



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

Fall 2018 / Thursdays 7:00pm–8:40pm / Bomberger 202

Dr. Johannes Karreth

Office: 216 Bomberger

Office phone: 610-409-3126

Office hours: M 1-3pm, Tu 10-11am, Th 3-5pm; other times by appointment.

Email: jkarreth@ursinus.edu

Course website: <http://www.jkarreth.net/modelun.html>

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 and examine core questions of global governance and multilateral diplomacy.

In the spring semester, students who continue with the course may be part of a delegation representing a particular country at the Model United Nations Conference in New York City. In that semester, 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 2019 National Model United Nations (NMUN) Conference. Working with a partner, 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.

Note: This course is part of a two-semester sequence that includes participating in the National MUN conference in New York City during March 24-28, 2019.

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

Learning goals

Upon successfully completing both courses of the POL 350 sequence, you should:

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

All relevant readings (books, articles and book chapters/excerpts) will be made available to you as hard copies or in digital format. Books mentioned in this syllabus include:

- Fasulo, Linda. 2015. *An Insider's Guide to the UN*. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press.
- Moore, John Allphin and Pubantz, Jerry. 2017. *The New United Nations: International Organization in the Twenty-First Century*. New York, NY: Routledge.
- Weiss, Thomas G., Forsythe, David P., Coate, Roger A., and Pease, Kelly-Kate. 2017. *The United Nations and Changing World Politics*. Boulder, CO: Westview Press.

My role as instructor

I am looking forward to getting to know you and sharing my passion for studying international organizations with you. As the faculty advisor to the Ursinus Model United Nations delegation, I want to ensure that you have the best possible preparation to succeed in participating at the National Model UN conference. I ask that you please schedule an individual meeting with me within the first three weeks of class (no later than Monday, September 18) so that I can learn more about you, your background, and your expectations for Model UN.

Requirements and assignments

All assignments in this course are designed to give you the best possible preparation to be (1) an informed citizen in an internationally connected world and (2) a successful delegate at the National Model United Nations conference in 2018.

Attendance & preparation (required to pass this course)

In keeping with a strong liberal arts tradition that encourages active learning and complete participation in the education process, Ursinus College expects you to attend class. In addition, this class serves as preparation for the NMUN Conference. For this conference, it is important that your fellow delegates can rely on you. Missing more than one single class during one semester (for any reason) therefore means that you will become ineligible to attend the NMUN conference.

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 4-6 hours per week outside the classroom** on this class, plus any additional time required for specific assignments.

In the event that you experience a significant health problem or other issue that may prevent you from performing adequately in your academic work and/or attending class for a number of days, you should notify the Office of Student

Affairs. The Student Affairs phone and email contact is Lynda Manz: lmanz@ursinus.edu or 610-409-3590. Upon your return to class, it is your responsibility to talk to professors and to develop a plan for making up missed work.

1. In-class participation (15% of your course grade)

Participation includes (1) your contributions in class, (2) short informal writing assignments in class, and (3) short informal public speaking requirements in class. A rubric for participation is posted on Canvas. I will post a preliminary participation grade in early October and update it again in early November. You may also inquire about your participation grade at any time.

2. Online participation (15% of your course grade)

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

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. Oral midterm exam (20% of your course grade)

During the class period on October 23, this exam will test your ability to communicate the knowledge acquired throughout the semester so far and to hold an informed conversation about international organizations and the United Nations. This exam will not test whether you can memorize detailed empirical facts or arguments. Time slots of 10 minutes will be scheduled individually. A grading rubric and sample questions for this exam will be posted on Canvas before fall break.

5. Final written exam (20% of your course grade)

This final exam will test your ability to synthesize the knowledge acquired throughout the semester, to pursue information pertinent to the United Nations, and to identify critical challenges for the United Nations in the upcoming years. You will be able to use notes during this exam. A grading rubric and additional information 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
Online participation	15%	A–	92.999 - 90.0	C	76.999 - 73.0
Group projects	30%	B+	89.999 - 87.0	C–	72.999 - 70.0
Oral midterm exam	20%	B	86.999 - 83.0	D+	69.999 - 67.0
Final written exam	20%	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. Ursinus College is committed to ensuring equal access and providing reasonable accommodations for students with disabilities. Students requesting academic accommodations must meet with the Director of Disability Services, located within the Ursinus Institute for Student Success on the lower level of the Myrin Library.

At the beginning of each semester, qualifying students must meet with the Shammah Bermudez to reinstate accommodations and pick up their accommodations letters. Students are also responsible for presenting their letters to the course faculty member. If you have any questions, contact Shammah Bermudez, Director of Disability Services by email at sbermudez@ursinus.edu or by phone at (484) 762-4329.

