

The United Nations

Fall 2011

Professor Kyle Beardsley
317 Tarbutton Hall
Office hours: Thursdays, 1:00-3:00; or by appointment

Goals:

This course will assess the past, present and future of the United Nations. The first portion of the course will be devoted to looking at the big picture of what the UN has done in the past, what the UN is doing now, and where the UN is going. The primary purpose of this part of the course is to establish a firm foundation of how the UN works and to become fully versed in the intricate bureaucracy. The bulk of the course is devoted to the UN's efforts in addressing a number of substantive problems. The purpose here is to both understand the nature of these problems confronted by the international community and where the UN fits in addressing those problems.

By the end of the course, students should not only be experts on UN activity, but they should also have a firm grasp on the major problems that pervade international politics. In this respect, the course provides a capstone experience for students of international relations. The major term paper for the course, and indeed the in-class discussions, provide an opportunity for the students to integrate their general understanding of international politics within the specific context of UN activity.

Expectations:

Students are expected to attend each class ready to discuss the assigned readings. The format of the course will be primarily discussion based, and the quality of the discussion will only be as strong as the preparation put into it. Students are also encouraged to engage current events that are related to the United Nations. Students should follow international news closely and contribute their perspectives on current events during class.

The students' written work should be grammatically correct, concise and persuasive in argument. Poorly written papers will receive poor grades. As a result, students are encouraged to proofread their work carefully, which will entail finishing drafts well in advance of the deadlines. All work must be the students' own and all sources must be cited. Any honor-code violations will be submitted to the Honor Council for investigation. Students must register with the Office of Disability Services to receive accommodations. Paper extensions will only be granted with proper documentation from the Office for Undergraduate Education.

Text:

Thomas G. Weiss and Sam Daws, *The Oxford Handbook on the United Nations*. New York: Oxford University Press (2008).
Other required reading can be accessed using the library's e-journals site or otherwise can be found on Reserves Direct.

Course Requirements:

All class components will be graded on a 16-point scale that is basically a 4-point scale stretched out to 16 points. Using the criteria on the attached grading standards, I decide what letter grade to assign to a student's work and then assign a corresponding point value. The one exception is the quizzes, which are simply assigned the assessed point values, usually out of 8 points (student can double their quiz scores to see the corresponding letter grade).

Attendance and Participation (10%): Since the course is discussion oriented, attendance and readiness to participate are mandatory. Failure to attend a class will result in the loss of two points on the 16-point grading scale. Absences for legitimate reasons (including illness) will only be excused if students inform me prior to the start of class. Students that do not actively participate will not receive strong marks in this category. Students would do well to come to each class with a few questions prepared, which should reduce some of the anxiety of trying to contribute to the discussion on the fly.

Quizzes (10% total): Each class will begin with a short quiz about the readings assigned for that week. The format will be short answer. The questions will be fairly general, drawing on themes, concepts and actors that are emphasized in the readings. Students that understand the main points of the readings will do well on the quizzes. Students that miss a quiz due to tardiness or absence will receive a zero on the quiz. A student will only be excused from a quiz if he/she informs me prior to the start of class about an illness, family emergency or university-related activity. A student that is excused from a quiz will have that quiz waived. Students can drop their lowest quiz grade; however, they cannot drop a quiz that was missed because of an unexcused absence.

Term Paper (60% total: 20% for each draft of the two sections and 20% for the final version): For the final paper, students will choose one of the substantive issue areas covered after week 5 (no more than two students can have the same issue area). Students will then answer, in a 20-25 page paper, the overall question of how the UN can be more effective at addressing the problem at hand. For example, if the human rights topic were chosen, the paper would be on how the UN can be more effective in addressing human rights issues. If the peacekeeping topic were chosen, the paper would be on how the UN can be more effective in addressing the problem of conflict recurrence. In addition to engaging the course material, students are expected to do significant outside research using both primary sources from Emory's extensive collections of UN documents and secondary scholarly sources. Papers that rely primarily on material that is neither a primary source nor a scholarly source (such as news articles or solely web-based material) will not receive full credit. Papers that rely too heavily on a single scholarly source will also not receive full credit—scholars frequently disagree with each other and a good research paper is one that can draw on multiple perspectives to better understand a topic. Students should use the Chicago Manual of Style's author-date formatting for the citations and bibliography (http://www.chicagomanualofstyle.org/tools_citationguide.html -- make sure to select the "author-date" tab).

