Introduction and Objectives

Both in their practical and theoretical aspects, international organizations (IOs) are a dynamic and increasingly important element in the functioning of modern world politics. This advanced seminar in international relations is meant to provide a critical consideration of the development, power, and pathologies of international organizations, as well as the theories, approaches, and methods scholars and practitioners have created to understand them. This course offers a survey of the subfield of international organizations within the broader international relations (IR) discipline, and therefore assumes some basic knowledge of IR theory from your PS280 class (or equivalent).

The course has two primary objectives: first, to introduce students to the IO subfield, assessing the value and limitations of its main theories; second, to encourage active student research on the design, behavior, change and impacts of international organizations on world politics that is built upon a strong understanding of the discipline’s various theoretical, methodological and ideational foundations.

The arrangement of this course strikes a balance between breadth and depth in the study of international organizations. We will consider a wide variety of methodologies, ideologies and approaches to the study of IOs, while examining IOs of differing in form and in purpose. However, the group projects and individual research papers will allow you to develop you knowledge of specific cases of your choosing, while simultaneously building your analytical and conceptual abilities.

Organization of Course

This is an upper-division seminar in international organizations, and it will be conducted as such, with an emphasis on research and the sharing of information and ideas. As an exercise in collective learning, each participant— instructor and student—will occasionally be required to lead the seminar discussion on particular topics. Thus, you are not only responsible for your own education, but that of your colleagues as well. In other words—we will all only get as much out of this class as we each put into it. If you are not sincerely committed to learning—including attending and preparing for class, as well as concentrating, and participating in class discussions and research activities—this may not be the course for you.
Course Requirements

Student performance in the class will be evaluated based on participation in the class, two examinations (one midterm and a final), as well as participation in the group presentation and an individual research project.

The grade breakdown is as follows:

- Class Participation: 10%
- Midterm Exam: 20%
- Group Presentation: 15%
- Individual Research Project: 35%
- Final Exam: 20%

Grading Scale:

- 100—97%: A+
- 96.9—93%: A
- 92.9—90%: A-
- 89.9—87%: B+
- 86.9—83%: B
- 82.9—80%: B-
- 79.9—77%: C+
- 76.9—73%: C
- 72.9—70%: C-
- 69.9—67%: D+
- 66.9—63%: D
- 62.9—60%: D-
- Below 60%: F

Class Participation: 10%

For an advanced seminar format to be effective, it is necessary that all students attend class on a regular basis and come prepared to actively engage in class discussions. Just showing up to class will not ensure that you receive a satisfactory class participation grade. You will be expected to come to class having read all of the assigned readings for that week, and had time to think critically about them. Ensuring that everyone is familiar with the arguments put forth in the various readings is the minimum condition for developing an effective classroom environment. Good seminar participation entails being an active participant in class by asking questions, making thought-provoking arguments, and being engaged in the discussion.

Midterm Exam, Final Exam: 20% each

The exams will be cumulative in that there will be a continuity of similar topics, concepts and perspectives throughout the class, but the focus of each exam will primarily concern the materials which immediately precede each exam. All readings, discussion materials, and even other topics brought to the fore in classroom presentations and discussions are all fair game for exam questions.

Group Presentation: 15%

Given the wide variety of international organizations on the world scene today, each student will be assigned to be part of a group of 2-5 students who will lead group discussion on a particular area of international organizations during weeks 9 through 13 of the class. During the second week of class, students will submit their preferences for an area from the topics to be covered. Ideally, this presentation will be a synthesis of the research interests and findings of each of the group members, with a number of thought-provoking questions to lead the subsequent conversation. Each student’s grade in the group presentation will be calculated based on the extent to which each is involved in the preparations for the presentation, and willingness to contribute with timely, appropriate, and poignant questions and insights. The topics and dates for the presentations will be as follows:

- Week 9 will cover UN affiliates and agencies, with UN peacekeeping operations being covered on Tuesday, October 21, and UN agencies for global welfare (i.e. UNDP, UNEP, WFP, UNICEF, UNHCR) on Thursday, October 23.
- Week 10 will look at institutions for international justice, with international, interstate courts like the Permanent Court of International Justice and its current incarnation, the ICJ, being covered on Tuesday, October 28. On Thursday, October 30 we will look at international, ad hoc criminal tribunals to prosecute individuals charged with genocide and war crimes from Nuremberg and Tokyo through Rwanda and Yugoslavia to Sierra Leone, as well as the establishment of a permanent international tribunal, the International Criminal Court (ICC).
Week 11 will be devoted to international economic organizations, with international trade organizations like the GATT and WTO on Tuesday, November 4, and international development banks like the World Bank and International Monetary Fund on Thursday, November 6.

Week 12 will look at regional, rather than global organizations, beginning with trade organizations like the European Union, NAFTA, ASEAN and so forth on Tuesday, November 11, before turning to regional security organizations, like NATO, the CIS, the Shanghai 5 and others on Thursday, November 13.

Finally, week 13 will be dedicated to transnational non-governmental organizations (NGOs), beginning with those that are primarily concerned with international environmental concerns (Greenpeace, WWF, Bellona, etc.) on Tuesday, November 18, before concluding with NGOs that promote human rights and democracy (Amnesty International, Human Rights Watch, etc.) on Thursday, November 20.

Please be thinking about what area(s) of study most interest you, and accordingly which day and with which group you would like to present.

**Individual Research Project: 35%**

The capstone to this class will be the individual research project of 15-20 pages. Ideally, this project will allow the student to explore in some depth the genesis, operations, significance, power, or pathologies of a particular international organization or category of organizations, and integrate this research with the prevailing approaches to international organizations as discussed in class, either by way of expanding theoretical implications of a particular approach, or by testing observable implications of some prevalent IO approach or theory. The first half of the course will give you a solid foundation in IO theories to build upon. The research thesis should be cleared well in advance of the student’s contribution to the group presentation, and should not be left until the very end of the semester!

**My Policies:**

**Grading**

All assignments will be graded on a 100-point scale which can be used to translate your number grade into a letter grade. At the end of the semester, your final grade will be calculated by adding-up the grades on each assignment in proportion to the weights assigned to them above.

**Make-Up Exams**

Make-up exams will only be granted under extreme circumstances, resulting either from 1) genuine family emergencies, 2) travel associated with university obligations (academic or athletic), or 3) severe illness or injury. If you are traveling due to university obligations, you must inform me at least two weeks prior to the event. If you are genuinely ill or injured, you will need proper documentation from your physician. **These regulations will be rigorously enforced!!!**

**Late Assignments**

Written assignments turned-in after the due date and time indicated will be penalized one full letter grade (ten points) for each full day that it is late. Therefore, an otherwise “100” quality paper turned-in one day late would become at best a “90” two days late would become at best an “80,” and so forth.

**Living in the Computer Age**

Computers are great. Ever more, computers are an integral part of the learning experience. Much of the readings are available online, you’ll probably do a great deal of research online, and write a paper or two on your computer. But as we all know, networks and computers are not always reliable—computers crash, networks fail, printers jam and run out of ink—these are the realities, and we must all confront them. Experience has shown that computers disproportionately tend to crash the night
before an exam or assignment is due. As a competent adult, it is up to you to take responsibility and plan ahead for such eventualities. Back-up your files to the web or an external drive. As an excuse for not being able to access online materials or being able to complete an assignment on time, “my computer crashed” will not garner much sympathy.

**Questions on Grading**

Invariably throughout the semester, students have questions about the grade they received on a particular assignment that goes beyond the given comments on the paper or exam. If you feel that you did not deserve the grade you received on a given assignment, I am certainly open to discussing the matter. However, I will insist upon the following:

1. **A 24-hour “cooling off” period.** Please do not approach me with questions about “why did I receive this grade” within 24-hours of having your assignment returned to you. This will allow you time to re-read the comments, and understand whatever shortcomings may be in question.

2. **Come to office hours.** I will not discuss individual grades during, before or after class. Questions about grades will only be considered in face-to-face discussions during office hours. In the end, it is exceedingly rare that a grade will be altered—but if you can persuade me that the evaluation was in error, I am not opposed to re-evaluating the grade.

**Plagiarism and Academic Integrity**

Breaches of the University of Illinois Student Code, especially Article 1, Part 4 concerning breaches of Academic Integrity (such as cheating on exams and plagiarism) are serious business. Not only are such activities contrary to your entire purpose in attending college and official university policy, but I also consider such breaches a personal affront to me as both an instructor and a competent human being—so consider this your **prior warning**; if blatant breaches of academic integrity are discovered, I will prosecute them to the fullest extent.

Please take a moment to familiarize yourself with the Student Code, available online at: [http://www.admin.uiuc.edu/policy/code/](http://www.admin.uiuc.edu/policy/code/).

The Penalties for Infractions of Academic Integrity (§ 1-403) are steep, and you should be aware of them: at a minimum, you will flunk the assignment or test, and likely, the entire class. Moreover, you may be brought before an ethics review tribunal, where it will be recommended that you be suspended not only from UIUC, but the entire University of Illinois system. Note will be made of your transgressions in your university file—which will be made known to any other college that you may look to enroll in. Needless to say, most universities would be reluctant to accept a known cheater or plagiarizer to their institutions, and many employers would be reluctant to hire someone with such marks in their file. So, long story short: don’t waste my time, don’t waste your time—just don’t do it. Please feel free to contact me with any questions you may have on this issue so that they can be easily resolved before the assignments are completed!

**Extra Credit**

No. Let me clarify that: if there comes a situation where extra credit would be appropriate, it would be offered on an equal-opportunity basis to all students, and that would be exceptionally rare. Individual extra-credit opportunities distort the baseline of evaluating every student by the same standard. This is to say, please do not approach me at the end of the semester asking for some extra-credit opportunity to make-up for a poor performance on an earlier assignment. Such requests are based on two implicit assumptions: 1) that the student in question wishes to be held to a different (lower) standard than the rest of the class, and 2) that the professor is willing to bend the rules and sacrifice objective standards of evaluation. As a result, I tend to find such requests to be rather off-putting, even though that was surely not the student’s intent, which is why I feel compelled to spell-out the justifications for this policy here.
Respect

A key aspect of maintaining an interesting and energetic seminar environment is to ensure that all participants in discussions feel free to express their ideas and opinions without fear of scoffs or condescension. To that end, it is incumbent upon everyone to treat everyone—and their ideas—with respect, especially when another student’s perceptions may not align with your own. Of course when speaking of politically charged topics disagreements will surely arise, yet please be aware of and show respect for others’ ideas and feelings. If at any time you feel offended, please try to raise your concerns in a constructive, level-headed manner—either in class, with me directly, or even anonymously—to amicably resolve the situation. Many times, interpersonal conflicts are rooted in simple misunderstandings, other times they reflect serious issues that need to be resolved before the class can continue.

Accessibility

Generally speaking, I am a fairly easy person to get in contact with. I encourage you to e-mail me with questions, clarifications, and concerns as they appear throughout the semester, and I especially encourage you to come speak with me face-to-face during my office hours, or by appointment: nothing beats old fashioned interpersonal interaction. Additionally, preceding the exams, I will open-up a discussion tab on the Compass website for review where you can feel free to post questions and build upon the concerns of others. For questions asked of me personally on the review thread, I will try to answer them as quickly as possible, given my other duties and obligations.

Readings

The required reading load for this course may be considered by some to be heavy. The assigned readings are sufficient to give a rudimentary, baseline understanding of the history, development, functions and functioning of a wide variety of international organizations today. In addition to these required readings that will be necessary to facilitate the week’s discussions, each student will be expected to undertake additional readings for their research papers. As both the quantity of assigned readings and research load are not inconsistent with the requirements for an advanced undergraduate seminar, please do not ask or expect for reductions to the requirements.

To that end, the following required books are available for purchase at the local university bookstores. Go buy them, they will come in handy.


All remaining materials will be included in a course reading packet that will be available for purchase, as well as being available on electronic reserve.

Course Website

This syllabus, along with relevant class announcements, review materials, reading assignments, and other information will be available on the course website, located at [http://compass.uiuc.edu](http://compass.uiuc.edu).
Course Outline and Reading Schedule

◙ = Reading from required books    ◆ = Reserve/supplemental reading

Part I: History, Theories & Approaches to IOs

Week 1: Introduction: Understanding IOs
Tuesday, August 26
Thursday, August 28
Required Readings:

Week 2: Brief History of IOs
Tuesday, September 2
Thursday, September 4
Required Readings:

Week 3: Theories and Approaches to IOs: “Idealism,” Realism, Institutionalism
Tuesday, September 9
Thursday, September 11
Required Readings:

Week 4: Delegation, Principles and Agents
Tuesday, September 16
Thursday, September 18
Required Readings:
Week 5: Sociological Constructivism: IOs as Bureaucracies
   Tuesday, September 23
   Thursday, September 25
   Required Readings:

Week 6: Network Organizations
   Tuesday, September 30
   Thursday, October 2
   Required Readings:

Week 7: Catching-Up, Review and Midterm Exam
   Tuesday, October 7--Catching-Up and Review
   Thursday, October 9--Midterm Exam

Week 8: The UN
   Tuesday, October 14
   Thursday, October 16
   Required Readings:
Part II: Group Presentations

Week 9: UN Affiliates and Agencies

Tuesday, October 21: UN Peacekeeping Operations

Required Reading:

Suggested Reading for Presenters:
Thursday, October 23: United Nations and Global Welfare

Required Reading:

Suggested Reading for Presenters:

Week 10: Institutions for International Justice

Tuesday, October 28: Resolving Disputes Between States

Required Reading:

Suggested Reading for Presenters:
Thursday, October 30: Criminal Tribunals and Courts

Required Reading:

Suggested Reading for Presenters:

Week 11: Governing Economic Globalization

Tuesday, November 4: International Trade Organizations

Required Reading:

Suggested Reading for Presenters:
Thursday, November 6: International Development Banks

Required Reading:

Suggested Reading for Presenters:

Week 12: Regional Organizations

Tuesday, November 11: Regional Trade Organizations

Required Reading:

Suggested Reading for Presenters:
PS395: International Organizations

Thursday, November 13: Regional Security Organizations

Required Reading:


Suggested Reading for Presenters:


Week 13: Transnational Issue-Oriented NGOs

Tuesday, November 18: Environmental & Anti-Globalization Movements

Required Reading:


Suggested Reading for Presenters:


Thursday, November 20: Organizations to Promote Human Rights & Democracy

Required Reading:


Suggested Reading for Presenters:


**Week 14: No Class—Thanksgiving Break!**

Tuesday, November 25--No Class!

Thursday, November 27--No Class!

**Part III: Summary and Conclusions**

**Week 15: The Future of International Organization(s)**

**Tuesday, December 2**

**Thursday, December 4**

**Required Reading:**


**Week 16: Wrap-Up and Exam Review**

**Tuesday, December 9:** Individual Research Papers Due

No Required Readings!

**Final Exam:** 1:30pm--4:30pm, Thursday, December 18, 2008.