

“Developing the Critical Thinking Skills of the Professional Policy Analyst.”

Current Topics in Foreign and Defense Policy
Political Science 429 (3 credit hours)

Instructor: Dr. Thomas Preston

Spring Semester 2014

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Class Time: Tuesday/Thursday, 9:10-10:25 a.m. Bryan Hall 402

Course Description and Objectives

This course is designed to provide students interested in American foreign and defense policy with an overview of many of the most important topics and current challenges facing U.S. policy makers. At the same time, and more critically, **this course is designed to train students to become better analytical thinkers and develop the ‘critical eye’ required of the professional policy analyst when following current events in foreign or defense policy.** Throughout the semester, student’s analytical skills will be sharpened by in-depth classroom discussions and active monitoring of ongoing political developments around the world (through reading of *The New York Times*, use of other mainstream media sources (newspapers, magazines, television network newscasts, etc.), and exploration of substantive Internet resources (such as government, military, and foreign/defense policy institute sites, regional news sources, etc.). Students will actively participate throughout the semester in a policy simulation designed to develop their analytical abilities and hone skills useful for interpreting overseas events. These classroom activities will provide a broad overview of many of the critically important foreign and defense policy topics currently being addressed or debated by U.S. policy makers, and help students better understand current events by placing them into their proper contexts. The skills taught in this course should assist students interested in pursuing professional careers in government, the military, the media, or academia.

Course Requirements

This course requires students to **actively participate** in classroom discussions of current affairs, to diligently keep up with current events through a thorough reading of *The New York Times* (and other appropriate media sources in region), and by watching at least one network newscast nightly (an excellent source is The BBC World News and Al Jazeera which are on KWSU every afternoon/evening). Students are also expected to keep up with assigned class readings and handouts. **There will be one take-home exam (worth 30% of the final grade) and a student journal (worth 40% of the final grade).** Because active student participation in classroom discussions is critical, **points will be assigned throughout the semester based upon ACTIVE classroom participation AND attendance (worth 30% of the final grade)!** To be blunt, attendance is mandatory, it is taken at the beginning of every class, and you will have points deducted for absences or arriving late for class. It is also the student's responsibility (not mine) to stay informed about exam times and paper deadlines. Since you are adults, and should understand the concept of "responsibility" by now, you will be treated as such with regard to missed exams, attendance, and late papers. **Unless prior arrangements have been made – late assignments are NOT be accepted!**

Required Texts & Readings

This course has a mixture of required texts and articles, along with in-class handouts that students are expected to read. The three required books are:

1. George Orwell. *Nineteen Eighty-Four* and *Animal Farm*.
2. Robert J. Gula. *Nonsense: Red Herrings, Straw Men, and Sacred Cows: How We Abuse Logic in Our Everyday Language*. Mount Jackson, VA: Axios Press, 2007.

All of these books are inexpensive and cheap, used copies should be readily available. I have also placed a number of handouts and journal articles/readings online at the WSU Angel website (<https://lms.wsu.edu/>), which you can access as students by clicking onto the course. These readings on angel are denoted by an asterisk (*) next to the citation in your list of weekly readings in the syllabus. It is your responsibility to read all assigned readings (for both class discussion and take-home exam). As a bit of helpful advice, let me tell you it is wise to immediately begin reading these articles early in the semester (along with the four books) rather than waiting until you get the exam! **ALSO, THE DAILY ARTICLES WE WILL CRITIQUE IN CLASS WILL BE PLACED IN THE “DAILY READINGS” FOLDER ON ANGEL AND IT IS YOUR RESPONSIBILITY TO PRINT OFF COPIES OF THESE TO BRING TO CLASS WITH YOU DAILY!** Finally, you are also expected to read about foreign affairs in *The New York Times*, *Washington Post*, or the *BBC World News daily* (they provide great sources for articles for your student journals as well). While I prefer paper copies myself, if you are sufficiently diligent, you can use the online version of the two newspapers (which are free) or pickup a free paper the student government provides here at WSU at various locations around campus.

Course Grade Breaks Down As Follows:

<i>Midterm Take-home Exam</i> (Handed Out Thursday, February 27th; Due in class on Tuesday, March 25th)	30%
<i>Student’s Critical Journal of Foreign & Defense Articles</i> - <u>each week, students must select two news articles, editorials, or commentaries</u> from <i>The New York Times</i> or some other print media source that they feel are standouts in terms of either their excellence <i>OR</i> their biases and distortions of fact. Each of these news clippings will be included in a journal, along with an accompanying <u>one full page minimum length</u> (single-space, <i>Times New Roman</i> font 11) discussion/analysis of each of the pieces by the student (commenting upon your views regarding the quality of the piece; what its strengths & weaknesses are, why you think your classmates should read it, etc.). <u>Refer to the ‘critical eye’ guide at end of syllabus in thinking about your comments about each piece.</u> Make sure you also include a copy of each article you critique in your journal. (Due in class (first 7 weeks material) Tuesday March 4th and (second 7 weeks material) on Thursday May 1st.)	40%
<i>Attendance & Active Participation in Classroom Discussions</i>	30%
TOTAL	100%

Code of Conduct

The University Student Handbook states that students have the right to freedom of expression but that disruptive behavior in classes will not be permitted. You are expected to participate in classroom activities in a professional manner. Private discussions with other students, passing notes, reading newspapers, disruptive eating, sleeping, or persistently arriving late or leaving early constitute inappropriate classroom behavior. If you demonstrate such behavior, you will be verbally warned in class to cease. If you persist in disruptive or distracting behavior, formal action, in accordance with WSU policy, will be taken. Expectations for student assignments and participation are set by the course syllabus and are not negotiable. Students who decline to fulfill those expectations should select another course.

