Alternative Analytic Techniques for International Affairs
U85 5410
Fall 2016
Professor Susan Craig
Wednesdays, 6-8:30 pm
Eads 215
Course website: bb.wustl.edu

Course Description
This course instills analytic rigor and imagination into the consideration of the most pressing issues in international affairs. Based on structured analytic techniques employed in the Intelligence Community, students in this course will hone critical thinking skills, consider overlooked ideas and develop unique perspectives. Students will be given the tools to recognize and overcome biases, mental shortcuts and unstated assumptions, and challenge conventional wisdom, while exploring current national security topics. We will employ five alternative analysis techniques – Devil’s Advocacy, What If?, High Impact/Low Probability, Team A/Team B, and Red Team. These techniques will facilitate strategic analysis of our NATO alliance, the Middle East, the terrorism threat and East Asia.

Rationale/Background
We are all prone to developing “ruts” in our thinking – connecting the same points frequently, and seeing similar patterns in new information. We unconsciously perceive information selectively through the lens of preconceptions, unwittingly search too narrowly for facts that confirm rather than discredit these preconceptions, and are unduly influenced by those with whom we surround ourselves. This is a natural and often effective way for our mind to work. But it prevents us from seeing new patterns, or alternate interpretations.

Structured analytic techniques for alternative analysis are meant to help us overcome these natural human tendencies – to help us develop new pathways in our brain, and keep our minds open to alternate interpretations of complex and rapidly changing situations. The field of alternative analysis is relatively new, born out of the intelligence failures of 9/11 and the Iraq War. These techniques are increasingly used across the defense, intelligence and business communities as a way to prevent similar failures of imagination and groupthink.

But these tools have applicability beyond the Intelligence Community. The skill to “think outside the box” and see things from other perspectives will serve all students of international affairs well as they strive to understand and contribute to a complex, dynamic, interconnected and multicultural world.

Course Goals
At the end of this course, you will:

- Recognize and appreciate the biases, shortcuts and failings of the human mind, and how structured analytic techniques are helpful in overcoming them.
- Be able to apply structured analytic techniques to issues in international affairs.
- Have a broad understanding of some of the most complex national security issues.
- Be able to write a professional, succinct, strategic-level memo and deliver a professional brief.
- Most importantly, be a more critical and creative thinker.
**Required Texts**
Micah Zenko, *Red Team: How To Succeed by Thinking Like the Enemy*, 2015

**Course Requirements and Expectations**
Alternative analysis is best when done collaboratively – the more ideas, the better. As you will quickly learn, “expertise” is overrated. Therefore, *your contributions to this course are as important as mine.*
We will brainstorm and challenge one another - in group work, online and through discussion. In order for this to work, *your preparation, attendance and participation are required.* You are expected to critically read all assigned readings, attend all course meetings, complete all assignments on time, keep up with current events in international affairs, and actively engage in both our virtual environment and in the classroom. We will utilize our Blackboard site regularly, and it will be a forum for sustained dialogue and more reflective engagement.

Because the success of this class depends on robust and respectful discussion, I hope you will limit behavior that is distracting and disrespectful to your peers (e.g. laptop use, eating, arriving late).

**Assignments**
You will have four memo assignments (including your final), written to a high-ranking U.S. government official. As such, it must be extremely concise, easy-to-read and strategic in nature. You must demonstrate both a mastery of the structured analytic technique you applied, and the complexity of the issue you are analyzing – in a few short pages. This requires multiple drafts and editing. An example memo will be provided prior to the first assignment. You will also have two in-class briefings and one group testimony, which will hone your professional presentation skills.

