



SPI 547: The Conduct of International Diplomacy
Graduate Seminar - Fall 2026
Instructor: Daniel Kurtzer
Thursday, 9:00-12:00

This course examines the formulation and execution of policy through diplomacy in the global arena. It explores key concepts and theories concerning national interest, negotiations, decision-making, strategic design, leadership, and crisis management; and it applies those concepts via case studies in diplomacy. The course aims to help students learn not only to analyze but also to implement policy: it employs an action-oriented approach that obliges students to think and act as policymakers and diplomats would, thus gaining a better appreciation of how and why states, organizations, leaders, and diplomats act as they do.

Assignments and grades:

- A 1-2 page weekly reading response:
 - 1-2 paragraphs that summarize the key points in the assigned readings;
 - 1-2 paragraphs that draw out lessons learned, implications, and challenging issues;
 - 1-2 questions or issues for discussion in class.
 - Please email these papers in Word, not PDF or Google doc, by 10:00 PM on Tuesday evening before class.
- Presentation of one of the case studies listed on pages 7-9 (below), or – in consultation with the instructor -- a different case study of your choosing.
- A 12-15 page study of some aspect of diplomacy.
- Grades will be based on weekly reading responses (20%), class participation (10%), presentation of a case study (20%), and the study of some aspect of diplomacy (50%).

September 3: Policy process, strategy, tactics, tools, leadership, and diplomacy

September 10: Diplomacy and statecraft

Reading:

1. Gilles Andreani, "Negotiating with Savoir Faire: Twelve Rules for Negotiating with the United States," in Richard Solomon and Nigel Quinney, eds., *American Negotiating Behavior: Wheeler-Dealers, Legal Eagles, Bullies, and Preachers* (USIP Press, 2010), 279-289.
2. Lakhdar Brahimi and Salman Ahmed, "In Pursuit of Sustainable Peace: The Seven Deadly Sins of Mediation," NYU Center on International Cooperation, May 2008, 1-12. <https://ciaotest.cc.columbia.edu/wps/cic/0001438/0001438.pdf>
3. Philip Zelikow, "Diplomacy and the Mysteries of the How: The 'Craft' in Statecraft." *American Diplomacy*, May 2024. [Diplomacy and the Mysteries of the How: The 'Craft' in Statecraft | American Diplomacy Est 1996 \(unc.edu\)](https://www.american-diplomacy.com/2024/05/diplomacy-and-the-mysteries-of-the-how-the-craft-in-statecraft/)

September 17: Preventive diplomacy

Reading:

1. Paul Stares, *Preventive Engagement: How America can Avoid War, Stay Strong, and Keep the Peace* (Columbia University Press, 2018), Chapter 1 (1-25), Chapter 3 (55-89) and Chapter 8 (223-244).
2. Paul Stares, "Preparing for the Next Foreign Policy Crisis: What the United States Should Do," CFR, Dec. 2019. 1-18. https://cdn.cfr.org/sites/default/files/report_pdf/Preparing%20for%20the%20Next%20Foreign%20Policy%20Crisis.pdf

September 24: Crisis diplomacy

Reading:

1. Sergey Radchenko and Valdislav, "Blundering on the Brink: The Secret History and Unlearned Lessons of the Cuban Missile Crisis," *Foreign Affairs*, May/June 2023, Volume 102, Number 3.
2. Edward Avenell & David Hastings Dunn, "Crisis Diplomacy" in *The SAGE Handbook of Diplomacy*. <https://doi.org/10.4135/9781473957930>
3. Barton J. Bernstein, "Understanding Decisionmaking, U.S. Foreign Policy, and the Cuban Missile Crisis: A Review Essay," *International Security*, Vol. 25, No. 1 (Summer, 2000), 134-164. <https://www.jstor.org/stable/2626776>
4. Harlan Cleveland, "Crisis Diplomacy," *Foreign Affairs*, Vol. 41, No. 4 (July 1963), 638-649. <https://www.jstor.org/stable/20029649>

October 1: Coercive diplomacy

Reading:

1. U.S. Department of State, "Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action,"
<https://2009-2017.state.gov/e/eb/tfs/spi/iran/jcpoa/index.htm>
2. Suzanne Maloney, "After the Iran Deal: A Plan B to Contain the Islamic Republic," *Foreign Affairs*, Mar. 2023.
3. Peter Viggo Jakobsen, "Coercive Diplomacy" in *The SAGE Handbook of Diplomacy*. <https://doi.org/10.4135/9781473957930>
4. Jon Alterman, "Coercive Diplomacy against Iraq, 1990-98" in Robert J. Art and Patrick M. Cronin, eds., *The United States and Coercive Diplomacy* (USIP Press, 2003), 275-303. http://www-personal.umich.edu/~juliafar/politics/the_united_states_and_coercive_diplomacy.pdf
5. Syed Rizwan Haider Bukhari, "From Negotiation to Escalation: Coercive Diplomacy, Military Force, and the 2026 Iran-US Nuclear Conflict," *Journal of Development and Social Sciences*, Vol. 7, No. 1, 2026. <https://ojs.jdss.org.pk/journal/article/view/1624>
6. Martina Sprague, "The Nuclear Brink Revisited: Assessing Coercive Diplomacy in Iran." <https://www.e-ir.info/2026/04/24/the-nuclear-brink-revisited-assessing-coercive-diplomacy-in-iran/>
7. Abdul Rashid Ghambu and Mohammed Gadafi Ibrahim, "Security Communication and the Security Dilemma: Insights from the Iran-Israel Rivalry," *International Journal of Contemporary Security Studies*, Vol. 2 No. 1 (2026). <https://contemporarysecuritystudies.com/journal/article/view/27>
8. Abubakar Yusuf, "From Securitization to Open War: Media Framing, Alliance Politics, and the Collapse of Coercive Diplomacy in the United States-Israeli Bombing of Iran," March 13, 2026. https://papers.ssrn.com/sol3/papers.cfm?abstract_id=6405818
9. Lance Gordon, "Iran in the Box: The Coercive Architecture of the 2026 Iran War," *Small Wars Journal*, March 30, 2026. <https://smallwarsjournal.com/2026/03/30/iran-in-the-box/>
10. Clayton Thomas, et. al., "U.S. Conflict with Iran," R88887, *Congressional Research Service*, March 26, 2026. <https://sgp.fas.org/crs/mideast/R48887.pdf>

October 8: Track II diplomacy**Reading:**

1. Randa Slim, "The U.S.-Iran Track II Dialogue (2002–2008): Lessons Learned and Implications for the Rockefeller Brothers Fund's Grantmaking Strategy," August 3, 2010, 4-16. <https://www.issuelab.org/resources/28110/28110.pdf>
2. Harold H. Saunders, "Sustained Dialogue in Managing Intractable Conflict," *Negotiation Journal*, January 2003, 85-95. <https://link.springer.com/content/pdf/10.1023/a:1022308226501.pdf>

October 15: Challenges of bilateral diplomacy**Reading:**

1. Robert Hutchings, "American Diplomacy and the End of the Cold War in Europe," in Robert Hutchings and Jeremi Suri, eds., *Foreign Policy Breakthroughs: Cases in Successful Diplomacy*, 148-172.
2. Paul Kreutzer, "Ten Principles of Operational Diplomacy: a proposed framework," *American Diplomacy*, June 2014. [Ten Principles of Operational Diplomacy: a proposed framework | American Diplomacy Est 1996 \(unc.edu\)](#)
3. "The Skills of Diplomacy," National Museum of American Diplomacy. [The Skills of Diplomacy - The National Museum of American Diplomacy \(state.gov\)](#)
4. Robert Pearson, "The new age of diplomacy requires heightened expertise and foresight," *The Hill*, April 24, 2023. [The new age of diplomacy requires heightened expertise and foresight | The Hill](#)

October 17-25: Fall break. No class**October 29: Expeditionary diplomacy****Reading:**

