



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

Spring 2023 / Th 7:00-8:40pm / IDC 116

Dr. Johannes Karreth

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Student hours: Location & scheduling: https://www.calendly.com/jkarreth_ursinus.

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Course website (only to submit assignments and view grades): Canvas

Important dates — please add to your calendars:

January 17, 11:59pm: New drafts of position papers must be submitted via email.

February 16, 11:59pm: Merged position papers (one per committee) must be submitted via email.

Sunday, April 2–Thursday, April 6: NMUN conference in New York City

Please clear your absence during NMUN with your professors by the end of January. When in doubt about the conference schedule, please consult the NMUN website at

<https://www.nmun.org/conferences/new-york/at-the-conference/conference-schedule.html>

Course description

This course is the second part of the two-course sequence POL 350 for the Model United Nations program at Ursinus College. Students will build on their experience from POL 350-A to prepare for representing Switzerland at the 2022 National Model United Nations conference. During the course, students will familiarize themselves with the politics and foreign policy of Switzerland and act as Swiss representatives on a UN committee during the conference. Working with a partner, members of each 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 is 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.
- 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.
- have become skilled negotiators in an in-person setting, sharing the experiences of “real” diplomats.

Materials

Your primary reading material for this semester is:

- Your committee’s background guide: <https://www.nmun.org/conferences/new-york/prepare-for-committee/committee-materials.html>.
- The *NMUN Delegate Preparation Guide*: <http://nmun.org/downloads/NMUNDelegatePrepGuide.pdf>.
- The *NMUN Rules and Overview*: <http://www.nmun.org/downloads/NMUNRules.pdf>.
- Additional resources shared during the semester

Two full books are useful to catch up on background knowledge. Students can borrow these books from the instructor.

- Fasulo, Linda (2015). *An Insider’s Guide to the UN*, 3rd edition. New Haven: 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.

All other relevant readings (articles and book chapters/excerpts) are linked in this syllabus.

Requirements and assignments

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 meeting 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 continuing your pre-conference work via a remote setup, please reach out to me so we can work out alternative accommodations.

1. Current events reports (10% of your course grade)

Each student will be responsible for posting an international news digest before the conference to our email group. News digests should cover a sample of relevant international news and be modeled after the New York Times’ *Evening Briefing*. A schedule (for students in POL 350-B) for dates will be provided on Canvas.

2. Short written assignments (20% of your course grade)

On dates indicated in the syllabus, students will prepare (mostly short) written assignments before or during a meeting. Specific instructions, grading rubrics, and deadlines are posted on Canvas.

3. Oral presentations (20% of your course grade)

On a few days as indicated below, each student will deliver oral presentations on (1) your committee and committee topics on Day 2, (2) a background issue on Switzerland (Day 3), and a speech (Day 5). A grading rubric will be posted on Canvas.

4. Position paper (30% of your course grade)

By January 17, each student will submit a draft of their individual position papers. By February 16, each student will submit a merged, revised, final position paper to Canvas. This position paper must incorporate any feedback received on earlier drafts. It must also follow all guidelines in the MUN *Position Paper Guide*. The grade on this assignment evaluates both drafts.

5. Conference participation (20% of your course grade)

For a good grade in this class, every student needs to be an active and productive conference participant. Specific guidelines and instructions for excellent conference participation 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. **Late assignments will receive a grade of 0 because NMUN sets hard deadlines that I cannot change.**

Current events reports	10%	A	100 - 93.0	C+	79.999 - 77.0
Short written assignments	20%	A-	92.999 - 90.0	C	76.999 - 73.0
Oral presentations	20%	B+	89.999 - 87.0	C-	72.999 - 70.0
Position paper	30%	B	86.999 - 83.0	D+	69.999 - 67.0
Conference participation	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. As the instructor of this course, I strive to provide an inclusive learning environment. If you experience barriers to learning in this course, do not hesitate to discuss them with me. The Office of Disability and Access also works with students who have any kind of disability, whether apparent or non-apparent, learning, emotional, physical, or cognitive, and need accommodations to increase their access to this learning environment.