Statement of Disability Policy

Students with Disabilities: Reasonable accommodations are available for students with a documented disability. If you have a disability and need accommodations to fully participate in this class, please either visit or call the Access Center (Washington Building 217; 509-335-3417) to schedule an appointment with an Access Advisor. All accommodations MUST be approved through the Access Center.

Academic Dishonesty: WAC 504-25-015 and WAC 504-25-315

Academic integrity will be strongly enforced in this course. Any student caught cheating on any assignment will be given an F grade for the course and will be reported to the Office Student Standards and Accountability. I encourage you to work with classmates on assignments. However the guiding principle of academic integrity shall be that your submitted work, examinations, reports, and projects must be your own work. No copying will be accepted. Students who violate WSU's Standards of Conduct for Students will receive an F as a final grade in this course, will not have the option to withdraw from the course and will be reported to the Office Student Standards and Accountability. Cheating is defined in the Standards for Student Conduct WAC 504-26-010 (3). It is strongly suggested that you read and understand these definitions. You can learn more about Academic Integrity on your campus using the URL listed in the Academic Regulations section or to <http://conduct.wsu.edu/academic-integrity-policies-and-resources>. Please use these resources to ensure that you don't inadvertently violate WSU's standard of conduct. “

Safety and Emergency Notifications

Washington State University is committed to enhancing the safety of the students, faculty, staff, and visitors. It is highly recommended that you review the Campus Safety Plan (<http://safetyplan.wsu.edu/>) and visit the Office of Emergency Management web site (<http://oem.wsu.edu/>) for a comprehensive listing of university policies, procedures, statistics, and information related to campus safety, emergency management, and the health and welfare of the campus community.”

Student Learning Outcomes

This course **is designed to train students to become better analytical thinkers and develop the ‘critical eye’ required of the professional policy analyst when following current events in foreign or defense policy.** Throughout the semester, student’s analytical skills will be sharpened by in-depth classroom discussions and active monitoring of ongoing political developments around the world (through reading of *The New York Times*, use of other mainstream media sources (newspapers, magazines, television network newscasts, etc.), and exploration of substantive Internet resources (such as government, military, and foreign/defense policy institute sites, regional news sources, etc.). Students will actively participate throughout the semester in a policy simulation designed to develop their analytical abilities and hone skills useful for interpreting overseas events.

Students will be evaluated on their ability to successfully and effectively apply the "Five Critical Eye" analytical elements and supporting analytical components (see back of syllabus) taught in this course, along with a recognition of relevant propaganda/rhetorical techniques, to any written and spoken materials from media, academic articles, books, and classroom discussions. These skills will be evaluated through in-class discussions observed by the instructor through intensively one-on-one assessments during the simulation, in their application to material in the student's critical journal (evaluated twice during the semester), and from a take-home exam. The learning outcomes for ALL students is for them to develop and hone their objective analytical abilities, recognize bias/slant/distortions/propaganda/poor analogy usage, etc. in all materials they read or examine. This intensive analytical training should make this analysis second-nature to students and provide them with an analyst's mental frame in how they take on information processing and assessment in the real world. It is intended to be a stepping stone to careers as a professional analyst in the government or business communities, preparation for the analytic demands of graduate school, and geared to improving the critical thinking abilities of students generally.



The Foggy Bottom Experience: A Department of State Staff Simulation.

The following policy simulation will run throughout the semester and provide structure for our examination of current topics in U.S. foreign and defense policy.

Regular attendance and active student involvement in all facets of this simulation is mandatory and will determine 30% of your final course grade!! Be on time for class, since attendance is taken during first five minutes of the period (during which time you will be carrying out your assigned group task of preparing your bureau for the daily intelligence brief)! **If you are absent or late for more than 2 class periods during the semester (without instructor permission), you will have 3% per additional day deducted from your final class participation grade!!!**

State Department Bureaus

<p>Bureau of South Asian Affairs</p> <p>Responsible for tracking political developments across the South Asia region: Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, Maldives, Nepal, Pakistan, and Sri Lanka.</p>	<p>Bureau of East Asian and Pacific Affairs</p> <p>Responsible for tracking political developments in the East Asia and Pacific regions, including China, Mongolia, Burma, Indochina, Indonesia, North and South Korea, Taiwan, Japan, Australia and New Zealand.</p>	<p>Bureau of Near Eastern Affairs</p> <p>Responsible for tracking political developments in the Middle East and North African regions. Includes all the northern tier of Africa (Western Sahara, Morocco, Algeria, Libya, Tunisia, Egypt, etc.). All Middle Eastern countries (Israel, Jordan, Syria, Lebanon, Iraq, Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, Yemen, Oman, UAE, Bahrain, Qatar) and Iran.</p>
<p>Bureau of European and Eurasian Affairs</p> <p>Responsible for tracking political developments across all of the Europe states, plus all of the CIS countries that were part of the former-Soviet Union (i.e., Russia, Ukraine, Kazakstan, Belarus, etc.)</p>	<p>Bureau of Western Hemisphere Affairs</p> <p>Responsible for tracking political developments across all the countries of North, Central, and South America (excluding the U.S.).</p>	<p>Bureau of African Affairs</p> <p>Responsible for tracking political developments across all the countries of sub-Saharan Africa. Includes states like Sudan, Ethiopia, Somalia, Nigeria, Rwanda, Burundi, Malawi, Kenya, South Africa, Zimbabwe, Angola, Democratic Republic of the Congo, etc..</p>