The final paper will consist of three assignments. The first is to complete the first section of the paper (due 10/12 in class) and the second is to complete the second section (due 11/16 in class). The third assignment is to take the comments that I will give you on each section, update them and turn in the final aggregate paper (due 12/14 by 5:00pm). I prefer papers to be turned in hard copy but will accept electronic submissions prior to the time due under special circumstances. Papers turned in on the same date due but after the time due will receive a two-point deduction (on the 16-point scale) and then lose two additional points for each day late.

The first section of the paper should be 10-12 pages and address the following questions:

- What is the scope of the problem(s) to be addressed? By problem, I mean the basic issues that necessitate UN involvement in the first place. Scholarly sources will be especially important to address this question.
- What is the history of UN involvement with regard to this problem? Be specific about the steps that the UN has taken.
- How is the UN involved in addressing the problem(s) now?

The second section of the paper should also be 10-12 pages and address the following questions:

- In what ways has the UN succeeded in addressing the problem?
- In what ways has the UN struggled in addressing the problem?
- Can reform improve UN performance?
 - If yes, what specifically will help?
 - If no, why?
- Discuss at length one or more cases that corroborate your arguments. Choose one or more instances of UN involvement that demonstrate the UN's strengths and/or weaknesses in addressing this issue. Scholarly sources will be especially important to address this question.

Presentations (5%): Students are expected to present during the week that relates to their chosen paper topic. There should be four components to the presentations:

- 1) Past and present overview of the issue at hand and the UN's involvement (5-10 minutes)
- 2) The potential for reform to help UN efficacy with regard to this issue (5-10 minutes)
- 3) Description of the case(s) chosen and discussion of how the case(s) illustrates UN involvement on this issue (5-10 minutes).
- 4) Questions from the class and discussion led by the presenters.

A projector will be available for a multimedia component. When two students have the same topic, they should split duties on the first and fourth components but prepare separate presentations for the second and third components.

1-page summary papers (6 papers, 15% total): Students will turn in six one-page reflection papers throughout the semester. The purpose of the papers is to provide practice in concise writing and to understand some of the intricacies of the UN. Students will choose one component (organ, body, agency, council, committee, etc.) of the UN that was discussed in the previous week. Then, the students will concisely summarize what that component does and describe where it fits within the UN bureaucracy. Finally, the students will address whether the budget expenses for this component are worthwhile. In this last section, the student should provide a sense for how expensive the component is and whether or not the component is doing enough to merit such funding.

The reflection papers are due in class one week after the relevant component was discussed. Students are only allowed to turn in one paper per week. I prefer papers to be turned in hard copy but will accept electronic submissions prior to the time due under special circumstances. Papers turned in after class will receive a two-point deduction and then lose two additional points for each day late. Students may drop their lowest summary-paper grade.

Schedule:

8/24 Overview: What is the UN and why does it exist?

Readings:

Recommended: W&D: Chs. 2-4

8/31 or 9/7 Past: Where has the UN been?

Readings:

W&D: Ch. 1

The UN Charter

The Universal Declaration of Human Rights

9/7 or 9/14 Present I: What are the main organs up to now?

Note: on 9/14, class will meet in room 312 of the library. Dr. Palazzolo will show us how you can use the library resources best in obtaining UN documents.

Readings:

- W&D: Chs. 5-11
- 9/14 or 9/21 Present II: What else is the UN up to now?
 Note: on 9/14, class will meet in room 312 of the library. Dr. Palazzolo will show us how you can use the library resources best in obtaining UN documents.
Readings:
 W&D: Chs. 12-16
- 9/28 Future: Where is the UN going?
Readings:
 W&D: Chs. 38-40
- 10/5 Conflict Management and Arms Control
Readings:
 An Agenda for Peace
 W&D: Chs. 17-18, 24
- 10/12 Peacekeeping and Peacebuilding
1st section of the paper due
Readings:
 Lise Morje Howard, *UN Peacekeeping in Civil Wars*. New York: Cambridge University Press (2008). Chapter 1 (pp. 1-20).
 W&D: Chs. 19, 23
- 10/19 Humanitarian Intervention and the Responsibility to Protect
Readings:
 W&D: Chs. 20-22
 Michael Doyle, "The Folly of Protection: Is Intervention against Qaddafi's Regime Legal and Legitimate?" *Foreign Affairs* (20 March 2011:
<http://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/67666/michael-w-doyle/the-folly-of-protection>)
- 10/26 Development
Readings:
 W&D: Chs. 32, 34, 36-37
- 11/2 Humanitarian Assistance and Human Security
Readings:
 W&D: Chs. 27, 31, 33
 Brett D. Schaefer, "Curing the International Health System," in *ConUNdrum*.
- 11/9 Human Rights
Readings:
 UNSC Resolution 1325
 W&D: Chs. 25, 28-30
- 11/16 International Law
2nd section of the paper due
Readings:
 W&D: Chs. 26, 35
 Beth A. Simmons and Allison Danner. 2010. "Credible Commitments and the International Criminal Court." *International Organization* 64(2):225-256.
 Terrence L. Chapman and Stephen Chaudoin. 2010. "The Limits of an International War Crimes Regime."
- 11/23 Class is cancelled, given its proximity to Thanksgiving**
- 11/30 Environment and Climate Change
Readings:
 2007 Nobel Peace Prize Award Speech
 IPCC 2007 Nobel Lecture

