

Political Science 337  
Fall 2007

## **International Organization and the United Nations**

Thursday 4:30-7:10 p.m., Holton 180

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Office hours: Tues. 7:10-8:10 p.m., Thurs. 7:10-8:10 p.m.

Teaching assistant: Aaron Weinschenk, [acw@uwm.edu](mailto:acw@uwm.edu), Wed., 3:00-4:00 p.m., Thurs., 3:30-4:30 p.m.

Final exam: Thurs., Dec. 20, 4:30-6:30 p.m., Holton 180

### **Course Description**

We will look at the goals, policy choices, and impacts of the United Nations organizations. What are the functions or purposes of these organizations? What are their memberships and institutional structures? How are policies chosen? What are the most common voting coalitions, and why have they formed? What relations exist between voting outcomes and real-world policies? Why do UN realities—both in words (mainly resolutions) and in actions—so often fall short of the ideals in the UN Charter? How and why have the answers to these questions changed over time?

We will look at how various UN organizations work in practice. How well has the UN provided its members with collective security and conflict resolution services? Among other examples, we will look at the response to the break-up and civil wars in Yugoslavia, and at the wars and confrontations with Saddam Hussein's Iraq. What role has the UN played in combating (or legitimizing) terrorism? Can the new International Criminal Court neutrally and efficiently bring violators of international law to justice? What role has the UN played in arms control agreements? What impact has it had on human rights and environmental conservation? Finally, we will look at efforts of UN and UN-affiliated organizations to promote international trade and economic development, and to address economic adjustment crises.

Throughout, we will ask how the UN affects outcomes, relative to those that would likely have been reached in its absence by regional organizations, spontaneous diplomatic negotiations, and most fundamentally, states' decentralized pursuit of their national interests. This depends primarily on how UN organizations can be used by the relevant coalitions of member states to pursue their national interests—which are in practice defined by the regimes or governments in power.

The course will conclude with a brief discussion of the European Union (EU). Because the EU's powers and achievements are much greater than those of the UN organizations, it provides a useful comparison. Towards the end of the course, we will apply the material by simulating a UN Security Council effort to resolve a hypothetical regional crisis in Africa.

## Grades

Grades will be based on the best two of three quizzes (8.33% each), attendance and participation (8.33%), one midterm exam (25%), and one final exam (50%). Interested students can choose to write a seven-page research paper related to a course topic, as agreed upon with the instructor. In that case, the research paper counts for 25% and the final exam 25% of the grade. Each student must present on one class discussion question or one current events topic. Students presenting in a given week should talk to me after class the week before, in order to agree on what will be debated or discussed. (Students should prepare their own talking points, and should never read long statements written by others to the class.) There will be no make-up quizzes, although one quiz may be dropped. No make-up exams can be given without a medical excuse. To check your understanding of the material and your preparations for the exams, you should see me in office hours once before the midterm and once before the final. If you will need accommodations in order to meet any of the requirements of this course, please contact me as soon as possible.

## Readings

The following required book is available in the bookstore.

Ziring, Lawrence, Robert E. Riggs and Jack C. Plano. (2005) *The United Nations: International Organization and World Politics*. Fourth Edition. Belmont, CA: Wadsworth.

Other required readings are on reserve in Golda Meir Library.

## Course Schedule

The following schedule is subject to modification. Try to finish each week's reading *before* class. Do the reading with each week's study questions in mind. Study questions usually refer most directly to readings from Ziring, Riggs and Plano, but other readings are also relevant. Each week, one or more people will provide an introductory discussion of the debate questions, which we will then discuss together.

Weeks 1-2 (9/6, 9/13): Introduction. Film on "The United States and the United Nations."

Origins of the UN. Legal Framework, Institutional Structure, and Finances. The UN Political Process and National Self-Determination.

Reading: Ziring, Riggs and Plano, chaps. 1-3, Appendix (UN Charter).

*Study questions:*

Chaps. 1-2, appendix: What are the goals, powers and voting rules of the League of Nations and the UN? What are the most obvious differences between the two? What are the similarities and differences between the Security Council and General Assembly on the one hand, and domestic legislatures such as our Congress on the other? Are the objectives stated in the UN Charter mutually consistent? What is the relationship between the ideals of non-intervention in the affairs of sovereign states, collective security, national self-determination, and human rights? When should one of these principles be considered a greater priority than the others? Where, if at all, does democracy fit in? Try to apply these issues to some specific examples. Why did the League fail to deter aggression in Manchuria, Ethiopia, and Eastern Europe?

