

PREFACE

Why have students read about Munich 1938, the Cuban Missile Crisis, the First Palestinian Intifada, or the 2014 confrontation over Crimea, when they can re-create them? This book introduces simulations, conducted in the classroom and on social networks, as innovative, informative, and fun tools for teaching and studying world politics in the 21st century. It is a handbook for educators that explains how to integrate cyber elements into face-to-face simulations and how to preserve the human touch in cyber simulations involving participants who may never meet in person.

The simulations addressed in the book bring together at the negotiating table teams that represent states, non-state actors, and media organs. This interplay between political and media actors enhances the understanding of the complexities of world politics, illuminates multicultural perspectives, and guides students to adopt an analytical and open-minded approach to theory and data.

In the global information age, simulations are a subset of hybrid learning, which complements the most valuable aspects of traditional teaching methods with high-tech resources. Hybrid learning has been proven useful as a way to advance in-depth learning along with analytical capabilities that prepare students for professionalism in academe and beyond. Simulations coupled with cyber tools constitute an effective educational method that provides students with an exciting learning experience that stays with them long after the semester ends.

This book focuses on three kinds of simulation experiences: face-to-face, which involve human participants interacting in a common physical environment; cyber, which involve human participants interacting in a common virtual environment, like social networks with desig-

nated Facebook groups as computer-generated “rooms”; and hybrid, which integrate at least two simulation rounds, one face-to-face and the other cyber. Educators can determine which type of simulation is appropriate for their particular courses and then use this book as a step-by-step guide on how to run simulations, with cyber platforms as a supplementary or a major element. Either way, the process will reinforce gradual learning for long-term retention of knowledge and allow students to practice and develop important skills such as critical thinking, creativity, persistence, empathy, and coping during periods of solitary study and teamwork.

The book consists of four parts: Theory, Implementation, Analysis, and Conclusion. It discusses (1) the state of the art on world politics simulations; (2) the types of simulations from which to select a suitable version for a particular course; (3) the facilities required and setup constraints to consider as one prepares for a simulation in an academic setting; (4) a selection of assignments to include as part of the simulation and considerations to take into account for grading participants; (5) the use of simulations to facilitate teaching of different topics, such as theory, methodology, case studies, and area studies; (6) the importance of analysis as an ongoing process during and after the simulation, with feedback, debriefing, and assessment that create a comprehensive overview of the interactive experience; and (7) conclusions on the wide spectrum of tools and simulation designs available and an examination of how the choices we make today are likely to impact the future of simulations in the digital age.

Part I, on theory, consists of three chapters. Chapter 1 outlines simulations as a new mode of study within the hybrid learning field. It reviews the goals for using

simulations and provides a framework for the analysis of simulation attributes. The chapter explains why the four framework components of platforms, boundaries, interactions, and study efficiency are useful building blocks for analyzing simulations and how their detailed attributes can be used in planning new simulations. Chapter 2 takes a close look at the academic setting, focusing on course subjects, on-campus vs. online teaching styles, course duration, class type, and cooperation with other educators. It then explains how your specific academic setting affects your options in planning simulations. Chapter 3 offers a new typology of world politics simulations, which can serve as a practical toolbox with which to characterize simulations and plan new ones. The typology is then applied to a variety of simulations reported in academic publications with an emphasis on the 21st century, an era when the Web 2.0 and social networks emerged. The chapter addresses the costs of teaching with simulations and shows how to minimize them in face-to-face and cyber exercises.

Part II, on implementation, consists of three chapters. This part of the book takes you by the hand and leads you through every step of the simulation process. Chapter 4 lays out the essentials of how to create and run a simulation. It starts with a description of the preparations for the event and points to ways you can enhance face-to-face and cyber simulations by using online tools, creating assignments, planning the schedule carefully, and integrating authentic theatrical formats into scenarios. Chapter 5 continues with procedures for the policy formation process within teams, and chapter 6 focuses on the mechanisms for world politics interactions among teams. Unless mentioned otherwise, the same guidelines in these chapters apply to the simulations on campus and in fully online courses.

All three implementation chapters adopt a dual outlook: yours, as an educator, and that of your students. Even as you develop your simulation-related plans and activities to convey the concepts you want to teach and methods for assessing student mastery, you must also consider how things look from a student's point of view. Each chapter contains concise instructions for participants in order to get your students ready to step into the shoes of political and media characters and begin to fulfill their roles in the simulation from the start.

Part III, on analysis, consists of four chapters that form an overview of the entire learning cycle within a simulation project. Chapter 7 addresses feedback, debriefing, and assessment and discusses the overlap among them. The next three chapters deal with each of these concepts

in-depth. Chapter 8 looks at feedback, chapter 9 focuses on debriefing, and chapter 10 illuminates assessment. All of them include an in-depth analysis of the various choices for focus, method, and schedule, so you can choose how to best implement the full simulation overview within the parameters specific to your resources and constraints. Chapters 8 and 9 involve activities of educators and students, so each one ends with summary instructions for participants.

In **part IV**, chapter 11 offers a closing discussion on current trends in world politics simulations and possible future interactions. With a macro look at hybrid learning by simulations, it revisits the evolutionary path of simulations till the present, evaluates the contributions of hybrid tools, and suggests insights for future modifications. It also highlights challenges that we have faced in our own simulations, describes solutions we have adopted, and illustrates how ongoing communication with our students and colleagues led to novel ideas for the conduct and appraisal of simulations in a global information age.

Together, the four parts of the book present the core attributes of a simulation project from its drawing board stage, through the learning cycle, to the assessment of students and of the simulation as a whole. All parts embrace theoretical and practical topics, consider options to choose from, discuss costs, and offer tips on how to avoid pitfalls. Illustrative examples from our simulation experiences add detail and contextual substance to operational guidelines for setting up a simulation plan and performing specific procedures for policy formation, world politics activity, feedback, debriefing, and assessment.

If you are familiar with the theoretical underpinnings of simulations as an essential pedagogical tool, you may choose to skip directly to the practical chapters in parts II and III. Novices, however, may want to begin with the theoretical discussion in part I to fully grasp what this rich field of simulations offers educators and students and why such exercises should be an essential part of hybrid learning in the 21st century.

Students live in an increasingly digital world; why not meet them there? While many aspects of traditional teaching retain pride of place, simulations will complement them by allowing your students to engage in active learning, giving you innovative ways to improve their learning efficiency and digital tools with which to enhance the appeal of your class. It is a brave new world, but with this book in hand you can navigate through the wealth of available choices for making an exciting and productive simulation project the highlight of the semester.