1. James Bullington, "Expeditionary Diplomacy and the Casamance Conflict," September 9, 2012. <https://2009-2017.state.gov/j/cso/releases/remarks/2013/214373.htm>
2. Marc Grossman, "Diplomacy Before and After Conflict," *PRISM*, Vol. 1, No. 4 (09/2010), 3-14. <https://www.jstor.org/stable/10.2307/26469073>
3. Anthony Cordesman, "The Death of Ambassador Chris Stevens, the Need for Expeditionary Diplomacy, and the Real Lessons for U.S. Diplomacy," Center for Strategic and International Studies, 2012. <https://www.csis.org/analysis/death-ambassador-chris-stevens-need-expeditionary-diplomacy-and-real-lessons-us-diplomacy>

November 5: Multilateral diplomacy**Reading:**

1. James P. Muldoon Jr. and JoAnn Fagot Aviel, "Multilateral Diplomacy," *International Studies*, July 30, 2020.
2. Daniel Kurtzer and Aaron Miller, "Multilateralism and U.S. Policy in the Middle East," *Carnegie Endowment for International Peace*, December 14, 2020.
<https://carnegieendowment.org/2020/12/14/multilateralism-and-u.s.-policy-in-middle-east-pub-83437>
3. Kenneth Brill, "To compete with China, the US must embrace multilateral diplomacy," *The Hill*, April 30, 2023.
<https://thehill.com/opinion/international/3978238-to-compete-with-china-the-us-must-embrace-multilateral-diplomacy/>

November 12: Diplomacy during military conflict**Reading:**

1. Ronald E. Neumann, Charles Ray, James Jeffrey, "Lessons We Should Have Learned from Vietnam," *The Jerusalem Strategic Tribune*, December 2022.
<https://jstribune.com/neumann-ray-jeffrey-lessons-we-should-have-learned-from-vietnam/>
2. Doron Almog, Shaul Arieli, Yair Golan, "Lessons We Should Have Learned from Lebanon," *The Jerusalem Strategic Tribune*, April 2023.
<https://jstribune.com/almog-arieli-golan-lessons-from-first-lebanon-war/>
3. Garrett Graff, "Orders of disorder: who disbanded Iraq's army and de-Baathified its bureaucracy," *Foreign Affairs*, May 5, 2023.

November 19: Ethics and diplomacy**Reading:**

1. Amy Gutmann and Dennis Thompson, eds., *Ethics and Politics: Cases and Comments* (Nelson-Hall, 1998), 1-26.
2. David A. Welch, "Ethics and Foreign Policy," *Georgetown Journal of International Affairs*, Vol. 1, No. 1 (Winter/Spring 2000), 79-88.
https://www.jstor.org/stable/pdf/43134008.pdf?refreqid=excelsior%3A72c2944f17a65f5504f6d0d3f4c4cc13&ab_segments=&origin=&initiator=&acceptTC=1
3. Corneliu Bjola, "Diplomatic Ethics," in *The SAGE*

Handbook of Diplomacy,

<https://doi.org/10.4135/9781473957930>

4. Brian Barder, "Diplomacy, Ethics and the National Interest: What Are Diplomats For," *The Hague Journal of Diplomacy*, 5 (2010), 289-297.
5. Asa Kasher and Amos Yadlin, "Assassination and Preventive Killing," *The SAIS Review of International Affairs*, Winter-Spring 2005, Vol. 25, No. 1, 41-57.
<https://www.jstor.org/stable/26999245>
6. Avishai Margalit and Michael Walzer, "Israel: Civilians & Combatants," *N.Y. Review of Books*, Vol. 56, No. 8, May 14, 2009.
7. Mark Clarence Walker, "Morality, self-interest, and leaders in international affairs," *The Leadership Quarterly*, Vol. 17, No. 2, 138-145.

November 26: Thanksgiving - No class.