Would the UN have done any better? Has the UN been important in deterring aggression since World War II? What are the UN's financial resources, and why? Chap. 3: How much power do the various organs of the UN possess? How does the UN's institutional structure affect voting outcomes? In the Security Council (SC), what difference does limited membership and veto power make? What are the main voting blocs that have formed in the UN over time? Why haven't democracies formed an effective voting bloc, particularly since the end of the Cold War? How do we explain the changing pattern of voting outcomes over time, particularly with respect to U.S. influence? If you see any obvious weaknesses in the way the UN functions, what sorts of institutional changes would make an improvement? Would the changes have undesirable consequences in other ways? What changes would be politically feasible? *Debate questions:* In trying to organize member countries to provide collective security, to what extent is the UN Charter an improvement over the League Covenant? What is the relationship between the ideals of non-intervention in the affairs of sovereign states, collective security, national self-determination, and human rights? When should one of these principles be considered a greater priority than the others? Try to apply these issues to some specific examples. In what senses are the systems of representation in the General Assembly and Security Council just or unjust? Have the US and other countries been justified when, at times, they have withheld their financial dues to the UN? Should the US and other rich countries contribute more money to the UN? Should the Security Council be enlarged to include more permanent members, e.g. Japan, Germany and/or important developing countries? Why or why not? What positive or negative effects would this have? Are any such changes politically feasible?

Weeks 3-7 (9/20, 9/27, 10/4, 10/11, 10/18): **QUIZZES (9/20 & 10/11)**. Collective Security. Korea and Iraq. International Conflict Resolution. The Yugoslav Wars. Terrorism. The International Criminal Court and War Crimes Tribunals. Reading: Ziring, Riggs and Plano, chaps. 5-6, 8; Russett and Sutterlin; Reno; Horowitz, chaps. 8-10; Fenske; Cohen; Chandler; Lewis; Rubin, 1-32; Bush; Tessitore and Woolfson, 245-262.

*Study questions:*

Chap. 8: What makes some territorial units legitimate candidates for "national self-determination"? What are the implications of the standards used to draw internationally recognized boundaries? What alternative standards might be used and what are their implications?

Chap. 5: What does the UN add to traditional tools of international relations such as national armed forces, alliances, and diplomacy? Is UN action a substitute or a complement for such traditional methods? What is the relationship between diplomacy and SC "judgment" or resolution-making, and between national armed forces, alliances, and SC "enforcement" of its resolutions? What do the examples of Korea and Iraq-Kuwait (First Gulf War) show about when and how the UN actually acts militarily? What are the implications for the current debate about "unilateralism" vs. "multilateralism"? Why have economic sanctions been used so often since the end of the Cold War? When are economic sanctions likely to work?

Chap. 6: What explains the purposes, methods, and high frequency of UN peacekeeping operations? Based on the examples discussed in the readings, under what conditions is UN peacekeeping likely to make a significant contribution to settlement of international and domestic conflicts? Try to keep in mind the objectives and relative power of the sides involved in a given conflict. Try to think through the possibilities for the various conflicts discussed in the readings.

Reserve readings: What were the main sources of the Yugoslav conflicts? Why were international organizations—particularly the UN Security Council and the European Community—so ineffective in resolving these conflicts? How and why were the U.S. and NATO ultimately able to intervene more successfully? Is the experience in Sierra Leone consistent with that in the former Yugoslavia? Describe the main developments in Middle Eastern politics in recent decades. What explains the power of radical ideologies such as Pan-Arabism and, more recently, Islamism, and the weakness of moderate ideologies emphasizing democracy, human rights, and economic development?

*Debate questions:*

September 20: Should the Security Council be enlarged to include more permanent members, e.g. Japan, Germany, or one or more developing countries? Why or why not? What positive or negative effects would this have?

September 27 & October 4: What do the examples of Korea and Iraq show about the limits of UN military involvement? What are the prospects for some kind of UN-operated worldwide security regime, in which UN military forces replace those of individual countries in responding to acts of aggression and offering peacekeeping services? Evaluate the likely feasibility and effectiveness of the proposals advanced by Russett and Sutterlin. What do the examples of Yugoslavia and Sierra Leone show about the effectiveness of peacekeeping operations? Realistically, could the UN have acted differently to more effectively resolve these conflicts? Were any of these lessons applied to resolve the conflict in Kosovo? What do the US-led actions in Bosnia, Kosovo, and in the war to overthrow Saddam Hussein (Second Gulf War) show about the limits of UN-led intervention? If a UN peacekeeping mission is dispatched to the Darfur region in Sudan, how effective would it be?

