

CRISIS & DISASTER IN INTERNATIONAL POLITICS

POLS 5367
CRN 80495

About this course

Crises and disasters are always and everywhere political events. In this course we will explore these events, using the theories and methods of political science and economics. Our focus will be not just on the politics crises and disasters themselves but on how these events can serve as an analytical windows, allowing us to better view and appreciate some of the underlying incentives that always shape our domestic and international politics.

Throughout the semester we will illustrate these concepts by comparing cases. These stories will provide us with a common narrative for analysis and hopefully force us to think carefully about the difficult choices facing policymakers and the powerful incentives that guide them.

Course objectives

- Gain factual knowledge (terminology, classifications, methods, trends) about the politics of crises and disasters.
- Learn fundamental principles, generalizations and theories associated with studying and modeling these events.
- Improve critical thinking and writing skills

Course materials

There are no text books purchase for this seminar. However, there are a few case studies that you will need to purchase online and download

from various sources. The total cost should be less than \$20. All other readings are available through Bb.

POLS5367 Course Requirements

Seminar participation 10%

Our primary interaction in this course will occur in our virtual classroom, our Slack team page. In addition, we'll have two or three videoconferences where we'll meet to engage with guests or discuss case studies. See the video and the rubric posted online for how I will evaluate participation on a weekly basis.

Response Papers 50%

You'll write two papers (5–7 pages ea.) in response to the material in each unit. You will submit each paper as a draft and spend a few days reviewing and commenting on one of your colleague's drafts. (Your review is part of the response paper grade.) Then you'll revise and resubmit a final version.

Case Study Project 40%

You will write a case study on a course-related topic. Please see the video (posted on Slack and Bb) where I lay out the mechanics and expectations of these projects. You'll submit a first draft of your case (100 points). I'll make comments, and you'll have the opportunity to revise and resubmit (300 points). Due dates below.

Dr. Jason Enia



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Campus Office Hours: W 10:30–12; by appt.*

*Please note: Most weekdays, I am in my office on campus for some if not all of the day. If you need to meet me in person outside of my open-door office hours, just email me or send me a message to make an appointment.





Deadlines

All assigned work must be completed and submitted by due date/times indicated. There is no grace period. It is your responsibility to ensure that you leave yourself enough time to post/submit your assignment before the deadline. Everything that comes in after is late, and penalties will start to accrue as follows:

LATE	PENALTY
1 minute–24 hours	10%
24–48 hours	30%
48–72 hours	50%
72–96 hours	75%
96+ hours	100%

When you complete an assignment upload, you will receive a receipt via email. If you do not receive a receipt, I strongly advise you to log in to Blackboard to confirm that your document uploaded properly. I will only entertain “technological error” excuses if they are accompanied by your upload receipt!

Determining Your Final Grade

Your current running total/grade will always be available on Blackboard. The final letter grade will be determined as follows per University policy:

EARNED	GRADE	DENOTATION
90–100%	A	Excellent
80–89%	B	Acceptable
70–79%	C	Pass, insufficient
below 70%	F	Failure

Academic Integrity

You are expected to maintain complete honesty and integrity in academic experiences both in and out of the classroom. Any student found guilty of any instance of academic dishonesty will fail the course. In addition, the University and its official representatives may initiate disciplinary proceedings against a student accused of any form of academic dishonesty including, but not limited to, cheating on an examination or other academic work which is to be submitted, plagiarism, collusion and the abuse of resource materials. If you have any questions, please ask!

Absences on Religious Holy Days

Section 51.911(b) of the Texas Education Code requires that an institution of higher education excuse a student from attending classes or other required activities, including examinations, for the observance of a religious holy day, including travel for that purpose. Section 51.911 (a) (2) defines a religious holy day as: “a holy day observed by a religion whose places of worship are exempt from property taxation under Section 11.20....” A student whose absence is excused under this subsection may not be penalized for that absence and shall be allowed to take an examination or complete an assignment from which the student is excused within a reasonable time after the absence.

University policy 861001 provides the procedures to be followed by the student and instructor. A student desiring to absent himself/herself from a scheduled class in order to observe (a) religious holy day(s) shall present to each instructor involved a written statement concerning the religious holy day(s). The instructor will complete a form notifying the student of a reasonable timeframe in which the missed assignments and/or examinations are to be completed.

Disability Services

It is the policy of Sam Houston State University that individuals 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 subjected 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 their individual instructors so that appropriate strategies can

be considered and helpful procedures can be developed to ensure that participation and achievement opportunities are not impaired.



