



PPE 3253
THE UNITED NATIONS IN WORLD POLITICS
ACADEMIC YEAR 2024/2025
AUTUMN SEMESTER

COURSE SYLLABUS

1. COURSE INFORMATION

Classes held on: S/T, 9:50-11:30
Room: UG-501
Credits: 4
Prerequisite(s): Introduction to International Relations

2. FACULTY INFORMATION

Faculty Name: Dr. Herman T. Salton
Title and Department: Visiting Associate Professor of International Relations, PPE
Email: herman.salton@auw.edu.bd
Office Location: UG-701
Office Hours: Sunday, 4:00-6:00

Qualifications: J.D. Trento, PhD Auckland (Int'l Law), MPhil Oxford (Int'l Relations), PhD Wales (IR)
Areas of Expertise: International Relations, International History, International Organizations
Profile: I am an Associate Professor based in Tokyo (Japan) and a Visiting Fellow at Oxford University (UK). Previously, I was an Associate with the Under-Secretary-General of the United Nations in New York City; a Senior Research Fellow at the Ralph Bunche Institute for International Studies, City University of New York (CUNY); a Visiting Scholar at Sciences-Po in Paris (France); and an officer at the Icelandic Human Rights Centre in Reykjavík (Iceland). I am fluent in English, French, Italian and Spanish, and I have published widely on the United Nations, international relations, on human rights. More info on www.hermansalton.net

3. TEXT AND OTHER COURSE MATERIALS

The main textbook for this course will be: Thomas G. Weiss and Sam Daws (eds), *The Oxford Handbook on the United Nations* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2018). Other readings and audio-video materials will be used as needed. Copies of the readings will always be shared with the students beforehand.

4. COURSE OBJECTIVES AND DESCRIPTION

This course introduces students to the role of the United Nations (UN) in world politics. It offers an overview of the Organization's development, assesses its position within International Relations (IR) theory, and explains its main functions and organs. Students will learn why and how the UN came into existence, what its aims are and who does what and why in New York. The course will also offer an overview of how the UN has responded to global issues, including international peace and security, humanitarian assistance, development, and democratization. The course aims to blend history and theory, therefore a long-term historical perspective is accompanied by case-studies and theoretical evaluations.

The course is divided into three parts. The first will focus on the historical and theoretical dimensions of international cooperation: it will overview the development of the international system beginning with the Concert of Europe, running through the League of Nations, and ending with the San Francisco Peace Conference which created the UN. It will ask why (and for whom) the UN was built and will prepare the groundwork for a study of the Organization in the rest of the course. It will also serve as an introduction to the place of international organization within the discipline of International Relations Theory (IRT).

The second and third part will focus on how the UN actually works. After an examination of its principal organs, we will analyze their key functions from 1945 until today. Emphasis will be on the changing nature of the UN through the prism of the evolving role of the Organization and its relationship with the superpowers, especially the USA. Topics covered include the Cold and Gulf war periods; the era of disillusionment in Bosnia, Somalia and Rwanda; the effects of 9/11; and the implications of the ongoing conflicts in Ukraine and in Gaza on the Organizations. Several case studies will also be considered.

5. LEARNING OUTCOMES

Student Learning Outcomes	Method of Assessment
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Understand the historical development of the United Nations; • Demonstrate basic knowledge of the UN's origins and functions; • Understand the relations between the main organs of the United Nations; • Assess the different theoretical approaches as they relate to the United Nations; • Evaluate criticism of the United Nations; • Analyse the validity of claims made in defence of the Organization; • Demonstrate a basic level of knowledge of contemporary issues and critically evaluate the effectiveness of the UN's responses; 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Participation • Group discussions • Presentations • Final paper

6. ATTENDANCE REQUIREMENT & GRADING POLICY

Students are expected to attend all classes. Missing classes will reduce the attendance and participation components of the final grade (see below). Students will be excused for health reasons only if they provide supporting documentation. Other reasons for excused absences will also require supporting evidence. As per AUW policy, missing more than 25% of classes may result in a student's failure in the course.

