

**Government and Politics (GVPT) 406**  
**International Organizations**  
**University of Maryland**  
**Spring 2017**

Room: Tydings 1114  
Time: Tuesday 2:00-4:45pm

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Office Hours: Wednesday 3:15-5:00pm

**Course Description:**

This course examines the central actors, structures, and processes that are part of contemporary international organizations (IOs). The course is intended to provide you with a solid understanding of various international organizations, as well as the theoretical literatures and debates concerning those organizations. In light of recent developments such as Brexit and comments critical of IOs from President Trump, this semester we will emphasize the role that IOs have played in promoting global peace and security since World War II as well as the current backlash against them.

We begin by considering the different types of international organizations, their development over time, and their current role in the international system. In doing so, we also will situate IOs within broader debates in the study of international relations. We then study in greater depth the development of, and debates concerning, prominent organizations such as the United Nations, European Union, and North Atlantic Treaty Organization. We also will investigate important dynamics within these and other IOs, such as decision-making, financing, and membership. We then consider the myriad roles that international organizations play in advancing international peace and security, and in promoting economic cooperation and development. The course concludes with an investigation of the role of international organizations in areas such as international justice and the promotion of human rights.

**Learning Objectives:**

The learning objectives for this course include: 1) the development of critical reading and thinking skills, especially the integration of theoretical argumentation and empirical evidence; 2) knowledge of major theories and debates regarding international organizations, as well as international relations more generally; and 3) the development of research and analytical-writing skills for use in the behavioral and social sciences.

**Required Readings:**

It is important that you complete all assigned readings in advance of the corresponding class meeting. Completing assigned readings on time is an essential ingredient for success in this course.

The primary required book for this course is:

Margaret P. Karns, Karen A. Mingst, and Kendall W. Stiles, *International Organizations*, 3<sup>rd</sup> edition. Boulder: Lynne Rienner, 2015.

We also will read most of a second book:

Linda Fasulo, *An Insider's Guide to the UN*, 3<sup>rd</sup> edition. New Haven: Yale University Press, 2015.

In addition to the above two books, there are other assigned readings drawn from academic journals, periodicals, and websites. All of these readings can be accessed via the ELMS website for this course (<https://myelms.umd.edu/login>). Those readings followed by “CR” are located in the “Course Reserves” section of our ELMS site, and those followed by “M” are linked directly from the “Modules” section of the ELMS site. Throughout the semester I will add additional short readings – often newspaper articles – as global events change and particular IOs become more noteworthy.

In addition to the reserve readings, on the ELMS site I also will post the syllabus, handouts, assignments, other important documents, as well as announcements.

### **Course Requirements:**

The primary requirements for the course are as follows:

- 1) Participation: You are expected to attend class regularly and to participate actively. You will be given an overall grade for attendance and participation that is based upon your attendance record and the degree to which you contribute to classroom activities and discussions.
- 2) Short Assignments and Quizzes: Throughout the semester you will be given a handful of short assignments, which may include things such as reaction papers, short research reports, or the preparation of discussion questions. These assignments are straightforward and not particularly time consuming, and thus they will be assigned the week before they are due. In addition, you also will take a few quizzes – at the beginning of class – which will emphasize your comprehension of assigned readings. These quizzes may be announced (the week before) or unannounced.
- 3) Research Paper: You will be asked to write a research paper of approximately 15 pages in length. The paper will be due during the week of May 8. I will provide you with a handout describing the paper assignment in detail by late February. At that time I also will provide you with additional information about potential research resources and guidance on choosing a topic.
- 4) Exams: You will take both a midterm and final exam. Both exams will consist primarily of a series of essay questions, but also may include some multiple choice, matching, or short answer questions. Additional details regarding exam content and format will be provided in class approximately two weeks before each exam.

## **Grading:**

Your final course grade will be calculated according to the following breakdown:

Attendance and Participation – 12.5%  
Short Assignments and Quizzes – 12.5%  
Research Paper – 25%  
Midterm Exam – 25%  
Final Exam – 25%

I will use the + and – grading scale when grading major assignments (papers and exams). Grades will be calculated according to a standard scale, in which 97 and above is an A+, 93-97 is an A, 90-93 is an A-, 87-90 is a B+, 83-87 is a B, 80-83 is a B-, 77-80 is a C+, 73-77 is a C, 70-73 is a C-, 67-70 is a D+, 63-67 is a D, 60-63 is a D-, and below 60 is a F. Grades will not be curved.

If you have a question about a particular grade you receive, you first should meet with me to gain further information and clarification about why you received the grade you did. In the rare event that you believe the grade you received was unwarranted, you then should submit to me a written statement that details your complaint, along with the original copy of the graded work. The grade you receive from the re-grade will be final, regardless of whether the revised grade is higher or lower than the original grade. All grade inquires and requests for a re-grade must be made at least 48 hours—but no more than two weeks—after an assignment, paper, or exam has been returned to you.

