

University of Western Ontario - Department of Political Science
Winter 2013: Political Science 4201G/9746B – United Nations Issues: The Modern UN

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Introduction:

This course will help you critically assess the political perspectives on contemporary issues on the United Nations and global governance. This course will help you explore the theoretical perspectives on the United Nations, as well as key issues, debates and topics in global governance. We will address a range of issues starting with the UN's objectives, structure and decision-making procedures, followed by United Nations' policies and activities on a range of contemporary issues, including peacekeeping, peace building, humanitarian intervention, economic development, and human rights.

Objectives:

This course has three main objectives. First, this course is designed to develop your critical thinking about the current issues and debates confronting the United Nations and its role in global governance. This will provide a foundation for any future interests in international relations, human rights, peace studies, international law, and global politics. Second, the assignments in this course are designed to help you develop your arguments and ideas in ways that relate to specific issues and events relating to the United Nations. While we will cover a range of debates and issues, you need to decide which you find most interesting and which you will focus on in your work. Third, by the conclusion of this course you should be able to provide a critical and original argument about the United Nations on a specific issue. Your ability to accomplish these objectives will be assessed using the assignments and work outlined below.

Readings:

All readings are available on-line, on 2-hour reserve, or in the periodical section at the Weldon or King's Libraries.
Textbook: Craig N. Murphy, *The United Nations Development Programme: A Better way?* Cambridge, 2006.
Suggested text : Devaki Jain, *Women, Development and the UN: A Sixty-Year Quest for Equality and Justice*. Indiana University Press, 2005.

Evaluation:

Attendance and Participation: 20% of final course grade.
Students are expected to attend and participate consistently and effectively in the work of their respective groups and individually. Any missed classes are a loss of both attendance and participation marks, any efforts to make up lost marks will need to address both aspects of this grade. Full marks cannot be achieved if participation is not clear and consistent. Class discussions are an opportunity to engage with the ideas and concepts presented in the course through discussion and presentation. (See 'Guidelines for Success' below). Students who have further questions about attendance marks should inquire about the FAQ.

Media Assessment: 20% of final course grade.

This assignment will critically engage with an official or unofficial depiction of UN action in relation to a specific case or issue of global governance. All media options must be approved by the instructor before proceeding with

the assignment.¹ Media can include but is not limited to motion pictures, short films, documentaries, special reports, official documents, brochures, pamphlets and public relations of any UN body, agency or group. Signup for the media assessment will take place on unmedia.wikispaces.com. The media assessment must critically engage with the *content and argument* of the media for its use in understanding contemporary UN issues. This critical assessment can be presented in 2 ways.

1. A written report (essay) which assesses the media for its arguments about the UN issue, and the viability of the arguments given the academic debates on the issue. The written assignment should be a minimum of 1250 words, in proper essay format (with title page and bibliography) and have a minimum of 4 academic sources.
2. An in-class presentation. A section or short part (maximum 10 minutes) of media should be distributed to the class (subject to instructor prior approval, and following class guidelines) and the presenter should outline their interpretation of the argument for the class. The presenter will then prepare a short exercise, role playing or creative interactive exercise to raise issues and ideas that stem from media and their critical interpretation of it.

For an example of a media assessment see: Heather L. Johnson "Click to Donate: Visual images, constructing victims and imagining the female refugee" *Third World Quarterly*, June 2011.

For methodological foundation of media assessments see: Michael Shapiro . Chapter 1 "Philosophy, Method and the Arts." In *Studies in Transdisciplinary Method: After the Aesthetic Turn*, 2012. Also see Cynthia Weber Chapter 1 "Culture, ideology and the myth function in IR theory." In *International Relations Theory: A critical Introduction*, Routledge 2010.

Remaining 20% assignment.

Option 1: Take Home Exam: **Only available to undergraduate students**. 20% of final course grade. Due on April 15, 2013. The take home exam will be cumulative (i.e., will be based on the material covered in lectures, assigned readings, and discussions throughout the whole of the course). The take home exam will be a series of short essay questions. Choice of answers and an exam preparation guide may be given.

Option 2: Student Provocations (maximum of one per week)

Student Provocations: 20% of final course grade.

