

Making, Breaking, and Shaping Foreign Policy: Actors in the Domestic Politics of International Relations

Spring Quarter 2024

Instructor: Emily Tallo, PhD Candidate of Political Science, tallo@uchicago.edu

Class Time: Tuesday & Thursday, 9:30 – 10:50 am

Office Hours: Thursdays 2:00-3:30 pm, located outside of Pick 418

Course Description

There is no country in the world in which foreign policy is made in a hermetically sealed environment. Leaders make decisions based not only on the national interest, but on *their* beliefs, political interests, and competing policy priorities. Other actors – the public, advisors, politicians, bureaucrats, and societal interest groups – also constrain or otherwise impact decision-making. Peering inside the state at these numerous domestic actors is critical to understanding why states behave the way they do in international politics. This undergraduate seminar unpacks the influence of various domestic political actors on a country's international behavior. Each week, we will survey a subset of the International Relations (IR) literature on one of these kinds of actors, starting with leaders and the masses and concluding with bureaucracies and interest groups. Throughout the course students will learn about and discuss the implications of this research on longstanding debates in the study of IR, including democratic peace theory and audience cost theory. Due to time constraints, the course will focus on democratic regimes, although we will conclude with one class on domestic political actors in non-democracies.

The primary aim of the course is to help students reflect critically on the systemic explanations for international political behavior that are so often examined in courses at the University of Chicago, particularly with regard to international conflict outcomes. A secondary aim of the course is to help students develop an active research agenda to the emerging generation of scholarship on political regimes and IR. To this end, a special focus will be paid to the methodological approaches of the research we discuss in class. Students will complete a response paper that critically evaluates the literature assigned in a week of their choice and write a prospectus for a research project that they could plausibly complete.

Prerequisites

I expect that you have taken Introduction to International Relations or a similar course and have exposure to basic IR paradigms and concepts.

Requirements and Evaluation

Students will be evaluated across three main areas.

1. **Seminar participation (35%)** – Class will be discussion-based, with students directing the flow of discussion in each class. To facilitate in-class discussion, I may assign short assignments to be turned in on Canvas prior to the class meeting. These short assignments will be announced a week before they are due. Students should aim to complete these short assignments, participate at least once per class session, and abide by the class community agreements listed below. If participating in class discussions may be difficult for you, please let me know and we can determine an alternative method of evaluation.

2. **Response Paper (15%)** – Students will write a 1500-word paper in which they review the readings on a week of their choosing. This paper should go beyond summarizing the week’s readings. Instead, students will critically analyze the readings, organizing them into different “buckets” based on shared ideas or approaches. Above all, the response papers should advance an argument about the future of the literature and give specific suggestions of how researchers could design studies that would push the field forward. The response paper should also draw on other readings that are cited in the literature we have read for that week. Students should submit their response papers for the week before Tuesday’s class.
3. **Research Proposal (50%)** – Students will write a proposal for an original research project. The proposal should outline a research project that you could plausibly carry out. The main components of the research proposal would be: (1) a description of the research question/puzzle situated in either real-world conditions or extant literature; (2) a testable argument and a set of hypotheses; (3) a detailed research design that describes the analytical method and data sources one would employ if they were to carry out the study.

There will be three major deliverables for this proposal:

- 1000 words on proposed research puzzle – due April 23 (5% of class grade)
- Students will give 5-minute presentations summarizing their proposal to their peers – due May 16 (10% of class grade)
- The final research proposal, which should be at least 10 but not exceed 15 pages (double-spaced) – due May 22 (35% of class grade)

Class Community Agreements

- I will come to class on time and prepared to actively listen and contribute to discussions.
- I will abide by basic norms of professional intellectual exchange. I will use a respectful and non-confrontational tone in class discussions. I agree to challenge ideas – not people – such that any disagreements are a constructive part of the learning process.
- I agree to use inclusive and respectful language towards my peers. I will use stated pronouns and avoid ableist language. I will listen thoughtfully to any feedback I receive on the language I choose to use.

Communications

I will be using Canvas to make announcements, distribute readings, and collect assignments. Feel free to email me with questions or concerns that are not answered in the syllabus.

If you need to get in touch with me, please email me at [S](#). I will do my best respond to all emails the same day but may take up to two business days to respond to requests. I do not respond to emails after working hours or on weekends.

You can call me Emily, but I emphasize that all course-related communications should [remain professional](#).

Readings and Note-taking

All articles are available online through UChicago library resources. Any assigned book sections that are not available electronically through the library will be uploaded to Canvas prior to the course.

This course is geared towards upper level undergraduates with some background in international relations already, so the reading load for this course is moderate.

