International Organization and the United Nations

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Teaching assistant office hours: Wednesday, 3:00-5:00 p.m.

Online Course Information

Online Access: This course is offered entirely online. All course materials except for the textbook will be accessible online for reading and viewing. All assignments will be completed and graded online.

Contacting Me: Please contact me via email: shale@uwm.edu. I check email every day during the week (though often not on weekends). If you send an email, please use “Polsci 337” as your subject header. Also, you are always welcome to come in during my office hours. If you cannot make it to the university during office hours, email me a phone number and I will call you. I urge you all to come in to office hours as often as possible, both to go over any material that is unclear to you and to discuss any material that is of particular interest to you.

Computer Skills Needed for the Course: You will need basic word processing skills; the ability to send and receive email; and a simple understanding of how to access and browse Web sites, including our course website on CANVAS. You will have to be able to receive email via your UWM email account, but of course you can also forward your UWM email to a private account. Checking your email and our course website regularly is very important.

Computer Resources Needed for the Course: You will need routine access either to a computer that has a broadband connection, or to a campus network connection to the Web. If you don’t have your own computer, you will need to use one of the campus lab computers, or perhaps a computer in a public library. Be sure not to use an unreliable wireless connection when taking exams. The computer you use must have a basic word processing program such as Microsoft Word. You will also need Adobe Acrobat Reader to view Adobe PDF files.

Keeping Up with the Course: It is easy to fall behind in online courses. Be careful to organize your time so as to be able to complete the coursework.

Grades

Grades will be based on eight short exams. The lowest exam grade will be dropped, and the final grade will be based on the remaining seven exams (14.29% of the grade each). These short exams focus on the material covered in the previous one to three weeks, but may also cover material from earlier weeks. Short exams must be taken online between 7:00 a.m. in the morning and 11:59 p.m. at night (a 17-hour time window). The exams are scheduled as follows:

- Tuesday, January 28, 7:00 a.m.-11:59 p.m.
- Tuesday, February 11, 7:00 a.m.-11:59 p.m.
• Tuesday, February 25, 7:00 a.m.-11:59 p.m.
• Tuesday, March 10, 7:00 a.m.-11:59 p.m.
• Tuesday, March 31, 7:00 a.m.-11:59 p.m.
• Tuesday, April 14, 7:00 a.m.-11:59 p.m.
• Tuesday, April 28, 7:00 a.m.-11:59 p.m.
• Tuesday, May 12, 7:00 a.m.-11:59 p.m.

No make-up exams will be given. If there is a medical emergency, documented by a written excuse from a health care provider, an exam may be dropped. In this case, the grade will be calculated based on the other seven exams taken.

You will take the exams online in a timed format. You will have a set amount of time—usually 35 minutes—to take an exam. You must complete the exam in that amount of time. Late exams may still be submitted, but will receive lower grades. Once you start an exam, you must finish it—there is no starting an exam, exiting, and coming back to it at another time. Each exam may only be taken one time. Each of the eight short exams will consist of one multi-part essay question. To avoid losing your work while you are writing, you might want to write up your essay in your word-processing program, and then copy-and-paste it into the CANVAS exam window. Once you have completed your essay, be sure to click on the relevant CANVAS icon to submit your answer.

On CANVAS, grades will be assigned on a 0-4.0 scale. The following list shows how these numerical scores equate to letter grades:

• A = 4
• A- = 3.67
• B+ = 3.33
• B = 3
• B- = 2.67
• C+ = 2.33
• C = 2
• C- = 1.67
• D+ = 1.33
• D = 1
• D- = 0.67
• F = 0

Exam grades will be posted on CANVAS about one week after exams are taken. Students with questions about their grades should discuss them first (via email or in person) with the Teaching Assistant. If any issues remain unresolved, students should then contact me. Final course grades will be posted on PAWS.

Students are responsible to complete and represent their work honestly, to cite sources appropriately, and to respect others’ academic endeavors. Students must use their own words in completing exams. Copying-and-pasting from other sources, including course content materials, will result in a failing grade.

