GVPT 606: Introduction to International Institutions and International Law

Spring 2023
Tuesdays 3:30 – 6:15 pm
Tydings Hall 1132

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Office hours: Tuesdays 2-3 pm
or by appointment (in person or online)

Course Description

This course examines major theoretical approaches and empirical studies of international law and institutions. Questions related to the design, function, and reform of international institutions, state compliance with international laws, cooperation between states through international institutions, the effectiveness of international humanitarian law, and the interaction between international and domestic politics are covered. The last portion of the course will focus on research related to select international economic, security, and legal institutions. After completing this seminar, students will develop an improved understanding of central debates in the international institutions literature and the primary empirical findings from quantitative studies.

Learning Outcomes

After successfully completing this course:

1) Students will be able to describe and critically analyze the strengths and weaknesses of existing theories and empirical analyses of questions related to the design and function of international institutions and their effect on state behavior in the international system.

2) Students will be able to assess the future research and policy implications of existing academic scholarship on international law and institutions.

3) Students will be able to develop an informed understanding of the effectiveness of international institutions based on current political science research and apply this understanding to formulate relevant policy recommendations.

4) Students will be able to develop a systematic approach to answering questions regarding international cooperation between states through international institutions and will be able to apply these skills in their future research and/or policy analysis.
Course Structure

We will meet in person every Tuesday at 3:30 pm in Tydings Hall (1132). Each week, we will discuss the theoretical arguments and quantitative analyses in the assigned readings. You are expected to read assigned readings before the class begins and participate in the discussion. Your participation in the discussion is critical to your success in the class, which will constitute 25% of your grade (see attendance policy). I will announce changes to the class structure via ELMS.

Required Resources

All reading material will be posted on the course ELMS page (elms.umd.edu). All material is also available through the University Library (https://www.lib.umd.edu).

Assignments

1) Participation and Engagement (25%)

Your grade will be based on your attendance and participation in class discussions. You are expected to discuss assigned readings, answer discussion questions, and remain engaged during the class. You should be able to explain the assumptions and logic of theoretical arguments in the assigned readings, discuss the strengths and weaknesses of each article, and their place within the larger literature. I will post a sample of discussion questions on Mondays on the course ELMS page. In case of an emergency that prevents you from attending the class, you can submit a written assignment. You can use this option twice during the semester (see attendance policy).

2) Two short papers (50%)

You will write two short papers that are each 4-5 pages long (double-spaced), excluding references. More detailed information on each paper will be posted on the course ELMS page (elms.umd.edu).

   a. Paper 1: Main questions about international institutions (25%) Due March 14, 2023

Pick one of the research questions covered in Week 2 – 6. You will then review the relevant literature on this question. This review should not be limited to the articles covered in the syllabus. In your review, you will compare the different theoretical approaches to answer the research question you picked. Your comparison should include a discussion of different theoretical assumptions in each article, and how these articles contribute to our understanding of international institutions and how they function. The last portion of your paper should provide a discussion of the gaps in the literature. In this portion, you can either discuss a current global governance problem and how the current literature does not fully address it or discuss how the literature is lacking in explaining how a specific international institution functions.

   b. Paper 2: Effectiveness and Compliance (25%) Due April 21, 2023

You will pick a research question related to the effectiveness of, or compliance with, international institutions. You will then review the relevant literature on this question. This review should not be limited to the articles covered in the syllabus. In your review, you will
compare the different theoretical approaches to answer the research question you picked. Your review should largely follow the format from Paper 1. In the last portion of your paper, you will select one international organization that you are interested in and discuss how existing political science research helps us understand its effectiveness in a specific issue area within its mandate, or member states’ level of compliance with the organization's rules.

3) Take-home Final exam (25%) **Due May 19, 2023**

At the end of this course, you will complete a take-home final exam. Exam questions will require you to compare different arguments and assumptions in the existing literature, critically analyze findings, and discuss policy implications. You will answer questions by writing short essays and including *in-text citations to relevant course material*. Take-home final questions will be provided on May 19 at 8 am and will be due on the same day (May 19) at 5 pm. More detailed information on the take-home final exam will be posted on the course ELMS page ([elms.umd.edu](http://elms.umd.edu)).

This exam is open book. You can refer to your notes, and review/re-read relevant literature as you draft your essays. Using AI tools such as ChatGPT to answer final exam questions (in part or in full) is not allowed. I will refer any suspected use of these tools to the Office of Student Conduct for investigation.

**Grading Scale**

Grades will be based on a straight scale.

- 98 – 100 = A +
- 94 – 97 = A
- 90 – 93 = A -
- 87 – 89 = B +
- 84 – 86 = B
- 80 – 83 = B -
- 77 – 79 = C +
- 74 – 76 = C
- 70 – 73 = C -
- 67 – 69 = D +
- 64 – 66 = D
- 60 – 63 = D -
- 59 & below = F

**Course Policies**

**Attendance**

Attendance in each class session is required. If you are not able to attend the class for reasons that align with university policy for excused absences, please let me know as soon as possible. If you are not able to attend the class for any reason, you will be required to submit a written make-up assignment reviewing assigned readings. Please note that this assignment should be submitted within a week of your absence (unless we agree on an alternative deadline). You can use this option twice during the semester. Any medically necessary absences must be corroborated with documentation which may be submitted within a week of your absence. If you need more than two weeks due to severe illness/emergency, please contact me for alternative arrangements.
Grading
All assessment scores will be posted on the course ELMS page. I am happy to discuss any of your grades with you and correct any mistakes if identified. Any formal grade disputes must be submitted in writing and within one week of receiving the grade. I will review your request and schedule a time to discuss it.

