

THE UNITED NATIONS IN INTERNATIONAL POLITICS

Political Science BC 3012y
Spring 2001
MW 1:10-2:25
302 Barnard Hall

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COURSE DESCRIPTION

In the years following the cold war the United Nations has come to play an increasingly prominent role in international politics. Yet it is an institution steeped in controversy. Its strongest advocates see the UN as a guarantor of international law and human rights, a forum for maintaining the equality of sovereign states, a force for universal economic development and humanitarian assistance, and a means for the attainment of a just and peaceful world order through multilateral cooperation. Its harshest critics believe that it has failed to achieve its mandates, and see it as a drain on international resources that is used primarily for the advancement of particularistic interests. Those in the middle see a mixture of successes and failures, and strive to design and implement reforms in UN structures and practices in the hopes of strengthening the institution for the future. Yet these reform proposals in turn are often incompatible with each other, and each by definition challenges the interests and beliefs of certain member states or UN officials.

In this course students will gain knowledge and experience allowing them to come to their own informed conclusions about these controversies. Lectures, readings, policy field trips and an in-class simulation will encourage students to consider a wide variety of perspectives on UN institutions and policies, using a combination of international relations theory and analysis of recent history and current events. In addition, the writing and simulation assignments and exams will help students hone their analytical and communication skills.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

There will be a 5- to 7-page **take-home midterm essay** on basic UN theories, concepts, and structures; questions will be handed out in lecture on **Feb. 19**, and completed essays will be due at the start of lecture on **Feb. 26**. There will also be a **comprehensive, in-class, closed-book final exam** at the date and time set by the university: **Monday, May 7, 1:10-4:00 pm**. Students may bring one 8 ½ by 11" sheet of paper to the final exam, on which they may write anything they like.

In addition to these exams, an important component of the course will be a **two-session, in-class simulation** of negotiation and decision-making by the Permanent 5 (P-5) Members of the UN Security Council. Each student will be randomly assigned to take the position of one of these states (the US, Russia, China, Great Britain, or France) in a simulation of negotiation over how to resolve the current Iraqi sanctions crisis. (Details will be forthcoming in a separate handout.) In conjunction with this simulation, students must turn in **two 5-page papers**. The first, due at the start of lecture on **Apr. 4**, will be a position paper summarizing the views of the assigned state in regard to the current Iraqi sanctions crisis (there will be a separate handout talking about how the paper might be structured). The second, due at the start of lecture on the last day of class, **Apr. 30**, will be a thought piece, relating the student's experience in the simulation to the question of UN Security Council effectiveness as discussed in lectures and readings. **Students are required to attend class on Feb. 21 for an instruction session on using web-based sources for writing the position paper, and on Apr. 18 and 23 in order to participate in the simulation**; if you know now that you cannot attend class on one of those days, you must drop this class. Students are also required to meet twice with their assigned small group outside of class, once before Apr. 18 and once again before Apr. 23, to discuss their negotiation strategies.

Outside of class there will also be **at least one and perhaps more field trip(s)**; there will be one to United Nations headquarters, with a presentation on peacekeeping by a member of the Department of Peacekeeping Operations, and possibly ones to the U.S. and the Chilean missions to the UN. At these sessions, expert practitioners will discuss their work and the political issues of the day with the class. All communication will be off the record and not for attribution, and electronic recording is prohibited. Students should be aware that their bags will be searched at the security gates and that they will have to walk through a metal detector, and that only students officially registered in the class will be allowed in to the meetings. These trips will provide students with a unique opportunity to hear policy makers speak candidly, and to ask tough questions. **Participation in the trips is not required**, as they will be held outside of class time. Students must sign up for these trips in advance. Those wishing extra credit may write a 2-3 page summary of the discussion, explaining how the issues raised tie in to class themes; the extra-credit paper will be due at the next class meeting following the trip.

GRADING

Midterm essay: 25%

Position paper on Iraq: 25%

Summary paper on UNSC simulation: 10%

Participation (including attendance, as well as quality of contributions to class discussions): 10%

Final exam: 30%

Extra credit (at the discretion of the instructor) for papers turned in following field trips

ASSIGNED READINGS

The following books have been ordered at Labyrinth Books, 536 W. 112th, and are also available on reserve at the Barnard library.