7. CONTACT WITH YOUR PROFESSOR

The best way to reach me is either by coming to my office—only during office hours--or via email. However, please note that I send/receive a high number of emails daily, so it may take some time to get back to you.

8. COURSE SCHEDULE

Week 1 | 1-3 September | Introductions

CLASS 1 —Introduction: Teacher, Students, Goals

Discussion Questions: Why him? Why us? Why here?

Required Readings: None

CLASS 2—Methodology: What, Why and How to Learn?

Discussion Question: What is the best approach to this course?

Required Readings: None

Week 2 | 8-10 September | Historical Roots

CLASS 1 —The United Nations

Discussion Question: What is the United Nations?

Required Readings: Chapter 1

CLASS 2— Origins of the United Nations

Discussion Questions: When and Why was the UN Created?

Required Readings: Chapter 2

Week 3 | 15-17 September | Theoretical Roots

CLASS 1 — Political Approaches

Discussion Question: Which IR Theory Best Explains the UN?

Required Readings: Chapter 3

CLASS 2— Normative Evolution

Discussion Questions: How and Why Does the UN Produce Norms?

Required Readings: Chapter 5

Week 4 | 22-24 September | Political Organs

CLASS 1 — General Assembly

Discussion Question: Is the General Assembly the 'Parliament of Man'?

Required Readings: Chapter 6

CLASS 2— Security Council

Discussion Questions: Is the Security Council Necessary?

Required Readings: Chapter 7

Week 5 | 29 September-1 October | Administrative Organs

CLASS 1 — Secretariat

Discussion Question: Why Does the UN Bureaucracy Matter?

Required Readings: Chapter 11

CLASS 2— Secretary-General

Discussion Questions: Is the UN Secretary-General a Secretary or a General?

Required Readings: Chapter 12

Week 6 | 6-8 October | Other Principal Organs

CLASS 1 — Economic and Social Council

Discussion Question: Do We Need ECOSOC?

Required Readings: Chapter 8

CLASS 2— International Court of Justice

Discussion Questions: Can we regard the ICJ as the 'World's court'?

Required Readings: Chapter 10

Week 7 | 13-15 October | No Classes [Durga Puja & Leave]

Week 8 | 20-22 October | Mid-Term Prep & Mid-Term Assessment

CLASS 1 — Preparation for Mid-Term

Discussion Question: TBC

Required Readings: TBC

CLASS 2— Mid-Term Assessment

Discussion Questions: TBC

Required Readings: TBC

Week 9 | 27-29 October | Human Rights and International Criminal Court

CLASS 1 — The United Nations and Human Rights

Discussion Question: Whose Rights Does the UN Protect?

Required Readings: Chapter 30

CLASS 2— International Criminal Court

Discussion Questions: What are the Main Obstacles to the Effectiveness of the ICC?

Required Readings: Chapter 31

Week 10 | 3-5 November | Women’s Rights and Human Security

CLASS 1 — Women’s Rights

Discussion Question: What is the Role of the UN in Protecting Gender Equality?

Required Readings: Chapter 33

CLASS 2— Human Security

Discussion Questions: Do We Need the Concept of Human Security?

Required Readings: Chapter 35

Week 11 | 10-12 November | Development and Global Health

CLASS 1 — The United Nations and Development

Discussion Question: Why Should the UN Stress Development Issues?

Required Readings: Chapter 36

CLASS 2— Global Health

Discussion Questions: What is the Role of the UN in Global Health?

Required Readings: Chapter 37

Week 12 | 17-19 November | Climate Change and Sustainable Development

CLASS 1 — Climate Change

Discussion Question: What Should the UN Do about Climate Change?

Required Readings: Chapter 39

CLASS 2— Sustainable Development

Discussion Questions: Is the Concept of Sustainable Development Helpful?

Required Readings: Chapter 42

Week 13 | 24-26 November | The Future of the United Nations

CLASS 1 — The Future of Multilateralism

Discussion Question: Are We in a Post-Western World?