To ensure that you are able to see the forest from the trees when reading dense academic articles, I recommend taking notes on the following aspects of each reading:

- Research question(s): What is the purpose of the study?
- Motivating puzzles (or foils): What are the stakes of this research study? In other words, who or what are they arguing against?
- Argument: What is their answer to the research question? How do they arrive at that question theoretically?
- Research design/methodology: How are they answering the research question empirically? What data are they using and how are they analyzing that data?
- Key empirical contributions: What evidence did the authors locate to back up their argument empirically?
- Key theoretical contributions: Where do the author's findings fit in the literature on this subject? How does it add existing knowledge to our understanding of this topic?

I also recommend using a reference management system like Zotero for accessing, storing, and citing the readings in the course. Articles may be referenced throughout the course as relevant week to week. See the library's [getting started with Zotero guide](#) for help getting set up.

Assignments and Grading Policies

In general, assignments submitted late will not be acceptable. Students can request extensions ahead of time, which will be granted on a case-by-case basis. In general, extensions are intended for medical and other emergencies. Please give me as much notice as possible to consider your request for an extension.

Attendance Policies

I will be tracking attendance for all class meetings. In general, unexcused absences are unacceptable. Excused absences can be acceptable if you schedule a meeting with me to catch up on material you missed during class. That being said, I want to be cognizant of the global health crisis we are continuing to experience. Please do not come to class if you are not feeling well. I will work with students to ensure those who are experiencing circumstances that lead to absences can find an equitable solution.

Disability Accommodations

UChicago's Student Disability Services (SDS) works to provide resources, support, and accommodations for all students with disabilities. If you need any special accommodations, please email me a copy of an Accommodation Determination Letter (provided to you by SDS) as soon as possible so that you may discuss with me how your accommodations may be implemented in this course.

Academic Integrity

Students should have an understanding of and abide by the University's standards for academic integrity. To quote from the [University Policies and Regulations](#) website:

“It is contrary to justice, academic integrity, and to the spirit of intellectual inquiry to submit another's statements or ideas as one's own work. To do so is plagiarism or cheating, offenses punishable under the University's disciplinary system...Proper acknowledgment of another's ideas, whether by direct quotation or paraphrase, is expected. In particular, if any written or electronic source is consulted and material is used from that source, directly or indirectly, the source should be identified by author, title, and page number, or by website and date accessed.”

Any text that you submit for this course should be your own work. Submitting writing generated by ChatGPT or any other AI programs will be considered academic dishonesty and disciplined according to university guidelines.

Class Schedule

Schedule at a Glance

Week 1: Introduction to the Second Level of Analysis

Week 2: Leaders

Week 3: The Public

Week 4: Leaders and the Public

Week 5: Political Parties and Legislatures

Week 6: Bureaucratic Politics

Week 7: Advisors and the Inner Circle

Week 8: Societal Interests

Week 9: The Domestic Politics of Non-Democracies

Readings with an asterisk () are methodologically advanced. Devote some extra time to reading them. It's fine if you don't fully understand the method used by the authors, especially when advanced quantitative methods are being used.*

Week 1: Levels of Analysis and the Second Image

March 19: Class Introduction, Review Syllabus

March 21:

- Waltz, Kenneth N. *Theory of International Politics*. McGraw-Hill, 1979. Chapter 6.
- Singer, J. David. “The Level-of-Analysis Problem in International Relations.” *World Politics* 14, no. 1 (1961): 77–92.
- Putnam, Robert D. “Diplomacy and Domestic Politics: The Logic of Two-Level Games.” *International Organization* 42, no. 3 (1988): 427–60.

Week 2: Leaders – Do They Matter?

March 26:

- Krucmaric, Daniel, Stephen C. Nelson, and Andrew Roberts. “Studying Leaders and Elites: The Personal Biography Approach.” *Annual Review of Political Science* 23, no. 1 (2020): 133–51.
- Byman, Daniel L, and Kenneth M Pollack. “Let Us Now Praise Great Men.” *International Security* 25, no. 4 (2001): 107–46.

March 28:

- Bayram, A. Burcu. “Due Deference: Cosmopolitan Social Identity and the Psychology of Legal Obligation in International Politics.” *International Organization* 71, no. S1 (April 2017): S137–63.
- Mercer, Jonathan. “Racism, Stereotypes, and War.” *International Security* 48, no. 2 (October 1, 2023): 7–48.

Week 3: The Public – Do They Care?

April 2:

- Tomz, Michael, Jessica L. P. Weeks, and Keren Yarhi-Milo. “Public Opinion and Decisions About Military Force in Democracies.” *International Organization* 74, no. 1 (2020): 119–43.
- Guisinger, Alexandra, and Elizabeth Saunders. “Mapping the Boundaries of Elite Cues: How Elites Shape Mass Opinion across International Issues.” *International Studies Quarterly* 61 (2017): 425–41.

