

POL 350-A: International Organizations Introduction to the United Nations and Multilateral Diplomacy

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This syllabus was last updated on November 21, 2016. Please visit www.jkarreth.net/modelun.html for the most recent information on deadlines and readings.

Course description¹

This course is the first part of the two-course sequence POL 350 for the Model United Nations program at Ursinus College. In the fall semester, we will study the organization and operations of the United Nations. In the spring semester, students who continue with the course will represent a particular country at the Model United Nations Conference in New York City. Students will familiarize themselves with the politics and foreign policy of their country and act as that country's representative on a UN committee during the 2016 National Model United Nations (NMUN) Conference. Working with a partner or alone, members of the committee will prepare a position paper outlining their country's stance on issues such as climate change, disarmament, economic development, human rights, refugees, and women's rights. Students will also learn rules of procedure and gain experience with oral presentation and debate.

A considerable portion of the class in both semesters will be dedicated toward the development of so-called soft skills—team work, writing and speaking clearly, adapting to changing circumstances and interacting with others from different backgrounds. Toward this end, you will be practicing persuasive writing, public speaking, critical thinking, problem-solving, strategizing and group work.

Learning outcomes

Upon successfully completing both courses of the POL 350 sequence, students will:

- have developed and improved core skills in research, writing, public speaking and team work.

¹This syllabus leans strongly on language and syllabi for POL 350A developed by Professors Joseph Melrose and Rebecca Evans.

- understand the organization of the United Nations, its role in international politics and the contemporary issues that it faces.
- look at contemporary issues from a global perspective, considering the distinct viewpoints of other countries and actors. In so doing, students will gain a better appreciation for the benefits and challenges of multilateral diplomacy.

Materials

Book

Two full books are required for this seminar and available at the Ursinus bookstore and other sources:

- Fasulo, Linda (2015). *An Insider's Guide to the UN*, 3rd edition. New Haven: Yale University Press.
- Weiss, Thomas G., David P. Forsythe, Roger A. Coate, and Kelly-Kate Pease (2016). *The United Nations and Changing World Politics*. Boulder, CO: Westview Press.

You may of course also purchase the e-book version of these books or obtain used copies. All other relevant readings (articles and book chapters/excerpts) are posted on Canvas.

Requirements and assignments

1. Attendance & preparation (15% of your course grade)

In keeping with a strong liberal arts tradition that encourages active learning and complete participation in the education process, Ursinus College expects students to attend class. Attendance is especially important because this course prepares you for participating in the National Model UN Conference where you will be representing Ursinus College. More than one absence will make a student ineligible for participating in the National Model UN Conference in Spring 2017.

Students must complete and take notes on all assigned readings prior to the class in which they are scheduled to be discussed. You should plan on spending **about 4 hours per week outside the classroom** on this class, plus any additional time required for specific assignments.

In the event that a student experiences a significant health problem or other issue that may prevent them from performing adequately in their academic work and/or attending class for more than one class period (i.e. more than one week), students should notify the Office of Student Affairs. The Student Affairs phone and email contact is Lynda Manz: lmanz@ursinus.edu or 610-409-3590.

Participation includes (1) your contributions in class, (2) short informal writing assignments in class, and (3) short informal public speaking requirements in class. You begin the semester with 100 (out of 100) points for participation. Your contributions are evaluated on each day. Students who are present and contribute to class keep 100 points. Students who do not contribute on a day and students who are absent lose 5 participation points on that day.

2. Quizzes (10% of your course grade)

In most class meetings, short quizzes will test your comprehension of the material assigned for that class. These quizzes will take about 5–10 minutes and will consist of multiple choice, fill-in-the-blank, and short answer questions.

3. Group projects (30% of your course grade)

Learning how to working collaboratively on a project is not only valuable practice for the Model UN conference, it is a valuable skill more generally. Students will work on two group projects over the course of the semester, doing coordinated research on a particular person or peacekeeping mission. Each of you will need to locate sources and share the information that you find with the rest of the group; groups will need to work together to plan how to

present their findings to the rest of the class. Every student in the group will be expected to speak during the group's in-class presentation and group members should practice ahead of time, giving one another constructive feedback. Every student will also be required to submit a written description of his/her particular contribution and evaluate the contributions of other group members.

4. Essays (35% of your course grade)

Students will write three essays for this class. The first will require students to draw on course materials up through the first half of the class in order to assess an aspect of the UN system. This essay is due on Saturday, October 8. The second essay will require students to choose a policy field. In it, students will analyze the approaches adopted by UN institutions involved in this field, assess their effectiveness and discuss future reform possibilities. This essay is due on Friday, December 2. The third essay will take the form of a country position paper (as used at the NMUN conference) and outline our group's country's position on this policy field. It is due on Friday, December 9. Details on these writing assignments will be provided on Canvas.

