**Decision-Making and International Security POL380H1-F**

**University of Toronto**

September 8- December 8, 2021  
Thursdays, 12-2:00 PM, Sidney Smith Hall 2127 (in-person)

**Dr. Madison Schramm**  
Madison.schramm@utoronto.ca  
Office Hours: Thursdays, In-person, 3:00 to 4:00 PM; online 4:00 PM to 5:00 PM  
Sign up: [https://docs.google.com/spreadsheets/d/1WZoGI9hD2rfFykYhuTgpzgJ2E-RBeheOBdsj6pdN7qM/edit?usp=sharing](https://docs.google.com/spreadsheets/d/1WZoGI9hD2rfFykYhuTgpzgJ2E-RBeheOBdsj6pdN7qM/edit?usp=sharing)  
TA: Michele St-Amant, michele.stamant@mail.utoronto.ca

**Course Description**

This course will investigate various approaches to studying decision-making in International Security. We will cover models that draw on political psychology, social identity theory, and new research in the field of International Relations to explore how heuristics, context, organization, identity, norms, and emotion affect decision-making. Throughout the term we will investigate which factors did (or should have) informed decision-making and how political elites wrestle with these challenges.

**Learning Objectives**

- Introduce students to different approaches to decision-making in International Security  
- Develop students’ ability to think critically about the different variables affecting elite decision-making  
- Develop students’ ability to assess leaders' backgrounds and positionality and articulate the implications for decision making processes and International Security  
- Discern and explain patterns both in individual leaders' International Security decision-making over time and decision-making across leaders

**STATEMENT ON ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF TRADITIONAL LAND**

This course takes place on land that has been in relation with Indigenous people and societies since time immemorial. The Elders Circle of the University of Toronto has provided the following statement on acknowledgement of traditional land: We would like to acknowledge this sacred land on which the University of Toronto operates. It has been a site of human activity for 15,000 years. This land is the territory of the Huron-Wendat and Petun First Nations, the Seneca,
and most recently, the Mississaugas of the Credit River. The territory was the subject of the Dish
with One Spoon Wampum Belt Covenant, an agreement between the Iroquois Confederacy and
Confederacy of the Ojibwe and allied nations to peaceably share and care for the resources
around the Great Lakes. Today, the meeting place of Toronto is still the home to many
Indigenous people from across Turtle Island and we are grateful to have the opportunity to work
in the community, on this territory.

Revised by the Elders Circle (Council of Aboriginal Initiatives) on November 6, 2014. Available
at: https://www.studentlife.utoronto.ca/fnh

Requirements
Attendance and Participation
Attendance and active participation in all classes is required.

Readings
Students must complete all required readings before the lecture. All required readings will be
available to students on Quercus.

Weekly Reading Quizzes (8 in total):
Students must complete weekly reading quizzes (posted Wednesday at noon September 14, 21,
28; October 5, 19, and 26; and November 2, and 16th) via Quercus by Thursday at 9 AM.
Quizzes are open book and should take no more than ten minutes. Students must take quizzes
independently and not allowed to work together.

Intel Briefings (2): Due Monday October 17 and November 14 by 9 AM
Students will write two brief intelligence memos to Canadian Minister of Foreign Affairs Melanie
Joly applying lessons from the course to analyze a contemporary challenge in International Security.
In the first memo, students will describe the important unit(s) of analysis and structure within which
the President of the Philippines is making decisions regarding foreign policy in the South China Sea,
and what a personality analysis of the president and common cognitive biases might tell us regarding
the state’s future posture. In the second brief, students will examine US President Biden’s foreign
policy regarding Russian’s invasion of Ukraine to analyze how norms, culture, and identity may
contribute to a better understanding of the US’s future policy and what new frontiers in decision-
making research can help us uncover. For both assignments, students will find suggested background
readings (as well as formatting guidance) to get started and a short list of questions that must be
addressed in the briefs.

(Plagiarism or other acts of academic dishonesty will not be tolerated. See full statement below)

Final Exam: Examination period, date TBA
The final exam will include multiple choice, fill in the blank and 3-4 short answer questions.

Late Assignments
Late work (without a granted extension) will be reduced by 5 percentage points after every day
late. Students will only be granted extensions with documentation and under extenuating
circumstances.
**Appeals and Re-Grading Policy**
The first thing to do is to wait. Neither the TA nor the professor will discuss your assignment for at least 48 hours after the assignment has been returned to you. Your TA is your first point of contact. Since your TA marked your assignment in the first place, it is only fair to have them explain why you received the mark you did. If you are not satisfied with their explanation as to why you received the grade you did, you may ask them to re-grade your paper. Be aware, however, that this does not guarantee your mark will be raised. It could go up, down, or remain the same.

### Grading

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Requirement</th>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>Due Date</th>
<th>Submitted through</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Attendance and participation</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>Throughout semester</td>
<td>n/a</td>
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<tr>
<td>Weekly Reading Quizzes</td>
<td>25%</td>
<td>September 15, 22, 29; October 6, 20, and 27; and November 3, and 17</td>
<td>Via Quercus</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Intelligence Brief 1</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>Monday October 17 by 9 AM</td>
<td>Via Quercus</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Intelligence Brief 2</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>Monday November 14 by 9 AM</td>
<td>Via Quercus</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Final Exam</td>
<td>25%</td>
<td>December 1</td>
<td>In-person</td>
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**Course Policies and Procedures:** This course will use Quercus to disseminate all course-related information and assignments. It is your responsibility to log on to Quercus regularly and obtain relevant information. All written assignments must be submitted through Quercus.