Information on the Accommodation Process and Documentation Guidelines can be found on the [Disability Services Webpage](#). Disability Documentation Guidelines are posted there under [documentation requirements](#).

Additional resources regarding dining accommodations, medical leave of absence and service animal policies, campus safety are posted at (<https://www.ursinus.edu/offices/ursinus-institute/students-with-disabilities/>).

Religious observance. I will 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.

Names and classroom interactions. 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. Please be patient with me as I learn all students' names and pronouns and I encourage you to correct me when/if I make a mistake (i.e., call you by the wrong name/pronoun or mispronounce your name).

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.

Electronic devices. This course relies on responsible-use policy for laptops and tablets. Studies have shown that “laptop use is negatively associated with student learning and it poses a distraction to fellow students.”^{2,3,4} Students planning on using a laptop in class are asked to consult with me at the beginning of the semester. Cell phones must be stored away and silenced during class.

²Fried, Carrie B. 2008. “In-Class Laptop Use and Its Effects on Student Learning.” *Computers and Education* 50: 906-914.

³Carter, Susan P., Kyle Greenberg, and Michael Walker. 2016. “The Impact of Computer Usage on Academic Performance: Evidence from a Randomized Trial at the United States Military Academy.” *SEI Discussion Paper #2016.02*. (<https://goo.gl/7SxH1m>)

⁴Dynarski, Susan M. 2017. “For better learning in college lectures, lay down the laptop and pick up a pen.” *Brookings Institution Report*. (<http://brook.gs/2hKV7gk>).

Schedule

This schedule will be updated prior and during the semester. It is likely that at least a few topics and readings will be modified. Please visit <http://www.jkarreth.net/modelun.html> for the most recent information on deadlines and readings.

No class meeting on August 30

Annual Meeting of the American Political Science Association

Week 1 (Thursday, September 6)

Why do the United Nations exist? What is Model United Nations?

- Required reading: Moore & Pubantz, Introduction and Chapter 1

Week 2 (Thursday, September 13)

What is the legal basis for the United Nations?

- Required reading: Moore & Pubantz, Chapter 3

Week 3 (Thursday, September 20)

What is the institutional structure of the United Nations?

- Required reading: Moore & Pubantz, Chapter 4
- Group presentations on each of the principal organs of the UN

Week 4 (Thursday, September 27)

International Peace and Security

- Required reading: Moore & Pubantz, Chapter 5

Week 5.1 (Thursday, October 4)

UN Peacekeeping

- Required reading: Moore & Pubantz, Chapter 6

Week 5.2 (Friday, October 5)

1:30-3:00pm, Location TBA

Talk and discussion with Carolyn Strainic UC '11, U.S. Department of State & U.S. Mission to the United Nations

- Required viewing before class: PBS Frontline Season 36 Episode 11, "UN Sex Abuse Scandal", available at <https://www.pbs.org/wgbh/frontline/film/un-sex-abuse-scandal>.

Week 6 (Thursday, October 11)

Global governance and human rights

- Required reading: Moore & Pubantz, Chapter 7

Week 7 (Thursday, October 18)

Oral midterm exams, scheduled individually during and around class time. Recommended for preparation:

- Revisit notes from class, including notes on group presentations
- Read Moore & Pubantz, Chapter 2
- Read Fasulo, especially chapters 6 through 11.

Week 8 (Thursday, October 25)

Economic, environmental, and human development

- Required reading: Moore & Pubantz, Chapter 8

Week 9 (Thursday, November 1)

The role of the Sustainable Development Goals for global governance

- Readings distributed by group
- Group presentations

No class meeting on November 8

Annual Meeting of the Peace Science Society (International)

Week 10 (Thursday, November 15)

What do diplomats at the UN do, and how can they have an impact? Resolutions and beyond

- Required reading: Weiss, Chapter 9

No class meeting on November 22

Thanksgiving Break

Week 11 (Thursday, November 29)

Representing Iraq: Diplomatic style and negotiation strategies

- Required reading: Fasulo Chapter 5, 8, and Appendix A
- Required reading: CIA World Factbook entry on Iraq (<https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/resources/the-world-factbook/geos/iz.html>)
- Recommended: BBC Timeline on Iraq (<https://www.bbc.com/news/world-middle-east-14542954>)
- Recommended (save for later): International Model United Nations country profile: Iraq (<http://www.imuna.org/resources/country-profiles/iraq>)

Week 12 (Thursday, December 6)

Final exam (open book). Details will be announced on Canvas by November 30.