

Political Science 551
The United Nations System
Spring 2012

Tuesday and Thursday, 3:30–5:18
Journalism Bldg. 0251

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Course Description

This course provides an overview of the United Nations system from the perspective of international relations. It is divided into three parts. The first part begins with an overview of various theoretical perspectives on international relations generally and on the role of international organizations and law more specifically. We then examine the historical evolution of the UN and its precursors, and outline the UN's structure and the key actors and decision-making processes that take place within it. The second part of the course deals with the issue of peace and security, which is central to the UN system. We will discuss topics such as peacekeeping, collective security, and humanitarian intervention, and will use the case of Iraq to illustrate the UN's role in some of these areas. The third part of the course deals with various other issues of importance to the UN, including economic cooperation and development, the environment, globalization and trade, and concludes with a discussion of UN reform and the question of unilateralism versus multilateralism as alternative political strategies in the contemporary international system.

Course Requirements

Students are expected to attend every class session and to keep themselves updated on current events involving the UN and other international organizations (we will begin every Thursday session with a discussion of relevant current events). Graded assignments include: three exams and a 5-page paper on UN reform. Detailed instructions on the exams and paper assignment will be forthcoming in class. The exams will test course readings as well as information covered during class sessions. Note that class lectures and discussion will often cover material that is not covered in the course texts, so receiving a good grade in this course requires that you attend class *and* do the readings.

The final grade will be determined as follows:

Exam 1 (April 19)	25%
Exam 2 (May 10)	25%
Exam 3 (June 5)	25%
Paper (May 29)	25%

Course Texts

The following required books are available at SBX:

- Karen Mingst & Margaret Karns, *The United Nations in the 21st Century*, 4th Ed. (Westview Press)
- Alexander Thompson, *Channels of Power: The UN Security Council and U.S. Statecraft in Iraq* (Cornell University Press).

Academic Misconduct

It is the responsibility of the Committee on Academic Misconduct to investigate or establish procedures for the investigation of all reported cases of student academic misconduct. The term “academic misconduct” includes all forms of student academic misconduct wherever committed; illustrated by, but not limited to, cases of plagiarism and dishonest practices in connection with examinations. Instructors shall report all instances of alleged academic misconduct to the committee (Faculty Rule 3335-5-487). For additional information, see the Code of Student Conduct (http://studentaffairs.osu.edu/resource_csc.asp).

Disability Services

Students with disabilities that have been certified by the Office for Disability Services will be appropriately accommodated, and should inform the instructor as soon as possible of their needs. The Office for Disability Services is located in 150 Pomerene Hall, 1760 Neil Avenue; telephone 292-3307, TDD 292-0901; <http://www.ods.ohio-state.edu/>.

March 27 – Introductory session

Readings:

-Mingst & Karns, Chapter 1

PART I: INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS AND THE UN SYSTEM

March 29 – IOs: Trends and Concepts

Readings:

-Pevehouse, Jon C., Timothy Nordstrom, and Kevin Warnke. 2004. "The COW-2 International Organizations Dataset Version 2.0," *Conflict Management and Peace Science* 21(2):101-119.

-Kenneth Abbott & Duncan Snidal. 1998. "Why States Act through Formal Intergovernmental Organizations," *Journal of Conflict Resolution* 42(1): 3-32.

April 3 – No Class

April 5 – Background and Evolution of the United Nations

Readings:

-Mingst & Karns, Chapter 2, pp. 19-22

April 10 – The Structure of the United Nations I

Readings:

-Mingst & Karns, Chapter 2, pp. 23-49

April 12 – The Structure of the United Nations II

Readings: None

April 17 – Actors and Decision-making in the UN System

Readings:

-Mingst & Karns, Chapter 3

-Ian Johnstone, "The Role of the UN Secretary-General: The Power of Persuasion Based in Law," *Global Governance* 9(4): 441-58.

April 19 – Exam #1

PART II: THE UN IN PEACE AND SECURITY

April 24 – War and Collective Security

Readings:

-Mingst & Karns, Chapter 4

-Thompson, Chapter 1

April 26 – Peacekeeping and Arms Control

Readings:

-Fortna and Howard. 2008. "Pitfalls and Prospects in the Peacekeeping Literature," *Annual Review of Political Science* 11: 283-301.

May 2 – Case Study: The Gulf War

Readings:

Thompson, Chapter 3

May 3 – Case Study: From 9/11 to Iraq 2003

Readings:

-Thompson, Chapters 5-6

-Fareed Zakaria, “We Had Good Intel—The UN’s,” *Newsweek*, February 9, 2004.

May 8 – Human Rights and Humanitarian Intervention

Readings:

-Mingst & Karns, Chapter 6

-Ramesh Thakur, “The Responsibility to Protect,” In *The United Nations, Peace and Security*.

May 10 – Exam #2

PART III: OTHER GLOBAL ISSUES

May 15 – Economic Cooperation and Development

Readings:

Mingst & Karns, Chapter 5

May 17 – Human Security and the Environment

Readings:

Mingst & Karns, Chapter 7

May 22 – No class.

May 24 – Climate Change: Cooperation and Institutions

Readings:

-UNFCCC, “Uniting on Climate 2007”

-Stephen Gardiner, “A Perfect Moral Storm: Climate Change, Intergenerational Ethics and the Problem of Moral Corruption,” *Environmental Values* 15 (2006).

May 29 – Governing Globalization and Trade (Paper Due)

Readings:

-Keisuke Iida. 2004. “Is WTO Dispute Settlement Effective?” *Global Governance* 10(2): 207-25.

May 31 – The UN: Problems and Reform

Unilateralism versus Multilateralism

Readings:

-Mingst & Karns, pp. 49-60 and Chapter 8

-Stephen Walt, “Taming American Power,” *Foreign Affairs* Sept./Oct.

June 5 (Tuesday) – Exam #3: 3:30 – 5:18