

The United Nations

Spring 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. 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.

Course Requirements:

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 loss of one of the 10-percentage points allocated to this portion of the course grade. 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%): Each class will begin with a short quiz about the readings assigned for that week. The format will be short answer, and the questions will be fairly general. Students that understand the main points of the readings will do well on the quizzes.

Term Paper (50% total: 15% 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. 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. Students should use the Chicago Manual of Style's author-date formatting for the citations and bibliography.

The final paper will consist of three assignments. The first is to complete the first section of the paper (due 2/22 in class) and the second is to complete the second section (due 3/29 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 5/4 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 one letter grade deduction and then lose an additional letter grade 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?
- What is the history of UN involvement with regard to this problem?
- 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:

- How has the UN succeeded?
- How has the UN struggled?
- Can reform improve UN performance?
 - If yes, what specifically will help?
 - If no, why?
- Discuss at length a case that corroborates your arguments.

Presentations (10%): 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 chosen and discussion of how it illustrates UN involvement on this issue (5-10 minutes).
- 4) Questions from the class and answers from the presenters.

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 (8 papers, 20% total): Students will turn in eight 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.

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 one letter grade deduction and then lose an additional letter grade for each day late.

Schedule:

1/18 Overview: What is the UN and why does it exist?

Readings:

The UN Charter

Recommended: W&D: Chs. 2-4

1/25 Past: Where has the UN been?

Readings:

Fasulo: Chs. 1-2, 17

W&D: Ch. 1

Ian Hurd, *After Anarchy: Legitimacy and Power in the United Nations Security Council*,

Introduction: 1-28.

2/1 Present I: What are the main organs up to now?

Readings:

Fasulo: Chs. 3, 5-6

W&D: Chs. 5-11

2/8 Present II: What else is the UN up to now?

Readings:

Fasulo: Chs. 4, 7-8, 15-16

W&D: Chs. 12-16

2/15 Future: Where is the UN going?

Readings:

Fasulo, Chs. 13-14

W&D: Chs. 38-40

2/22 Peacekeeping and Peacebuilding

1st section of the paper due

DPKO; PBSO; DFS

Readings:

An Agenda for Peace

Fasulo: Ch. 9

W&D: Chs. 19, 23

3/1 Conflict Management and Arms Control

UNODA; IAEA; CTC; Kimberly Process

Readings:

Fasulo: Ch. 10

W&D: Chs. 17-18, 20-21, 24

3/15 Development

UNDP; UNCTAD; UNFPA; UNICEF; UNESCO; UN-HABITAT; DESA

Readings:

W&D: Chs. 32, 34, 36-37

3/22 Humanitarian Assistance

OCHA; UNHCR; WFP; UNRWA; ISDR; FAO

W&D: Chs. 22; 27, 31

3/29 Human Rights

2nd section of the paper due

We will most likely be spending time with Ms. Gilian Sorensen during this class time, but the readings should still be completed. We will discuss them during the following week on international law.

OHCHR; Human Rights Council; ILO

Readings:

The Universal Declaration of Human Rights

UNSC Resolution 1325

Fasulo: Ch. 12

W&D: Chs. 25, 28-30

4/5 International Law

OLA; ICJ; ICC; ICTY; ICTR; UNDCP; UNODC

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."

4/12 Environment and Climate Change

UNEP; IPCC; UNFCCC

Readings:

Copenhagen Accord

2007 Nobel Peace Prize Award Speech

IPCC Nobel Lecture

Fasulo: Ch. 11

Michael A. Levi. 2009. "Copenhagen's Inconvenient Truth." *Foreign Affairs* 88(5): 92-104.

4/19 Health

WHO; UNAIDS

Readings:

2010 World Health Report

W&D: Ch. 33

Brett D. Schaefer, "Curing the International Health System," in *ConUNdrum*.

5/4 Final paper due by 5:00pm

Recommended events on campus to attend:

Emerging India Summit: 24-25 February

Knowledge Futures Conference: 18-19 March

Cartooning for Peace and Health: 7-8 April

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.