**Course Description**

We will examine the goals, policy choices, and impacts of the United Nations organizations. What are the functions or purposes of these organizations? What are their memberships and institutional structures? How are policies chosen? What are the most common voting
coalitions, and why have they formed? Why do some member countries and voting coalitions have more power than others? What relations exist between voting outcomes and real-world policies? How and why have these characteristics changed over time?

We will look at how various UN organizations work in practice. How well has the UN provided its members with collective security and conflict resolution services? We will discuss well-known examples such as Korea, Iraq, Somalia, Rwanda, Sudan, and more recently, Libya, Syria and Ukraine. We will also look in detail at the classic post-Cold War case of the break-up and civil wars of Yugoslavia—a set of conflicts that well illustrate the strengths and weaknesses of UN-led efforts to advance peace and security.

What role has the UN played in combating (or legitimizing) terrorism? How much has the UN helped to produce disarmament and arms control agreements—particularly for weapons of mass destruction? What impact has it had on human rights and environmental conservation? Finally, we will look at efforts of UN and UN-affiliated organizations to promote international trade and economic development, and to address economic adjustment crises.

Throughout, we will ask how UN organizations affect outcomes, relative to those that would likely have been reached in their absence by regional organizations, spontaneous diplomatic negotiations, and most fundamentally, governments’ decentralized pursuit of their interests. This depends primarily on how UN organizations can be used by the relevant coalitions of member state governments to pursue their varying interests—again, interests that are in practice determined by the regimes or governments in power.

Readings
Required readings are available on CANVAS or online.

Course and Exam Schedule
Before reading the lecture notes and doing the reading, please read the study and debate questions below. This will help you focus on the central topics and questions of the course, and also give you an idea of what to expect on the exams. After the exam times listed below within each of the subject areas, the material to be covered for each exam time is also listed. Students will not be expected to know material to be covered after a given exam, but they should be ready to answer questions about all material covered through the given exam.


Reading: Ziring, Riggs and Plano, chapters 1-3, Appendix (UN Charter); Lecture Notes 1-2.

Short exam online:
- Tuesday, January 28, 7:00 a.m.-11:59 a.m. (all reading material for January 21-28 is relevant for this exam).

Study questions:
Chapters 1-2, Appendix: What are the goals, powers and voting rules of the League of Nations and the UN? What are the most obvious differences between the two? What are the similarities and differences between the Security Council and General
Assembly on the one hand, and domestic legislatures such as the U.S. Congress on the other?

Are the objectives stated in the UN Charter mutually consistent? What is the relationship between the ideals of non-intervention in the affairs of sovereign states, collective security, national self-determination, and human rights? When should one of these principles be considered a greater priority than the others? Where, if at all, does democracy fit in? Try to apply these issues to some specific examples.

During the 1930s, why did the League fail to deter aggression in Manchuria, Ethiopia, and Eastern Europe? Would the UN have done any better? Has the UN been important in deterring aggression since World War II?

What are the UN’s financial resources, and why?

Chapter 3: How much power do the various organs of the UN possess? How does the UN’s institutional structure affect voting outcomes? In the Security Council (SC), what difference does limited membership and veto power make? What are the main voting blocs that have formed in the UN over time? Why haven’t democracies formed an effective voting bloc, particularly since the end of the Cold War? How do we explain the changing pattern of voting outcomes over time, particularly with respect to U.S. (and in the past, Soviet) influence?

If you see any obvious weaknesses in the way the UN functions, what sorts of institutional changes would make an improvement? Would the changes have undesirable consequences in other ways? What changes would be politically feasible?

Debate questions: In trying to organize member countries to provide collective security, to what extent is the UN Charter an improvement over the League of Nations Covenant? Again, what is the relationship between the ideals of non-intervention in the affairs of sovereign states, collective security, national self-determination, and human rights? Does the Charter provide any guidance? What are the political implications or consequences of this vagueness?

