**The United Nations**

*International Governance and Global Issues*

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**Course Overview**

This course will allow students to critically engage with the role and function of the United Nations as an international organization. Emerging from the ashes of WWII, the UN was founded in 1945 to be a diplomatic alternative to conflict. However, it was born into a Cold War where tensions ran high and international peace remained fragile. Through its development, the UN has grown not only in members, but in its function as well. Now incorporating multiple bodies and agencies, the UN has expanded its mandate into new areas. Part of this course is to understand the UN system itself and how its various components interact with each other. This course will allow students to critically analyze and evaluate the infrastructure of the organization. We will also focus on current global themes and challenges which affect the international community. Through topics ranging from Human Rights to Sustainable Development, this course will examine how the UN addresses these issues.

**Outcomes**

* Gain insight into the UN System and its affiliated organizations
* Critically engage with the functions and capabilities of the UN
* Acquire general understanding of current global issues and challenges the UN confronts

**Course Format and Methods of Instruction**

The format of this course will consist of class sessions involving active discussion and lectures. The discussion will be supplemented with other materials, such as short videos and readings for enhanced understanding. Participation through discussions and the assignments play a key role in being successful throughout this course. Lecture and discussions will take place for 2 hours a week. In addition to participating in sessions, students are expected to review the assigned readings and materials before the relevant session. Throughout the course, students will interact in debate, group activities, and informal presentations based on readings and lecture.

**Assignments**

*BCourses Posts:*

There will be 4 required BCourses posts where students must respond to the themes and issues presented in the readings and supplementary material (videos, lecture, simulations). The posts will be due at 11:59 PM the day before class. The topics of these posts will be relevant to the topics for the weeks that they are assigned. Students may ask questions about the readings they want to discuss in class, post a short summary of a related article, or voice their opinion about the particular international issue.

*Essay 1:*

The Secretary-General of the UN is the spokesperson and leader of the institution. S(he) plays a key role in the UN with many functions and purposes. The coming election to replace the current Secretary-General, Ban Ki-moon, will take place in 2016. In a 2-3 paged paper (double-spaced, 12-inch font) briefly outline the responsibilities of the Secretary-General and whether or not past Secretary-Generals have been effective in their position. Some notable Secretary-Generals are Ban Ki-Moon, Kofi Annan, and Dag Hammarskjöld. You may choose to focus on other Secretary Generals to present your case.

*Essay 2:*

The UN was established as a platform for diplomacy and an alternative to conflict. While no new World War has occurred, there is plenty of conflict in the world. This raises the concern whether the UN is effective at all or even necessary. Utilizing lecture and readings, write a 3-4 paged paper (double-spaced, 12-inch font) on whether or not the UN is necessary today.

**Grading Policy**

Upon completion of the course, students will receive 2 units of pass/no pass credit. Successful completion of at least 70% of the course assignments (with a passing grade) and attendance at sessions (with the ability to miss two sessions) are required to pass.

*Breakdown of Grades:*

Attendance 10%

Participation 30%

BCourses Posts 10%

Essay 1 20%

Essay 2 30%

***Student Accommodations***

If you require any DSP accommodations for the assignments or in-class activities, please submit a DSP request form to the facilitators. You may also email the facilitators if you have any questions or concerns about the class.

***Attendance***

Because of the importance of interactive discussion, students are only allowed to miss 2 sessions. Any further unexcused absences will result in NP. However, if a student encounters a family or medical emergency and provides the appropriate documentation to the facilitators, arrangements can be made for the student to complete an alternative assignment.

***Agenda***

**Week One:** *A Brave New World*- History of the UN & Introduction to the Course

* Watch: **UN** How does the United Nations work? | RMIT University

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QoIafzc0k74>

**Week Two:** *Acronyms 101-* Introduction to the UN System: The Structure and Bodies

**Readings:**

* The United Nations Today (Page 3-18)

<http://www.un.org/ar/geninfo/pdf/UN.today.pdf>

* The Six Organs of the UN

<http://www.un.org/wcm/webdav/site/visitors/shared/documents/pdfs/FS_This%20is%20the%20UN%20_2013.pdf>

* Collective legitimization as a political function of the UN by Inis Claude

<http://www.jstor.org/stable/2705629>

**Week Three**: *The Impossible Job-* The Secretary-General and the Secretariat

**BCourses Post #1 Due**

**Readings:**

* New York Times- Secrecy Reigns as UN Seeks a New Secretary-General

<http://www.nytimes.com/2016/07/22/world/americas/united-nations-secretary-general.html?rref=collection%2Ftimestopic%2FUnited%20Nations>

* The Economist- Master, Mistress or Mouse?

<http://www.economist.com/news/international/21699134-despite-unprecedented-push-pick-uns-next-boss-open-contest-choice-will>

* The New York Times- United Nations Chief Exposes Limits to His Authority by Citing Saudi Threat

<http://nyti.ms/1WGQj8Y>

**Week Four**: *The Insecure Council-* Security Council and Keeping the Peace

**Readings:**

* “Where will we run this time?”