The student provocations are a two part exercise. During the first class a maximum of 10 students will select a week for their provocation. Each student will find at least one link to an article, issue, newspaper event or magazine topic and post it for the class at least one week prior to the class in which they present. Each student will prepare a very short (8 minute) exercise to stimulate class discussion on an issue related to the class readings for the week. **THIS IS NOT A SUMMARY**. Students should prepare a short exercise, role playing or creative interactive exercise to raise issues and ideas that stem from the discussion questions or their reading for the week. Students do not necessarily need to present orally to the class, as long as they provide clear instructions and facilitate the exercise. The goal of the exercise is to raise analytical issues and concerns with the course material rather than summarize or re-present the material. All exercises must be preapproved by the instructor, and cannot be presented without the instructor's approval.

Mini-Conference week: 20% of final grade.

This exercise is designed to allow students to experience what it is like to present at an academic conference. A minimum of 4 and a maximum of 5 students will have to self-organize panels based on common themes, area of interest, regional issues or overarching ideas. Students can use <http://4201panels.wikispaces.com> to sign up for

¹ All video clips must be preapproved by the instructor prior to any display in the classroom. No clip should contain disturbing or offensive material or make anyone in the class feel uncomfortable or unwelcome. The instructor reserves the right to reject any material, on any grounds at any time at the instructor's discretion. The classroom is a space for the free exchange of ideas, and any material that impedes the ability of anyone to fully and comfortably participate will be excluded.

possible panels as well as recruit chairs and discussants for the panels. Panels may also suggest readings for the class in order to better prepare the audience for the panel. A standard academic conference presentation has a minimum of four panelists as well as a chair and discussant. The panelists do their best to have a full paper prepared for the time of presentation, but in all likelihood will be presenting unfinished research or research in progress. The panelists provide as much of their work as possible to the discussant prior to the panel, but in some cases the discussant has to respond to the content of the presentation. The discussant's role is to tie common themes together from the papers, as well as provide critical insights into strengths and weaknesses of each presentation. The discussant does not engage in inappropriate behavior, disrespectful characterizations, ad hominem attacks, or anything that would make panelists uncomfortable. The role of the chair is to present the panel, ensure panelists follow presentation time limits and oversee questions from the audience. See the example below for ideas about structure.

All panels including introduction, presentation, discussion and questions should take a maximum of 60 minutes. See the sample below for an idea of the format.

Conference Week 8: The Responsibility to Protect: Idealism, Implementation and Effectiveness

Chair: Dan Bousfield

Discussant: Slavoj Zizek

Panelists:

1. Judith Butler: "The responsibility to protect in Darfur: failed responses to genocide"
2. Noam Chomsky: "R2P and Canada: From Promotion to Denial"
3. Jacques Lacan: "The International Community's Moral Leadership: Cosmopolitan Failures"
4. Alain Badiou: "R2P and the future: Libya as a Roadmap for Success?"

Option 3: Peer Editing Exercise. 20%

This exercise is designed to allow students to understand what it is like to go through an academic peer review process. This exercise requires exactly 4 students (no exceptions). Students will pick a date no later than March 13 (preferably much sooner) to begin the exercise. On the given date each of the students will e-mail dbousfie@uwo.ca the first 5 pages of their final essay. This should include an introductory paragraph which clearly outlines the core arguments in the final essay, and includes one of the core arguments in proper essay format with footnotes, citations and data included. The paper should also contain a short conclusion, explaining the link between the core argument and the expected thesis. The instructor will then anonymize the assignments and distribute them to members of the group. Each group member will then critically assess the arguments of their peers and provide written feedback for each assignment. The assignment will be graded on the quality of the peer feedback, NOT the essay itself. Peer feedback should assess the strength of the arguments, the validity of the sources and provide useful suggestions for revision. The feedback will be assembled and given back to the original author for use in their final paper.

Essay : 40% of final grade due in class March 24, 2011.

Length: 3,750 words (15 pages), typed and double spaced. Pages should be numbered and the type font should be no smaller than 12 characters per inch (e.g. Arial 12).

Topics: Students choose their own essay topics but such choices must be approved by the instructor. The essay must have, as part of its introduction, a statement of its thesis (central argument). This thesis must be supported by a careful analysis of relevant data and arguments in the body of the paper. See Criteria for Evaluation of Written Assignments below.

Notes: The Department's rules regarding plagiarism and the submission of similar essays to two or more different instructors are appended to this course outline and should be noted. (See 'Criteria for Evaluation of Written Assignments' below). Please note that papers must be submitted in hard copy in class and cannot be accepted electronically or by fax.