Bureau Desk Assignments -

Students are assigned the role of analysts within the U.S. Department of State working in one of six real-life policy bureaus. The six regional bureaus (above) coordinate the conduct of U.S. foreign relations and reside in the State Department's *Office of Political Affairs*. While you will be following ALL foreign events generally in this class, as staffers assigned to one of these six policy bureaus, **you will be responsible (as a group) for providing a brief (3 minute) oral summary to the class of any major (significant) political developments that have occurred in your region/area of responsibility since the last class period.** Therefore, the first five minutes of class will be allotted to your bureau desk groups – allowing you to quickly confer with one another and decide what topics merit briefing the class about (and who will do it). **I suggest you take turns within your group giving the quick, ‘to-the-point’ oral briefs so that it doesn’t always fall to one person.** Multiple analysts may speak during the briefing – but your group still only gets 3 minutes total to speak – so don’t waste time on fluff, get to the point! If you are not (or seldom) making any briefing comments, this will hurt you on your participation points.

Focus on major developments in the countries or region (not minor, unimportant ones) – **in other words, brief on the developments that have some implications for the political situation in the given country, region, or for U.S. policy.** You should not be gathering your intelligence only from *The New York Times*, but also from non-U.S. regional newspapers or sources in your region of responsibility (find them on www.newspapers.com). For example, if you are working on the Bureau of Near Eastern Affairs, you will want to have some members of your desk monitoring regional news sources like *Al-Jazeera*, *Dar Al Hayat*, *The Jerusalem Post*, etc.. Divide them up amongst you. Students will sit with their assigned policy groups in the classroom throughout the semester.

Daily Class Schedule: (Given that this State Department staff simulation works (of necessity) on a very tight schedule, **it is essential that students are punctual and arrive on-time for class daily!** Attendance will be noted and students who frequently arrive late will lose **substantial points** from their participation grade.)

9:10-9:15 a.m. – Preparing for DIB (Daily Intelligence Briefing)

First five minutes of class devoted to allowing members of the bureau desk groups to confer with one another and decide what topics merit briefing the class about during the daily intelligence briefing.

9:15-9:40 p.m. – DIB (Daily Intelligence Briefing)

Each of the six State Department Bureaus will be given **a maximum of three minutes each (timed)** to brief the class on the latest political developments (if any) in their regions that have occurred since our last session.

9:40-9:50 p.m. – Discussion of Current Situation/Events

The next twelve minutes of class are devoted to in-depth discussion of topics obtained from the DIB (Daily Intelligence Briefing). Emphasis during this session will be upon: a) how the current political developments are likely to affect the regional situation; b) discussion of any specific recommendations for U.S. policy in response to these developments we might want to propose to our superiors; and c) developing analytical skill at ‘reading between the lines’ or looking ‘beneath the surface’ of reported events in our analyses.

9:50-10:25 – Analysis and Discussion (News Articles, Editorials, Commentaries, etc.) to Sharpen Analytical Skills.

The last forty minutes of class are devoted to giving students an opportunity to analyze and discuss news articles, editorials, commentaries, or other media reports that they have found to be either of: a.) exceptional quality (providing intriguing or interesting arguments/takes on a situation or topic), or b.) particularly distorted, slanted, or inaccurate in its treatment of a situation or topic. The instructor will pass around samples for students to read and discuss in class. If students have articles they would like to have discussed, clip it out or email it to the instructor. If appropriate, I will photocopy it for distribution and analysis by the class.

Guidance for Daily Intelligence Briefings (DIBs)

When preparing your comments during the first five minutes of class, staffers on each of the main State Department policy desks should briefly confer with one another about current political developments in their individual regions. It may be helpful for one analyst on each desk (perhaps in rotation) to listen to current newscasts that morning in order to provide *up-to-date* briefs for the Department. Analysts in the regional desks should use the internet links (provided below) to identify and monitor how the local press is covering/treating developments in the country or region. The "**newspapers online**" website (below) provides links to English language content for many of the world's major newspapers.

Each policy desk has 3 minutes to brief the class on the most important developments that have occurred in their region since the last session. **This should not just be a recitation of every minor event that has occurred.** Instead, **staffers should identify only the most important developments and how these potentially affect either regional/country stability or U.S. policy.** In other words, it should pass the "so what?" test – you need to briefly note why this information is important for other staffers to know (why does it matter?). What might its impact be upon the region or for U.S. policy? Following these basic guidelines should help your desk to provide briefings that are more concise, to-the-point, and relevant to your colleagues.

Resources Available on the Web:

There are a number of exceptionally good web sites on the Internet which have material on foreign affairs and security matters that will be very useful for this course. Below, I have provided you with a selection of some of the best sites available and, more importantly, ones that are reasonably credible. Do recognize that all sites will come with some level of bias, so as you gather information or follow events, **you should always pay attention to see if other sources you look at corroborate (or dispute) the information (or perspectives on policy) you found at the original site.** In addition, most of the sites below also provide sets of links to other sites that 'they' think are good ones. By all means surf around, but do be wary of other sites (i.e., make sure they have real data to support their assertions; aren't special interest groups beholden to particular points of view; don't slant (or selectively present) much of their information to support particular policy views, etc.). While such sites can be interesting because of their biases, as an analyst, you must be careful to corroborate you information. Don't merely stop looking for information when you find something that fits your own beliefs (you might be wrong).