<http://www.washingtonpost.com/sf/world/wp/2016/08/06/2016/08/06/south-sudanese-civilians-fear-the-u-n-cant-protect-them-from-a-massacre/>

* Peacekeeping Operations and the Quest for Peace

<http://www.jstor.org/stable/2150760>

# The United Nations Still Can't Stop Civilian Slaughter

<http://www.theatlantic.com/international/archive/2015/07/bosnia-srebenica-united-nations-peacekeeping/398078/>

**Simulation:** The Security Council on the Issues

**Week Five:** *Expanding the Horizons–* Development and the UN

**Readings:**

* The United Nations Today (Pages 149-156, 184-186)

<http://www.un.org/ar/geninfo/pdf/UN.today.pdf>

* Development and the United Nations: Achievements and Future Challenges by Lorna Gold and Eileen Connolly

<http://www.jstor.org/stable/30002098>

**Week Six:** *Protecting the Horizon-* The Environment, Climate Change, and Energy

**BCourses Post #2 Due**

**Readings:**

* The United Nations Today (Pages 217-234)

<http://www.un.org/ar/geninfo/pdf/UN.today.pdf>

* The New Yorker- The Weight of the World: Can Christiana Figueres Persuade Humanity to Save Itself?by Elizabeth Kolbert

<http://www.newyorker.com/magazine/2015/08/24/the-weight-of-the-world>

* Optional: The UN Environment Programme on Climate Change and International Security

<http://www.jstor.org/stable/23036068>

**Simulation:** Cap and Trade Dilemma: Money or Flexibility?

**Week Seven:** *Human Dignity -* Human Rights

* **Essay 1 Due**

**Readings:**

* The United Nations Today (Pages 239-251)

<http://www.un.org/wcm/webdav/site/visitors/shared/documents/pdfs/FS_This%20is%20the%20UN%20_2013.pdf>

* The UN and Human Rights

<http://www.jstor.org/stable/20039379>

**Simulation:** Redefining Human Rights

**Week Eight:** *The Other Half-* UN and Women

**Readings:**

* The Global Problem of Gender Inequality by Kamrany and Robinson

<http://www.huffingtonpost.com/nake-m-kamrany/gender-inequality_b_1417535.html>

Gender Development Index

* <http://hdr.undp.org/en/content/gender-inequality-index-gii>

also <http://hdr.undp.org/en/content/gender-inequality-index>

* New York Times- UN Summit Meeting Highlights Tension by Somini Sengupta

<http://www.nytimes.com/2015/09/27/world/un-summit-meeting-on-womens-rights-highlights-more-tension-between-us-and-china.html>

**Week Nine:** *Food and Growth-* Food Security and Agriculture

**BCourses Post #3 Due**

**Readings:**

* The United Nations Today (Page 181-185)

<http://www.un.org/ar/geninfo/pdf/UN.today.pdf>

* Agriculture Development and Food security report to the General Assembly

<http://www.un.org/esa/dsd/susdevtopics/sdt_pdfs/SG%20Report%20on%20Agriculture%20Development%20and%20Food%20Security.pdf>

**Week Ten:** *Connected World, Moving People-* Migration and Refugees

**Readings:**

* The United Nations Today (Pages 273-276)

<http://www.un.org/ar/geninfo/pdf/UN.today.pdf>

* Millions Uprooted: Saving Refugees and the Displaced by António Guterres

<http://www.jstor.org/stable/20699306>

**Simulation:** The Syrian Refugee Crisis

**Week Eleven:** *Grass Roots*- Civil Society’s role in the UN

**Readings:**

* NGO Participation in the International Policy Process by Leon Gordenker and Thomas G. Weiss

<http://www.jstor.org/stable/3992892>

**Week Twelve:** *Justice-* International Law and Mechanisms

**BCourses Post #4 Due**

**Readings:**

* The United Nations Today (279-283, 290-294)

<http://www.un.org/ar/geninfo/pdf/UN.today.pdf>

* The role of the International Court of Justice in the Global Community by Judge Christopher Greenwood

<https://www.chathamhouse.org/sites/files/chathamhouse/public/Research/International%20Law/0713pp_iccafrica.pdf>

**Simulation:** International Court of Justice Case

**Week Thirteen:** *Looking Ahead* -Millennium Development Goals and the Post-2015 Agenda

**Readings:**

* Sustainable Development Goals (Page 12-23)

<http://www.un.org/pga/wp-content/uploads/sites/3/2015/08/120815_outcome-document-of-Summit-for-adoption-of-the-post-2015-development-agenda.pdf>

* Poverty Goals? No, it’s extreme wealth we should be targeting by Zoe Williams

<http://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2015/oct/19/un-poor-wealth-sustainable-development-goals>

**Week Fourteen:** Conclusion; Reflection and Evaluations