Guidelines for Success in Class

Since there seldom are definitive answers to the questions we will be asking about UN issues, and much of what you will learn in this course will be enhanced by the ideas and perspectives of your colleagues. But for this to work, everyone must participate fully and constructively. Be mindful of the following points, and you will be successful:

- Come to all classes having read the assigned readings for that week and prepared to participate in discussion. It is useful to remember that some week's readings may be more relevant to your research interests than others, and focusing on readings that are most salient to your interests will ensure maximum usefulness in the course.
- Participate in discussions, but do not over-participate. Everyone must be given an opportunity to take part in discussions. Constructive participation involves the raising of *relevant* points and ideas. Online participation will be considered as well in participation marks.
- Demonstrate respect for the ideas presented by others at all times. This is essential to open discussion and the free exchange of ideas. This does not mean that you must agree with others. Informal debate will teach you even more about your own position while simultaneously exposing you to different viewpoints. Make use of such opportunities, but no disrespectful behavior will be tolerated.
- Raise questions when you have them. Raising useful questions counts as participation. You can use minute papers, online forums, e-mail, facebook or in class lecture to raise questions you encounter throughout the course. Uncertainties are usually shared by others – when you raise your questions in class everyone learns while you build your own participation grade.

Criteria for Evaluation of Written Assignments

These criteria will be used in evaluation of written work and possibly in combination with the checklist below. Please be sure to read them carefully:

Analytical Content: Higher grades will be given to work that demonstrates the ability to interpret, critically assess and develop insights of the material. To determine whether or not your argument is analytical, ask yourself "Am I demonstrating to the reader my insights in an academic way?" If you are simply summarizing or describing in detail phenomena, your work is unlikely to have high analytical content.

Helpful signs you are not developing analytical content: Excessive quotes; beginning or ending a paragraph with a quote; short (fewer than 4 sentences) paragraphs; no sources in a long paragraph; lack of similar argument in introduction and conclusion.

Development of an Argument: Higher grades will be given to work that has a clearly stated argument and a set of logically developed and reasonably comprehensive points in support of that argument. Academic arguments need not be personal (though in certain instances they can be – check with the instructor), rather they demonstrate the logical progression of the position you are developing. The key here is to attempt to convince your reader of the soundness or feasibility of your argument. Nuanced arguments recognize obvious criticisms and seek to address them logically. Consistency of an argument throughout a paper is important.

Helpful signs your argument may be in trouble: Using the same author or quote more than a few times in successive paragraphs; your introduction and conclusion are not similar; you introduce material in the introduction and the conclusion that cannot be found elsewhere; you have quotes in your conclusion; your attempt to address obvious criticisms contradicts your thesis, you adopt multiple theoretical frameworks; you cannot find any sources that agree with your central claims.

Grammar, Spelling, and Style: Higher grades will be given to written work that is grammatically correct and is clearly and accurately written, while lower grades will be given to work that is difficult to read or understand due to excessive grammatical and/or spelling errors.

While different approaches work for different people, it is recommended that you try the following every time you have a written assignment: after completing your assignment, put it away for a while (ideally, for a few days); when you pick it up again, read it carefully, slowly, and aloud (when we are familiar with a paper we tend to skim it during proof-reading, thereby missing errors – so make sure you are reading it word for word). Mistakes in grammar may not always look wrong, but they usually sound wrong. If you need some help with writing style or grammar, there are many resources available on campus.

Meeting the Requirements of the Assignment: All written work must be submitted on time, must be of the appropriate length, must use the required number and type of resources, and, most importantly, must address the issues or questions posed in the assignment.

Important Notices

General

All students must complete all course requirements. Failure to do so (e.g., by not handing-in an assignment or by missing an examination without due cause) will subject the student to the appropriate University regulations. Students must also keep a duplicate copy of their assignments.

Late Assignments - Formal Guidelines

Late papers will be accepted, but will be subject to a late penalty of 5 per cent per weekday to a maximum of 5 days, after which they will not be accepted and a mark of 0 will be recorded. In the interest of fairness to all students, there will be no exceptions to this unless you have arranged in advance for an extension. All extensions must be arranged in advance of the day on which a paper is due. **Papers submitted after deadlines (including excused late papers) will be marked, but comments will not be provided.**

Plagiarism

Students must also note that it is a serious academic offense to hand in the same assignment to two or more courses or to pass off another person's work as their own (i.e., plagiarism). The University of Western Ontario "Handbook of Academic and Scholarship Policy" defines plagiarism as follows:

Students must write their essays and assignments in their own words. Whenever students take an idea, or a passage from another author, they must acknowledge their debt both by using quotation marks where appropriate and by proper referencing such as footnotes or citations. Plagiarism is a major academic offence (see Scholastic Offence Policy in the Western Academic Calendar).

