Course Description

This workshop in political decision making has a theoretical component and a practical one. The theoretical part of the course focuses on models of decision making (rational actor, prospect theory, poliheuristic theory, bureaucratic politics, organizational politics, the cybernetic theory of decision, groupthink, and polythink), biases in decision making, the decision environment, and domestic, international and psychological influences on political decision making.

The practical component of the workshop demonstrates how to utilize the Decision Board platform (decisionboard.org) for process tracing of political and economic decisions, trends and events, voting decisions, and as a Decision Support System.

Course Goals

To familiarize the student with essentials of decision making and with computerized process tracing

A. Essentials of Decision Making

Who makes political decisions?
Types of decisions
Information processing characteristics
Applied Decision Analysis (ADA)
Groupthink, Polythink, and Con-Div
Decision rules
Comparing and contrasting models of decision making
  Rational actor/Expected Utility model
  Prospect Theory
  Cybernetic Theory
  Poliheuristic Theory
  Bureaucratic Politics
  Organizational Politics
Biases and heuristics in decision making
Foreign policy decisions
Influences on national security and foreign policy decision making

B. The use of Decision Board (DB) for research, training, and teaching

Computerized process tracing
Detecting biases in decision making using DB
DB and Applied Decision Analysis
C. Guidance in writing your final paper

Grading
Active participation: 10%
Computer exercise: 20%
Pilot study: 70%

Lecturer Office Hours
Schedule in advance through Shira Akiva
Shira.Akiva@idc.ac.il

Teaching Assistant
Eldad Tal-Shir
eldad.talshir@post.idc.ac.il - schedule via e-mail

Reading List

Reading Assignments:
Allison, Graham. The Cuban Missile Crisis at 50. Foreign Affairs, Aug. 2012
Kertzer, Joshua D. and Dustin Tingley. Political Psychology in International Relations: Beyond the Paradigms (2018)

Recommended Reading: