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 graduate 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 international relations theory.

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 differing in form and in purpose. The group projects and individual research papers around which the course is structured will allow you to develop your knowledge of specific cases of your choosing, while simultaneously building analytical and conceptual abilities.

Organization of Course

This is a graduate research 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, a mid-semester take-home essay, as well as participation in the group presentation and an individual research project.

The grade breakdown is as follows:

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<tr>
<th>Component</th>
<th>Weight</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Class Participation</td>
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<tr>
<td>Theory Essay</td>
<td>20%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Group Presentation</td>
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<tr>
<td>Individual Research Project</td>
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Grading Scale:

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<td>92.9 — 90%</td>
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<td>86.9 — 83%</td>
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Class Participation: 15%
For a research 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.

Additionally, since there is much more to be gotten out of a graduate seminar than what goes on during our few short hours together, I will open up a space under the “discussions” tab on the Blackboard/WebCT site ([https://elearning.villanova.edu/webct](https://elearning.villanova.edu/webct)) for the PSC9050 course to provide a stepping-off point for subsequent classroom discussions. Constructive input to these discussions will be considered when tabulating the class participation grade, and may provide a great opportunity for those who might otherwise be hesitant to contribute in the more traditional classroom setting.

Theory Essay: 20%
Before moving on to the substantive issues in the study of international organizations, I feel it necessary to ensure that we have some mastery of the relevant theories of international organizations. Therefore, following week 5, there will be a brief take-home essay that exclusively covers IO theory. The assignment is open with respect to length, but 5-7 double-spaced pages should suffice. The theory essay will be due in class on week 7 (**Monday, February 25**), and will be worth 20% of the class grade.

Group Presentation: 15%
The bulk of this course will be structured as a graduate seminar with discussions both in-class and online led by groups of students (usually 2-4) with a common thematic focus. During the second week of class, students will submit their preferences for a topic area from the list of 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.

Each week, the group will be the “point people” for the subsequent discussions, and are responsible for both the online preparation and the in-class direction of the course.

To prepare for the in-class seminar, I hope to already have a lively debate over the readings online in the days leading-up to the Monday-evening class. This requires that members of the group—having read the assigned readings as well as some supplemental readings (based either on your own research, or the suggested reading list), act as a “lead blogger” and post some thought-provoking questions to the discussion thread on the WebCT site, which will provide a stepping-off point for both online debate and classroom discussion to follow. Questions and follow-up posts can be of any length, though try to be as succinct in your arguments as possible. The best posts tend to be the most original ones, and synthesize multiple readings.

This pre-class discussion should help inform the content of the classroom presentation and discussion. Again, the content, style, and direction of what goes on in class is up to the group. *Feel free to be creative!* Some suggestions would be to examine a particular organization as a case study, small-group work or provide limited role-playing exercises to illustrate particular points. *At minimum,* the group is expected to address some of the basic issues, concepts, and debates from the week’s readings, and provide some interesting questions to keep the classroom discussion flowing.
The topics and dates for the presentations will be as follows:

**Week 7 (February 25)** will cover UN peacekeeping operations around the globe.

After we return from mid-semester break on week 8, **Week 9 (March 11)** will continue the theme of security by looking at regional security organizations, most notably (but not exclusively) NATO.

**Week 10 (March 18)** will deal with international trade and banking, looking at global trade organizations (GATT/WTO) and international development banks like the World Bank and IMF.

**Week 11 (March 25)** will continue the economic theme by looking at regional economic and trade organizations, like the European Union, NAFTA, ASEAN and others.

**Week 12 (April 1)** will look at institutions for international justice, examining interstate dispute-resolution mechanisms like the International Court of Justice, as well as international criminal tribunals from Nuremberg to the development of an International Criminal Court (ICC).

For **week 13 (April 8)**, we return to the United Nations, in examining its institutions pertaining to the promotion of global welfare (i.e. UNDP, UNEP, WFP, UNICEF, UNHCR).

These themes will continue during **week 14 (April 15)** when we look at transnational movements and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) that promote global welfare issues including defense of the environment and global justice.