COURSE INTRODUCTION (SEPT 5 - SEPT 11)

READINGS

Defining crises

- Boin et al. (2017) The Politics of Crisis Management: Public Leadership Under Pressure pp. 5–12.
- Brecher (1978) “A Theoretical Approach to International Crisis Behavior”, pp. 5–24.
- McCormack (1978) “International Crises: A Note on Definition” pp. 352–358.

CASE STUDIES

- [Thomas \(2015\) “Chicago's Deadly 1995 Heat Wave : An Oral History”](#)
- [Weeks, Howitt, & Leonard \(2012\) “‘Miracle on the Hudson’: Landing U.S. Airways Flight 1549,” Kennedy School Case No. 1966.0.](#) Also purchase and read [Part B](#). (\$7.90)

NOTES

- ➡ Set up a Slack account. See my video on this for more information. Our team’s URL is pols5367shsufall2017.slack.com. (Hopefully, you’ve received an email invitation from me.)
- ➡ Watch all of the videos on the #coursemechanics channel on Slack. (Also cross-posted on Bb.) Please post any questions in the discussion thread created on Slack under each of the videos.
- ➡ It’s never too early to think about your case study project. See the video on Slack (and Bb) and discuss with me.

CRISES & THE MOTIVATIONS OF NATION STATES (SEPT 12 - OCT 1)

READINGS

The nature of the international system

- Mearsheimer (2014) “Anarchy & the Struggle for Power” in The Tragedy of Great Power Politics, pp. 29–54.
- Jervis (1978) “Cooperation Under the Security Dilemma” pp. 167–214.

Information and incentives in the anarchic international system

- Zenko (2013) “The Signal and the Noise” pp. 1–4.
- Fearon (1997) “Signaling Foreign Policy Interests: Tying Hands Versus Sinking Costs” pp. 68–90.
- Tingley & Walter (2011) “Can Cheap Talk Deter? An Experimental Analysis” pp. 996–1020.

Domestic incentives in international crises

- Fearon (1994) “Domestic Political Audiences and the Escalation of International Disputes” pp. 577–592.
- Schultz (1998) “Domestic Opposition and Signaling in International Crises” pp. 829–844.
- Levendusky and Horowitz (2012) “When Backing Down Is the Right Decision: Partisanship, New Information, and Audience Costs” pp. 323–338.

CASE STUDIES

- [Cuban Missile Crisis, 1962](#) (Take your time, and explore all documents and videos.)
- [North Korea nuclear crisis, 1994](#) (Frontline 2003, “Kim’s Nuclear Gamble” approx. 55 minutes)
- North Korea nuclear crisis, present (See documents/links on Blackboard.)

NOTES

- ➡ From week to week, we’ll focus on the case studies and use the other readings to help us frame our analyses.
- ➡ See the unit’s introduction video for my suggestions about approaching the readings and cases.
- ➡ It’s never too early to think about your case study project. See the video on Slack (and Bb) and discuss with me.

IMPORTANT DATES & DEADLINES

9/20 Videoconference to discuss cases. Time TBD.

9/27 Upload first draft of response paper #1 to Bb.

10/1 Complete peer review (Bb) of colleague’s paper.

10/4 Upload final draft of response paper #1 to Bb.

DECISION MAKING & COORDINATION IN CRISES (OCT 2 - OCT 15)

READINGS

Key ideas on decision making processes (rationality, historical analogy, group-think, etc.)

- Oneal (1988) "The Rationality of Decision Making During International Crises" pp. 598–622.
- Herek et al. (1987) "Decision Making during International Crises: Is Quality of Process Related to Outcome?" pp. 203–226.
- Boin et al. (2017) *The Politics of Crisis Management*, pp. 34–38.

Vertical and horizontal coordination of decision making in domestic politics

- Boin et al. (2017) *The Politics of Crisis Management*, pp. 62–71.

CASE STUDIES

- [Frontline \(2012\) "Inside Japan's Nuclear Meltdown"](#) (approx. 55 minutes)
- [Frontline \(2010\) "The Spill"](#) (Deepwater Horizon explosion, approx. 55 minutes)

NOTES

- ➡ See the unit's introduction video for my suggestions about approaching the readings and cases.
- ➡ By the end of this unit, settle the topic of your case. Please discuss with me.

IMPORTANT DATES & DEADLINES

10/4 Upload final draft of response #1 to Bb. (listed above too)

INTERNATIONAL TENSIONS IN CRISIS & DISASTER MANAGEMENT (OCT 16 - NOV 1)

READINGS

The unintended consequences of intervention

- Bajoria (2013) "The Dilemma of Humanitarian Intervention," Council of Foreign Relations.
- Rauchhaus (2009) "Principal-Agent Problems in Humanitarian Intervention..." pp. 871–884.

The challenges of multiple actors

- Wilkenfeld & Brecher (1984) "International Crises, 1945–1975: The UN Dimension" pp. 45–67.
- Beardsley (2012) "UN intervention and the duration of international crises" pp. 355–349.
- Mishali–Ram (2013) "The Role of Intervention in Multi-Actor International Crises" pp. 55–82.
- Hannigan (2012) "The Kindness of Strangers" in *Disasters without Borders*, pp. 42–58.

CASE STUDIES

- [PBS Frontline \(2010\) "The Quake"](#) (approx. 55 minutes)
- [Elliott and Sullivan \(2015\) "How the Red Cross Raised Half a Billion Dollars for Haiti and Built Six Homes" Pro Publica.](#)
- ["Peacekeeping without Accountability: The United Nations' Responsibility for the Haitian Cholera Epidemic" \(2013\).](#)

NOTES

- ➡ See the unit's introduction video for my suggestions about approaching the readings and cases.
- ➡ Continue to push ahead with your case study projects. Remember that the deadline for submitting your first draft is due 11/19.

IMPORTANT DATES & DEADLINES

10/25 Videoconference to discuss cases. Time TBD.

10/29 Upload first draft of response paper #2 to Bb.

11/2 Complete peer review (Bb) of colleague's paper.

11/5 Upload final draft of response paper #2 to Bb.

THE POLITICAL CONSEQUENCES OF CRISES & DISASTERS (NOV 2 - NOV 19)

READINGS

Policy change after catastrophic events

- Birkland (2007) *Lessons of Disaster: Policy Change After Catastrophic Events*. pp. 1–30; 103–156; 157–195
- Tama (2014) “Crises, Commissions, and Reform: The Impact of Blue–Ribbon Panels” pp. 152–164.

The idea of “disaster diplomacy”

- Ker–Lindsay (2000) “Greek–Turkish Rapprochement: The Impact of ‘Disaster Diplomacy’?” pp. 215–232.
- Kelman (2012) “Hypotheses and Research Questions,” in *Disaster Diplomacy*, pp. 11–17.
- Acinaroglu, DiCicco, and Radziszewski (2011) “Avalanches & Olive Branches,” pp. 260–275.

CASE STUDIES

- Gawronski & Olson (2013) “Disasters as Crisis Triggers for Critical Junctures? The 1976 Guatemala Case” pp. 133–149.
- [Enia \(2006\) “Between Promise & Delivery” GUISD Case #313](#). (\$3.50)

NOTES

- ➡ See the unit’s introduction video for my suggestions about approaching the readings and cases.
- ➡ The deadline for submitting the first draft of your case project is 11/19.

IMPORTANT DATES & DEADLINES

- 11/2 Complete peer review (Bb) paper #2. (listed above too)
- 11/5 Upload final draft of response paper #2. (listed above too)
- 11/19 Upload first draft of your case to Bb.

PREVENTING & MITIGATING FUTURE INTERNATIONAL DISASTERS (NOV 20 - DEC 5)

READINGS

Thoughts on mediating present and future crises

- Wilkenfeld et al. (2003) “Mediating International Crises: Cross–National and Experimental Perspectives” pp. 279–301.
- Smil (2008) “Fatal Discontinuities,” in *Global Catastrophes and Trends: The Next Fifty Years*, Cambridge, MA: The MIT Press, pp. 9–69.
- Smil (2008) “Dealing with Risk and Uncertainty,” in *Global Catastrophes and Trends: The Next Fifty Years*, Cambridge, MA: The MIT Press, pp. 219–253.

CASE STUDIES

- [Fisher \(2015\) “How World War III Became Possible,” Vox](#). Read the whole thing. Click through and read any of the linked references that interest you.
- Check out [The Economist “The World If” series](#). Look at any that interest you. I’ll make some suggestions on our Slack channel.

NOTES

- ➡ See the unit’s introduction video for my suggestions about approaching the readings and cases.

IMPORTANT DATES & DEADLINES

- 11/19 Upload first draft of your case to Bb. (listed above too)
- 12/5 Upload final draft of your case to Bb.