December 3: The future of diplomacy

Reading:

1. U.S. Government Accountability Office, "Priority Open Recommendations: Department of State," GAO-24-107318, Jun 04, 2024. <https://www.gao.gov/products/gao-24-107318>
2. "Negotiating in a Transforming World," in Solomon and Quinney, eds., *American Negotiating Behavior*, 293-313.
3. William J. Burns, *The Back Channel: A Memoir of American Diplomacy and the Case for its Renewal* (Random House, 2019), 400-427.
4. Deborah McCarthy, "The Decline of U.S. Diplomacy: Implications for U.S. Global Leadership," *Nordic Review of International Studies*, 5/2025.
<https://nris.journal.fi/article/view/179570>

Case studies

Week 2 - Diplomacy and statecraft

- Princeton N. Lyman "From Civil War to Civil War: The Struggle for Peace in Sudan and South Sudan: A Commentary on the Triumphs and Failures of Diplomacy," Institute for Study of Diplomacy, Georgetown Univ., Case 344.
- Daniel Curran, James K. Sebenius, Michael Watkins, "Two Paths to Peace: Contrasting George Mitchell in Northern Ireland with Richard Holbrooke in Bosnia-Herzegovina," *Negotiation Journal* (2004) 20 (4), 513-537.
<https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1571-9979.2004.00041.x>

Week 3 - Preventive diplomacy

- James E. Bjork & Allan E. Goodman, "Yugoslavia, 1991-1992: Could Diplomacy Have Prevented a Tragedy?" Institute for the Study of Diplomacy, Georgetown Univ., Case 179.
- https://kroc.nd.edu/assets/279569/un_preventive_diplomacy_policy_paper_and_case_studies.pdf
 - UN Preventive Diplomacy in the 2008-10 Crisis in Guinea, 25-39.
 - Firefighting on Multiple Fronts: Preventive Diplomacy in Lebanon through the Syria Crisis (2011-17), 40-61.
 - UN Preventive Diplomacy and Facilitation of Dialogue in Malawi (2011-12), 62-74.
 - UN Preventive Diplomacy during the 2015 Nigerian Elections, 75-87.
 - Preventive Diplomacy and the Southern Sudan Independence Referendum (2010-11), 88-108.
 - Things Fall Apart: Holding the Centre together through Yemen's 2011 Popular Uprising (April - November 2011, 109-127.

Week 4 - Crisis diplomacy

- James Blight, Joseph Nye, Jr., and David Welch, "The Cuban Missile Crisis Revisited," *Foreign Affairs*, Vol. 66, No. 1 (Fall 1987), 170-188.
<https://www.jstor.org/stable/20043297>
- Andrew Steigman, "The Iranian Hostage Crisis (1979-1981): Explores U.S. diplomatic efforts to resolve the hostage situation in Tehran," Institute for the Study of Diplomacy, Georgetown Univ., Case 348.
- Tara Baird and Lyn n Kuzma, "A Madman's Appetite - Operation Menu (Cambodia): Examines Nixon's secret bombing campaign and its diplomatic fallout," Institute for the Study of Diplomacy, Georgetown Univ., Case 270.
- Christopher Klein, "A Tale of Two Vetoes: How North Korea tests the UN system -- and the Great Powers," Institute for the Study of Diplomacy, Georgetown Univ., Case 369.
- Maley, W., & Jamal, A. S., "Diplomacy of Disaster: The Afghanistan 'Peace Process' and the Taliban Occupation of Kabul," *The Hague Journal of Diplomacy*, 17(1), 2022, 32-63. https://brill.com/view/journals/hjd/17/1/article-p32_2.xml

Week 5 - Coercive diplomacy

- Micah Zenko, "Coercive Diplomacy before the War in Kosovo: America's Approach in 1998," Institute for the Study of Diplomacy, Georgetown Univ., Case 279.
- Bruce Jentleson and Christopher A. Whytock, "Who "Won" Libya? The Force-Diplomacy Debate and Its Implications for Theory and Policy," *International Security* (2006) 30 (3): 47-86. <https://doi.org/10.1162/isec.2005.30.3.47>
- Christopher Stevens, "The Libyan Debate: Coercive Diplomacy Reconsidered," *Diplomacy & Statecraft*, Volume 28, 2017, Issue 2, 320-343. <https://doi.org/10.1080/09592296.2017.1309894>

