



## MEMORANDUM

**FROM: Ms. X**  
**TO: NEW AGENT**  
**RE: MISSION ASSIGNMENT**

The following is a summary of the mission you have chosen to accept. Please familiarize yourself with the mission's description, requirements, and standards of procedure. Periodic situation reports will be necessary as the mission nears completion. As per protocol, the purpose of the mission will be found as its course unravels. This document is classified as for your eyes only and is presented below in civilian format.

University of California, Los Angeles  
Spring 2008

### **Military Science 88S: Simulating U.S. Crisis Decision-making**

Meeting Times: Tuesday, 3-3:50pm  
Location: Student Activities Center 120P  
Unit: One Unit  
Grading: Pass/Not Pass only

Swati Srivastava  
Advisor: Captain Casey Miner  
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### **Course Description**

To walk a mile in the shoes of top U.S. policy-makers does not have to require obtaining multiple degrees and years of experience. As an undergraduate you are presented with such an opportunity now. The guiding principle of this seminar is "Education through Simulation," as students will view history not through a textbook but via their own experiences as leaders and diplomats.

The course is designed to provide practical involvement with theories and histories to students interested in actively learning material through role-playing and discussion. We will cover major crises in U.S. diplomacy and instances where national security was put in jeopardy necessitating a swift course of action from the American leadership. We will apply theories of decision-making during simulations to not only understand how diplomacy and leadership factor into crucial policy-making, but also how a few can alter the course of history for the many.



## **Course Goals**

The goals of the course is to receive a hands-on approach to crisis decision-making, to think critically about the accountability held for decisions made during crises, and to apply theoretical knowledge and historical background into practice.

## **Course Requirements**

- Your attendance is vital to a discussion-based seminar. Missing more than two classes (or missing more than one simulation) will result in a not pass. When you cannot make the class, email me in advance.
- Class participation is also important in a course where you are responsible for your own learning---your level of engagement is directly proportional to your level of satisfaction with the course. In order to make discussion meaningful, you must have completed the assigned reading thoroughly before class.
- Since this is a simulation-based class, it is imperative that during role-play you are prepared for your positions as well as display an understanding of the history and theory of the situation under consideration.

## **Structure**

Simulations will be held every other week starting week 3. The rest of the weeks we will discuss the history and background for each crisis before we simulate it the week after. The simulation will represent one specific policy crisis during a time of threat to U.S. national security. You will be given characters to represent—most likely positions of U.S. cabinet ministers—one week in advance of the simulation to provide time for research. Characters will be assigned based on preference and class participation during discussion.

## **Assignments**

### *Readings and Research*

We will discuss 4 major crises in U.S. foreign decision-making and an article will be assigned for each crisis highlighting its theoretical and historical significance. Due to the dense academic nature of these texts, no other reading would be required for that week. In addition, it is recommended that you read the Wikipedia entries on the crises for a general gist of the situation and to familiarize yourself with the timeline of events. During the weeks where there is no assigned reading, you will be expected to conduct research on your assigned character through a mix of online and library resources.

### *Discussion Board Postings*

After reading the assigned texts, you will be required to post a thoughtful response on the discussion board by 5pm the day preceding our class meeting. Examples of what



constitute as acceptable postings will be discussed during the first class. Since there are 4 readings, you will be writing 4 responses. As such, in order to pass the course, you must post at least 3 out of the 4 responses.

### *Reactions*

Since you will be playing a specific role of a historical character during crisis simulations, you will have felt certain experiences different than usual when attempting to formulate policies. To capture this novel experience, you will be required to write reactions on 3 out of the 4 simulations (the fifth simulation has a different final assignment) to receive a passing grade in the course.

### *Final Paper*

In lieu of an in-class simulation, the fifth crisis will be conducted virtually through email. You will be given updates on the situation during a 24-hour period in week 10. At the conclusion of this 24-hour period, your final assignment will be due in the form of a one-paged policy memo prescribing the course of action to the President in response to the given updates. Details will follow as time nears.

Thus, to receive a pass in this course, you must:

- Not miss more than two classes (or more than one simulation)
- Turn in at least 3 out of the 4 reactions on the simulation
- Post 3 out of the 4 reading responses to the discussion board
- Complete the final paper

## **Class Schedule**

### **Week 1: Introduction to Crisis decision-making and Mock Simulation**

Recommended Reading: A Ben-Zvi. 1976. "Hindsight and Foresight: A Conceptual Framework for the Analysis of Surprise Attacks"

### **Week 2: Pearl Harbor: History and Theory**

Required Reading: SD Sagan. 1988. "The Origins of the Pacific War"  
*Assignment: Discussion board posting*

### **Week 3: Pearl Harbor: Simulation**

*Assignment: Research character and email reaction piece*

### **Week 4: Cuban Missile Crisis: History and Theory**

Required Reading: L Scott, S Smith. 1994. "Lessons of October: Historians, Political Scientists, Policy-Makers and the Cuban Missile Crisis"

*Assignment: Discussion Board posting*



**Week 5: Cuban Missile Crisis: Simulation- U.S. cabinet**

*Assignment: Research character and email reaction piece*

**Week 6: Cuban Missile Crisis: Simulation- Russian cabinet**

*Assignment: Research character and email reaction piece*

**Week 7: Guest Speaker on U.S. Crisis Management**

**Week 8: Iran Hostage Crisis: History and Theory**

Required Reading: B Glad. 1989. “Personality, Political and Group Process Variables in Foreign Policy Decision-Making: Jimmy Carter's Handling of the Iranian Hostage Crisis”

*Assignment: Discussion board posting*

**Week 9: Iran Hostage Crisis: Simulation**

*Assignment: Research character and email reaction piece*

**Week 10: 9/11: History and Theory**

Required Reading: W Crotty. 2003. “Presidential Policymaking in Crisis Situations: 9/11 and Its Aftermath:”

*Assignment: Discussion Board posting*

**Week 10: Final Simulation (submitted through email)**

*Assignment: 1-page policy memo*