You will have the opportunity to earn 1000 points throughout the course. They are distributed as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Points</th>
<th>Assignment</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>25 pts.</td>
<td>1-pager on Biases and Heuristics (posted to online discussion forum)</td>
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<td>100 pts.</td>
<td>Memo 1 – Devil’s Advocacy on NATO</td>
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<td>50 pts.</td>
<td>Middle East Country Briefing and One-Pager (posted online)</td>
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<td>125 pts.</td>
<td>Memo 2 – What If? in The Middle East</td>
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<td>150 pts.</td>
<td>Group Testimony and Presentation – Team A/Team B on ISIS</td>
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<td>150 pts.</td>
<td>Memo 3 – Red Team on East Asia</td>
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<td>200 pts.</td>
<td>Final Project – Technique/Issue of your choice</td>
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<td>50 pts.</td>
<td>Final Project Brief</td>
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<td>150 pts.</td>
<td>Engagement</td>
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All written assignments will be submitted online through our Blackboard portal. Most assignments are due several days prior to our Wednesday meetings. This will give me time to read them and identify themes for our class meeting, and will give you a few days to focus solely on the week’s readings. Several assignments – the writing sample and the Middle East one-pager – will be submitted on a Discussion Board, to give your peers the benefit of reading and responding to them. The deadlines are all delineated below. Since they do vary, please pay close attention to them. If for some reason you cannot meet a deadline, you must speak with me *prior* to the assignment’s due date. Unexcused late assignments will not be accepted.
What is Engagement?
Class engagement is not about the quantity of times you participate in class. It is about quality. Quality will be judged by your preparation for class, the extent to which your comments or questions advance the discussion, the contribution’s relevance, and your ability to communicate your ideas clearly and concisely. Engagement with course content does not need to be limited to comments in class. You will also have the opportunity to demonstrate your engagement online. I will ask you to provide me a self-assessment of your engagement midway through the course. So keep track of your particularly thoughtful contributions – and don’t be afraid to remind me of them! I will provide you feedback throughout the course, to further clarify my expectations. You can earn extra engagement points for an exceptional online posting or contribution to our discussion.

If you must miss a class, please let me know prior to class, but understand that your engagement grade may be affected. Any unexcused absence will result in a 3 point deduction from your engagement grade.

Grading Scale
The grading scale is as follows:
92.5-100 A
89.5-92 A-
86.5-89 B+
81.5-86 B
78.5-81 B-
76.5-78 C+
71.5-76 C
69.5-71 C-
66.5-69 D+
60-66 D
0-59 F

Contact Information
You can reach me via email at: scraig@wustl.edu
and by phone at: 314-594-7442

I encourage you to communicate with me early and often. This class is collaborative, challenging and fast-paced – so I need your feedback, and you need mine. Thinking differently will seem like second nature by the end of the course – but until then, you are likely to need reassurance that you’re on the right track. So please reach out to me when you need clarification, additional explanation, or have feedback that would help me improve the course. You can reach out to me in whatever forum you feel most comfortable. We can communicate over email, over the phone, or in person. In addition to before and after class, I am on campus on Tuesdays and Fridays and would be more than happy to arrange a meeting during these times.

Academic Integrity
Do your own work. Plagiarizing, cheating, copying and fabricating or falsifying data will not be tolerated. Washington University’s policy can be found here:
http://www.wustl.edu/policies/undergraduate-academic-integrity.html
An easy rule of thumb: if you take 5 or more words from any one source, put quotes around it and cite it. This applies to all sources – electronic and print. If I suspect you have engaged in any sort of academic dishonesty, I will report it to the Dean of University College, who may take punitive action after conducting an investigation. Please let me know if you have questions about proper citation or collaboration.

Special Needs and Disabilities
If you have special needs, please contact Cornerstone, the Center for Advanced Learning at 935-5970. I will provide any accommodations for which you qualify as long as I receive documentation from Cornerstone.
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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Week</th>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Assignment</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Week 1: 8/31</td>
<td>Introductions and Course Overview</td>
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<td>Week 2: 9/7</td>
<td>Why We Need to Think Differently</td>
<td>Biases and Heuristics Writing</td>
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<td>Sample</td>
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<td>Due: SUNDAY, Sept 11</td>
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<td>Week 3: 9/14</td>
<td>Introduction to Alternative Analysis</td>
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<td>Week 4: 9/21</td>
<td>Devil’s Advocacy and NATO’s Relevance</td>
<td>Memo 1: Devil’s Advocacy</td>
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<td>Due: SUNDAY, Sept 25</td>
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<td>Week 5: 9/28</td>
<td>The Black Swan, What if? and High Impact/Low Probability – ONLINE</td>
<td>Briefing and One-Pager</td>
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<td>Due: TUESDAY, Oct 4</td>
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<td>Week 6: 10/5</td>
<td>The Messy Middle East</td>
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<td>Week 7: 10/12</td>
<td>Brainstorming Session – What if in the Middle East</td>
<td>Memo 2: What If</td>
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<td>Due: SUNDAY, Oct 16</td>
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<td>Week 8: 10/19</td>
<td>Team A/Team B and the ISIS Threat</td>
<td>Team A/B Group Testimony</td>
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<td>Due: WEDNESDAY, Oct 26</td>
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<td>Week 9: 10/26</td>
<td>Team A/Team B Presentations</td>
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<td>Week 10: 11/2</td>
<td>The Geography of Thought and How to Think “Red”</td>
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<td>Week 11: 11/9</td>
<td>Red Teaming: US vs. China’s View</td>
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<td>Week 12: 11/16</td>
<td>Red Teaming Role Play: CCP and PLA Decision-Making</td>
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<td>Week 13: 11/23</td>
<td>No Class - Thanksgiving Break</td>
<td>Final Paper Proposal</td>
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<td>Due: MONDAY, Nov 28</td>
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<td>Week 14: 11/30</td>
<td>Red Teaming: The View from North Korea</td>
<td>Memo 3: Red Team</td>
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<td>Due: SUNDAY, Dec 4</td>
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<td>Week 15: 12/7</td>
<td>Moneyball – ONLINE</td>
<td>Final Paper and Elevator Brief</td>
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<td>Due: WEDNESDAY, Dec 14</td>
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<tr>
<td>Week 16: 12/14</td>
<td>Final Project Presentations and Course Wrap-up</td>
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</table>
Course Schedule