At the discretion of the instructor, students may be required: (i) to pass a brief oral examination on their assignment before a final grade is assigned and/or (ii) provide an electronic copy of their assignment so that their work can be checked using plagiarism-checking software (e.g., Turnitin.com). As stated in the University of Western Ontario "Handbook of Academic and Scholarship Policy:"

All required papers may be subject to submission for textual similarity review to the commercial plagiarism detection software under license to the University for the detection of plagiarism. All papers submitted will be included as source documents in the reference database for the purpose of detecting plagiarism of papers subsequently submitted to the system. Use of the service is subject to the licensing agreement, currently between The University of Western Ontario and Turnitin.com (<http://www.turnitin.com>).

SEMINAR TOPICS AND READINGS

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NOTE: The schedule below is subject to change in the event of extenuating circumstances or by mutual agreement between the instructor and the students.

January 9 - Intro to the course: objectives, format, decisions on structure and topics.

January 16 – Imagining the UN/ Presentations Begin

Readings:

- Craig N. Murphy, Chapter 1 “Not the Standard Image” *The United Nations Development Programme: A Better way?* Cambridge, 2006.
- Devaki Jain, Introduction “Women, Development and Equality: History as Inconclusive Dialogue” in *Women, Development and the UN: A Sixty-Year Quest for Equality and Justice*. Indiana University Press, 2005.
- Heather L. Johnson "Click to Donate: Visual images, constructing victims and imagining the female refugee" *Third World Quarterly*, June 2011.

Issue/Theory: Gender, Norms and the UN

Krook, Mona Lena, and Jacqui True. "Rethinking the life cycles of international norms: The United Nations and the global promotion of gender equality." European Journal of International Relations 18.1 (2012): 103-127.

January 23 – Situating Origins

Readings:

- Craig N. Murphy, Chapter 2 “Development and the United Nations” *The United Nations Development Programme: A Better way?* Cambridge, 2006.
- Devaki Jain, Chapter 1 “Setting the Stage for Equity, 1945-1965” in *Women, Development and the UN: A Sixty-Year Quest for Equality and Justice*. Indiana University Press, 2005.

Issue/Theory: UNAIDS and 'Getting to Zero'

Sidibé, Michel, Sonja Tanaka, and Kent Buse. "People, passion & politics: looking back and moving forward in the governance of the AIDS response." GLOBAL HEALTH 4.1 (2010).

January 30 - Evolving Institutions

Readings:

- Craig N. Murphy, Chapter 3 “Institutions for practical solidarity” *The United Nations Development Programme: A Better way?* Cambridge, 2006.
- Devaki Jain, Chapter 2 “Questioning Development Paradigms” in *Women, Development and the UN: A Sixty-Year Quest for Equality and Justice*. Indiana University Press, 2005.

Issue/Theory: Haiti

Podur, Justin. Haiti's New Dictatorship, Pluto 2012. Chapters 1-5.

February 6 – Decolonization and Development

- Readings: Craig N. Murphy, Chapter 4 “Decolonization and economic transformation” *The United Nations Development Programme: A Better way?* Cambridge, 2006.
- Devaki Jain, Chapter 4 “Development as if Women mattered” in *Women, Development and the UN: A Sixty-Year Quest for Equality and Justice*. Indiana University Press, 2005.

Issue/Theory: Haiti

Podur, Justin. Haiti's New Dictatorship, Pluto 2012. Chapters 6-10.

February 13 – UN on the ground

Readings:

- Craig N. Murphy, Chapter 5 “Lewis in Ghana and After” *The United Nations Development Programme: A Better way?* Cambridge, 2006.
- Devaki Jain, Chapter 5 “Lessons from the UN’s Sixth decade” in *Women, Development and the UN: A Sixty-*

Year Quest for Equality and Justice. Indiana University Press, 2005.

Issue/Theory: World Food Crises

McKeon, Nora. *The United Nations and civil society*. Zed, 2010. Chapter 2.