IPCC *Special Report on Renewable Energy Sources and Climate Change Mitigation*, summary for policy makers (http://srren.ipcc-wg3.de/report/IPCC_SRREN_SPM).
Michael A. Levi. 2009. "Copenhagen's Inconvenient Truth." *Foreign Affairs* 88(5): 92-104.

12/14 Final paper due by 5:00pm

GRADING SCALE:

[15-16] -- A
[14-15] -- A-
[13-14] -- B+
[11-13] -- B
[10-11] -- B-
[9-10] -- C+
[7-9] -- C
[6-7] -- C-
[2-6] -- D
[0-2] -- F

GRADING STANDARDS:

The following standards will be applied to the evaluation of assignments in the class.

A Exceptional Performance.

Consistently outstanding work on all course-related tasks at a level that distinguishes the student from other members of the class. A comprehensive and incisive command of the issues, literature, and substantive information relevant to the course. A frequently demonstrated exceptional capacity for original, creative, critical and logical thinking. The ability to master and integrate large amounts of factual material and abstract theories. An outstanding ability to discuss effectively course subject matter using both written and oral communication skills.

A- Excellent Performance.

Consistently strong work on all course-related tasks. A comprehensive command of the issues, literature, and substantive information relevant to the course. A clearly demonstrated capacity for original, creative, critical and logical thinking. Understands well and can integrate the relevant factual and theoretical material central to the course. A strong ability to discuss effectively course subject matter using both written and oral communication skills.

B+ Very Good Performance.

Consistently above average work on all course-related tasks. A very good grasp of the issues, literature, and substantive information relevant to the course. A generally demonstrated capacity for original, creative, critical, and logical thinking. A very good command of factual and theoretical material, and some capacity to integrate the two. A solid ability to discuss effectively

course subject matter using both written and oral communication skills.

B Good Performance.

Good and generally consistent work on all course-related tasks. A general understanding of the issues, literature, and substantive information relevant to the course. Modest evidence of the capacity for original, creative, critical and logical thinking. A good understanding of factual and theoretical material, but limited evidence of the capacity to integrate the two. A basic ability to discuss effectively course subject matter using both written and oral communication skills.

B- Satisfactory Performance

Satisfactory work on course-related tasks. A reasonable understanding of the issues, literature, and substantive information relevant to the course. An infrequently demonstrated capacity for original, creative, critical and logical thinking. Understands at a basic level the facts and theories related to the course, but demonstrates weak integration skills. A limited or inconsistent ability to discuss effectively course subject matter using both written and oral communication skills.

C+/C/C- Adequate Performance

Adequate performance on course-related tasks. An understanding of the basic elements of the issues, literature, and substantive information relevant to the course. A rarely demonstrated capacity for original, creative, critical and logical thinking. An inability to go beyond a recitation of basic factual material related to the class. Demonstrated weaknesses in the ability to discuss effectively course subject matter using both written and oral communication skills.

D/D+ Minimal Passing Performance.

Barely acceptable work on course-related tasks. A generally superficial and often inconsistent familiarity with the issues, literature, and substantive information relevant to the course. A failure to demonstrate the capacity for original, creative, critical and logical thinking related to course content. An uneven understanding of basic factual material related to the course; no evidence of fact/theory integration. Demonstrates significant gaps in the ability to discuss effectively course subject matter using both written and oral communication skills.

F Unacceptable Performance

Fails to meet minimum course expectations. Unable to understand even the most basic elements of the issues, literature, and substantive information relevant to the course. Demonstrates an inability to engage in coherent written or oral discussion of course material. Does not satisfy specific course expectations with respect to attendance, deadlines, participation, etc.