In what senses are the systems of representation in the General Assembly and Security Council just or unjust? In what sense do different types of governments represent their peoples? Should Luxembourg have the same voting power as India? Should the Security Council be enlarged to include more permanent members, such as Japan, Germany, India or Brazil? Why or why not? What positive or negative effects would this have? Are any such changes politically feasible?

Have the U.S. and other countries been justified when, at times, they have withheld their financial dues to the UN? Should the U.S. and other rich countries contribute more money to the UN? If so, should this occur within the regular or voluntary budgets?


Reading: Ziring, Riggs and Plano, chapters 5-6, pp. 419-422; Nau, pp. 257-264, 266-268, 273-278; Russett and Sutterlin; Reno; Horowitz, chapters 8-10; Fenske; Lewis; Rubin, pp. 1-32; Tessitore and Woolfson, pp. 245-262.

Recommended reading: Bush; Obama; Trump; International Criminal Court Home Page <http://www.icc-cpi.int/>.
Short exams online:

- **Tuesday, February 11, 7:00 a.m.-11:59 p.m.** (cover materials through collective security and peacekeeping: Ziring, Riggs and Plano, chapters 5-6; Nau, pp. 257-264, 266-268, 273-278; Russett and Sutterlin; Reno; Lecture Notes 3-4).
- **Tuesday, February 25, 7:00 a.m.-11:59 p.m.** (cover materials through Yugoslav wars: Horowitz, chapters 8-10; Fenske; Lecture Notes 5).
- **Tuesday, March 10, 7:00 a.m.-11:59 p.m.** (cover materials through terrorism: Lewis; Rubin, pp. 1-32; Lecture Notes 6).
- **Tuesday, March 31, 7:00 a.m.-11:59 p.m.** (cover materials through International Criminal Court and war crimes tribunals: Tessitore and Woolfson, pp. 245-262; Lecture Notes 7).

**Study questions:**

**Chapter 5:** What does the UN add to traditional tools of international relations, such as national armed forces, alliances, and diplomacy? Is UN action a substitute or a complement for such traditional methods? What is the relationship between diplomacy and SC “judgment” or resolution-making, and between national armed forces, alliances, and SC “action” to enforce its resolutions? What do the examples of Korea and Iraq-Kuwait (First Gulf War) show about when and how the UN actually acts militarily? What are the implications for the longstanding debate about “unilateralism” vs. “multilateralism”?

Why have economic sanctions been used so often since the end of the Cold War? When are economic sanctions more or less likely to work?

**Chapter 6:** What explains the purposes, methods, and high frequency of UN peacekeeping operations? Based on the examples discussed in the readings, under what conditions is UN peacekeeping likely to make a significant contribution to settlement of international and domestic conflicts? Try to keep in mind the objectives and relative power of the sides involved in a given conflict. Try to think through the possibilities for the various conflicts discussed in the readings.

**CANVAS readings:** What were the main sources of the Yugoslav conflicts? Why were international organizations—particularly the UN Security Council and the European Community—so ineffective in resolving these conflicts? How and why were the U.S. and NATO ultimately able to intervene more successfully? Is the experience in Sierra Leone consistent with that in the former Yugoslavia?

Describe the main developments in Middle Eastern politics in recent decades. What explains the power of radical ideologies such as Pan-Arabism and, more recently, Islamism, and the weakness of moderate ideologies emphasizing democracy, human rights, and economic development? How do we understand the “Arab Spring” movements and their aftermath? What has been the pattern of international and UN intervention in Arab Spring conflicts? How do we explain this pattern?

**Debate questions:**

What do the examples of Korea and Iraq-Kuwait show about the limits of UN military involvement? What are the prospects for some kind of UN-operated worldwide security regime, in which UN military forces replace those of individual countries in responding to acts of aggression and offering peacekeeping services? Evaluate the likely feasibility and effectiveness of the proposals advanced by Russett and Sutterlin.
What about the 2011 humanitarian intervention in Libya? Or the multi-national state-building efforts in Somalia? How do such cases confirm or refute the hopes of Russet and Sutterlin? What could be done in response to Russia’s 2014 attack on Ukraine?