Recommended Websites

Newspapers and News Organizations:	
Newspapers Online – link to virtually all of the world’s newspapers! Helpful for those looking for local (regional) papers in countries of interest.	http://www.newspapers.com
<i>The Washington Post</i>	http://www.washingtonpost.com
<i>The New York Times</i>	http://www.nytimes.com
CNN	http://cnn.com
<i>The Los Angeles Times</i>	http://www.latimes.com
<i>The Herald Sun</i>	http://www.news.com.au/heraldsun/
<i>International Herald Tribune</i>	http://www.ihf.com/frontpage.html
The BBC	http://news.bbc.co.uk/
<i>The Financial Times</i>	http://www.ft.com
<i>The London Times</i>	http://www.thetimes.co.uk
<i>The London Guardian – Observer</i>	http://www.guardian.co.uk
<i>The Economist</i>	http://www.economist.com
<i>The Christian Science Monitor</i>	http://www.csmonitor.com
<i>National Public Radio</i>	http://www.npr.org
<i>The Washington Times</i>	http://www.washtimes.com
<i>MSNBC News</i>	http://www.msnbc.msn.com/
<i>ABC News</i>	http://abcnews.go.com/
<i>CBS News</i>	http://www.cbsnews.com
Interfax News Agency	http://www.interfax-news.com
Itar-Tass News Agency	http://www.itar-tass.com
<i>The New Republic</i>	http://www.thenewrepublic.com
<i>The Times of India</i>	http://www.timesofindia.com
<i>The Moscow Times</i>	http://www.moscowtimes.ru
Kyodo News Agency	http://home.kyodo.co.jp/
<i>The Japan Times</i>	http://www.japantimes.com/
<i>The Jerusalem Post</i> (Internet Edition)	http://www.jpost.com/servlet/Satellite?pagename=JPost/P/FrontPage/FrontPage&cid=1002116796299
<i>Dar Al Hayat</i>	http://english.daralhayat.com/
<i>AlJazeera</i>	http://english.aljazeera.net/English
Government Sites, Research Institutes and International Organizations	
DefenseLinks	http://www.defenselink.mil
U.S. Department of State	http://www.state.gov
U.S. Central Intelligence Agency	http://www.cia.gov/index.html
U.S. Defense Intelligence Agency	http://www.dia.mil/
United States Intelligence Community	http://www.intelligence.gov/
International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA)	http://www.iaea.or.at/worldatom
Federation of American Scientists	http://www.fas.org
The Henry Stimson Center	http://www.stimson.org
The Brookings Institution	http://www.brookings.org
The Project on Defense Alternatives	http://www.comw.org/pda/index.html
Carnegie Endowment for International Peace	http://www.ceip.org
Monterey Institute of International Studies	http://cns.miis.edu/
Congressional Research Service (CRS) Reports: Military and	http://fas.org/man/crs/index.html

National Security	
<i>Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists</i>	http://www.bullatomsci.org
Center for Strategic and International Studies	http://www.csis.org
Center for Civilian Biodefense Strategies – John Hopkins	http://www.hopkins-biodefense.org
School of Public Health – John Hopkins	http://www.jhsph.edu
Center for Biosecurity – Univ. of Pittsburgh Medical Center	http://www.upmc-biosecurity.org
Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (SIPRI)	http://www.sipri.se
The Washington Institute for Near-East Policy	http://www.washingtoninstitute.org
Institute for Defense Disarmament Studies	http://www.idds.org
Chemical and Biological Arms Control Institute	http://www.cbaci.org
The United Nations	http://www.unsystem.org
Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change	http://www.ipcc.ch
USAF Institute for National Security Studies	http://www.usafa.af.mil/inss/inss.htm
Aerospace Power Chronicles	http://www.airpower.maxwell.af.mil
Institute for National Strategic Studies – National Defense University	http://www.ndu.edu/inss/press/nduphp.html
National Security Research and Analysis – Rand Corporation	http://www.rand.org/research_areas/national_security/index.html
International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA)	http://www.iaea.or.at/Publications/index.html
The U.S. Army Medical Research Institute of Infectious Diseases - Fort Detrick, Maryland	http://www.usamriid.army.mil
Centers for Disease Control and Prevention	http://www.cdc.gov
The National Security Archive – George Washington Univ.	http://www.gwu.edu/~nsarchiv/
Military Full Text E-Journals	http://www.ndu.edu/library/ejrn_l_military.html
Nuclear Control Institute	http://www.nci.org/index.htm
Arms Control Association	http://www.armscontrol.org/
Union of Concerned Scientists	http://www.ucsusa.org
Council on Foreign Relations	http://www.cfr.org/index.html
Natural Resources Defense Council	http://www.nrdc.org/contactUs/default.asp
Nautilus Institute	http://www.nautilus.org/
World Health Organization	http://www.who.int/en/
Department of Peace Studies, University of Bradford	http://www.brad.ac.uk/acad/peace/contact/contact.htm

“Developing the Critical Thinking Skills of the Professional Policy Analyst.”

I. Becoming a More Sophisticated Consumer of Political Information:

Identifying sound argument, propaganda, cognitive biases, and distortions in media or government sources of information.

Weeks 1-4

Required Readings:

Robert J. Gula. *Nonsense: Red Herrings, Straw Men, and Sacred Cows: How We Abuse Logic in Our Everyday Language*. Mount Jackson, VA: Axios Press, 2007. (all)

*Garth S. Jowett and Victoria O’Donnell. “What is Propaganda, and How Does It Differ From Persuasion?,” pp.1-46; “Propaganda and the Internet,” pp.157-160; “Hitler and Nazi Propaganda,” pp.235-248; “How to Analyze Propaganda,” pp. 279-298.” In *Propaganda and Persuasion*. London: Sage Publications, 1999.

