

UNITED NATIONS I

Instructor: Dr. Katerina Oskarsson

MW 3:00-4:15pm

BAL 3070

Prerequisites: POLSC 100/Instructor Approval

Office: Library 3011L

Office Hours: Wed 4:30-5:30pm or

by appt: koskarss@odu.edu

Course description

POLSC 320 is a course that introduces students to the academic discussion about the role of the United Nations Organization in the contemporary world politics. Students will learn about the history of the UN, its structure, main bodies and agencies and also challenges and opportunities that the United Nations faces in the 21st century. The course includes not only theoretical analysis of the UN system, its functions, and current missions, but also offers practical experience during a tour to the UN headquarters in New York City and through participation in the ODU Model United Nations Day.

Course objectives

Upon completion of the course, students are expected to demonstrate a fundamental knowledge of the history, structure, and functions of the UN as well as the challenges it faces in the contemporary world politics. Moreover, students are expected to be familiar with central theories of international relations regarding the UN; determine the positions of the United States, People's Republic of China, Russian Federation, France, Great Britain and other world powers towards the role of the United Nations; and, understand the unique position of the UN system in the world politics.

Readings

Mingst, Karen A., and Margaret P. Karns. *The United Nations in the 21st Century*. 4th ed. Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 2012.

Internet/Blackboard Readings, including selections from:

- Chesterman, Simon, ed. *Secretary or General? The UN Secretary-General in World Politics*. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2007.
- Fasulo, Linda. *An Insider's Guide to the UN*. 2nd ed. New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2009.
- Weiss, Thomas G. *What's Wrong with the United Nations and How to Fix It*. 2nd ed. Cambridge, UK: Polity Press, 2012.

- Ziring, Lawrence, Robert E. Riggs, and Jack C. Plano. *The United Nations: International Organizations and World Politics*. 4th ed. Stamford, CT: Cengage Learning, 2005.

Course requirements

- Students must attend all classes as part of their participation grade.
- Students must attend the ODU UN Day: Friday, October 30, 2015.
- Students must attend UN Seminar, New York City: November 8-11, 2015.
- Students who are unable to attend the UN Seminar will be required to complete a similar assignment.
- Students MUST complete all assignments outlined in this syllabus and submit them in a timely manner.
- Students are will submit their assignments as word docs to koskarss@odu.edu.

Grading

Late assignments will lose 5 percentage points per day. Each assignment will be worth 100 points. The percentage points will be deducted from the 100 available not from the number of points earned by your efforts. The following assignments are accompanied by their relative weight as a portion of your final grade.

Reflection papers 30% (10% each)

Oral Presentations 10%

Attendance and participation 10%

Attendance - conferences & seminars 10%

Position paper 15%

Final exam 25%

Total 100%

Reflection papers

During the course of the semester, students will submit **three two-page papers** (approximately 600 words per paper) that will outline the structure and functions of the UN, its missions around the globe, as well as the challenges and opportunities that this international organizations faces in the 21st century. These papers are intended to familiarize students with the activities of the UN and develop an in-depth understanding of a particular subject. During the first part of the course, students will choose one UN agency, body or program and prepare an overview of its main functions. Following the second part of the course, students will analyze a particular topic (e.g. peacekeeping, human rights, etc.) that is addressed by the UN agency, body or program that they have chosen. Finally, after the last section of the course, students will be asked to reflect on the prospects of the specific issue area that they analyzed and suggest their vision for reforming the UN. Reflection papers are via email by midnight on Sept 21th, October 28th, and November 23th.

Oral presentations

Students will make short presentations (maximum 5-7 minutes) of their findings based on three reflection papers. Presentations should include a quick analysis of the UN body and issue area

that you have chosen, challenges that they faced in the 21st century, and a conclusion that should reflect your stance on the prospects of the UN transformation. Oral presentations will be held during the last several weeks before the final exam. Student may choose to use visual tools for their presentations. Tips for effective presentation:

<http://www.cgl.uwaterloo.ca/~csk/washington/presentations.html>)

Position paper

A position paper is a short overview (3 pages/900 words) of a country's stance on a specific UN-related topic. Position papers are an effective tool to prepare for participation in the United Nations Day activities on October 30th. Each student will send an email with the choice of three countries (from the UN Day country list) and one issue area. The instructor will assign each student with a country and an issue area. Position papers are due via email by midnight on October 7th. A guide and sample position papers are available at:

<http://www.unausa.org/global-classrooms-model-un/how-to-participate/model-un-preparation/position-papers>

UN seminar - NYC

The initial classes in this course will familiarize students with the history, structure, and role of the UN. Class attendance for these discussions is especially important to give students a good foundation for the UN trip in New York between November 8th and November 11th. The Course Instructor and the Society Director, Dr. Fran Hassencahl, reserve the right to exclude students from the trip/seminar for disciplinary reasons.

Final examination

The final exam will consist of several identifications, two short essays and one longer essay question. The content of the examination will not require external research; rather, students will be required to draw on classroom discussions, assigned readings, the UN seminar experience, reflection papers, and overall classroom interactions to answer the questions.