October 11: What is terrorism? Under what, if any, circumstances is terrorism a politically legitimate means of pursuing goals? What regimes and movements have used terrorism most intensively in recent decades, and why? Why do most regimes and movements employ other means to achieve their goals? Take an example of a regime or movement that uses terrorism and try to explain why. What are the legitimate responses to terrorism? How has the US responded to the September 11 attacks and what future steps are likely? Why? To what extent is the UN likely to play a useful role in combating terrorism? How does this explain the extent to which the US has sought to incorporate the UN in its own response?

October 18: What are the strengths and weaknesses of the proposed International Criminal Court (ICC)? What kinds of human rights abuses is the ICC best suited to punishing or deterring? How well have ICC prototypes functioned in the cases of Yugoslavia and Rwanda? How well would the ICC function in current conflicts, such as those in Chechnya or Sudan (Darfur)? What prosecutions have been or are

- underway at the ICC? Do the results so far support the ICC's proponents or its critics? Should the US ratify the ICC Treaty?
- Weeks 8-9 (10/25, 11/1): **MIDTERM (10/25)**. Disarmament and Arms Control. Human Rights. Environmental Conservation.
- Reading: Ziring, Riggs and Plano, chaps. 7, 9.
- Study questions:*
- Chap. 7: Many countries do not engage in arms races. To what extent do arms per se contribute to conflict? In what way are arms control agreements likely to contribute to conflict resolution? Go back and look at some of the conflicts. Try to explain why there are arms races, and how arms control agreements might contribute to their resolution. Why do some conflicts allow for arms control agreements but not others? Why are arms control agreements possible for some regions and weapons systems, but not for others?
- Chap. 9: How clearly does the UN Charter protect human rights? Why has the UN been so ineffective and hypocritical in defending human rights? What have been the main obstacles to agreement on the Law of the Sea Treaties? What types of conflicts have produced large refugee flows?
- Debate questions:*
- October 25: What difference did arms control agreements make during the Cold War? In what kinds of conflicts can they make a difference in the current period? What lessons can be learned from the experience with Iraq? Can arms control agreements help to defuse the conflicts between the Arab countries and Israel, or between India and Pakistan? Should the US sign the treaty banning landmines? Should the US have withdrawn from the Anti-Ballistic Missile (ABM) Treaty?
- November 1: Are human rights universal, or merely "Western" cultural constructs that should not be imposed in other regions? Are some human rights more fundamental than others? If some are, how much justification does this provide for restricting those deemed less fundamental? Do East Asian or Islamic cultures uphold different human rights standards, or are such assertions merely convenient excuses for authoritarian regimes interested in keeping power? In international diplomacy and at the UN in particular, when are human rights standards capable of being more than conveniently applied political rhetoric? The old UN Human Rights Commission was recently reorganized as the Human Rights Council. Has this new body performed any better? Why or why not? Does prosecution of leaders that violate international human rights laws help or hurt the prospects of resolving conflicts peacefully or with minimum loss of life? Under what circumstances, if any, should the US be willing to tolerate human rights violations by allies? Can the UN function effectively to improve human rights, or is it doomed to provide politically convenient rationalizations for human rights abuses?
- Weeks 10-11 (11/8, 11/15): **QUIZ (11/15)**. International Trade and Finance. Economic Development.
- Reading: Ziring, Riggs and Plano, chaps. 10-11; Feldstein; Fischer.
- Study questions:*
- Chaps. 10-11: What are the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs)? What about the MDGs looks like the product of a grand political compromise at the UN? What is the

purpose of the WTO? What rules and procedures does it use to achieve its purpose? How effective is it? Answer the same questions for the IMF and World Bank. Why does the IMF have more power than the World Bank? How are these independent, UN-affiliated economic institutions different from the Security Council and General Assembly? In what sense are they more or less effective? Why? What are some possible changes to their rules, and how would this affect how they work in practice? What are the anti-globalization protests since the end of the Cold War about? What are the interests of the various groups involved in the dispute?

*Debate questions:*

November 8: Should seabed mineral rights and mining be directly controlled by the General Assembly? Why or why not? Should the US sign the Kyoto Protocol on greenhouse gas emissions? Why or why not?

November 15: Would the IMF work better if it was reformed to work like the General Assembly or the Security Council? Why or why not? Should the IMF return to its original methods (Feldstein), or continue with its more ambitious recent approach, (Fischer)? Apply the arguments to specific examples, such as South Korea, Argentina, Brazil or Russia. What are the criticisms of anti-WTO and anti-IMF protest groups? What interest groups provide core support for the protest movements? What interest groups support the WTO and IMF? Why?

Week 12 (11/22): No class (Thanksgiving).

Week 13 (11/29): UN Security Council Simulation.