**Communication Information**
You are responsible for checking Quercus and your UofT e-mail regularly. Your TA should be your first point of contact for most questions related to the course, including queries about course material, requests for extensions, and requests to regrade. Your TA will explain how to reach them during the first class. When corresponding by e-mail, please put “Decision-Making and International Security” at the beginning of the subject line, followed by the subject of your e-mail (for example: “Decision-Making and International Security: Question about intel memo”). Neither the TA nor professor will respond to emails over the weekend or after 5PM during weekdays. Unless an emergency, responses will take 48-72 hours.

**Accessibility**
Students with diverse learning styles and needs are welcome in this course. In particular, if you have a disability or health consideration that may require accommodations, please contact Accessibility Services at accessibility.services@utoronto.ca http://www.studentlife.utoronto.ca/as/contact-us

**Academic Integrity**
Please refer to the Seven Grandfathers of Academic Integrity: https://studentlife.utoronto.ca/wpcontent/uploads/Seven_Grandfathers_in_Academic_Integrity.pdf The University of Toronto treats cases of academic misconduct very seriously. Academic
integrity is a fundamental value of learning and scholarship at the UofT. Participating honestly, respectfully, responsibly, and fairly in this academic community ensures that your UofT degree is valued and respected as a true signifier of your individual academic achievement.

The University of Toronto’s Code of Behaviour on Academic Matters (http://www.governingcouncil.utoronto.ca/policies/behaveac.htm) outlines the behaviours that constitute academic misconduct, the processes for addressing academic offences, and the penalties that may be imposed. You are expected to be familiar with the contents of this document. All suspected cases of academic dishonesty will be investigated following the procedures outlined in the Code of Behaviour on Academic Matters. If you have any questions about what is or is not permitted in this course, please do not hesitate to contact me. If you have questions about appropriate research and citation methods, you are expected to seek out additional information from me or other available campus resources: Normally, students will be required to submit their course essays to the University’s plagiarism detection tool for a review of textual similarity and detection of possible plagiarism. In doing so, students will allow their essays to be included as source documents in the tool’s reference database, where they will be used solely for the purpose of detecting plagiarism. The terms that apply to the University’s use of this tool are described on the Centre for Teaching Support & Innovation web site (https://uoft.me/pdt-faq). You may opt out of this tool by contacting the instructor as early as possible in the semester to make alternative arrangements. Writing Centres: http://writing.utoronto.ca/writing-centres/ Academic Success: http://www.studentlife.utoronto.ca/asc How not to Plagiarize: http://advice.writing.utoronto.ca/using-sources/how-not-to-plagiarize/ RESOURCES Writing

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Support
Students can visit www.writing.utoronto.ca for information and advice on all aspects of academic writing. Students are encouraged to make use of the college writing centers for individualized consultations on their written assignments. Interested students should book their appointments with the writing centers early, as they fill up fast. Information about the writing centers is available at http://www.writing.utoronto.ca/writing-centres/arts-andscience. Students can also take advantage of the Library’s free “Writing Plus” academic skills workshop series, described at http://www.writing.utoronto.ca/writing-plus. International students can find information about the English Language Learning program (ELL), which includes practice opportunities for improving oral communication and critical reading skills, at http://www.artsci.utoronto.ca/current/advising/ell. Registrar Support: Students are encouraged to contact their registrar promptly if they experience unexpected challenges during the course that may require accommodations.

Health and Wellness:
Students can access a wide range of programs and services to support their health and well-being. Many of these programs are listed at: https://studentlife.utoronto.ca/department/health-wellness/

6 Crisis Support: Students in distress can access a range of free crisis lines available from the University of Toronto and the City of Toronto, as listed below: • University of Toronto: https://studentlife.utoronto.ca/task/support-when-you-feel-distressed/ • City of Toronto: https://www.toronto.ca/311/knowledgebase/kb/docs/articles/311-toronto/information-and-business-development/crisis-lines-suicide-depression-telephonesupport-lines-non-crisis-mental-health-services.html Most of these crisis lines are available 24 hours a day and some address specific problems that students may be experiencing. Immediate assistance is available as follows: • My SSP for University of Toronto Students: 1-844-451-9700. • Good 2 Talk Student Helpline: 1-866-925-5454 • Gerstein Crisis Centre: 416-929-5200 • Distress Centres of Greater Toronto: 416-408-HELP (4357) • The Centre for Addiction and Mental Health (CAMH): 250 College Street (walk-in)

You are not alone: please get help if you’re experiencing difficulties or are in distress.

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**Reading and Schedule**

1. **September 8: Introduction to Decision Making in International Security**


**Recommended**


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2. **September 15: Decision Units, Structure, and Methodology- Quiz 1 (by 9 AM)**


**Recommended**

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**3. September 22: Confidence and Beliefs: So, What Do We Know?-Quiz 2 (by 9 AM)**


**Recommended**


4. September 29: Cognitive Biases and Information Processing - Quiz 3 (by 9 AM)


Recommended


5. Oct 6: Personality-Quiz 4 (by 9 AM)


**Recommended**


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**Recommended**
7. **Oct 20 Socio-cultural- Quiz 5 (by 9 AM)**


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8. **Oct 27 Socio-cultural Cases – Quiz 6 (by 9 AM)**


**Recommended**


9. Nov 3, Emotion—Quiz 7 (by 9 AM)


Recommended


November 10, NO CLASS, Reading Week
10. Nov 17: New Frontiers, Quiz 8 (by 9 AM)


Recommended

11. Nov 24 HW Bush, the US and the Gulf War and Tying it all together


Bush, George HW, and Brent Scowcroft. A world transformed. Vintage, 2011. Chapters “This Will Not Stand” and “Storm and Shield” pgs 302-357


**Recommended**


[https://hiddenbrain.org/podcast/creatures-of-habit/](https://hiddenbrain.org/podcast/creatures-of-habit/)

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**12. Dec 1: Final Exam (in-class)**