

Political Science POL370
UNITED NATIONS SEMESTER
SPRING 2009

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Class Hours: T 4:30 –7:10 and Fridays

Office Hours: T 12:00-4:00 or by appointment

Course Description

The UN Semester is a 6-credit course consisting of two components: one, an academic component focusing on the study of international organization in general and the history, institutional structure, thematic issues, and dilemmas of the UN in particular; and two, a practical field experience component that is facilitated by weekly trips to the United Nations in New York City where students will participate in a series of scheduled briefings by UN officials, NGO representatives, and Permanent Missions of Member States.

The academic component is similar to that of other courses in that the class meets twice a week, readings are assigned, students participate in lectures, class discussions and presentations; exams are administered; and there are papers to complete. The subject matter of the course will focus on the United Nations in particular, and international organization and inter-state cooperation in general. Students will learn about the organizational structure and function of the United Nations. We will also study the wide array of contemporary issues, such as human rights, the natural environment, development, disaster relief, international refugees, international security, and international trade that the UN deals with on a daily basis. Students will become experts in at least one aspect of the UN in that each student is required to research a selected topic on a particular dimension of the United Nations system.

The field experience component of this course involves taking advantage of the opportunities provided by the proximity of SUNY New Paltz to the United Nations and NYC. There will be ten trips to the United Nations throughout the duration of the semester. These trips will take place on Friday and transportation is provided free of charge to the students who are enrolled in the course. A chartered bus will pick students up on Friday mornings and return in the early evening. Our time at the United Nations will be spent attending official delegation briefings, learning about the different organs of the UN representatives of the various agencies of the UN, listening to representatives of nongovernmental organizations, and utilizing the resources of the UN and the surrounding area. Students will have the opportunity to ask questions and learn from the experts themselves.

Required Texts (Available at the University Bookstore)

1) The United Nations And Changing World Politics, 2007, Fifth Edition, Thomas G. Weiss, Westview Press ISBN: 081334347-1

2) Basic Facts About the UN, 2008

3) UN Peacekeeping in Civil Wars, 2008, Lise Morje Howard, Cambridge University Press ISBN 978052170767-1

4) E-res (Electronic Reserves in the Library) and on Blackboard under readings indicated as (BB) on the syllabus

Course Requirements:

1) FRIDAY TRIPS TO THE UNITED NATIONS ARE ABSOLUTELY AND UNCONDITIONALLY MANDATORY. Transportation to and from the United Nations is provided and, unless noted otherwise, we will be adhering to the following schedule: 7:45 am depart promptly from New Paltz in front of the Administration building; 4:00 pm depart from NYC. You are responsible for being on time. We cannot wait for you at all. If you miss the bus, you are responsible for finding alternative transportation. Students are not allowed to miss any of the trips to, or scheduled sessions, at the UN. If you are going to miss a Friday session, you must notify me in advance with your valid excuse (I will decide what is a valid excuse) and get my approval or have official documentation and proof of emergencies (I NEED TO SEE THE OFFICIAL DOCUMENTATION OF YOUR EMERGENCY, I WILL NOT MAKE EXCEPTIONS ON THIS!). If you miss attending Friday sessions, your final course grade will be lowered one level for each absence; e.g. B+ to B.

2) Reaction Papers 15%

You are required to write 5 reaction papers based on the weekly Friday meetings at the UN. In this paper you should discuss the major issues that surfaced in these meetings. Your discussion should incorporate concepts and analytical frameworks that we study in this class. While I expect that you offer your reaction to the session, these reactions should be based on analytical thinking as opposed to your feelings about the discussion. Each paper should be 2-3 pages in length and due Tuesday following each meeting. No late papers, no exceptions. At least 2 of the reaction papers MUST be completed before the midterm. I will stop reading the papers at the end of page 3 therefore do not write longer (Times new roman, 12 pt. font with 1 inch margins).

3) Class Attendance and Participation: 7% of grade

You are required to attend class regularly. Everyone is expected to participate in class discussions. Unless excused in advance or you have proof of emergency, you may not miss more than 1 class periods without penalty. Do not come to class late. If you walk in late, you are responsible for getting the instructor to mark you present after class. After the first late arrival, I will count all late arrivals as absent.

4) Presentations 8%

Each student will have a 5 minute in class presentation. The students will sign up for a topic of their interest. Depending on the week's topic, the student is responsible for sharing with the class their reaction to the Friday meeting at the United Nations. The student will also be expected to lead a short discussion with the class by presenting questions that arise from the Friday briefings. The presentation will take place first thing Tuesday morning following Friday visit to the UN.

There will also be peacekeeping operation group presentations that will be scheduled and organized later in the semester.

5) Midterm 20%

Scheduled for March 3, 2009. Short answer and essay questions covering lectures, reading assignments and the visits to the United Nations.

6) Papers 25%

You are required to write a 12-15 pages paper for this class. A research topic proposal is due **March 10, 2008 in my office**. Research paper due **April 21, 2008**. The specifics of the assignment will be handed out in class and posted on blackboard. 1 point will be deducted from the grade each day the paper is late.

7) Final 25%

Scheduled for **MAY 12, 5-7pm**. This is a comprehensive final with short answer and essay questions covering lectures, reading assignments and the visits to the United Nations.

WARNING!!!

You are responsible for all of the policies explained in this syllabus. Ignorance of these policies is not an acceptable excuse for failing to meet the course requirements. You are encouraged to read over this syllabus very carefully and refer to it regularly throughout the course. On rare occasion, changes in policy which supersede the syllabus may be announced in class. You are responsible for knowing any updated policies regardless of whether you were in attendance when new policies were announced.