## **Academic Integrity:**

Cheating and plagiarism are absolutely unacceptable. I will employ various methods and techniques to detect cases of academic dishonesty. To be perfectly honest, in most cases it is typically quite easy for instructors to spot cheating and plagiarism. If you are unsure as to what constitutes plagiarism, please ask me. When in doubt, always cite the source you have consulted!

The university has a detailed code of academic integrity, which will apply to this course. You should familiarize yourself with this code, which is available at:

<http://www.president.umd.edu/policies/iii100a.html>

## **Accommodation of Disabilities:**

If you have any special condition that requires accommodation, please contact the Disability Support Service (DSS) office to obtain a letter of accommodation. I will make every effort to work with you to meet any special needs, provided that you have given me the proper DSS documentation. Documentation should be provided no later than February 28.

## **Professionalism:**

Once class has begun, please refrain from texting, emailing, or browsing the Web, since such activities are distracting and disrespectful. Laptops may be used for note-taking purposes only. I reserve the right to revoke permission for electronic devices in the classroom if this policy is abused.

## **Medical Absences:**

Please note that the University has a policy regarding medical absences, which allows you to present a self-signed note and be excused for missing a single class meeting per semester. You must submit to me a letter that includes the date of the illness, a statement that the information you have provided is true, and your signature. This policy does NOT apply to absences on days when there is an exam or major assignment due. If you have a valid medical excuse for missing a major grading event, you must provide me with detailed written documentation from the Campus Health Center or another health care provider.

## **Important Themes and Questions in the Study of International Organizations**

Here are some ongoing, important themes that you should reflect upon throughout the course of the semester. We will address many of these themes on a regular basis.

### **Do International Organizations (IOs) “Matter”?**

- Do IOs affect or constrain governments in certain ways?
- Through what mechanisms can IOs influence the decision-making calculus of politicians and other national political actors?

### **The “Role” of IOs (the “Value Added” by IOs)**

- Why would states choose to create or work through an IO?
- What “function” do IOs perform for governments and politicians?
- What things might IOs be able to do more effectively than individual states, or groups of states acting on an *ad hoc* basis?

### **Independence**

- Do formal international governmental organizations function independently from member-state governments?
- Is there a “principal-agent” problem when it comes to states and IOs?

### **Democratic Deficit**

- How are IOs accountable to governments?
- How are IOs accountable to citizens?

### **State Influence**

- Which states have the most influence within IOs?
- What mechanisms given them such influence?

### **Power**

- Do IOs codify or reinforce the power of large states?
- Are they a reflection of existing power (im)balances in the world?
- Do IOs enhance the power of smaller states and “level the playing field,” so to speak?

### **Asymmetry**

- Do certain states bear a disproportionate burden for establishing and/or supporting the efforts of IOs?
- Are some states more motivated to play a larger role in IOs and/or to work through IOs to solve global problems?
- Which types of states tend to be most supportive of IOs?

### **Exacerbate or Resolve?**

- Do IOs tend to resolve or exacerbate international conflicts?
- Which IO strategies for resolving disputes tend to be the most effective?

### **Evolution and Change**

- By what process do IOs change or adapt after they have been established?

### **Issue-Areas**

- Are there significant differences in the structure, importance, and effectiveness of international organizations across different issue-areas in international relations?

### **Global or Regional**

- Do global and regional IOs complement one another or compete with one another?

### **Too Harsh or Too Lenient?**

- In general, are citizens, politicians and commentators unfairly critical of international organizations, or are they overly optimistic and blindly faithful to international organizations?

### **Biased Conclusions**

- Are IOs typically asked to perform “easy” tasks, which might lead us to give them too much credit for their successes?
- Or, are IOs typically called upon to perform difficult tasks in abnormal or difficult circumstances, in which case we may be too harsh in judging their effectiveness and performance?

### **Expand our Definition?**

- Should we be thinking more in terms of “global civil society” and “transnational actors” instead of thinking narrowly about (formal) international governmental organizations?