EXPLANATION OF GRADES:

Grade	Points	Grade	Points
A	93-100	C	73-76
A-	90-92	C-	70-72
B+	87-89	D+	67-69
B	83-86	D	63-66
B-	80-82	D-	60-62
C+	77-79	F	59 and below

Course schedule

Date	Topic	Readings	Assignment
Aug 24	Introduction		
Aug 26	International Relation Theory and International Actors	S. Walt, "International Relations: One World, Many Theories" - Blackboard	
Aug 31	The UN as an International Actor	Mingst and Karns, pp. 2-16, UN Charter	Position paper assignments
Sep 2	League of Nations	Mingst and Karns, pp. 19-22. http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/amex/wilson/portrait/wp_election.html	
Sep 7	Labor Day Holiday	NO CLASS	
Sep 9	UN History	Mingst and Karns, ch. 2. UN.org http://www.un.org/en/aboutun/history/	
Sep 14	UN system	Mingst and Karns, pp. 23-49. UN system chart http://www.un.org/en/aboutun/structure/pdfs/un-system-chart-color-sm.pdf	
Sep 16	UN system (cont)	Mingst and Karns, ch 3.	
Sep 21	UN Security Council	Mingst and Karns, pp. 31-35. Fasulo, <i>An Insider's Guide to the UN</i> pp. 38-60.	Reflection paper 1 due
Sep 23	UN General Assembly and Secretary General	Mingst and Karns, pp. 25-30; 37-41; 83-88. Fasulo, <i>An Insider's Guide to the UN</i> pp. 60-81 Chesterman, Simon, ed. <i>Secretary or General? The UN Secretary-General in World Politics</i> .	
Sep 28	UN in action. An overview of UN issue areas	UN Global Issues http://www.un.org/en/globalissues/index.shtml "The United Nations: It's your world" (video) http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bHmXZXsABm0	
Sep 30	Peace and Security/UN Day briefing	Mingst and Karns, pp. 100-142 briefing for the UN Day	
Oct 5	Economic and Social Development	Mingst and Karns, ch. 5.	
Oct 7	Millennium Development Goals	Mingst and Karns, pp.183-187. MDG	Position Paper due

		http://www.un.org/millenniumgoals/news.shtml “Let’s Step Up” (video) http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YfjdUcJla6s&list=PL8DEED622522E65D3	
Oct 12	Fall Break	NO CLASS	
Oct 14	Human Rights	Mingst and Karns, ch. 6	
Oct 19	Human Security and Environment	Mingst and Karns, ch. 7.	
Oct 21	International Terrorism and Weapons of Mass Destruction	Mingst and Karns, pp.146-150. Fasulo, <i>An Insider’s Guide to the UN</i> , ch. 10. UN Action to Counter Terrorism http://www.un.org/en/terrorism/index.shtml	
Oct 26	UN and Globalization	Mingst and Karns, pp. 190-192. Fasulo, <i>An Insider’s Guide to the UN</i> , pp. 190-192. Ruggie, John. G. “The United Nations and Globalization.” (blackboard)	
Oct 28	Prospects and criticism of the UN	Mingst and Karns, ch. 8. Weiss, Thomas G. <i>What's Wrong with the United Nations and How to Fix It</i>	Reflection Paper 2 due
Nov 2	Reforming the UN	Mingst and Karns, pp.289-290. Fasulo, <i>An Insider’s Guide to the UN</i> , ch. 14.	
Nov 4	NY Tour Preparation	Q&A, consent forms. All participants must attend	
Nov 9	UN Tour	NO CLASS	
Nov 11	Returning from UN Tour	NO CLASS	
Nov 16	UN in the 21 st C: Challenges and Opportunities	Course overview	
Nov 18	Student Presentations		
Nov 23	Student Presentations		Reflection paper 3 due
Nov 25	Thanksgiving	NO CLASS	
Nov 30	Student Presentations		
Dec 2	Student Presentations		
Dec 11 3:45pm - 6:45pm	Final Exam		BAL 3070

Online research/information resources:

- United Nations News Center: <http://www.un.org/news/>
- JSTOR, LexisNexis, etc.
- UN Member States views: <http://www.un.org/Depts/dhl/unms/>
- Foreign Affairs: <http://www.foreignaffairs.com/>
- American Model United Nations website: <http://www.amun.org/index.php?page=home>
- Foreign Policy Association: <http://www.fpa.org>
- CIA World Factbook: <https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/>
- BBC News Country Profiles: http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/country_profiles/default.stm (just select your country for a list of pertinent news items and a brief profile)
- ODU Library Political Science and Law Databases:
<http://www.lib.odu.edu/resources/databases/PSandL/index.htm>
- UN structure <http://www.un.org/en/aboutun/structure/index.shtml>

University procedures

- Students are required to use their official university email address for all correspondence about assignments submission, grades and inquire about academic standing.
- Students with disabilities and special needs should discuss these with the instructor at the start of the term.
- This course conforms to all university policies concerning class conduct, disabilities, harassment, academic integrity and the student honor code. If in doubt about any aspect of university rules of services, please review the ODU university catalogue.
- Plagiarism and academic dishonesty will not be tolerated. Ensure that you cite appropriately using Chicago/Turabian. Unlike the issue of attendance above, I will not discuss issues of suspected plagiarism with students or apply in class penalties. I will just refer the matter to the Office of Student Conduct and Academic Integrity. If found guilty you will have a permanent notation made to your transcripts that will disqualify you from many career paths, including any government job or any position that is based on trust.
- Student evaluations provide important feedback and are essential for evaluating teaching effectiveness. Please complete the online course evaluation when prompted at the end of the semester.

