



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

Spring 2024 / T 2:50–4:15pm / IDC 116

Dr. Johannes Karreth

Office: 216 Bomberger

Student hours: Location & scheduling: [click here](#).

Email: [jkarreth@ursinus.edu](mailto:jkarreth@ursinus.edu)

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

## **Important dates — please add to your calendars:**

January 19, 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, March 24–Thursday, March 28: 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 2024 National Model United Nations conference. Students will familiarize themselves with the politics and foreign policy of Argentina and act as Argentinian 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*: <https://www.nmun.org/assets/documents/NMUNDelegatePrepGuide.pdf>.
- The *NMUN Rules and Overview*: <https://www.nmun.org/assets/documents/nmun-rules.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 (10% 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 Argentina (Day 3), and a speech (Day 6). A grading rubric will be posted on Canvas.

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

By January 19, 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, with the individual draft counting 75% and the merged draft counting 25%.

## 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	10%	A-	92.999 - 90.0	C	76.999 - 73.0
Oral presentations	30%	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 the Disability and Access team to discuss supports and accommodations you may need. Their 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](mailto: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 would like to address you by your preferred name or gender pronoun. Students may edit their pronouns, chosen name, and gender identity within the Ursinus Self-Service portal at <https://my.ursinus.edu/portal/my-ursinus>. Please be patient with me as I learn all students' names and pronouns. I ask that you please 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.”<sup>1,2,3</sup> Cell phones must be stored away and silenced during class.

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

<sup>2</sup>Carter, 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>)

<sup>3</sup>Dynarski, 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 23)

Check-in: Diplomacy today; Recent events in world politics; Position paper workshop

- **Before class**, re-read the NMUN Position Paper Guide.
- **Before class**, bookmark this list of UN-related acronyms on your laptop or phone: <https://www.un.org/dgacm/en/content/editorial-manual/abbreviations#po>
- During class, we will workshop position paper drafts, fine-tune the third paragraphs, and begin the merging process
- During class, we will practice using UN-related acronyms to your advantage

### Day 2 (January 30) **Note different location: Bomberger Auditorium**

Conference overview

Drafting policy language and contributing to resolutions

- **Before class**, read the *NMUN Rules and Overview*, pp. 1–11, at <https://www.nmun.org/assets/documents/nmun-rules.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>.
- **Before class**, prepare a short presentation on your committee topic (coordinate with your committee partner to cover both topics)

### Day 3 (February 6)

All about Argentina

- Resources for today's class:
  - CIA World Factbook entry on Argentina (<https://www.cia.gov/the-world-factbook/countries/argentina>)
  - International Model United Nations country profile: Argentina (<http://www.imuna.org/resources/country-profiles/Argentina>)
  - Argentina's foreign ministry's "Foreign Policy" pages (<https://www.cancilleria.gob.ar/en/foreign-policy>)
- **Before class**, you will prepare individual presentations on select aspects of Argentina's politics and foreign policy priorities.
- After these presentations, we will discuss implications for Argentinian diplomacy at the United Nations.

## Day 4 (February 13) **Note different location: Bomberger Auditorium**

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

- **Before class**, revisit the materials from Day 2 and submit questions about committee procedure on Canvas.
- **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.youtube.com/watch?v=GOD2aV7jtxc>
- 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
- **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 20)

The Art of Diplomacy II: Full committee simulation and focus on negotiations

- **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 (February 27) **Note different location: Bomberger Auditorium**

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

- **Before class**, write a 150-word speech arguing for your preferred committee topic (submit on Canvas)
- During class, you will practice ad-hoc speeches in front of a larger audience

## Spring break (March 2–10)

## Day 7 (March 12)

The Art of Diplomacy IV: Networking and authorship

- **Before class**, revise your opening speech (submit on Canvas)
- Bystander training
- Methods for successfully co-authoring working papers
- During class, we will collect questions for the briefing at Argentina's Permanent Mission to the UN
- During class, we will finalize a brainstorming document to facilitate cooperation with other delegations during NMUN

## Day 8 (March 19)

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

- 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>
- Final questions before the conference

NMUN conference March 24-28. 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 9 (April 2)

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.