Late Assignments and Extensions
To request an extension for an assignment you should contact me at least 24 hours prior to the due date of the assignment (except in cases of emergency). Late assignments will be penalized 10 percent per day unless you contact me beforehand. Please plan to have your papers submitted before the scheduled deadline to avoid running into technical issues resulting in late submission.

Communication with Instructor
Email: If you need to reach out and communicate with me, please email me at dci@umd.edu. Please DO NOT email me with questions that are easily found in the syllabus or on ELMS (e.g., When is this assignment due? How much is it worth? etc.) but please DO reach out about personal, academic, and intellectual concerns/questions.

ELMS: I will send IMPORTANT announcements via ELMS. Make sure that your email & announcement notifications (including changes in assignments and/or due dates) are enabled in ELMS so you do not miss any messages. You are responsible for checking your email and Canvas/ELMS inbox with regular frequency.

Campus – Wide Policies
It is our shared responsibility to know and abide by the University of Maryland’s policies that relate to all courses, which include topics like:

- Academic integrity
- Student and instructor conduct
- Accessibility and accommodations
- Attendance and excused absences
- Grades and appeals
- Copyright and intellectual property

Please visit www.ugst.umd.edu/courselatedpolicies.html for the Office of Undergraduate Studies’ full list of campus-wide policies and follow up with me if you have questions.

Statement on Diversity and Inclusivity
The Government and Politics department deeply values the voices and perspectives of all people. We are committed to having a diverse department that recognizes and appreciates the differences in race, ethnicity, culture, gender, sexual orientation, religion, age, abilities, class, nationality, and other factors. Our department prioritizes diversity and seeks to foster a diverse community reflected in its faculty, staff, and students.
In this class, students are invited to share their thoughts and a diversity of opinions is welcome. Respectful communication is expected, even when expressing differing perspectives. Supporting one’s statement with research findings is encouraged. In accordance with free speech statues, speech that contains threats of violence is prohibited.

**Reporting Racism and Other Forms of Hate and Bias**

If you experience racism or other forms of bias in this class or any GVPT course, I encourage you to do at least one of the following:

- Please report the experience to me.
- Report the experience to David Cunningham, the GVPT Director of Undergraduate Studies at dacunnin@umd.edu
- Report the experience to the GVPT Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion committee, led by Professor Antoine Banks at abanks12@umd.edu

Please also report all incidents of hate and bias to the Office of Diversity and Inclusion at [https://diversity.umd.edu/bias/](https://diversity.umd.edu/bias/).

**Names/Pronouns and Self-Identifications**

The University of Maryland recognizes the importance of a diverse student body, and we are committed to fostering inclusive and equitable classroom environments. I invite you, if you wish, to tell us how you want to be referred to both in terms of your name and your pronouns (he/him, she/her, they/them, etc.). The pronouns someone indicates are not necessarily indicative of their gender identity. Visit [trans.umd.edu](http://trans.umd.edu) to learn more.

Additionally, how you identify in terms of your gender, race, class, sexuality, religion, and dis/ability, among all aspects of your identity, is your choice whether to disclose (e.g., should it come up in classroom conversation about our experiences and perspectives) and should be self-identified, not presumed or imposed. I will do my best to address and refer to all students accordingly, and I ask you to do the same for your fellow Terps.

**Readings**

**Note:** This is a tentative schedule, and subject to change as necessary – monitor the course ELMS page for current deadlines. In the unlikely event of a prolonged university closing, or an extended absence from the university, adjustments to the course schedule, deadlines, and assignments will be made based on the duration of the closing and the specific dates missed.

**Week 1 – Introduction: What are international institutions? (January 31, 2023)**


**Week 2 – Why do states work through international institutions? (February 7, 2023)**


**Week 3 – Design of international institutions (February 14, 2023)**


**Week 4 – International institutions as actors (February 21, 2023)**


**Week 5 – When do international institutions change? (February 28, 2023)**


**Week 6 – When do international institutions die? (March 7, 2023)**


**Week 7 – No class (March 14, 2023)**

Dr. Cil will be attending International Studies Association Annual Convention in Montréal, Canada.
Week 8 – Spring Break (March 21, 2023)

Week 9 – Compliance with international institutions (March 28, 2023)


Week 10 – Effectiveness of international institutions (April 4, 2023)


Week 11 – Role of international law in IR (April 11, 2023)


**Week 12 – Human rights and international humanitarian law (April 18, 2023)**


**Week 13 – International institutions and domestic politics (April 25, 2023)**


**Week 14 – Economic and Security institutions (May 2, 2023)**


**Week 15 – International courts (May 9, 2023)**


