relations and Comparative Politics. This course is modeled after Graham Allison’s graduate level class at Harvard University titled “Central Challenges of American Foreign Policy.” (http://ksgacman.harvard.edu/courses/course.aspx?number=ISP-202). Students will learn how to analyze American foreign policy options and challenges. This class is designed to help students learn how to: (1) write a publishable scholarly article; (2) formulate policy for think tanks and NGOs; and (3) formulate policy options for various governmental institutions (e.g., NSC, State Department).

The first hour of each session, I will lecture presenting the background and context of that session’s topic. In the following hour and half, each student discusses his or her understanding of that session’s assigned readings. It is imperative for each student’s success that he or she develops a regular study schedule that permits keeping up with the assignment at all times.

Do NOT freak out at the long reading list. Many of the articles are only a few pages long and are very easy to understand. Required readings are approximately 45 pages a week.

Attendance policy
Class attendance is mandatory. It is imperative that you attend all the lectures. If you are going to miss a class, ask a friend to tape the lecture for you. Rolls will be taken. Anyone with 3 absences (that are not excused) will receive an “F.” Permission to submit late papers will rarely be given and only a dire situation will warrant one.

Religious holy day or days
A student who is absent from class for the observance of a religious holy day or days or to travel for the purpose of religious observance may take an examination or complete an assignment within a reasonable time. The student should inform me before or immediately after the absence in writing (e-mail preferred). The student will have 15 days to complete the assignment or take the exam. If you are to miss the lecture, have a fellow student tape the lecture for you. Absence due to religious holy day does not count towards the 3 absences.
Academic dishonesty
I have zero tolerance for plagiarism. Anyone caught cheating will receive “F” for the course and will be referred to the Associate Vice President for Student Services for further disciplinary action. When in doubt, share where you got the idea with full citation.

Attention student with disabilities
It is the policy of SHSU that individuals that otherwise qualified shall not be excluded, solely by reason of their disability, from participation in any academic program of the university. Further, they shall not be denied the benefits of these programs, nor shall they be subject to discrimination. Students with disabilities that might affect their academic performance are expected to visit with the Office of Services for Students with Disabilities located in the Counseling Center. They should then make arrangements with me so that appropriate strategies can be considered and helpful procedures can be developed to ensure that participation and achievement opportunities are not impaired.

Thought Papers
You have to hand in 4 brief thought papers (about 200-900 words each). This is somewhere between one paragraph and three pages. Each of these thought papers deals with one or two questions from the assigned readings for that week. I will give you the question or questions one session before the due date. Please e-mail the thought paper by 1:00 p.m. Monday. If you do not have the thought paper ready when the class meets at 6:00, you will get zero for that paper. Each student will read aloud in class his or her thought paper. Then, the class will discuss the topic.

Final Paper
The National Security Advisor has asked you to write a research paper outlining the various policy options towards Iran. This paper will be circulated among the V.P., the NSC Principals Committee (NSC/PC is composed of National Security Advisor, Secretary of State, Secretary of Defense, DNI, Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff), and the NSC Deputies Committee. First, enumerate American national interests in the Middle East. Second, outline the potential threats Iranian government may pose to U.S. interests. Third, enumerate all the policy options open to the U.S. government. Fourth, discuss the costs and benefits of each option. Fifth, discuss the possible consequences of each option (including the consequences of taking no action). It is your job to present policy options as objectively as possible. It is NOT your job to recommend a policy in this paper.

OPTIONAL: If your subfield is American Politics, you may wish to add a section on the domestic political costs and benefits. If your subfield is IR or Comparative Politics, you may wish to add a section on other actors (e.g., EU, China, Russia, Saudi Arabia, Germany, U.K.). If you so desire, you could present policy options for another actor (e.g., EU, Russia, China, Saudi Arabia, Iran, specific EU countries) on the assumption that their decision-making is similar to that of the United States.

If your paper is publishable, I will try to suggest revisions and journals to help you get your work published. Unlike the assigned paper for this class, in your article for submission, you may choose to make a policy recommendation.
Oral Presentation
Choose one of the OPTIONAL readings, and present a 10-15 minute report to the class. Other students have not read the OPTIONAL readings, so it is your job to describe the article for others.

Course grade will be computed as follows:
Thought Papers 40 (10 each)
Final Paper 30
Oral Presentation 10
Class Discussions 20
Total 100

Textbooks:


A number of articles have been placed on Reserve at the library.

OUTLINE

Aug 20: Hi.

week 2 (Aug 27): Introduction
film: 13 Days

no class on Monday Sept 3, Labor Day

week 3 (Sept 10): Nuclear Weapons: Is Iran’s Possession of Nuclear Weapons Desirable or Dangerous

week 4 (Sept 17): American Foreign Policy: Presidential Leadership

week 5 (Sept 24): American Foreign Policy: Bureaucracy and Agencies

week 6 (Oct 1): What is Grand Strategy? What are America’s interests?


week 7 (Oct 8): Conceptual Models
* Graham Allison, “Conceptual Models and the Cuban Missile Crisis,” *American Political Science Review*, vol. 63, no. 3 (September 1969). Find it in our library e-journals collection (it takes only 5 or 6 clicks).

week 8 (Oct 15): Rational Actor Paradigm

week 9 (Oct 22): Foreign Policy Engineering

weeks 10-11 (Oct 29, Nov 5): Nature of the Islamic Republic of Iran
OPTIONAL: Janet Afary and Kevin Anderson, “The Iranian Impasse,” The Nation, July 16, 2007. [this is about 7 pages]. This is a left perspective.

week 12 (Nov 12): Opposition Groups
Film: BBC, End of Empire: Iran

weeks 13-14 (Nov 19, 26): U.S. Policy Options towards Iran
* Bauder, chs. 1-12.
* Kamal Nazer Yasin, “Cloak-and Dagger Occurrences Mark Iran’s Relations with United States, Britain,” April 9, 2007 (http://www.eurasianet.org/departments/insight/articles/eav040907.shtml). [this is only three pages].

OPTIONAL: Ted Galen Carpenter, “Toward a Grand Bargain with Iran,” *Mediterranean Quarterly*, vol. 18, no. 1 (Winter 2007). This is a libertarian perspective.


week 15 (December 3, 2007): student final paper presentations