Reading: United Nations Model Security Council Simulation.

Weeks 14-15 (12/6, 12/13): Introduction to the European Union. Institutions. Economic and Military Policies. Enlarging the EU. Comparing the European Union and the United Nations.

Reading: Ross 2002, chaps. 3-4.

*Study questions:*

Why does the EU have greater powers in some economic policy areas than in others? Has the common Euro currency been a success? Why are the EU's military powers so weak? What impact has eastern enlargement had on EU economic and foreign policies? Can the UN ever be like the EU? Can the EU or similar regional organizations grow into competitors of the UN?

*Debate questions:*

How would stronger EU powers in foreign and military policy affect US national security and NATO? How would they affect UN collective security and peacekeeping activities? What do the Yugoslav wars show about the likely effectiveness and independence of the EU in undertaking joint military interventions? Choose an EU country and summarize how its mass media cover the costs and benefits of eastern enlargement. Is Turkey likely to be admitted into the EU? How about Ukraine and Russia?

**Required Readings on Reserve in the Library**

Bush, George W. (2002) "The National Security Strategy of the United States of America." Available at <<http://www.whitehouse.gov/nsc/print/nssall.html>>.

- Chandler, David. (2001) "Bosnia: The Democracy Paradox." *Current History* 100 (March), 114-119.
- Cohen, Lenard J. (2000) "Kosovo: 'Nobody's Country.'" *Current History* 99 (March), 117-123.
- Feldstein, Martin. (1998) "Refocusing the IMF," *Foreign Affairs* 77, 2 (March-April), 20-33.
- Fenske, John. (1993) "The West and 'The Problem from Hell,'" *Current History* 92 (November), 353-356.
- Fischer, Stanley. (1998) "In Defense of the IMF," *Foreign Affairs* 77, 4 (July-August), 103-6.
- Horowitz, Shale. (2005) *From Ethnic Conflict to Stillborn Reform: The Former Soviet Union and Yugoslavia*. College Station, TX: Texas A&M University Press.
- Lewis, Bernard. (2002) "The Revolt of Islam." *The New Yorker* (November 19). Available at <[http://www.newyorker.com/printable/?fact/011119fa\\_FACT2](http://www.newyorker.com/printable/?fact/011119fa_FACT2)>.
- Ross, George. (2002) "The European Union and the Future of European Politics." In Mark Kesselman et al., *European Politics in Transition* (4<sup>th</sup> ed.). Boston: Houghton Mifflin.
- Reno, William. (2001) "The Failure of Peacekeeping in Sierra Leone." *Current History* 100 (May), 219-225.
- Rubin, Barry. (2002) *The Tragedy of the Middle East*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Russett, Bruce and James S. Sutterlin. (1991) "The U.N. in a New World Order," *Foreign Affairs* 70 (Spring), 69-83.
- Tessitore, John and Susan Woolfson, eds. (1999) *A Global Agenda: Issues before the 54<sup>th</sup> General Assembly of the United Nations*. Lanham: Rowman and Littlefield.
- United Nations Model Security Council Simulation: simulation instructions; example of a resolution; overview of hypothetical conflict; diplomatic instructions for 15 Security Council member countries.

### **Useful Library Periodicals and Internet Research Resources**

*Annual Review of United Nations Affairs*

*Issues before the...Assembly of the United Nations*: substantive discussion of main issue areas.

*Report to Congress on Voting Practices in the United Nations*

*UN Chronicle*: quarterly report on areas of UN involvement and UN activities.

*UNDOC: United Nations Documents Index*

*Yearbook of the United Nations*: annual record of United Nations activities and resolutions.

Other Periodicals often discussing the UN: *American Journal of International Law*, *Ethics and International Affairs*, *Foreign Policy*, *Foreign Affairs*, *Global Governance*, *Human Rights Quarterly*, *International Peacekeeping*, *International Organization*, *International Affairs*, *International Journal*, *Journal of Conflict Resolution*, *Journal of Peace Research*, *Millennium*, *National Interest*, *Orbis*, *Survival*, *Washington Quarterly*, *World Policy Journal*.

United Nations Home Page <<http://www.un.org>>

UN organizations, committees, etc. <<http://www.unsystem.org>>

WTO Home Page <<http://www.wto.org>>

IMF Home Page <<http://www.imf.org>>

World Bank Home Page <<http://www.worldbank.org>>

International Criminal Court Home Page <<http://www.icc-cpi.int/php/show.php?id=home&l=EN>>

Freedom House Home Page <<http://www.freedomhouse.org>>

Eye on the UN Page <<http://www.eyeontheun.org/>>