

Course Title	LAS303 Comparative Foreign Policy		Instructor(s)	Rui Saraiva
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Class Style	Lecture	Office Hours	TBA	
Track	Global liberal arts	Mode of Instruction	Single	
Credits	2	Allocated Year	3 rd year, Fall	
Active Learning	2.3. Presentations, 4.1. Interactive lectures, 4.3. Free discussions, 4.4. Case studies, 4.8. Informal debates, 4.9. Group work on questions, 4.10. Think-pair-share and Think-group-share.	Compulsory or Elective	Elective	
Course Overview	<p>Why do nations act as they do on the world stage? This course approaches foreign policy analysis through first principles thinking and classical international relations theories, training students to reason from foundational concepts and theories rather than defaulting to opinions or slogans. We examine the classical pillars of Foreign Policy Analysis: leadership, national interest, and national security strategy. Through comparative case studies, students dissect how individual leaders perceive threats and opportunities, how states define and pursue their national interests, and how these interests translate into concrete policy instruments. The course features two intensive workshops where students apply analytical frameworks to real-world cases to gather data on leadership profiles and national interest calculations. By the end of this course, students will analyze foreign policy behavior through systematic examination of causal drivers, structural constraints, and strategic logics.</p>			
Course Objectives	<p>Upon completion of this course, students will be able to: (1) Deconstruct foreign policy decisions by identifying underlying assumptions and strategic logics; (2) Analyze how leadership variables—cognition, personality, decision-making styles—shape state behavior; (3) Define and operationalize national interest, distinguishing vital, important, and peripheral interests across state contexts; (4) Identify and compare foreign policy pillars of major powers, examining how states prioritize diplomatic, economic, military, and soft power instruments; (5) Evaluate national security strategies as documents revealing state priorities, threat perceptions, and strategic culture; (6) Conduct structured comparative analysis of foreign policies using consistent analytical frameworks; (7) Use AI tools as research assistants while maintaining critical judgment about data quality and analytical rigor; (8) Articulate and defend analytical positions with reasoned arguments.</p>			
Prerequisite				
Course Schedule	No	Contents	Homework	
	1	First Principles Thinking in Foreign Policy Analysis	Preparatory readings and assignments.	
	2	The Individual Level: Leadership and Cognition	Preparatory readings and assignments.	
	3	Leadership Styles and Operational Codes	Preparatory readings and assignments.	
	4	Workshop 1: Leadership Analysis (Part 1)	Select two leaders for comparative analysis.	

		Use AI tools to gather biographical data, speeches, and decision patterns.
5	Workshop 1: Leadership Analysis (Part 2)	Apply leadership frameworks. Peer review draft analyses. Refine comparative arguments for midterm presentation.
6	Midterm Preparation and Analytical Framework Review	Final preparation for midterm presentations. Review leadership analysis frameworks and presentation structure.
7	Leadership Analysis Presentations	Student presentations comparing leadership profiles of two country leaders.
8	National Interest: Foundations and Definitions	Preparatory readings and assignments.
9	Foreign Policy Pillars and the DIME (Diplomatic, Information, Military, and Economic) Framework	Preparatory readings and assignments.
10	National Security Strategy Documents	Preparatory readings and assignments.
11	Workshop 2: National Interest Analysis (Part 1)	Select two countries for comparative analysis. Gather documents, policy statements, and strategic priorities.
12	Workshop 2: National Interest Analysis (Part 2)	Apply national interest and foreign policy pillar frameworks. Peer review draft analyses. Develop comparative arguments.
13	Comparative Case Studies: Great Powers	Preparatory readings and assignments.
14	Analytical Frameworks Review and Presentation Preparation	Final preparation for comparative presentations. Review national interest, FP pillars, and NSS frameworks.
15	National Interest, National Security Strategies, and Foreign Policy Pillars Presentations	Student presentations comparing national interest, NSS, and FP pillars of two countries.
Grading	Participation (30%) Assignments and presentations (20%) Midterm Examination (25%) Final Examination (25%)	

Textbooks	<p>Students will be asked to read sections of the books listed in the reference section. Other relevant reading materials will be provided by the instructor. Students should bring printed or digital copies of the assigned reading to each class.</p>
References	<p>Breuning, Marijke. 2007. <i>Foreign Policy Analysis: A Comparative Introduction</i> (1st ed.). Palgrave Macmillan.</p> <p>George, A. L. (1969). The "operational code": A neglected approach to the study of political leaders and decision-making. <i>International Studies Quarterly</i>, 13 (2), 190-222.</p> <p>Hermann, M. G. (1980). Explaining foreign policy behavior using the personal characteristics of political leaders. <i>International Studies Quarterly</i>, 24 (1), 7-46.</p> <p>Hudson, V. M. (2019). <i>Foreign policy analysis: Classic and contemporary theory</i>. Rowman & Littlefield.</p> <p>Rosenau, J. (1966). Pre-Theories and Theories of Foreign Policy. In B. R. Farrell (Ed.), <i>Approaches to Comparative and International Politics</i> (pp. 27-92). Northwestern University Press.</p>
NOTES	<p>Attendance: Mandatory. Missing more than 2 sessions significantly impacts your participation grade. Missing more than 5 sessions means you will not be able to pass this course.</p> <p>Success depends on completing the assigned readings (approximately 10 pages weekly) before each class.</p> <p>Workshops require collaborative research and analysis using AI tools for data gathering, but your analytical conclusions must be your own.</p> <p>Presentations will be evaluated on the quality of reasoning and evidence. Academic integrity is paramount: cite all sources, distinguish between your analysis and AI-assisted research, and attribute ideas appropriately.</p>