The final theme comes in **week 15 (April 22)**, examining transnational advocacy networks that seek to promote human rights and democratic values, including NGOs like Amnesty International and Human Rights Watch. 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. My hope is that the choice of a given topic area will relate to your research interests, and provide a stepping-off point for your individual research project, which is due at semester’s end.

### Individual Research Project: 50%

The capstone to this class will be the individual research project of **18-22 pages**, which will be due during the final exam period for the class (**Wednesday, May 8: 7:30pm—10:00pm**). Ideally, this project will allow you 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.

To ensure that the research develops in a timely fashion, I have instituted a number of (ungraded) benchmarks for the project throughout the semester. By the sixth week of class (**Monday, February 18**), I expect that everyone will have submitted via e-mail a topic for your research paper, complete with a research question that your research seeks to resolve. Simple historical overviews or general investigations will not suffice: such papers should be driven by a good “how” or “why” question regarding some aspect of international organizations. This deadline will allow sufficient time to provide feedback and suggestions before the project progresses too far.

Additionally, a conceptual outline of your paper project along with a preliminary bibliography will be due during week 11 of class (**Monday, March 25**), to again permit enough time for constructive feedback.

To both deter and detect the plagiarism that is inconsistent with your purpose as a graduate student, I will ask that all research papers be submitted electronically by the final exam period (**Wednesday, May 8: 7:30pm—10:00pm**) through the SafeAssign program, which will be located under the “Course Content” tab on the course Blackboard/WebCT site: [https://elearning.villanova.edu/webct](https://elearning.villanova.edu/webct).

### Additional Guidelines for Research Project:

The expectations for this class include a professional academic research paper (since in graduate education we are all academic professionals), and the final paper will be judged according to appropriate standards. That is to say, I will evaluate the paper as though it were submitted for consideration to be published in an academic journal. Accordingly, there are a number of expectations that I have for a good paper:
1) The paper should be an original contribution of your own (see policy on academic integrity below).
2) The paper should have a clear and persuasive argument to answer a question of importance to our understanding of international organizations. Broad topic declarations such as “I want to study the IMF” are too vague—a concrete topic question is required, and can be worked-out in conjunction with the professor. Usually addressing topics with “how” or “why” questions can help, while supplementing such questions with some notion of how your research question “matters”—in terms of furthering our understanding of a particular outcome or contribution to a theoretical approach or debate—is also a plus.
3) The paper should aim to generate new knowledge, rather than simply convey information.
4) The paper should have a coherent and consistent structure to convey the argument, rather than meandering, stream-of-consciousness thought.
5) A good paper will be firmly grounded in the theoretical literature (and may well advance that literature), while supporting evidence for your position should be drawn from the empirical realm of international organizations, preferably incorporating primary sources and original research.
6) The paper should be presented with a minimum of typographical errors and other “local concerns” that might otherwise erode the credibility of the author, and thereby the argument.
7) The paper must include adequate references following a proper and consistent citation style. Since political science stands at the intersection of a wide variety of social sciences, each with their own standards for citation, ultimately I am less concerned about which style you use or how you cite your sources, and more concerned that you cite your sources, and do so in a consistent fashion.

Course 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.

Grade Entitlement

A recent UC Irvine study found that 1/3 of all students surveyed expected a course grade of “B” just for attending lectures, while 40 percent expected a “B” simply for completing the required readings. Moreover 2/3 of all students surveyed claimed that explaining to a professor that they “worked hard,” it should be factored into the calculation of a grade. This trend increasingly mistakes effort for quality of work. I strive to objectively assess the quality of assignments in this class against a uniform standard, nothing more. Course grades should not be thought to be a reflection of either the amount of effort exerted or some evaluation of the personal worth of the student.

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, all the way down to zero. As all of the deadlines are clearly articulated here in the syllabus from day one so they should come as no surprise, no extensions will be granted, based in part on the same premise as the policy on extra credit (see below).
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 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
Cheating, plagiarism, fabrication, assisting dishonesty and other breaches of the University Policy on Academic Integrity, as outlined in the Enchiridion (http://www.villanova.edu/vpaa/office/studentservices/policies/integrity/), are serious business. Not only are such activities contrary to your entire purpose in attending college and official university policy, but are also a personal affront to me as an instructor and 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.