## Course Schedule

CR – the reading is available through Course Reserves (via ELMS)

M – the reading is available via “Modules” on ELMS, either directly or through a weblink

### **January 31: Introduction and Course Overview IOs in Historical and Contemporary Context**

Karns, Mingst, Stiles, pp. 1-41, 75-108 (chs. 1 and 3)

### **February 7: Theoretical Approaches to IOs**

Karns, Mingst, Stiles, pp. 43-72 (ch. 2)

Abbott and Snidal, “Why States Act Through Formal International Organizations.” *Journal of Conflict Resolution* 42:1 (February 1998), pp. 3-32 (CR)

Barnett and Finnemore, “The Politics, Power, and Pathologies of International Organizations,” *International Organization* 53:4 (Autumn 1999), pp. 699-727 (CR)

### **February 14: The United Nations System**

Patrick, “World Weary: Evaluating the UN at 70,” short online *Foreign Affairs* reading (M)

Fasulo, pp. 1-54, 79-110, 171-187, 208-219, 236-243 (chs. 1-5, 7-8, 12-13, 15, 18)

Karns, Mingst, Stiles, pp. 109-159 (ch. 4)

### **February 21: UN Security Council State Power and the UN**

Fasulo, pp. 55-78 (ch. 6)

Thompson, “Coercion through IOs: The Security Council and the Logic of Information Transmission.” *International Organization* 61:1 (Winter 2006), pp. 1-34 (CR)

### **February 28: European Union**

Karns, Mingst, Stiles, pp. 177-195, 413-417

Matthijs, “Europe after Brexit: A Less Perfect Union.” *Foreign Affairs* 96:1 (January/February 2017), pp. 85-95 (CR)

Menon and Salter, “Brexit: Initial Reflections.” *International Affairs* 92:6 (November/December 2016), pp. 1297-1318 (CR)

**March 7: NATO  
Regional Organizations**

Karns, Mingst, Stiles pp. 161-176, 195-237 (rest of ch. 5)

Brzezinski, "An Agenda for NATO: Toward a Global Security Web," *Foreign Affairs* 88:5 (Sept-Oct 2009), pp. 2-21 (CR)

Mattelaer, "Revising the Principles of NATO Burden-Sharing," *Parameters: The U.S. Army War College Quarterly* 46:1 (Spring 2016), pp. 25-33 (M)

**March 14: MIDTERM EXAM** (first half of class)  
**Watch film "Outbreak" on the Ebola crisis** (second half of class)

Sometime after the March 14 class, read:

Garrett, "Ebola's Lessons: How the WHO Mishandled the Crisis." *Foreign Affairs* 94:5 (Sept/Oct 2015), pp. 80-107 (CR)

**March 21: NO CLASS – Spring Break**

**March 28: Membership, Voting, and Financing**

Fasulo, pp. 229-235, 244-253 (chs. 17, 19)

[Karns, Mingst, Stiles, review pp. 117-129, 154-158]

Short pieces on the recent selection of new UNSC Antonio Guterres, from the *New York Times*, *Politico*, and *Thompson-Reuters* (M)

Weisbrot and Johnston, "Vote Share Reform at the IMF: Will it Make a Difference?" *Center for Economic and Policy Research* (April 2016), pp. 1-7 (M)

**April 4: The Bretton Woods Institutions (WTO, IMF, World Bank)**

Karns, Mingst, Stiles, pp. 379-422 (ch. 8)

Drezner, "The Irony of Global Economic Governance: The System Worked." *Council on Foreign Relations Working Paper*, (October 2012), pp. 1-18 (M)

Chin, "The Asian Infrastructure and Investment Bank: Governance Innovation and Prospects." *Global Governance* 22 (2016), pp. 11-25 (CR)

### **April 11: IOs and Economic Development**

Karns, Mingst, Stiles, pp. 425-465 (ch. 9)

Fasulo, pp. 188-207 (ch. 14)

Winters and Gould, "Betting on Oil: The World Bank's Attempt to Promote Accountability in Chad," *Global Governance* 17 (2011), pp. 229-245 (CR)

Mallaby, "NGOs: Fighting Poverty, Hurting the Poor," *Foreign Policy* (September 1, 2004), pp. 1-7 (M)

### **April 18: No in-class meeting (Assignment TBA)**

### **April 25: IOs and Threats to Global Peace and Security**

Karns, Mingst, Stiles, pp. 279-303, 308-317, 353-377 (parts of ch. 7); [review 104-108]

Fasulo, pp. 134-152 (ch. 10)

### **May 2: IOs and Peacekeeping and Humanitarian Intervention**

Karns, Mingst, Stiles, pp. 303-308, 317-353 (rest of ch. 7)

Fasulo, 111-133 (ch. 9)

Western and Goldstein, "Humanitarian Intervention Comes of Age," *Foreign Affairs* 90:6 (Nov-Dec 2011), pp. 48-59 (CR)

Valentino, "The True Costs of Humanitarian Intervention," *Foreign Affairs* 90:6 (Nov-Dec 2011), pp. 60-73 (CR)

### **May 9: IOs and Human Rights The International Criminal Court**

Karns, Mingst, Stiles, pp. 467-526 (ch. 10)

Vilmer, "The African Union and the International Criminal Court: Counteracting the Crisis." *International Affairs*, 92:6 (November 2016), 1319-1342 (CR)

(optional) Fasulo, pp. 153-170 (ch. 11)

**FINAL EXAM:**

**Wednesday, May 17th  
10:30-12:30pm**