An Introduction to the United Nations:
Theory, Institutions, Processes and Policies

➢ Instructor: Dr. Jean-Marc Coicaud
   • Email: jmcoicaud@rutgers.edu
➢ Meeting time: Monday 6:00-8:40

Course Description:
This course aims to guide students towards a comprehensive understanding of the foundations and operations of the United Nations. Students will develop and apply sound thinking to the normative and policy debates which surround the organization by examining the UN through its historical, theoretical and practical processes and dimensions. The course starts with an introduction to international multilateralism and the move of international society away from the League of Nations to the establishment of the UN. It then surveys the nature and influence of the UN—in conjunction with understanding its international legal underpinnings—as an institution for public policy and norm setting in the areas of security, human rights, peacekeeping and development. The course will also cover the internal workings of the UN as a bureaucracy and its operational and structural challenges.

Course Requirements:
This course is designed as a seminar and requires student attendance and participation as mandatory. Attendance is the responsibility of the student. If a student has an absence they are expected to contact the instructor prior to the missed class. If a student is absent more than three classes s/he will be unable to earn credits for the course. Students must read all assigned literature prior to each class and be prepared to discuss the materials both voluntarily and when called upon. Students will be graded based on the following:

I. Class Participation: Active participation by students is required in class. This includes contributions to in-class discussions and presentations. It will account for 30% of students final grade

II. A final research paper of 4,000 words is required to be submitted at the end of the semester on Monday December 1. It may address any topic covered in the course. Students must submit a draft of the paper prior to the final on Monday November 10.

*****
Session I: The session will introduce the relevance of the course for graduate students, highlight its main aspects and indicate how they will be tackled.

Overall presentation of the course

- Introduction of the students enrolled in the course
- Describing the overall logic of the course

Practical Issues
- Course participation
- Paper
- Grades

Session II: History of Multilateralism before the UN

Readings


*****

Session III: From the League of Nations to the United Nations

Readings

Session IV: The UN Charter: Principles and Institutions

Readings


- Alvarez, Jose “UN Treaty Making Conferences” in International Organizations as Lawmakers (Oxford University Press, 2005)

Session V: International Law and the UN

Readings

- Alvarez, Jose “Revisiting the Development of International Law Through the Political Organs of the UN” in International Organizations as Lawmakers (Oxford University Press, 2005)

- Cassese, Antonio International Law in a Divided World (Clarendon Press, 1990)

- Coicaud, Jean-Marc “Toward the International Rule of Law,” in Beyond the National Interest: The Future of UN Peacekeeping and Multilateralism in an Era of U.S. Primacy. (United States Institute of Peace, 2007)

Session VI: Collective Security: Institutions, Processes and Policies

Readings


*****

**Session VII: Development: Institutions and Policies**

*Readings*

• *Agenda for Development*, Report of the Secretary-General Boutros-Boutros Ghali, (United Nations, 1995)

• Chowdhury, and Sundaram (eds.) *Is Good Governance Good for Development?* The United Nations Series on Development (Bloomsbury Academic, 2012)

*****

**Session VIII: Human Rights: Institutions, Norms and Policies**

*Readings*


• Coicaud, Jean-Marc “The Structure of International Politics and the Dilemmas of Solidarity,” in *Beyond the National Interest: The Future of UN Peacekeeping and Multilateralism in an Era of U.S. Primacy*. (United States Institute of Peace, 2007)

• Teitel, Ruti G. *Humanity’s Law* (Oxford University Press, 2011)

*****
**Session IX: The Question of Democracy in the UN Context**

*Readings*


*****

**Session X: The Responsibility to Protect**

*Readings*


*****

**Session XI: The UN as a Bureaucracy**

*Readings*

- Coicaud, Jean-Marc “International Organizations as a Profession and Distribution of Power,” in Andrés Solimano (ed.), *The International Mobility of Talent: Types, Causes, and Development Impact* (Oxford University Press, 2007)
Session XII: The UN: Data and Global Policy

Readings


*****

Session XIII: Reforming the UN

Readings


- Weiss, Thomas G. What’s Wrong with the United Nations and How to Fix It (Polity Press, 2008)


*****

Session XIV: The Future of the UN

REVIEW