Armstrong, David, et al. *From Versailles to Maastricht: International Organizations in the Twentieth Century*. New York: St. Martin's, 1996.

Durch, William J., ed. *UN Peacekeeping, American Politics, and the Uncivil Wars of the 1990s* (New York: St. Martin's, 1996).

Evans, Tony, ed. *Human Rights 50 Years On: A Reappraisal*. New York: St. Martin's, 1998.

Fisher, Roger, and William Ury. *Getting to Yes: Negotiating Agreement Without Giving In*. New York: Penguin, 1981.

Haass, Richard N., ed. *Economic Sanctions and American Diplomacy*. New York: Council on Foreign Relations, 1998.

Jentelson, Bruce W., ed. *Opportunities Seized, Opportunities Missed: Preventive Diplomacy in the Post-Cold War World*. New York: Rowman and Littlefield, 2000.

Luard, Evan, rev. by Derek Heater. *The United Nations: How It Works and What It Does*. 2nd ed. New York: St. Martin's, 1995.

South Centre. *For a Strong and Democratic United Nations: A South Perspective on UN Reform*. New York: St. Martin's, 1997.

Tessitore, John and Susan Woolfson, eds. *A Global Agenda: Issues before the 55th General Assembly of the United Nations* (New York: Rowman and Littlefield, 2000).

Note: be sure you obtain the current edition of this annual volume; earlier editions will not be of any use to you.

Willetts, Peter, ed. *Conscience of the World: The Influence of Nongovernmental Organizations at the United Nations*. Washington: Brookings, 1996.

In addition, there are five required journal articles which are on reserve at the Barnard library. These journal articles are also available online to anyone with a registered Columbia email account. Go to the webpage: www.columbia.edu/cu/libraries/indexes/. Select "ProQuest Direct" from the alphabetical list of sources. Once you are connected to the database list in ProQuest, simply hit the "continue" button at the bottom of the page. Select the "Guided Search" tab at the top of the next screen. Then enter the author's last name in the first field area, select "author," and the full text of the article will come up.

SCHEDULE AND SYLLABUS

SECTION I: THE UN IN THEORY AND PRACTICE

Jan. 17. Why Study the UN?

--**Tessitore and Woolfson**, pp. 1-3 [through "Reinterpreting Sovereignty"] and 7-10 ["Multilateralism and Political Will in the Security Council"]

--**Luard**, pp. 1-9

Jan. 22. The UN, the League of Nations, and Collective Security

--**Armstrong**, pp. 7-87

Jan. 24. Theory: Realism vs. Institutionalism.

--**Required articles:**

--John Mearsheimer, "The False Promise of International Institutions," *International Security* 19, no. 3 (Winter 1994/5): 5-49.

--Robert Keohane and Lisa Martin, "The Promise of Institutional Theory," *International Security* 20, no. 1 (Summer 1995): 39-51.

Jan. 29. Theory: The Politics of Organizations.

--**Required article:**

--Michael Barnett and Martha Finnemore, "The Politics, Power, and Pathologies of International Organization," *International Organization* 53, no. 4 (Aut. 1999): 699-732.

--**Tessitore and Woolfson**, pp. 271-301.

Jan. 31. The General Assembly, ECOSOC, and North/South Issues.

--**Luard**, pp. 38-79.

--**South Centre**, pp. 3-24.

--**Armstrong**, pp. 88-112.

Feb. 5. The Security Council and Reform.

--**Luard**, pp. 10-37.

--**Armstrong**, pp. 113-37.

--**South Centre**, pp. 127-50.

Feb. 7. Secretaries General and Why They Matter.

--**Luard**, pp. 102-52.

--**South Centre**, pp. 65-126.

SECTION II: HUMAN RIGHTS AND ECONOMIC ISSUES.

Feb. 12. International Law: The Example of War Crimes Tribunals

--**Tessitore and Woolfson**, pp. 230-62

--**Luard**, pp. 80-101.

--**Evans**, pp. 105-29.