*Carol Trosset. Obstacles to Open Discussion and Critical Thinking: The Grinnell College Study. *Change* (September/October 1998): 44-49.

*Rob Johnston. *Analytic Culture in the U.S. Intelligence Community*. Washington, D.C.: Center for the Study of Intelligence, (2005): 9-29.

*Alexander L. George. *Bridging the Gap: Theory and Practice in Foreign Policy*. Washington, D.C.: United States Institute of Peace (1993):

“Foreword and Introduction,” pp.xiii-xxvi; “The Gap Between Knowledge and Action,” pp.3-30; “The Bridge Between Knowledge and Action,” pp.105-145.

*Michael Hirschorn. “The Truth Lies Here: How Can Americans Talk to One Another – Let Alone Engage in Political Debate – When the Web allows Every Side to Invent Its Own Facts.” *The Atlantic*, November 2010.

*All of the following from Richard J. Heuer, Jr., *Psychology of Intelligence Analysis*. Washington, D.C.: Center for the Study of Intelligence, (1999):

“Improving Intelligence Analysis at CIA: Dick Heuer’s Contribution to Intelligence Analysis,” pp.xiii-xxvi; “Thinking About Thinking,” pp.1-6; “Perception: Why Can’t We See What Is There To Be Seen?,” pp.7-16; “Strategies for Analytical Judgment: Transcending the Limits of Incomplete Information,” pp.31-49; “Keeping an Open Mind,” pp.65-84; “Analysis of Competing Hypotheses,” pp.95-109; “Hindsight Biases in Evaluation of Intelligence Reporting,” pp.161-171; “Improving Intelligence Analysis,” pp.173-184.

II. The Problem of Faulty Threat Assessments and How Biases Impact

Analysis: Examples of threat inflation, stove-piping, blame avoidance, and the politically-motivated use of information.

Weeks 5-6

Required Readings:

*Cassino, Daniel and Peter Wooley. “Some News Leaves People Knowing Less.” Fairleigh Dickinson University PublicMind Poll, 21 November 2011.

*Crepon, Michael. “The Mushroom Cloud That Wasn’t: Why Inflating Threats Won’t Reduce Them.” *Foreign Affairs*, Vol. 88, No.3 (May/June 2009): 2-6.

*Kaufmann, Chaim. “Threat Inflation and the Failure of the Marketplace of Ideas: The Selling of the Iraq War.” *International Security* Vol. 29, No.1 (Summer 2004): 5-58.

*Pillar, Paul R. "Intelligence, Policy, and the War in Iraq." *Foreign Affairs* 85, no. 2 (March/April 2006): 15-28.

*Jervis, Robert. "Reports, Politics, and Intelligence Failures: The Case of Iraq." *Journal of Strategic Studies*, Vol. 29, No.1 (February 2006): 3-52.

*Renshon, Jonathan. "Assessing Capabilities in International Politics: Biased Overestimation and the Case of the Imaginary 'Missile Gap'." *Journal of Strategic Studies*, Vol. 32, No.1 (February 2009): 115-147.

*Parker, Charles F. and Stern, Eric K. "Bolt From the Blue or Avoidable Failure?: Revisiting September 11 and the Origins of Strategic Surprise," *Foreign Policy Analysis*, Vol. 1, No.3 (November 2005): 301-327.

*Woods, Kevin M. and Stout, Mark E. "Saddam's Perceptions and Misperceptions: The Case of Desert Storm." *Journal of Strategic Studies*, Vol. 33, No.1 (February 2010): 5-41.

III. Classic Politics Books EVERY Analyst Should Read: Examples of propaganda, political manipulation, and the public as sheep.

Weeks 7-9

Required Readings:

George Orwell. *Nineteen Eighty-Four*. (all)

George Orwell. *Animal Farm*. (all)

IV. The Debate Over National Missile Defense (NMD): The Pros & Cons; Technical & Political Hurdles; Strategic Consequences.

(Material for Long Essay in Take Home Exam)

Weeks 10-12

Required Readings:

*Cirincione, Joseph. "Assessing the Assessment: The 1999 National Intelligence Estimate of the Ballistic Missile Threat." *The Nonproliferation Review*, (Spring 2000): 125-137.

*Lewis, George, Gronlund, Lisbeth, and Wright, David. "National Missile Defense: An Indefensible System." *Foreign Policy*, No.117, (Winter 1999/2000): 120-137.

*Deutch, John, Brown, Harold, and White, John P. "National Missile Defense: Is There Another Way?." *Foreign Policy*, (Summer 2000), pp.91-100.

*Garwin, Richard L. "National Missile Defense: The Wrong Plan." *The Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists* Vol.56, No.2, (March/April 2000): 36-41.

*Moore, Mike. "Unintended Consequences." *The Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists* Vol.56, No.1 (January/February 2000): 58-64.

*Postol, Theodore A. "Why Missile Defense Won't Work." Special Report on Missile Defense. *Technology Review*. (April 2002): 42-51.

*George N. Lewis & Theodore A. Postol. "The European Missile Defense Folly." *Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists*, (May/June 2008): 33-43.

*A series of NMD articles from The American Legion magazine and pieces produced by The Heritage Foundation.