What do the examples of Yugoslavia and Sierra Leone show about the effectiveness of peacekeeping operations? Realistically, could the UN have acted differently to resolve these conflicts more effectively?

What do the U.S.-led actions in Bosnia, Kosovo, and in the war to overthrow Saddam Hussein (Second Gulf War) show about the limits of UN-led intervention? France has intervened many times in its former African colonies—sometimes to protect existing governments and sometimes to midwife new governments. France has often obtained Security Council authorizations, but typically intervenes separately from any peacekeeping missions. Recent examples include the Ivory Coast, Mali, and the Central African Republic. What explains this approach to intervention? How effective are recent peacekeeping efforts in the Darfur region in Sudan? Concerning the Arab Spring, how are Syria and Yemen different from Libya? Does this explain the absence of UN-authorized intervention in Syria and Yemen?

What is terrorism? Under what, if any, circumstances is terrorism a legitimate means of pursuing political goals? What kinds of regimes and movements have used terrorism most intensively in recent decades, and why? Why do most regimes and movements employ other means to achieve their goals? Take an example of a regime or movement that uses terrorism and try to explain why. Take an example of a regime or movement that doesn’t use terrorism and try to explain why. Why isn’t terrorism used much more commonly than it is? What are the most effective responses to terrorism? To what extent is the UN likely to play a useful role in combating terrorism?

What are the strengths and weaknesses of the International Criminal Court (ICC)? What kinds of human rights abuses is the ICC best suited to punishing or deterring? Does ICC prosecution of leaders who violate international human rights laws help or hurt the prospects of resolving conflicts peacefully or with minimum loss of life? For example, consider the conflicts in Sudan and Syria. How well have ICC prototypes functioned in the cases of Yugoslavia and Rwanda? How well will the ICC function regarding Sudan (Darfur) or Syria? What prosecutions have been or are underway at the ICC? Do the results so far support the ICC’s proponents or its critics? Which countries have ratified the ICC Treaty, and why? Should the U.S. ratify the ICC Treaty? Recently, there is a new trend of countries (e.g., Burundi, the Philippines, South Africa) withdrawing from the ICC Treaty. What is its significance?

Short exam online:
- Tuesday, April 14, 7:00 a.m.-11:59 p.m. (cover materials through disarmament and arms control, human rights, and environmental conservation: Ziring, Riggs and Plano, chapters 7, 9; Marshall and Shea, xvii-xxii, 205-226; Lecture Notes 8-9).

Study questions:
Chapter 7: Many countries do not engage in arms races. To what extent do arms per se contribute to conflict? In what way are arms control agreements likely to contribute to conflict resolution? Think about some of the conflicts discussed earlier in the course. Try to explain why there are conflicts and arms races, and how arms control agreements might or might not help to stop them. Why do some conflicts allow for arms control agreements, while others do not? Why are arms control agreements possible for some regions and weapons systems, but not for others?
Chapter 9: How clearly does the UN Charter protect human rights? Why has the UN been so ineffective and hypocritical in defending human rights?

Debate questions:
What difference did arms control agreements make during the Cold War? In what kinds of conflicts can they make a difference in the current period? What lessons can be learned from the experience with Saddam Hussein’s Iraq? Can arms control agreements help to defuse the conflicts between the Arab countries and Israel, or between India and Pakistan? Can such agreements be used to defuse potential conflicts, such as those between China and India, China and Vietnam, or China and the Philippines? Should the U.S. sign the treaty banning landmines? Should the U.S. have withdrawn from the Anti-Ballistic Missile (ABM) Treaty? Should the U.S. have signed the New Start Treaty with Russia in 2011? Should the U.S. withdraw from the New Start Treaty in response to Russia’s attack on Ukraine? Russia appears to be violating an older treaty limiting intermediate-range ballistic missiles; China, which is not a party to the treaty, is rapidly building up its own intermediate-range and long-range missile forces. How should the U.S. respond?

