

SYLLABUS_TUTORIAL	
Title of the course: POLITICAL DECISION-MAKING	
Course lecturer: Prof. ANA PETEK, PhD	
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Study program: Undergraduate study of Political Science / Undergraduate study of Journalism	
Year of the study: 1 st or 2 nd	
ECTS: 5	
Course description and course objectives:	The course falls within the field of public policy research and serves as an introductory foundation for this discipline. It acquaints students with the main theories of political decision-making. Public policy is understood classically as what governments do, while political decision-making narrowly refers to the central phase of the policy-making process — the stage at which formal decisions are made. The course first presents and explains key theories of political decision-making and then focuses on their application through the analysis of decision-making processes within national governments. It is structured in two parts: the first examines classical theories (rational choice, bounded rationality, incrementalism, and the garbage can model), while the second presents several contemporary theoretical approaches, including Allison's conceptual models, punctuated equilibrium theory, multiple streams theory, and policy regime theory.
Course enrolment requirements and entry competences:	There are no formal prerequisites, this is an introductory course.
Learning outcomes (at the level of the course):	Upon completion of the course, the student will be able to: 1. explain the key concepts and assumptions of some major theory of political decision-making; 2. apply a theory of political decision-making to a specific decision-making case; 3. conduct a basic analysis of the functioning and decision-making processes of the national executive branch; 4. demonstrate fundamental knowledge of empirical data related to the national executive government; 5. perform document analysis using the representational method; 6. apply the fundamental principles of academic writing.
Course content (weekly class schedule):	1. Classical theories of political decision-making: rational model, bounded rationality, incrementalism, garbage can. 2. Contemporary theories of political decision-making: Allison's conceptual models, punctuated equilibrium theory, multiple streams theory, and policy regime theory. 3. Discussion on theoretical part of student papers. 4. Analytical framework for the analysis of decisions made by national governments. 5. Presentations of national government decisions 1. 6. Presentations of national government decisions 2.

	7. Final discussion: how theories of decision-making explain the decisions of national governments.
Required reading:	In preparing the final research paper, the student must use at least three units of classical scientific literature (books, book chapters, or journal articles) on selected theory, as well as at least five empirical sources related to the analyzed decision of the national government (such as official state documents, government and stakeholder websites, recordings of government sessions, media materials, and other relevant sources).
Student participation and requirements:	Attendance at course sessions is mandatory, and students are required to attend at least six meetings. Course assessment is based on a final research paper in which each student applies one theory of political decision-making to analyze a selected decision made by their national government. Academic integrity is strictly required, and all papers must be submitted through Turnitin. Any use of artificial intelligence must adhere to academic ethical standards. All instances of AI use must be transparently disclosed and described, with a critical evaluation of the information obtained. The author bears full responsibility for the accuracy and impartiality of all AI-generated content, which may never be presented as original authorship.
Grading and evaluating student work in class and at the final exam:	The assessment is based on a final research paper (2,500–3,500 words), evaluated on a 10-point scale. Five points are allocated to the theoretical section (concepts, process, argumentation, structure, and literature), and five to the empirical section (sources, analytical framework, data presentation, interpretation, and documentation).
Grading scale:	Excellent (5) – 10 points Very good (4) – 9 points Good (3) – 7–8 points Satisfactory (2) – 5–6 points Unsatisfactory (1) – 4 points or fewer