Required Readings: Chapter 43

CLASS 2— The Future of the United Nations

Discussion Questions: Does the UN Have a Future?

Required Readings: Chapter 45

Week 14 | 1-3 December | Final Assessment Week

9. ASSESSMENT METHODS

- 1) Presentation (20%): This will be a short, 10-minute presentation that you will give to the class on any topic which is related to the UN. This is your chance to explain to the class a UN-related issue you find intriguing and/or problematic. After the presentation, there will be a Q&A (question & answer) session. Although some people are nervous about speaking in public, this is a key part of your development and the sooner you start, the better.

When: One presentation per student, beginning from Week 3. You will be able to sign up for a slot during Week 1 and 2.

- 2) Memo to the SG (30%): You are a Senior Advisor to the Secretary-General (SG) and a crisis has erupted. The SG has asked you to write a short (1,000 words max) memo setting out the contours of the problem and your recommendation for solving it. The nature of the crisis will be made known to you at the beginning of the course, so that you will have time to research and prepare. This will also count as part of your mid-term assessment.

Due: Mid-Term Assessment Week

- 3) Final Paper (40%) This 2 hour-long paper will include a multiple choice section and a short-answer section. The first part will test the breadth of your knowledge on the topics covered, while the second part will ask you to critically evaluate a pressing UN problem. To succeed in the first part, you will need to attend classes regularly and to read widely on the topics covered in the course. To succeed in the second part, you will also need to use your critical thinking skills and to apply in practice the concepts that we will cover theoretically. Samples of exam questions can be found below.

Date: Final Assessment Week

- 4) Attendance/Particip. (10%) Your attendance to class will be monitored and your active participation to class debates will be assessed on a regular basis.

Your performance will be assessed according to the AUW scale:

A+	4	97-100
A	4	93-96
A-	3.7	90-92
B+	3.3	87-89
B	3	83-86
B-	2.7	80-82
C+	2.3	77-79
C	2	73-76
C-	1.7	70-72

D+	1.3	67-69
D	1.0	60-66
F	0	0-59

More specifically, the criteria used for grading the final paper are as follows:

- Whether there is evidence of reading
- Whether it shows knowledge and understanding of the relevant theories and concepts
- Whether it brings tools of analysis from politics, philosophy, and economics
- Critical analysis
- Clarity of writing
- Accurate referencing; for references and bibliographies use any of the standard referencing systems

We will do preparations for essay-writing in class. In general, the sooner you start working on your paper(s), the better the result (and grade!) will be. The golden rule is: don't leave it to the last minute!

10. KEY DATES & DEADLINES

Presentations:	TBC
Memo to the Secretary-General:	Mid-Term Assessment Week
Security Council Simulation:	TBC
Final Exam:	Final Assessment Week

11. PLAGIARISM & ACADEMIC INTEGRITY

At university, plagiarism is theft. Because of this, I take a zero-tolerance approach to it, so don't cheat! I will find out, you will receive a failing grade, and you also will be in my very own blacklist, which means I won't

be able to write any reference letter for you. Remember: ZERO tolerance. It is better to submit a poor paper than a plagiarized one; the former may give you low grades, but the latter will give you a fail.

Plagiarism is intentionally or unintentionally taking credit for another's words or ideas. You may not plagiarize in your academic work, and you must adhere to the following:

- When you use someone else's words (whether they are from a distinguished author or a classmate's paper), place the words you have copied in quotation marks and provide the appropriate citation of author and source. A good guideline to use to avoid plagiarism is to ensure quotes of three or more sequential words from someone else are put in quotation marks.
- If you paraphrase (reword) another person's ideas, you must also cite the source. Paraphrasing must involve changing the words and sentence structure of the original source. Cite materials you copy or paraphrase from the internet, even if the author is not identified. If you are not sure: cite it!

Other Forms of Academic Dishonesty

1. Making up references, quoting wrong sources, etc.
2. Falsifying data.



3. Misrepresenting your situation to be excused from academic work.
4. Submitting the same paper in more than one class.
5. Informing a student in a later class about questions on tests or quizzes.
6. Misrepresenting your academic work or qualifications in any way.