August 31: Introductions and Course Overview

http://www.nytimes.com/2009/03/26/opinion/26Kristof.html?_r=1

http://www.npr.org/2015/12/01/457974684/being-labeled-an-expert-may-contribute-to-someone-being-closed-minded

For additional reading:
Alix Spiegel, “So You Think you’re Smarter than a CIA Agent,” National Public Radio, April 2, 2014

September 7: Why We Need to Think Differently

We will discuss many of our mind’s shortcuts, and how they prompt us to misperceive, overlook information, and generally get things wrong.

Kluge, pgs. 1-94, 161-176

Amos Tversky and Daniel Kahneman, “Judgment Under Uncertainty” Science, September 27, 1974


For additional reading:
Daniel Kahneman, Thinking Fast and Slow, 2011
Richard Nisbett, Mindware: Tools for Smart Thinking, 2015

Assignment: Due SUNDAY, September 11. Write a 1-page single spaced paper on a personal experience with one of the heuristics or mental shortcuts described in the readings. This does not need to be in memo format; it is intended as a writing sample. Use the opportunity to demonstrate your writing skills and introduce yourself to your classmates. Post as a discussion thread in Blackboard.
September 14: Introduction to Alternative Analysis
After learning about our cognitive shortcomings, you’ll be introduced to the field that it attempting to mitigate them.

Micah Zenko, Red Team, pgs. Ix-106, 209-239

A Tradecraft Primer: Structured Analytic Techniques for Improving Intelligence Analysis, Central Intelligence Agency, March 2009


September 21: Devil’s Advocacy and NATO’s Relevance
We will challenge the conventional wisdom that the NATO alliance is critical to our nation’s security and relevant in light of the changing threat environment our European allies are facing today.

The North Atlantic Treaty, Washington, DC, April 4, 1949
http://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/official_texts_17120.htm

http://www.nytimes.com/2016/07/15/opinion/keeping-nato-relevant-and-united.html?_r=0

https://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/europe/2016-06-13/natos-next-act


R. Nicholas Burns and James L. Jones, Restoring the Power and Purpose of the NATO Alliance, Atlantic Council, June 2016, pgs. 8-11

http://www.rand.org/pubs/research_reports/RR1253.html

Jeffrey Taylor, “The Time is Ripe for Détente, 2.0,” The Atlantic, August 8, 2016

Molly O’Toole, “Is NATO Still Relevant? Trump’s not the only one asking,” Foreign Policy, April 1, 2016
http://foreignpolicy.com/2016/04/01/is-nato-still-relevant-trumps-not-the-only-one-asking/

http://nationalinterest.org/blog/the-skeptics/it-time-america-quit-nato-15615?page=2
Memo Assignment: Due SUNDAY, September 25. Write a 2-page single-spaced memo to the National Security Advisor, challenging the conventional wisdom that NATO is a relevant alliance that bolsters our national security and is thus worthy of sustained American investment.

September 28-October 5 ONLINE: The Black Swan, What If? and High-Impact/Low-Probability
This week we will engage in a robust online discussion of Taleb’s concepts and how they are relevant to alternative analysis.

*The Black Swan*, pgs. xvii-2, 8-22, 26-37, 40-42, 50-84, 122-133, 138-163, 201-211

Briefing Assignment: Due TUESDAY, October 4. Select a Middle Eastern country and analyze the critical variables that would influence high-impact, low-probability events in the region. Prepare a 1-page summary for distribution via Blackboard. Your 5 minute presentation is due in class on Wednesday, October 5.