February 27 –Funding the UN

Readings:

- Craig N. Murphy, Chapter 6 “Capacity, consensus, crisis and consequences” *The United Nations Development Programme: A Better way?* Cambridge, 2006.
- Fluri, J. (2012), Capitalizing on Bare Life: Sovereignty, Exception, and Gender Politics. *Antipode*, 44: 31–50.

Issue/Theory: The Birthright Lottery

Shachar, Ayelet. *The birthright lottery: citizenship and global inequality*. Harvard University Press, 2009. Introduction and Chapter 1.

March 6 – Citizenship Issues

Readings:

- Craig N. Murphy, Chapter 7 “Engaging liberation movements and revolutionary states” *The United Nations Development Programme: A Better way?* Cambridge, 2006.
- Fiona Terry - *Condemned to Repeat: The Paradoxes of Humanitarian Action*, Cornell 2002. Intro and Chapter 1.

Issue/Theory: Humanitarianism

Hyndman, Jennifer. *Managing displacement: Refugees and the politics of humanitarianism*. Vol. 16. University of Minnesota Press, 2000. Intro and Chapter 1.

March 13 – Issues of Exclusion

Readings:

- Craig N. Murphy, Chapter 8 “A learning organization: women, Latin America and Africa” *The United Nations Development Programme: A Better way?* Cambridge, 2006.
- Whitworth, Sandra. "Theory as exclusion: gender and international political economy." *Political Economy and the Changing Global Order* (1994): 116-29.
- Duffield, Mark. "Development, territories, and people: Consolidating the external sovereign frontier." *Alternatives: Global, Local, Political* 32.2 (2007): 225-246.

Issue/Theory: Borders

Hyndman, Jennifer. *Managing displacement: Refugees and the politics of humanitarianism*. Vol. 16. University of Minnesota Press, 2000. Chapter 2-3.

March 20 – Reporting and Reform

Readings:

- Craig N. Murphy, Chapter 9 “‘Bottoms up’ development helps make UNDP a mammal” *The United Nations Development Programme: A Better way?* Cambridge, 2006.
- Lamin Sise. Illusions of a Standing United Nations Force, "Cornell International Law Journal". (1995): vol 28. 645-647.
- Brendan O'Shea. The Future of United Nations Peacekeeping, "Peacekeeping and International Relations", April-Sept. (2001): vol 30, issue 4. 17-18

Issue/Theory: The ICC and the Crime of Agression

<http://jicj.oxfordjournals.org/content/10/1.toc>

March 27 – Religion and Development

Readings:

- Craig N. Murphy, Chapter 10 “Working for ‘a holy man’ after the cold war” *The United Nations Development Programme: A Better way?* Cambridge, 2006.
- Fox, Jonathan. "Religion as an overlooked element of international relations." *International Studies Review* 3.3 (2001): 53-73.

Issue/Theory: Israel, Palestine and the US

Russell Mead, Walter. "God's country?." *Dialog* 47.1 (2008): 5-15.

April 3 - Independent Study/External Supervision

April 11 - Last Class - Last Day for Presentations

Readings:

- Craig N. Murphy, Chapter 11 and 12 "Fabian Socialists do not make the cut" and "'Ploughing the sea?' UNDP and the future of global governance" *The United Nations Development Programme: A Better way?* Cambridge, 2006

Other Possible Topics for Discussion/Presentation/Research:

Cosmopolitanism

Climate Change and the UNCCC

Militarization and Peacekeeping

Corruption and Peacekeeping

World Food Crisis

Israel, Palestine and Human Rights

Middle East In/Security

Lebanon and International Law

Iraq, the UN and the Gulf War

Responsibility to Protect

Cyprus

Refugee Children

Child-Soldiers

Congo

Refugees/UNHCR

Water as a Human Right

UN Alternatives

Afghanistan and the UN

SC reform

ICC and the UN

Mercenaries and the UN system

Geoengineering

Islamophobia

Internet Freedom

Sport and the UN

Non-UN peacekeeping

Development 'Celebrities'

UNDRIP

Parenting and the UN

Elder care and the UN

(Graduate) Statement of Academic Offences

Scholastic offences are taken seriously and students are directed to read the appropriate policy, specifically, the definition of what constitutes a Scholastic Offence, at the following Web site:

http://www.uwo.ca/univsec/handbook/appeals/scholastic_discipline_grad.pdf