Full details about plagiarism, academic dishonesty and penalties are available in the Academic Honor Code in the Academic Bulletin.

12. STRATEGIES TO PREVENT PLAGIARISM & VIOLATIONS OF ACADEMIC INTEGRITY

I use anti-plagiarism software, but typically I don't need to. We can see plagiarism from miles off!

13. CLASS BEHAVIOUR

My assumption is that each student in this class is motivated, intelligent and considerate of the opinions of others, and my expectations of you reflect this assumption.

I would like to ask you to please come to class on time and participate while you are here. Of course, sometimes circumstances prevent your timely arrival—in these cases, please enter quietly and sit by the door. If you need to leave early, please sit by the door and leave quietly. If you will frequently need to arrive late or leave early, please speak to me about it. I am committed to starting and ending every class exactly on time, so please do not prepare to leave before I have ended class. It is disrupting to your colleagues and to myself. Also, please do not to read or sleep in class nor talk to students around you.

Please also be sure to turn off all phones and beepers. It is not appropriate to leave class in order to answer a call. If you feel that you have extenuating circumstances (e.g., a work or family emergency), please see me before class to discuss it. I encourage you to stop me during class if you have a question or relevant comment. If you feel uncomfortable talking during class, please approach me after class or through email. It is my job to help you understand the material and I will do what I can to make sure that you do.

14. GRADING RUBRICS

Grades are important and you should strive to obtain the best possible grade. However, the way you study is even more important. In this course, factual knowledge is essential but insufficient to achieve good results; critical thinking is what will make the difference not only in terms of grades but also—and more importantly—in terms of your personal development.

Consequently, the mere regurgitation and memorization of facts will not take you far—only the critical assessment of those facts will. What I am interested in is your approach to a certain problem. But you will only be able to acquire this analytical capacity if you come to class, read widely and participate in the discussions. Remember: analytical reasoning without facts is impossible, but facts without any analytical framework are useless! So both are needed and will be required of you.

The rubrics used to assess your work are reproduced in the following page.

Written Work				
Criteria	A	B	C	D
Content	Thorough understanding of material used; use of evidence; convincing argument; clear separation between others' and one's opinion.	Some uncertainty regarding the material used; good argument but insufficiently supported.	Vague understanding of material used; unclear argument with no support; unclear purpose of the essay.	Wrong understanding of material used; no argument.
Writing style & structure	Clear structure of the essay overall and of separate paragraphs; sentences are clear and to the point; no unnecessary words; emotionally neutral language; accurate spelling and grammar.	Mostly clearly structured with a few minor "jumps" in the flow of arguments; few unnecessary words and/or sentences that do not directly relate to the topic; some spelling or grammatical errors.	Poorly structured; paragraphs consisting of one sentence and/or one-page paragraphs with no lead sentences; frequent use of emotionally loaded and/or unnecessary words; significant spelling and grammatical errors.	Unstructured text; long, complex, unclear and grammatically incorrect sentences; short non-sentences; many spelling mistakes
References	All references done correctly and consistently.	Most references done correctly with minor mistakes that allow the reader to identify the source regardless. Minor inconsistencies.	Some info on the source provided in an inconsistent manner; some essential information missing or misplaced.	Very limited and/or incorrect information that makes it very hard to identify the sources used.

Discussions and Class Participation

Criteria	A	B	C	D
Contribution to class discussion	Well prepared for class; active participation in class discussions; meaningful contributions by linking assigned readings to other knowledge; engagement with class; often shows critical thinking.	Prepared for class; average participation in class discussions; contributions mostly based on simple re-statement of material from assigned readings; rarely engages in direct discussions; sometimes shows critical thinking;	Most of readings done in advance, but the information is not very internalized; very limited participation in class discussion; rarely demonstrates critical thinking.	Readings rarely done in advance; no participation in class discussions; no critical thinking.