Are human rights universal, or merely “Western” cultural constructs that should not be imposed in other regions? Are some human rights more fundamental than others? If some are, how much justification does this provide for restricting those deemed less fundamental? Do East Asian or Islamic cultures uphold different human rights standards, or are such assertions merely convenient excuses for authoritarian regimes interested in keeping power or advancing specific radical ideologies?

In international diplomacy and at the UN in particular, when are human rights standards capable of being more than conveniently applied political rhetoric? In 2006, the old UN Human Rights Commission was reorganized as the Human Rights Council. The current members of the UN Human Rights Council are listed here: <http://www.ohchr.org/EN/HRBodies/HRC/Pages/MembersByGroup.aspx>. What are the human rights records of these governments? Browse their Freedom House Country Reports from 2018 or 2019: <https://freedomhouse.org/report/freedom-world/freedom-world-2018> <https://freedomhouse.org/report/freedom-world/freedom-world-2019>
Has this “rebranded” body performed any better than its predecessor body? Why or why not? Can the UN function effectively to improve human rights, or is it doomed to provide politically convenient rationalizations for human rights abuses? Is the ICC more likely to deliver neutral justice or politically biased “show trials”? What will determine which outcome is most likely in a given case? Does ICC prosecution of leaders who violate international human rights laws help or hurt the prospects of resolving conflicts peacefully or with minimum loss of life? Should the U.S. ratify the ICC Treaty? Why or why not?

Under what conditions is international cooperation to conserve environmental resources most important? Why? What are the main obstacles to international environmental cooperation? How do these obstacles explain the relative easy international agreement on phasing out use of ozone-depleting chlorofluorocarbons (CFCs), as compared to the relative difficulty in regulating greenhouse gas emissions? Should the U.S. have ratified the Kyoto Protocol and the other, follow-on agreements on greenhouse gas emissions (such as those at Copenhagen and Paris)? Why or why not? Why are the agreements more or less far-reaching?


Reading: Spero and Hart, chapter 3; Ziring, Riggs and Plano, chapters 10-11; Nau, pp. 282-288; Feldstein; Fischer; Lecture Notes 10-12.


Short exams online:

- Tuesday, April 28, 7:00 a.m.-11:59 p.m. (cover materials through international trade: Spero and Hart, chapter 3; Lecture Notes 10).
- Tuesday, May 12, 7:00 a.m.-11:59 p.m. (cover materials through international finance and economic development: Ziring, Riggs and Plano, chapters 10-11; Feldstein; Fischer; Lecture Notes 11-12).

Study questions:

Chapters 10-11: What are the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs)—and the follow-up Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)? What goals are not included that many would consider important? How does the chosen list of goals make sense as the product of a non-threatening political compromise at the UN?

What is the purpose of the WTO? What rules and procedures does it use to achieve its purpose? How effective is it? Answer the same questions for the IMF and World Bank. Why is the IMF more important and powerful than the World Bank? How are these independent, UN-affiliated economic institutions different from the Security Council and General Assembly? In what sense are they more or less effective? Why? What are some possible changes to their rules, and how would this affect how they work in practice?

Debate questions:

Would the IMF work better if its governance was reformed to work like the General Assembly or the Security Council? Why or why not? Should the IMF return to its original methods (Feldstein), or continue with its broader approach of recent decades (Fischer)? Apply the arguments to specific examples, such as South Korea, Argentina,
Brazil, or Russia. What are the criticisms of anti-WTO and anti-IMF protest groups? What interest groups provide core support for the protest movements? What interest groups support the WTO and IMF? Why?

**Required and Recommended Readings Available on CANVAS**


Library Periodical Search Engines and Internet Resources
Apart from Google searches, try more targeted searches of academic literature on the UWM Library’s main political science search engines, JSTOR and Worldwide Political Science Abstracts. The following websites are also useful:
UN organizations, committees, etc. <http://www.unsystem.org>
WTO Home Page <http://www.wto.org>
IMF Home Page <http://www.imf.org>
International Criminal Court Home Page <http://www.icc-cpi.int/>