I encourage you to reach out to Dee Singley or Joanna Timmerman, the disability and access team, to discuss supports and accommodations you may need. The disability and access office is located in Lower Myrin, with the UCARE office. [Schedule a meeting with Disability and Access by clicking here](#), or by emailing them at disabilityandaccess@ursinus.edu. Check out their resources and services: [Disability and Access at Ursinus Webpage](#).

Religious observance. I will make every effort to accommodate religious observances and obligations. Please bring any possible conflicts with deadlines or assignments to my attention at the beginning of the semester.

Names. I will gladly honor your request to address you by your preferred name or gender pronoun. Students may now edit their pronouns, chosen name, and gender identity within the Self-Service portal. Please be patient with me as I learn all students' names and pronouns. 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).

Classroom interactions. In this class, we work to promote an environment where everyone feels safe and welcome, even during uncomfortable conversations. The topics we address can be political, personal, controversial, and provocative. As we explore these ideas, every voice in the room has something of value to contribute to group discussion. Because the group will represent a diversity of individual beliefs, backgrounds, and experiences, every participant must show respect for all others. You are encouraged to not only take advantage of opportunities to express your own ideas, but also to learn from the information and ideas shared by other students. Participation is crucial to the success of this classroom experience. Your insights, questions and comments will be useful not only to yourself and to your instructor, but to your fellow students as well. Remember that all ideas need to be well founded in class readings, and/or research in a civil and academic manner.

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 you 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.

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.”^{1,2,3} Cell phones must be stored away and silenced during class.

¹Fried, Carrie B. 2008. “In-Class Laptop Use and Its Effects on Student Learning.” *Computers and Education* 50: 906-914.

²Carter, 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>)

³Dynarski, 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 during the semester. Please visit Canvas for the most recent information on deadlines, assignments, and additional materials.

Day 1 (January 19)

Check-in: Diplomacy today; Switzerland; Recent events in world politics

- **Before class**, revisit information on Switzerland from the following sources that you explored in the Fall semester:
 - CIA World Factbook entry on Switzerland
 - International Model United Nations country profile: Switzerland (<http://www.imuna.org/resources/country-profiles/Switzerland>)
- **Before class**, read pp. 5–18 of the Delegate Preparation Guide.
- **Before class**, research your assigned topic (see email)
- During class, we will discuss key characteristics of Switzerland and its foreign policy as well as the basics of NMUN diplomacy.
- After class, review the following resources on Switzerland:
 - SwissInfo Youtube channel (<https://www.youtube.com/@swissinfo>)

Day 2 (January 26)

Conference overview

Fine-tuning the third paragraph in position papers

Drafting policy language and contributing to resolutions

- **Before class**, read the *NMUN Rules and Overview*, pp. 1–11, at <http://nmun.org/downloads/NMUNRules.pdf>.
- **Before class**, re-read the *NMUN Delegate Preparation Guide*, pp. 19–24, at <https://www.nmun.org/assets/documents/NMUNDelegatePrepGuide.pdf>.
- **Before class**, read the UN guide on drafting resolutions at <https://www.un.org/en/model-united-nations/drafting-resolutions>.

Day 3 (February 2)

All about Switzerland

- Resource for today's class:
 - The Swiss Confederation: a brief guide (<https://www.bk.admin.ch/bk/en/home/dokumentation/the-swiss-confederation--a-brief-guide.html>)
 - Switzerland's foreign policy strategy for 2020-23 (<https://www.eda.admin.ch/eda/en/fdfa/fdfa/publikationen/alle-publikationen.html/content/publikationen/en/eda/schweizer-aussenpolitik/Aussenpolitische-Strategie-2020-2023.html>)
- **Before class**, you will prepare individual presentations on select aspects of Switzerland's politics and foreign policy priorities.
- After these presentations, we will discuss implications for Swiss diplomacy at the United Nations.

