



Ursinus College

POL 350-B: INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS INTRODUCTION TO THE UNITED NATIONS AND MULTILATERAL DIPLOMACY

Spring 2025 / T 2:50–4:15pm / IDC 116

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

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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, April 6–Thursday, April 10: 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 Tanzania at the 2025 National Model United Nations conference. Students will familiarize themselves with the politics and foreign policy of Tanzania and act as Tanzanian 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/nmun-delegate-prep-guide.pdf>.
- The *NMUN Rules and Overview*: <https://www.nmun.org/assets/documents/nmun-rules.pdf>.
- Tanzania’s permanent mission to the UN: <https://un.tzembassy.go.tz> (if the site is in Swahili, switch to English on the top left)
- Short overview of Tanzania’s foreign policy priorities: <https://www.foreign.go.tz/about/category/foreign-policy>
- In-depth report: <https://www.chathamhouse.org/2024/04/reviving-tanzanias-regional-leadership-and-global-engagement/02-influence-isolation>
- This current foreign affairs bulletin (with updates from the ministry of foreign affairs): https://www.foreign.go.tz/uploads/FAB_-_JUL_-_SEP_-_Online_Edition.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 Tanzania (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. If you experience barriers to learning, it is important for me to provide an inclusive environment. The Office of Disability and Access works with students who need accommodations to enhance accessibility. Contact Karalyn McGrorty Derstine at disabilityandaccess@ursinus.edu or schedule a meeting at <https://kderstine.youcanbook.me/>. For more details, go to <https://www.ursinus.edu/offices/disability-and-access/>. **If you anticipate accommodations for the NMUN conference, please meet with me by January 31 to make a plan.**

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

Respectful participation. We will discuss complex and sometimes controversial topics. Always engage respectfully, using evidence from readings and reputable sources. Diverse opinions are welcome, but kindness and professionalism are non-negotiable.

Names and pronouns. I aim to address everyone by their preferred name and pronouns. If I make a mistake, please correct me — it's important to me to get it right. Together, we will strive to correctly pronounce the names of our colleagues, authors, and places we discuss, as a sign of respect. Feel free to ask for help with pronunciation at any time, and we will review it whenever needed. What is not acceptable is not making an effort.

Discrimination and harassment. Ursinus College seeks to provide an environment that is free of bias, discrimination, and harassment. I am also a member of two faculty and staff groups that work toward this goal,¹ and committed to an inclusive campus environment. Ursinus College considers sexual misconduct to include assault, harassment, stalking, and relationship violence of a sexual nature. If you have been the victim of sexual harassment, misconduct, or assault, we encourage you to report this. As a mandatory reporter, I am required to report any information I receive about sexual misconduct on campus. I am also simply happy to talk to you about issues you may be experiencing and refer you to the appropriate resources on campus. You may choose whether you or anyone involved is identified by name. For more information about your options at Ursinus, please go to <https://www.ursinus.edu/title-ix/>.

If you have been the target of a discriminatory act, you can report this to the College. For more information and ways to report, please see <https://www.ursinus.edu/life-at-ursinus/handbook/policy-on-discriminatory-acts/>.

Academic honesty. TI; dr: do your own work, cite your sources all of the time, and don't cheat. And: **reach out to me when you feel you can't keep up!** Most assignments in this course are designed to help you improve your thinking and document your progress. Guidelines for using (or not using) generative AI are provided for each assignment. Unless otherwise noted, a passing grade requires original work created by you. Familiarize yourself with the college-wide policy in full at <https://www.ursinus.edu/life-at-ursinus/handbook/academic-policies-including-academic-honesty/>.

Electronic devices. Laptops are for notetaking only; phones should remain silent and out of sight. We'll revisit this policy after the first two weeks of class to see what works best for everyone.

¹DART and SMART.

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 28)

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 (February 4)

Conference overview

Drafting policy language and contributing to resolutions

- **Before class**, read the *NMUN Rules and Overview*, pp. 1–11.
- **Before class**, re-read the *NMUN Delegate Preparation Guide*, pp. 19–24.
- **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 11)

All about Tanzania

- Resources for today's class:
 - CIA World Factbook entry on Tanzania (<https://www.cia.gov/the-world-factbook/countries/tanzania/>)
 - International Model United Nations country profile: Tanzania (<http://www.imuna.org/resources/country-profiles/Tanzania>)
 - Short overview of Tanzania's foreign policy priorities: <https://www.foreign.go.tz/about/category/foreign-policy>
- **Before class**, you will prepare individual presentations on select aspects of Tanzania's politics and foreign policy priorities.
- After these presentations, we will discuss implications for Tanzanian diplomacy at the United Nations.

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

Day 4 (February 18)

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=G0D2aV7jtxc>
- 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**, create a committee email account as instructed

Day 5 (February 25)

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 (March 4)

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 10–14)

Day 7 (March 18)

The Art of Diplomacy IV: owning your topic

- **Before class**, re-read your position paper
- **Before class**, revise your opening speech (submit on Canvas)
- During class, we will work on methods to use your topical expertise during negotiations

Day 8 (March 25)

The Art of Diplomacy V: Networking and authorship

- Bystander training
- Methods for successfully co-authoring working papers
- During class, we will finalize a brainstorming document to facilitate cooperation with other delegations during NMUN

Day 9 (April 1)

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

- 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 April 6–10. 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 15)

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.

Day 11 (April 23)

CoSA presentation!

- No classes today, but we will present at CoSA as a group.
- This is the final activity in POL 350-B this semester.