Feb. 14. The Role of NGOs in the UN
--**Willetts**, pp. 1-62, 277-89, 116-46.

Feb. 19. Defining Human Rights.
--**Evans**, pp. 2-23, 58-76, 161-85.
--**Willetts**, pp. 181-213.
--**South Centre**, pp. 151-74.

*****Take-home midterm handed out today in class.*****

Feb. 21. In-class demonstration: using the world wide web for primary source research, for the position paper on Iraq. **Attendance at this class is required.** Advanced search techniques using Lexis/Nexis, World News Connection, and the UN website will be demonstrated.

Feb. 26. The UN and Health Issues: The Example of the AIDS Crisis.
--**Tessitore and Woolfson**, pp. 202-8.

*****Take-home midterm essay due today at the start of class.*****

Mar. 5. Women's Issues and the UN.
--**Tessitore and Woolfson**, pp. 183-90.
--**Evans**, pp. 142-60 (you are free to read the beginning of this article, starting on p. 132, but not required to do so)
--**Willetts**, pp. 147-80.

SECTION III: SECURITY ISSUES.

Mar. 7. Economic Sanctions in Theory; alternatives.
--**Haass**, pp. 1-9, 35-56 (read this to gain an understanding of why US unilateral sanctions against Cuba have largely failed), pp. 129-156, 177-196.

Mar. 12 and 14. Spring Break. No class meetings.

Mar. 19. The UN and Iraq in the 1990s.
--**Haass**, pp. 107-128
--**Tessitore and Woolfson**, "Deadlock with Iraq," pp. 55-60.
--**Required article reading:**
--Gregory Gause, "Getting It Backward on Iraq," *Foreign Affairs* 78, no. 3 (May/June 1999): 54-65.

Mar. 21. Peacekeeping: Theory and Practice.
--**Durch**, pp. 1-67.
--**Tessitore and Woolfson**, pp. 3-7 ("Reexamining the Past") and 10-48 (through "Cyprus").

Mar. 26. Peacekeeping, continued: The Impact of Somalia on political will.

--**Durch**, pp. 311-366.

--**Jentelso**n, pp. 211-37.

Mar. 28. Peacebuilding in War-Torn Societies.

--**Durch**, pp. 69-102, 135-191.

--**Tessitore and Woolfson**, pp. 48-54, 61-68, 172-83.

Apr. 2, Apr. 4. Peacekeeping and Prevention: Conditions for Success.

--**Jentelso**n, pp. 3-14 (through "Strategies of Action"), 133-172, 173-208, 238-264.

--**Durch**, pp. 367-407.

On the first day of this topic, we will have an in-class movie on Macedonia. On the second day, we will discuss the movie and talk about why prevention succeeded in Macedonia but failed in Bosnia and Rwanda.

Position paper on Iraq due at the start of class on Apr. 4.

Apr. 9, 11. Intervention in Kosovo.

--**Tessitore and Woolfson**, pp. 61-8

--**Required article:**

--**Posen, Barry**. "The War for Kosovo: Serbia's Political-Military Strategy," *International Security* 24, no. 4 (Spring 2000): 39-84.

The first day of this topic will be a lecture on the intervention in Kosovo. (Lecture will be taped for students missing class because of Passover.) The second day will be a class discussion of the issues raised by the NATO intervention.

Apr. 16. Negotiation Theory and Techniques.

--**Fisher, Ury, and Patton**, pp. 3-14, 40-94, 97-116. As you are doing this reading, apply its principles to the issues surrounding your upcoming negotiations on Iraq. Concentrate on understanding the difference between positions and interests, on how you might invent options for mutual gain in regard to Iraq, on objective criteria you might propose to the UNSC at your meeting, and on defining your BATNA if the negotiations fail. While class will involve some lecturing, the focus will be on thinking creatively about these principles, so **be sure to do the reading before class** (it is very easy).

Apr. 18. In-class simulation session 1.

Apr. 23. In-class simulation session 2.

Apr. 25. The UNSC and sanctions: Lessons and Prospects.

--**Haass**, pp. 197-212.

Apr. 30. Conclusion: The UN in the 21st Century.