April 4: No Class

Week 4: Leaders – Do They Tie Their Hands?

April 9:

- James D. Fearon, “Domestic Political Audiences and the Escalation of International Disputes,” *American Political Science Review* 88 (1994): 577-592.
- Dan Reiter and Allan Stam, “Democracy, War Initiation, and Victory,” *American Political Science Review* 92 (June 1998), 377-89.

April 11:

- Potter, Philip B. K., and Matthew A. Baum. “Looking for Audience Costs in All the Wrong Places: Electoral Institutions, Media Access, and Democratic Constraint.” *The Journal of Politics* 76, no. 1 (January 1, 2014): 167–81.
- Kertzer, Joshua D., and Ryan Brutger. “Decomposing Audience Costs: Bringing the Audience Back into Audience Cost Theory.” *American Journal of Political Science* 60, no. 1 (January 1, 2016): 234–49.

Week 5: Political Parties and Legislatures

April 16:

- Milner, Helen V., and Dustin Tingley. *Sailing the Water's Edge: The Domestic Politics of American Foreign Policy*. Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 2015. Chapters 1-2.
- Kreps, Sarah E., Elizabeth N. Saunders, and Kenneth A. Schultz. "The Ratification Premium: Hawks, Doves, and Arms Control." *World Politics* 70, no. 4 (October 2018): 479–514.

April 18:

- Lupton, Danielle L. "Military Experience and Elite Decision-Making: Self-Selection, Socialization, and the Vietnam Draft Lottery." *International Studies Quarterly* 66, no. 1 (February 9, 2022).
- Hintson, Jamie, and Milan Vaishnav. "Who Rallies Around the Flag? Nationalist Parties, National Security, and the 2019 Indian Election." *American Journal of Political Science*, October 29, 2021.*

Week 6: Bureaucratic Politics

April 23: Research puzzle assignment due before class on Canvas

- Allison, Graham T., and Morton H. Halperin. "Bureaucratic Politics: A Paradigm and Some Policy Implications." *World Politics* 24 (1972): 40–79.
- Bendor, Jonathan, and Thomas H. Hammond. "Rethinking Allison's Models." *The American Political Science Review* 86, no. 2 (1992): 301–22.

April 25:

- Jost, Tyler. *Bureaucracies at War: The Institutional Origins of Miscalculation*. Cambridge Studies in International Relations. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2024. Chapters 1-3.

Week 7: Advisors and the Inner Circle

April 30:

- Schub, Robert. "Informing the Leader: Bureaucracies and International Crises." *American Political Science Review* 116, no. 4 (November 2022): 1460–76.*
- Jost, Tyler, Joshua D. Kertzer, Eric Min, and Robert Schub. "Advisers and Aggregation in Foreign Policy Decision Making." *International Organization*, February 8, 2024, 1–37.*

May 2:

- Saunders, Elizabeth N. "No Substitute for Experience: Presidents, Advisers, and Information in Group Decision Making." *International Organization* 71, no. S1 (April 2017): S219–47.
- Kertzer, Joshua D., Marcus Holmes, Brad L. LeVeck, and Carly Wayne. "Hawkish Biases and Group Decision Making." *International Organization* 76, no. 3 (March 2022): 513–48.

Week 8: Societal Interests

May 7:

- Jacobs, Lawrence R., and Benjamin I. Page. “Who Influences U.S. Foreign Policy?” *American Political Science Review* 99, no. 1 (February 2005): 107–23.
- Porter, Patrick. “Why America’s Grand Strategy Has Not Changed: Power, Habit, and the U.S. Foreign Policy Establishment.” *International Security* 42, no. 4 (May 1, 2018): 9–46.

May 9:

- Keck, Margaret E., and Kathryn Sikkink. *Activists beyond Borders: Advocacy Networks in International Politics*. Cornell University Press, 1998. Chapters TBA.

Week 9: The Domestic Politics of Non-Democracies

May 14:

- Weeks, Jessica. “Strongmen and Straw Men: Authoritarian Regimes and the Initiation of International Conflict,” *American Political Science Review* 106 (May 2012), 326–47.
- Talmadge, Caitlin. “The Puzzle of Personalist Performance: Iraqi Battlefield Effectiveness in the Iran-Iraq War.” *Security Studies* 22, no. 2 (April 1, 2013): 180–221.
- Humayun, Fahd. “The Punisher’s Dilemma: Domestic Opposition and Foreign Policy Crises.” *International Studies Quarterly* 68, no. 1 (March 1, 2024).

May 16: Student Research Proposal Presentations

Finals Week:

Research Proposals due May 22 by 11:59 pm on Canvas