Film: *ABC Nightline presentation on Bioterrorism* (shown over two week period)

Things to Focus on When Reading Articles/Books/Listening to Network News Reports/Considering Political Arguments

The following statement no doubt will annoy you (although I am not directing it at you as much as the American public in general). Yet, those who have lived abroad in Europe for a few years (as I have) will vouch for the accuracy of the following observation:

- **In Europe**, because of much greater political awareness and attention to current events among the population, **people tend to be very aware of the political biases in their newspapers, television programs, political parties, etc, and are quite critical (and skeptical) about what they read or hear.** And given the proximity of other neighboring countries, there also tends to be a greater awareness of foreign affairs.
- **In contrast, Americans are far less aware of current events, pay little attention to politics, and (as a result) tend to be generally unaware of bias and uncritically accept what they read or hear as fact because of their own lack of personal knowledge of the issues.** Replacing the broad skepticism of Europeans towards political discussion is an American tendency to use a very simple fall-back mechanism: Using their political party affiliation as their main ‘filter’ of information. In other words, Republican or Democrat, Americans tend to utterly dismiss whatever someone in a different political party says without even reflecting upon it – in almost a ‘knee-jerk’ instinctive reaction – thereby avoiding having to learn about the details of issues, problems, etc.. They use their political party affiliation as a short-cut, or simplifying heuristic, to give them ‘default’ positions to take. And **we have an unfortunate tendency to focus mostly on the short-term** (where immediate information is available – like during elections), **but lose interest quickly and seldom engage in long-term thinking or analysis of problems/issues.** As a result, the American public has become perhaps one of the most uninformed in the world about basic current affairs and politics, and one that is easily manipulated (due to their ignorance).

Developing A Critical Eye

Adopting a critical approach will: (1) help you to be a more discerning consumer of information; (2) help you to recognize bias or slant in material more readily so that you can take it into account when considering topics; (3) help you to avoid being manipulated by writers/reporters/political actors seeking to shape your views through biased discourse; (4) help you to gather accurate information so that you can become better informed and make more knowledgeable decisions about issues/problems; and (5) allow you to develop the skills required to be a professional scholar or policy analyst.

Relevant Questions For You To Ask:

What political or ideological position underlies the argument made by the author?

What solution or viewpoint is the author trying to get you to adopt AND why? (i.e., do they have a vested interest in a particular outcome?)

What information or viewpoints are being left out by the author?

Where might you be able to find a more complete information or less biased discussion of the topic? (Go look at it)

Have you looked at multiple sources and considered multiple viewpoints (pros & cons) regarding the issue/problem before you have made up your own mind?

***Be “self-aware”, reflect upon (or consider) how much potential bias you may be bringing yourself to the topic** (i.e., given your own personal political ideology, religious beliefs, life experiences/upbringing, education, etc.).*

(Note: This is not to say this is irrelevant or should be completely avoided. Your own life experiences, background, and beliefs help you to interpret all the information you come across in your world. What I am saying is that you need to be self-aware about your OWN biases and carefully (and honestly) consider whether or not you are really being open-minded about an argument or viewpoint.

- **You need to at least be willing to consider and give reasoned thought to other viewpoints before you dismiss them** – otherwise you will NEVER be able to develop a truly unbiased critical eye, since you YOURSELF will be selectively processing all incoming information to MAKE IT FIT IN WITH WHAT YOU ALREADY BELIEVE PERSONALLY!!!).
- **If you do this, you are nothing but a mindless automaton who will be easily manipulated by those sharing your own beliefs.** At best, regardless of the amount of education you receive or the life experiences you have, this kind of selectively biased approach means, at best, you can become a knowledgeable demagogue!

Who is the author of the article and what is their affiliation? (i.e., member of a particular political party, political action group, institute or think-tank, conservative/liberal journalist, university scholar, government official, etc.)

- **Author affiliation is a good first indicator of potential bias in articles.**
- **For Ex's of conservative bias:** Charles Krauthammer, George Will, Jonah Goldberg, and Mona Charon are well-known, right-wing conservative commentators who regularly appear with columns in newspapers. Obviously, one would often anticipate a right-wing, conservative slant on topics covered by their articles. Similarly, there are quite well-known conservative think-tanks, like The Heritage Foundation, The American Enterprise Institute, The Hoover Institute, and The Cato Institute, well-known conservative political action groups, such as the National Rifle Association and Right to Life, and well-known conservative newspapers, like *The Wall Street Journal*, *The Washington Times*, *The American Spectator*, and *The National*

Review, that should all be read or listened to very carefully for bias. Indeed, some of these, like the Heritage Foundation and the American Enterprise Institute (AEI), are well-known for their bias and distortions (or selective reporting) of fact in their research. On television, the FOX News network is well-known for its extreme conservative bias. In fact, **FOX News is probably the most biased and slanted of any mainstream media outlet in the United States.** Also, if you used to watch Crossfire on CNN (or other ‘talking-head’ shows, obviously commentators like Bob Novak, Pat Buchanan, Tucker Carlson, William Kristol, Jim McGlaughlin, Ann Coulter are usually expressing quite conservative viewpoints. On FOX, Bill O’Reilly on The O’Reilly Factor and Sean Hannity are also well-known for their extreme conservative bias. On Talk Radio (which is almost entirely conservative in its bias as a rule), examples would include Rush Limbaugh, G. Gordon Liddy, Glenn Beck, and The Savage Nation. Also, if you have a Republican congressman or an official from the Republican National Committee writing or speaking, it is highly unlikely they are expressing a liberal viewpoint.