Classroom and other course information

- Class participation is a vital part of this course. Students are expected to complete the assigned readings before class, and to participate in discussion on a regular basis.
- All components above must be completed in order to pass this course, even if lateness would leave them with zero points.
- The instructor holds expectations that students will attend all class meetings. Chronic absenteeism will lead to lowering of a student's grade. Conducting UN Business, after all, would be perhaps impossible if diplomats were chronically absent. Please email or text me if you will be unable to attend class or will be late. Otherwise your failure to attend class will be counted as an unexcused absence. Ensure that you sign your name on the attendance sheet that I will send around at the beginning of each class. I consider signing in for any class member other than yourself to be academic dishonesty. I will punish this by deducting 10% of your final grade. If violation of this class rule continues, the matter will be forwarded to the Office of Student Conduct and Academic Integrity.
- Cell phones, Blackberries, iPods, etc. are to be silenced.
- Be respectful to your instructor, your fellow classmates and the political opinions of each. Our classroom is a safe place to express and discuss those opinions in a civil manner.

DEPARTMENT OF POLITICAL SCIENCE AND GEOGRAPHY

Old Dominion University

Important Course Information

All University policies are in full force and effect in this course.

Honor Code: The Old Dominion University Honor Code is in effect at all times in this class. Your name on an exam, paper, or homework assignment constitutes your acceptance of the Honor Code:

“I pledge to support the Honor System of Old Dominion University. I will refrain from any form of dishonesty or deception such as lying, cheating, and plagiarism, which are honor violations. I am further aware that as a member of the academic community it is my responsibility to turn all suspected violators of the Honor System. I will report to an Honor Council hearing as summoned.”

Plagiarism: “A student will have committed plagiarism if he or she reproduces someone else’s work without acknowledging its source; or if a source is cited which the student has not cited or used. Examples of plagiarism include: submitting a research paper obtained from a commercial research service, the Internet, or from another student as if it were original work; making simple changes to borrowed materials while leaving the organization, content, or phraseology intact; or copying material from a source, supplying proper documentation, but leaving out quotation marks. Plagiarism also occurs in a group project if one or more of the members of the group does none of the group’s work and participates in none of the group’s activities, but attempts to take credit for the work of the group.” Plagiarism is not tolerated in this class. (For more information: <http://al.odu.edu/al/resources/About%20Plagiarism2.doc>)

Sexual Harassment: Sexual harassment is defined as unwelcomed and unsolicited conduct of a sexual nature, physical or verbal, by a member of the university community of the opposite sex or the same sex. Sexual harassment in any situation is prohibited. It is the policy of Old Dominion University to provide students and employees with an environment for learning and working which is free of sexual harassment whether by members of the same sex or the opposite sex, which is prohibited by Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972 and Title VII of the 1964 Civil Rights Act. (For more information: <http://www.odu.edu/ao/polnproc/pdfs/6320.pdf>)

Students with Special Needs: In compliance with PL94-142 and federal legislation affirming the rights of disabled individuals, provisions will be made for students with special needs on an individual basis. The student must be identified as “special needs” by the university and provide a letter from the Office of Educational Accessibility (OEA) located in 1525 Webb Center. Any accommodations will be based upon written guidelines from the OEA. All students are expected to fulfill all course requirements.

E-mail: Students are required to use valid Old Dominion University email accounts to send official information and notices and are held responsible for accessing electronic mail to obtain official University communications. Students should use their secure ODU email account to communicate with professors.

Course Evaluations: Course evaluations are submitted on-line. You will be notified by e-mail when you should evaluate this course. The link to the Course Evaluation System is available under Academic Resources at the university home page: <http://www.odu.edu>. You will need your UIN and password. Please take the time to evaluate this course when asked to do so. All evaluations are anonymous.

Final Grades: Instructors are not permitted to give out grades via telephone or email. In order to find out what grade you earned in this course, you must go to LeoOnline at the university home page: www.leonline.odu.edu. You will need your UIN and password.

Career Management Center: The Career Management Center offers a Career Advantage Program, which provides opportunities to gain work experience related to your major through internships, cooperative education or practical experience outside the classroom. The College of Arts and Letters has career coaches to assist in this process by providing help with resumes, cover letters, job search strategies, and interviewing skills. You may stop by the office in BAL 1006 (tel. 757-683-4388) or email cmc@odu.edu for more information. Their website is <http://www.odu.edu/ao/cmc/index.php>.