~~Day 4 (February 9) Cancelled due to illness~~

Day 4 (February 16)

The Art of Diplomacy I: Simulation — beginning and conducting a committee meeting

- **Before class**, read the materials for our SALW simulation (distributed via email)
- During class, we'll work through a short rules training video: <https://www.facebook.com/NationalModelUN/videos/408654600235509/>
- During class, we will practice how to navigate the first hour of the NMUN conference and how to approach others
- During class, we will also introduce conflict resolution techniques
- During class, you will create a handout reminding yourself of preambulatory and operative clauses
- During class, you will create a brainstorming document to help you organize collaborative work at NMUN
- **After class**, obtain a committee email account from the Head Delegates

Final draft of merged position papers due via email at 11:59pm on February 16.

Day 5 (February 23)

The Art of Diplomacy II: Full committee simulation, dealing with power dynamics and obstructive delegates

- **Before class**, re-read the materials for our SALW simulation (distributed via email)
- During class, you will further practice negotiation and drafting resolutions via role play
- We will pay particular attention to learning and practicing conflict resolution techniques

Day 6 (March 2)

We meet in the Bomberger Auditorium today.

The Art of Diplomacy III: Using speeches to persuade others and make connections

- **Before class**, draft a speech on why your NMUN topic should be the first agenda item.
- During class, we will practice and improve speeches

Spring break (March 6–10)

Special event at 11am (March 16)

“Germany and the U.S. in the face of multiple crises: Legal and Consular observations”

Talk and Q&A with the Consul General Niels von Redecker (German embassy, Washington D.C.)

Day 7 (March 16)

The Art of Diplomacy IV: Networking, authorship, and everything else

... and drafting a mock working paper

- **Before class**, read <https://www.un.org/en/model-united-nations/speaking-conference> and all four subsections linked on that site.
- During class, we will practice handling disputes in the writing process in a tense climate
- During class, we will review examples of working papers and resolutions contributed by past Ursinus delegates

- Example 1: <https://www.nmun.org/assets/documents/conference-archives/new-york/2022/ny22a-res-unea.pdf>
- Example 2: <https://www.nmun.org/assets/documents/conference-archives/washington-dc/2022/dc22-resolutions-wha.pdf>
- During class, we will finalize a brainstorming document to facilitate cooperation with other delegations during NMUN
- **During class**, we will play Jeopardy! on Swiss politics, foreign policy, and other relevant information.

Special event at noon (Wednesday, March 22)

Briefing with a member of the Swiss mission to the United Nations
We will meet in Bomberger 128 and prepare questions in advance.

Day 8 (March 23)

The Art of Diplomacy V: Communicating across cultural backgrounds; managing hostility in international negotiations; leveraging your research on Switzerland

- During class, you'll complete a short self-assessment form to share with your committee partner and make a plan for collaborating as a group on resolving conflicts and tense situations.
- **During class**, you'll prepare an "electronic binder" with key information for your committee work.

Day 9 (March 30)

Final preparation: Switzerland's strategy for NMUN; navigating the conference environment

- **Before class**, revisit your position paper and committee background guide.
- **Before class**, read one position paper from one other country for your committee and compare it to your position paper.
- **During class**, we'll work through final role play exercises to navigate a tense negotiation climate and hostile diplomatic behavior

NMUN conference April 2–6. Plan ahead for all your classes that you will miss. When in doubt, please consult the official schedule at <https://www.nmun.org/conferences/new-york/at-the-conference/conference-schedule.html>.

Day 10 (April 13)

Post-conference reflection; planning for CoSA; building on your NMUN experience for professional development

- **Before class**, please fill out the anonymous feedback form at ...
- **Before class**, please submit your conference reflection and your committee's resolution(s) on Canvas.