- **For Ex’s of liberal bias:** Maureen Dowd, E.J. Dionne, Eugene Robinson and Paul Krugman are well-known liberal commentators who regularly appear with their columns in newspapers. Obviously, a Democratic congressman or Party official is more likely to express a liberal viewpoint when writing or speaking. In terms of liberal bias in newspapers, like *The New York Times*, *The Washington Post*, or *The Los Angeles Times*, it is generally the case that whatever liberal slant appears in these papers predominantly takes the form of their ‘official’ editorials and the positions taken on issues by the papers in their editorial sections. Seldom is bias found in the actual reporting of the news or events in these papers. Unabashedly slanted liberal papers would include *The New Republic*, *American Prospect*, and *The Nation*. Liberal political action groups would include groups like The Sierra Club, Greenpeace, Move-On, or The American Civil Liberties Union. Similarly, The Jim Lehrer Newshour, PBS’s Frontline documentary series, and National Public Radio (NPR) often have a liberal slant in their choice of topics reported upon (but their reporting of the actual facts/substance is usually not biased). If you watched Crossfire on CNN (before it was cancelled), obviously James Carville and Paul Begala are well-known for their liberal bias, as would be Chris Matthews, and Rachel Maddow on MSNBC. On Current TV, Keith Olbermann’s Countdown provides a fact-checking counterbalance to Fox News (with a sardonic twist) – and though having a liberal slant is quite solid on its reporting. On Talk Radio, the main liberal outlet would be *Air America Radio* (although it is only available in major market areas and is quite small compared to the majority conservative outlets on radio) – with Al Franken being a good example of a liberal broadcaster. Of the major cables news networks, the only one that could be claimed to have liberal bias is CNN, although it is by far the most objective and balanced of any of the cable news networks in its coverage of the news (not hard when compared with FOX!). Finally, university scholars, academics, and research institutes tend towards more liberal positions on topics, although this often varies by specialty: with political scientists tending to be more liberal and economists/business/law professors tending to be more conservative.
- **Important Point:** **Neither liberals nor conservatives have a complete ‘corner on the market’ on truth, the accuracy of their viewpoints, or the degree to which their preferred solutions or interpretations of topics/problems fit with reality (or historical fact).** All must be considered critically by informed consumers of information (those with ‘critical eyes’).

What is the history or background of the issue or problem being discussed?

- **If you don't know this history or background yourself, you must be very cautious in uncritically accepting an article's interpretation of events or its viewpoint regarding the nature of the problem.**
- **You should try to check some reputable sources to provide corroboration of the facts or interpretation of events found in the article.** For example, if it is a historical or political event, you can look for reputable histories or books written by scholars that have been published by university presses (UP) or big commercial presses (i.e., Rowman and Littlefield, St. Martin's, Taylor and Francis, etc.)
- **University presses require external, outside scholarly review of manuscripts before they are published, thereby reducing the chances that a UP book will have gross distortions of fact or just plain bad scholarship.** Non-university press books by big commercial presses also have an identical external, scholarly review process (using the same reviewers the UPs do). On the other hand, smaller commercial presses usually do not have such external reviews, may be published by institutes that have notable biases of their own, or are published by small publishers more interested in sensational (if inaccurate) books that will be good sellers!.
- **You can also look up articles or commentary on a topic across a broad range of sources (newspaper, magazine, internet, etc.) to see if there is generally agreement on the point in question or dispute over it.** Then, take note of exactly what elements are being disputed: the facts, the interpretation of these facts, the solutions proposed, etc. If you find broad corroboration across sources you trust for their accuracy, it may help you to more easily identify the biases or slant in the original piece.
- **And, as you do this, you MUST remain aware of your own personal biases so that you objectively consider the information.**
- As Admiral William Crowe, former-Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, once observed: **"Your mind is like a parachute. If it won't open when you need it, it is not much good."**
- **And importantly, REMEMBER that as one current foreign leader recently remarked (privately) to one of our diplomats: Public Statements are for "those who don't know any better."**
- You need to be aware that official statements, campaign statements, or 'briefs on issues' released by governments, politicians, think-tanks, etc. **are (on a basic**

level) geared to cater to ‘those who don’t know any better’ – and this is an audience that is much easier to manipulate than an informed one!

- **And it plays on our tendency to ‘satisfice’ in our gathering of information** – since seeking out news/information is time-consuming and people are often not motivated to devote their resources to this pursuit.

In the intelligence community, new analysts coming onto the job are given cards to wear on their neck straps (where their ID’s go) that contain a laminated copy of the **IC’s Analytic Standards** (which are what all analysis should strive for – and be in the back of every analysts mind as they work on products). The standards are:

- 1. Objectivity**
- 2. Independent of Political Considerations**
- 3. Timeliness**
- 4. Based on All Available Sources of Intelligence**
- 5. Exhibits Proper Standards of Analytic Tradecraft (specifically):**

- Properly describes quality, reliability of sources;
- Properly caveats and expresses uncertainties or confidence in analytic judgments;
- Properly distinguishes between underlying intel and analysts’ assumptions, judgments;
- Incorporates Alternative Analysis where appropriate;
- Relevance to US national security;
- Logical argumentation;
- Consistency, or highlights change;
- Accurate judgments, assessments.

Although analysis in the intelligence community has sometimes fallen short of these standards (as you will see in course readings), **the IC Analytic Standard represents the goal for all analysts (and what they should strive for).**

What are the strengths and weaknesses of articles/reports/books/media broadcasts, etc.?