October 5: The Messy Middle East
Each student will select a pivotal country in the Middle East to research (e.g. Egypt, Iraq, Syria, Turkey, Saudi Arabia, Yemen, Lebanon, Iran). They will provide their peers a one-pager and brief them in class on the country’s critical variables that would be important in driving and determining potential high-impact, low-probability events.

“Tethered by History,” *The Economist*, July 5, 2014

Nassim Nicholas Taleb and Gregory F. Trevorton, “The Calm Before the Storm,” *Foreign Affairs*, January/February 2015


To assist in your research:
Middle East Media Research Institute, [http://www.memri.org/middle-east-media-research-institute.html](http://www.memri.org/middle-east-media-research-institute.html)
October 12: Brainstorming Session – What if? in the Middle East
We will conduct a what if? and high-impact/low-probability assessment of a hypothetical situation in the Middle East. We will visualize a plausible scenario as to how it could come about, and the short and long-term implications of it. We will then brainstorm a number of other plausible events that could transpire in the Arab world in the foreseeable future, which you will choose from for your second memo assignment. Several additional readings will be assigned based on the topic we select as a class.

Memo Assignment #2: Due SUNDAY, October 16. Write a 2-page single spaced memo to the Secretary of State, using either what if? or high/low technique to examine one of the topics on the Middle East brainstormed in class. Explore the potential event, establish a plausible scenario for how it could come to pass, and examine the consequences for U.S. foreign policy and the region.

October 19: Team A/Team B and the Threat of ISIS
We will develop equally compelling competing arguments about the threat posed by ISIS through the use of the Team A/Team B structured analytic technique.


http://www.theatlantic.com/magazine/archive/2015/03/what-isis-really-wants/384980/


John Brennan, Statement before the Senate Select Committee on Intelligence, June 16, 2016

http://www.bostonglobe.com/ideas/2014/12/14/the-terrorist-bureaucracy-inside-files-islamic-state-iraq/QtRMOARRYowsOD18faA2FP/story.html?_campaign=8315

https://www.wired.com/2016/03/isis-winning-social-media-war-heres-beat/

http://www.washingtonpost.com/opinions/the-islamic-state-threat-is-overstated/2014/09/12/acbbebb2-33ad-11e4-8f02-03c644b2d7d0_story.html

Daniel Byman and Jeremy Shapiro, “Homeward Bound? Don’t Hype the Threat of Returning Jihadists,” Foreign Affairs, September 30, 2014
http://www.brookings.edu/research/articles/2014/09/30-syria-foreign-fighters-byman-shapiro

Mara Rivkin and Ahmad Mhidi, “Quitting ISIS: Why Syrians are Abandoning the Group,” Foreign Affairs, May 1, 2016
https://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/syria/2016-05-01/quitting-isis

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Mlhm0xf-ttE


For further reading:
Dabiq, The Islamic State’s Magazine


**Group Assignment: Due WEDNESDAY, October 26.** You will be assigned to one of two teams that will testify as a panel before the Senate’s subcommittee on Terrorism and Homeland Security. As a team, you will prepare and submit written testimony arguing that the threat from ISIS is either grave or overstated. You will have 10 minutes to present oral testimony (including visual aides). At the end of both presentations, the “committee” will have the opportunity to ask questions of the expert panelists.

**October 26: Team A/Team B Presentations**
The teams will present their written and oral testimony to the Senate committee and respond, as a team, to the committee’s questions.
November 2: The Geography of Thought and How to Think “Red”
This book will show us the fundamentally different ways in which Easterners and Westerners view the world. These diverging perspectives impact how we communicate with and what we expect from one another. We will gain an appreciation for these differences and how they manifest themselves – the first step in Red Teaming.

Nisbett, The Geography of Thought (entire book)

For additional reading:
http://www.nytimes.com/2013/03/01/opinion/brooks-the-learning-virtues.html


November 9: Red Teaming: The China vs. US View
We will use the “4 ways of seeing” technique to build our appreciation for how the Chinese view themselves and the US, as well as how the US views itself and China.

http://www.cfr.org/china/us-relations-china-1949---present/p17698

Susan Craig, Chinese Perceptions of Traditional and Nontraditional Security Threats, Strategic Studies Institute, March 2007, Chapter 1, pgs. 1-23


Christopher Ford, China Views America: Aspiration, Opposition and the Telos of China’s Return, The Hudson Institute, Security and Foreign Affairs Briefing Paper, August 2012
http://www.hudson.org/content/researchattachments/attachment/1062/chinaviewsamerica--ford0812.pdf


https://www.brookings.edu/opinions/beijings-wish-list-a-wiser-china-policy-in-president-obamas-second-term/


https://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/china/2016-04-19/watching-american-democracy-china