5. Online participation (10% of your course grade)

We will use the discussion board on Canvas to create a news digest for current events related to the United Nations and global governance. Each student will be responsible for keeping this blog updated during a specific time period during the semester. A sign-up list with names, days, and instructions will be posted on Canvas.

Grading

Rubrics for all assignments are posted on Canvas. The course grade consists of the components below, sums to 100, and converts into letter grades as stated below.

In-class participation	15%	A	100 - 93.0	C+	79.999 - 77.0
Quizzes	10%	A-	92.999 - 90.0	C	76.999 - 73.0
Group projects	30%	B+	89.999 - 87.0	C-	72.999 - 70.0
Essays	35%	B	86.999 - 83.0	D+	69.999 - 67.0
Online participation	10%	B-	82.999 - 80.0	D	66.999 - 63.0
Total	100%			D-	62.999 - 60.0
				F	59.999 - 0

Course policies

Disability accommodations. I am committed to a fair and equitable learning environment. Reasonable accommodations will be provided for students with documented physical and/or learning disabilities who are eligible to receive accommodations under Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 and the Americans with Disabilities Act. If you believe you have a disability requiring accommodation in this class, please notify Shammah Bermudez at the Center for Academic Support (Myrin Library, lower level, 484-762-4329). His office will contact me to make appropriate accommodations.

If you wish to discuss academic accommodations for this course, please inform me as soon as possible.

While I will make every effort to accommodate valid requests, students should not expect that, if they do poorly on an assignment, to claim, at that time, the need of an accommodation. This statement is to preclude that problem, and allow people with a need for accommodations to be treated fairly and appropriately.

Religious observance. I will also make every effort to accommodate religious observances and obligations. You are asked to bring any possible conflicts to my attention as soon as possible. Students should not expect that, if they do poorly on an assignment, to claim, at that time, the need of an accommodation. This statement is to preclude that problem, and allow people with a need for accommodations to be treated fairly and appropriately.

Classroom interactions. Students and faculty each have responsibility for maintaining an appropriate learning environment. Those who fail to adhere to this standard may be subject to disciplinary procedures. Professional courtesy and sensitivity are especially important with respect to topics dealing with differences of race, color, culture, religion, creed, politics, veteran's status, sexual orientation, gender, gender identity, gender expression, age, disability, class, and nationality. Course rosters are provided to the instructor with the student's legal name, but I will gladly honor your request to address you by an alternate name or gender pronoun. Please advise me of this preference early in the semester so that I may make appropriate changes to my records.

Academic honesty. All students at Ursinus College are responsible for knowing and adhering to the academic integrity policy of our institution. Please familiarize yourself with this policy at (<https://www.ursinus.edu/student-life/handbook/academic-policies/academic-honesty/>). Violations of this policy may include: cheating, plagiarism, aid of academic dishonesty, fabrication, lying, bribery, and threatening behavior. **The policy also prohibits submitting material that was previously submitted in another course.** If you are involved in plagiarism, the penalty will be failure in the course and you will be reported to the College. In this one regard there are no second chances. If you are not sure if something violates standards—ask. If you are not sure whether to cite or not to cite—cite.

Emergencies and absences. Attendance is especially important because this course prepares you for participating in the National Model UN Conference where you will be representing Ursinus College. **If an emergency prevents you from attending class, please notify me as soon as circumstances allow.**

No electronic devices in the classroom. Laptops cannot be used during seminar meetings. This rule serves to facilitate a productive atmosphere to prepare you for the NMUN conference. Please come prepared with written or printed notes. Cell phones and tablets must be stored away during class as well.

Schedule

This schedule will be updated during the semester. Please visit <http://www.jkarreth.net/modelun.html> for the most recent information on deadlines, assignments, and additional readings that may be added to in this schedule.

Date	Day	Topic	Assigned reading	Special activity
August 29	1	Introduction: The UN in 2016		
September 5	2	The UN System	Fasulo 1, 2, 4, 5 & Weiss Intro	
September 12	3	UN Diplomacy & the UNGA	Fasulo 7, 8, 17	Choice of country preference
September 19	4	The UN Secretary General & UN Finances	Fasulo 3, 19	UNSG presentations
September 26	5	UN Agencies, Programs, and Commissions	Fasulo 15	NMUN deadline
October 3	6	The Security Council	Fasulo 6	
October 10	7	UNSC pre-and post Cold War	Weiss 3	UNSC mini-simulation
October 17	Fall Break			
October 24	8	Current UNPKOs	Fasulo 9	UNPKO presentations
October 31	9	Human Rights	Fasulo 12	
November 7	10	Human Rights	Fasulo 11 & Weiss 6, 8	UNHCR mini-simulation
November 14	11	Human Development	Weiss 11, 12	
November 21	12	Climate Change	Fasulo 16	
November 28	13	How can the UN have an impact?	Weiss 9 (<i>Theories of Change</i>)	
December 5	14	UN Reform	Fasulo 18, Weiss <i>Conclusion</i>	UN Reform discussion