- When examining any piece, you should immediately adopt a critical approach. What are the strengths and weaknesses of the piece?

The ‘Five Elements’ of the Critical Eye

At a minimum, ANY discussion of the strengths and weaknesses of a piece should involve a review of the following FIVE elements:

- (1) Accuracy - (discussion of issue/problem is factually correct and historically accurate);
- (2) Objectivity - (no strong or discernable bias/slant to the discussion of the topic);
- (3) Completeness - (good coverage of the details of the issue/problem, good overview of background or context of the problem/issue, discussion/mention/or coverage of several differing points of view regarding problem/issue);
- (4) Review of Potential Options or Solutions - (discussion of several possible approaches or solutions to address the problem/issue, along with their pros and cons);
- (5) Realistic Discussion - (the review of the pros and cons should not only involve elements substantively relevant to the subject, but also must be ‘realistic’ in the sense that it can’t involve unworkable, unrealistic, or immensely improbable solutions given the real-life political context in which we must operate).

Finally, as a friend of mine who has worked for the Central Intelligence Agency for over 28 yrs ALWAYS emphasizes to brand new analysts first taking their

jobs – (and I’ve seen him really drum this into the heads of a few when it didn’t quite sink in later) - **there is a cardinal rule that you should always remember:**

Do NOT engage in analysis by ‘labels’ (whether they be labels like conservative, liberal, communist, fascist, fundamentalist, moderate, etc.) - ONLY engage in analysis based on BEHAVIOR!!!!

- Why? **Because the labeling automatically biases you** – and you look for information that fits your label (and we subconsciously link emotional tags to certain labels based on our likes and dislikes).
- I’m sure you know people in your lives that as soon as they hear the word Republican or Democrat, they immediately either shut off, get negative, or apply a very simplistic stereotypes (along the lines of ‘their all alike, here’s what they believe/stand for).
- **But are all Republicans and Democrats alike?** Does everyone in both parties all agree completely with each other? **Are there views running across the spectrum in both from more extreme positions to quite moderate ones? Of course there are.** But if you are doing “analysis by labeling” – You’ll never consider that point. And your analysis will be crap!
- And, when you are looking around the world, **WHAT do we mean by conservative, liberal, etc. anyway???**
- In the US, some conservative people rant about how left-wing, liberal, or socialist the Democratic Party is – YET, in Europe and many other areas around the world, **BOTH the GOP AND THE DEMOCRATS would be viewed as quite conservative parties.** Certainly by local standards!
- Also, **depending on the culture or history of a given country or region, certain political or religious beliefs are not seen locally as being ‘extreme’ in the same way they would be if they occurred in the US** (For example, think of Saudi Arabia’s view of women, not allowing them to drive, go places unless accompanied by a male relative, etc.).

- **These are normative (or value-based) viewpoints** – and as analysts we acknowledge their existence --- **but we must guard AGAINST just “labeling” various political groups or factions as moderate, extreme, conservative, liberal.**
- **We must look at their BEHAVIOR!** What do they actually **DO?** For policy makers waiting for our analysis on regional situations – it is what these actors will do and behave like that matters – **NOT** our labels.
- **That is why it is so important to monitor regional/local press to get the proper ‘context’ for our analysis** – to understand exactly how “people on the street” in the target country perceive the situation.
- It’s why you would read cable traffic from our Embassies every morning, read the local press daily, and look at interviews with government or civilian people who had actually MET with various actors or officials if you were really working at State.
- **And we must recognize that THEIR labeling of their groups domestically** (anti or pro-this or that, conservative, liberal, whatever) **might be different from how WE would view it.**
- **Example from Anthropology** – need to avoid **ETHNOCENTRISM** – judging another’s culture by **OUR** culture’s values and norms instead of by **THAT** culture’s values and norms.
- **Another point** – the Gula book on Propaganda is an excellent guide and students really like it. But a word of caution – **please don’t equate a piece having a slant or using a propaganda/persuasion technique as automatically being incorrect or false.** Often techniques are used by writers to sway an audience, while the basic argument and facts in the piece remain sound.
 - **REMEMBER:** A piece can have a bias or slant (just be aware of it) – **THAT ALONE DOESN’T MAKE THE PIECE WRONG OR UNWORTHY OF REFLECTION.**
 - You can have **purposeful distortion or misrepresentation of facts** (like on Fox News or at The Heritage Foundation) that is a **purely manipulative form of propaganda** – which is a problem for uncritical thinkers.
 - Or you can have writers/commentators who use **propaganda/persuasion arguments to stir passions in their audience** –

but who are not really distorting or misrepresenting the facts – just slanting the presentation for effect (often comedic) – like Jon Stewart on *The Daily Show* or Keith Olbermann on *Countdown*. These can often be very good sources of information, even if not presented in a dry New York Times journalistic style (found in general reporting) showing no political slant.

- **A political slant does not automatically make something wrong or incorrect.** You may not agree with it, and a critical eye will help you decide if you do, but don't automatically dismiss a piece (liberal or conservative) just because you find a slant, propaganda technique, or style in it.
- **Apply your Critical Eye Analysis instead.**

The goal of this course is to provide you with “hands-on” experience throughout this semester in developing a ‘critical eye’ through our classroom discussions of issues, your critical reading of *The New York Times* and other media sources that we critique during class together, and your work as a State Department analyst in this policy simulation.

Through this training, I hope that you will gain the ability to engage in reasoned, thoughtful discussions of issues/problems, become a discerning consumer of information, and be able to avoid (or at least be aware of) the biases that exist both in the media and yourselves.