Translation of People’s Liberation Army’s National Defense University film *Silent Contest*, translated in 2013 (release date unknown)
http://chinascope.org/main/content/view/6168/92/

Visit: China’s Official Daily Newspaper, *Xinhua*
http://www.xinhuanet.com/english/

**November 16: Red Team Role Play: China’s Maritime Strategy**
We will spend this class emulating decision-makers in the Chinese Communist Party and the People’s Liberation Army, thinking about China’s maritime interests and strategic goals. A special guest Red Teamer will join us virtually, to assist in our thinking.

http://nationalinterest.org/commentary/the-pla-going-rogue-9846


http://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2015/07/30/world/asia/what-china-has-been-building-in-the-south-china-sea.html?_r=0
Howard French, “China’s Dangerous Game,” The Atlantic, November 2014


Andrew Erickson and Kevin Bond, “Archeology and the South China Sea,” The Diplomat, July 20, 2015

Keith Johnson, Dan De Luce, “Fishing Disputes Could Provoke a South China Sea Crisis,” Foreign Policy, April 7, 2016


Speech by Dai Bingguo at China-U.S. dialogue on South China Sea between Chinese and US think tanks, Xinhua, July 6, 2016

https://www.csis.org/analysis/judgment-day-south-china-sea-tribunal-issues-its-ruling

Editorial, “People’s Daily slams South China Sea arbitration tribunal for being political tool,” People’s Daily, July 14, 2016

Emily Rauhala, “China Believes it is the Real Victim in the South China Sea Dispute,” The Washington Post, July 11, 2016

Bethany Allen-Ebrahimian, “After South China Sea Ruling, China Censors Online Calls for War,” Foreign Policy, July 12, 2016
http://foreignpolicy.com/2016/07/12/after-south-china-sea-ruling-china-censors-online-calls-for-war-unclos-tribunal/

For further research:
Asia Maritime Transparency Initiative, https://amti.csis.org/

A relevant read and example of a Red Team memo:
Kori Schake, “All Your Pivots are Belong to Us,” foreignpolicy.com, September 12, 2014
http://foreignpolicy.com/2014/09/12/all-your-pivots-are-belong-to-us/
November 23 – NO CLASS – THANKSGIVING BREAK

Final Paper Proposal: Due MONDAY, November 28. Determine the topic and technique you want to use for your final paper. Submit a short write-up over email for feedback.

November 30: Red Teaming: The View from Pyongyang
We will gain insight into the North Korean’s ethno-nationalist worldview, and use this understanding to better understand North Korean decision-making.


Kongdan Oh, “Understanding North Korea,” Foreign Policy Research Institute E-Notes, April 1 2013
https://www.fpri.org/articles/2013/03/understanding-north-korea


B.R. Myers, “North Korea’s Race Problem,” Foreign Policy, March-April 2010 (view the slideshow, too)

Documentary: Juche Strong, Rob Montz, producer, May 2013
http://vimeo.com/65907063

Documentary: North Korea: A Day in the Life, Pieter Fleury, April 27, 2004


Ken E. Gause, Escalation Calculus: Dealing with the Kim Jong-un Regime, CNA Corp, August 2015


Visit:
Korean Central News Agency of the DPRK, http://kcnawatch.co/
38 North, http://38north.org/
For additional reading:
http://www.theatlantic.com/magazine/archive/2004/01/i-was-kim-jong-ils-cook/308837/

**Memo Assignment: Due SUNDAY, December 4.** Write a 2-page single-spaced memo to the Secretary of Defense, in first person, from a Chinese or North Korean perspective, giving the Secretary unique cultural insights relevant to US defense policy.

**DECEMBER 1-7 ONLINE: Moneyball**
We will view and discuss the movie *Moneyball*, a great example of how thinking differently can be a game-changer.

**Final Project: Due WEDNESDAY, December 14.** Select an alternative analytic technique and a topic in international affairs that merits alternative analysis. Write a 4-page, single-spaced memo to a senior decision-maker in international affairs that would benefit from your unique insights. Demonstrate a mastery of both the technique and the issue. Additionally, prepare a one-minute elevator brief, succinctly highlighting your findings, to present to your classmates.

**December 14: Final Project Presentations and Course Wrap-Up**
You will be expected to give a one minute presentation on your final project – what technique you used, why it was beneficial, the issue you explored, and what your take-aways were.