Fortunately, when it comes to plagiarism, the Villanova Writing Center has a handy guide to effective citation and how to avoid plagiarism (http://www.villanova.edu/artsci/vcle/writingcenter/guide/citing.htm), I suggest looking it over. If you have additional citation, formatting, or any other questions throughout the semester, please feel free to discuss them with me so that we might clarify any ambiguities and prevent ethical problems before they develop.

The Penalties for Infractions of Academic Integrity 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, an official report of the transgression will be made to the Dean of the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences, and the Board of Academic Integrity, and you will be required to complete a program on academic ethics. If a student is twice found responsible for such transgressions of academic integrity, the Dean may expel or suspend you from the University. So, long story short: don’t waste my time, don’t waste your time—just don’t do it. Again, 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. However, there are limits to my accessibility, especially outside of normal daytime business hours. A lack of preparedness on your part does not necessitate a crisis on mine—which is to say to not expect me to reply immediately to panicked, excuse-riddled e-mails the night before an exam or assignment due date.

Readings

The required reading load for this course may be considered by some to be heavy, but it is quite standard for a graduate-level course. 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 a graduate research seminar, please do not ask or expect for reductions to the requirements.

The following books are available for purchase at the Villanova University Shop, as well as through online retailers. Just be aware that ordering books online may be a great way to save money, but that must be balanced by the risk that the books may not arrive in a timely manner, which may in turn put you behind in your studies.


Recommended, but not required:


Additionally, there are a number of additional required readings (articles and book chapters) that will be posted electronically through the course site on Blackboard/WebCT (https://elearning.villanova.edu/webct).
Course Outline and Reading Schedule

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

Part I: History, Theories & Approaches to IOs

Week 1: Introduction & History of IOs
Monday, January 14
Required Readings:

Week 2: Martin Luther King Day--No class.
Monday, January 21

Week 3: Theories and Approaches to IOs: “Idealism,” Realism, Institutionalism
Monday, January 28
Required Readings:

Week 4: Theories and Approaches to IOs: Delegation, Principal-Agent Theory; Constructivism
Monday, February 4
Required Readings:
Week 5: Network Organizations  
Monday, February 11  
Required Readings:  
Suggested Further Reading:  

Week 6: The United Nations  
Monday, February 18  
Research Project Thesis Question Due! (E-mailed, preferably)  
Required Readings:  

Part II: Group Presentations  
Week 7: UN Peacekeeping Operations  
Monday, February 25  
Theory Essay Due In Class!  
Required Readings:  
Some Suggested Readings for Presenters:

Week 8: Mid-Semester Break--No class.
Monday, March 4

Week 9: NATO and Regional Security Organizations
Monday, March 11
Required Reading:

Some Suggested Readings for Presenters [Regional Security Organizations]:
Week 10: Governing Economic Globalization: International Trade and Banking

Monday, March 18

Required Reading:

Some Suggested Readings for Presenters (International Trade Organizations):
Some Suggested Readings for Presenters (International Development Banks):


Week 11: Regional Economic Organizations

Monday, March 25

Conceptual Outline and Preliminary Bibliography Due!

Required Reading:


Some Suggested Readings for Presenters (Regional Trade Organizations):

Week 12: Institutions for International Justice
Monday, April 1

Required Reading:


Some Suggested Readings for Presenters (Settling Disputes, ICJ):


Some Suggested Readings for Presenters (International Criminal Tribunals, ICC):

Monday, April 8
Required Reading:

Some Suggested Readings for Presenters:

Week 14: Transnational Environmental, Trade & Global Justice Movements
Monday, April 15
Required Reading:

Some Suggested Readings for Presenters:
Week 15: Transnational Organizations to Promote Human Rights & Democracy

Monday, April 22

Required Reading:

Some Suggested Readings for Presenters:
Part III: Summary and Conclusions

Week 16: The Future of International Organization(s)
Monday, April 29:
Required Reading:

Final Exam Period: Wednesday, May 8: 7:30pm—10:00pm, 204 Tolentine Hall