Week 6 - Track II diplomacy

- Peter Jones, "U.S.-Iran Nuclear Track Two from 2005 to 2011: What Have We Learned? Where Are We Going?" *Negotiation Journal*, Vol. 30, Issue 4, October 2012, 347-366. <https://onlinelibrary-wiley-com.ezproxy.princeton.edu/doi/10.1111/nejo.12067>
- Daniel Wertz, "Track II Diplomacy with Iran and North Korea: Lessons Learned from Unofficial Talks with Nuclear Outliers," June 2017. https://www.ncnk.org/sites/default/files/NCNK_Track_II_Conference_Report_0.pdf
- Sajjad Malik, "Track II diplomacy and its impact on Pakistan India peace process," *Strategic Studies*, Vol. 31, no. 4/Vol. 32, no. 1 (Winter 2011 & Spring 2012), 108-128. <https://www.jstor.org/stable/48527640>

Week 7 - Bilateral diplomacy

- Richard A. Moss, "Circumventing the Foreign Policy Bureaucracy: Kissinger, Dobrynin, and Back Channel Diplomacy," Institute for Study of Diplomacy, Georgetown Univ., Case 353.
- Happymon Jacob, "The Kashmir Back channel: India-Pakistan negotiations on Kashmir from 2004 to 2007," Institute for Study of Diplomacy, Georgetown Univ., Case 356.

Week 8 - Expeditionary diplomacy

- Carol L. Hanner, "Reading Ulysses in Baghdad," *Wake Forest Magazine*, Spring, 2022. <https://magazine.wfu.edu/2022/02/05/reading-ulysses-in-baghdad/>
- G.R. Berridge, "A weak diplomatic hybrid: U.S. Special Mission Benghazi, 2011-12," January 2013. <https://grberridge.diplomacy.edu/wp-content/uploads/2013/01/A-weak-diplomatic-hybrid.pdf>

Week 9 - Multilateral diplomacy

- David A. Korn, "The Making of UN Security Council Resolution 242,"

Institute for the Study of Diplomacy, Georgetown Univ., Case 178.

- Omur Yilmaz and Deborah Gerner, "U.S. and British Mediation Efforts During the 1974 Crisis Over Cyprus," Institute for the Study of Diplomacy, Georgetown Univ., Case 295.

Week 10 - Diplomacy during military conflict

- Gary Geipel, "The Nixon Administration and Vietnam: A Case Study in Negotiation and War Termination," Institute for the Study of Diplomacy, Georgetown Univ., Case 130.
- Abiodun Williams, "In Search of Peace: Negotiations to End the Angolan Civil War," Institute for the Study of Diplomacy, Georgetown Univ., Case 196.
- Marshall Singer, "The Tamil-Sinhalese Ethnic Conflict in Sri Lanka: A Case Study in Efforts to Negotiate a Settlement, 1983-1988," Institute for the Study of Diplomacy, Georgetown Univ., Case 151.
- Hugh Kearney and Robert Mulvihill, "The British-Irish Ethnic Conflict in Northern Ireland: A Case Study in Efforts to Reach a Settlement, 1973-1990," Institute for the Study of Diplomacy, Georgetown Univ., Case 197

Week 11 - Ethics of diplomacy

- Terry Nardin & Kathleen D. Pritchard, "Ethics and Intervention: The United States in Grenada, 1983," Institute for the Study of Diplomacy, Georgetown Univ., Case 156.
- Lyn Boyd, "Case 261 - A King's Exile: The Shah of Iran and Moral Considerations in U.S. Foreign Policy," Institute for the Study of Diplomacy, Georgetown Univ., Case 261.
- Daniel Kempton and Matthew Rossow, "The Extraordinary Rendition of Abu Omar: Ethics and the War on Terror, Institute for the Study of Diplomacy, Georgetown Univ., Case 318.