Academic Integrity

Plagiarism of any form will not be tolerated and will result in appropriate action by the instructor. You are responsible for learning about plagiarism. If you have questions regarding academic integrity, you should approach the instructor during office hours to get further information on university's policies.

Dates	Topic	Readings
Week 1 (Jan 20)	International Organizations	Abbott and Snidal, Why States Act Through Formal International Organizations (Eres) International Governmental Organizations, Pevehouse, Nordstrom, and Warnke (Eres)
Week 2* (Jan 27)	Introduction to the UN	Weiss: Introduction The United Nations Charter (Weiss 377-395) 2005 World Summit Outcome (Section I Clauses 1-16) Highlights of the UNGA 60 th or 62 nd Session
Week 3 * (February 3)	The League of Nations and the United Nations	Yoder, The Evolution of the UN System (Eres) Weiss: Chp 1 Theory of UN Collective Security Wilson's 14 points
Week 4 (February 10)	Collective Security and the United Nations	Russet, Oneil and Davis, Kantian Tripod (BB) Green, Kahl & Diehl, Predicting the Size of UN Peacekeeping Operations (Eres)
Week 5 * (February 17)	The Security Council and Peacekeeping	Weiss Chp.2 UN Security Efforts During Cold War Howard Chapter 1 and 2 2005 World Summit Outcome (Section IV Clauses 69-118)
Week 6 * (February 24)	Peacekeeping, Peace Enforcement and Peace Building	Howard: Chapters 9 and 10 Plus Selected reading for groups from 3-8
Week 7 * (March 3)	Midterm Exam March 3 (Research Topic Proposal due March 10)	Midterm and finish discussion on PKO
Week 8 *	Humanitarian Intervention and	Weiss Chapter 5, The UN, Human

Dates	Topic	Readings
(March 24)	Human Rights	Rights and Humanitarian Affairs 2005 World Summit Outcome (Section III Clauses 119-145)
Week 9 March 31	Human Rights (Cont)	Weiss Chapter 6, The United Nations Applying HR Standards Weiss Chapter 7, Change, the UN and Human Right Universal Declaration of Human Rights (BB) Case – Convention on the Rights of the Child (BB) Harris-Short, Cultural Relativism and the CRC (BB)
Week 10 * (April 7)	International Law	Over view Case- ICC (BB)
Week 11** (April 14) UN Trip on the 15 th and 17 th	Economic Development	Weiss Chapter 8, Theories of Development at the UN 2005 World Summit Outcome (Section II Clauses 17-68)
Week 12* (April 21)	Development and Environment (Research Paper due April 21)	Jacobson, Getting Countries to comply with international agreements (Eres) Case 1- Kyoto Protocol and its future (BB)
Week 13 * (April 28)	Sustainable Development	Weiss Chapter 9, Sustainable Development As a Process Weiss Chapter 10, The UN, Development and Globalization Case 2 – Agenda 21 (BB)
Week 14 (May 5)	Assessing and Reforming the United Nations	Overview 2005 World Summit Outcome (Section V Clauses 146-178)
Final	THURSDAY, May 12 5-7pm	

Topics and Schedule of the United Nations Meetings

Date & Topic	Schedule of Meetings	Reading for the Visit
January 30 Introduction to United Nations	10:30-11:30 UN Tour 11:45- 12:45 UN Overview briefing 2:00-3:30 Secretary General briefing	Basic Facts Chapter 1 PP. 3-64
February 6 Security Council and Security Issues	10:30-11:30 Security Council Briefing 11:30-12:30 Disarmament 12:30-2:00 Lunch 2:00-3:30 US Mission	Basic Facts Chapter 2 68-81 and 123-137
February 20 Peacekeeping and International Security	10:30-11:30 UNWRA 12-1:00 Mission of Israel 1:00-2:00 Lunch 2:00-3:30 Observer Mission of Palestine	UN Web page on UNWRA TBA
February 27 International security and peacekeeping	10:30- 11:30 Terrorism 11:30-12:30 Peacekeeping 12:30-2:00 Lunch 2:00-3:30 Global Policy Forum	Basic Facts Chapter 2 81-120
March 6 United Nations and International Law	10:30-11:30 International Criminal Court 11:30- 12:30 Humanitarian Affairs 12:30-2:00 Lunch 2:00-3:30 Situation in DRC or Darfur	ICC Web page Basic Facts Chapter 5 (251- 281)
March 27 Human Rights	10:30-11:30 Human Rights 11:30-12:30 Rights of Refugees 12:30-2:00 Lunch 2:00-3:30 Amnesty International	Basic Facts Chapter 4 (225- 232)
April 15 Economic and other development issues	10:30-11:30 Economic development briefing 11:30- 12:30 UNDP Briefing 12:30-2:00 Lunch 2:00-3:30 South Africa Mission	Basic Facts Chapter 3 (139- 204)
April 17 Environment and Development Issues	10:30-11:30 Sustainable Development 11:30- 12:30 Environment briefing 12:30-2:00 Lunch 2:00-3:30 Millennium Development Goals	Basic Facts Chapter 3 (206- 222)
April 24 Environment and Development Issues	10:30-11:30 UNFPA briefing 11:30- 12:30 Women's briefing 12:30-2:00 Lunch 2:00-3:30 Children and Armed Conflict	Browse UNAIDS 2007 Report Executive Summary (BB)
May 1 Role of Non governmental actors and UN Reform	10:30-11:30 UNNGO 11:30- 12:30 Global compact briefing 12:30-2:00 Lunch 2:00-3:30 UN Reform	Browse MDG 2007 Report (BB) Browse UN civil society web page