INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATION

Political Science 447/547
Portland State University, Fall 2017

David Kinsella
Department of Political Science
Hatfield School of Government
Office: Urban Center Building, room 650L
503.725.3035 | kinsella@pdx.edu
Office Hours: Monday & Wednesday 1:00-2:00

Description

The international system has been called an “anarchical society”—anarchic because there is no authority above that of individual states; a society because state behavior is nevertheless influenced by norms, laws, and institutions that states create for themselves. Yet among scholars there is a great deal of debate over the real importance of international rules and institutions and the degree of order they bring to the society of states. And among policymakers in the United States and elsewhere there is disagreement over the extent to which governments ought to be constrained by rules and institutions in the conduct of their foreign policies.

The course examines the myriad ways in which states have brought order and organization to their international conduct, with special emphasis on the functions and activities of formal international institutions. We will cover general purpose organizations, like the UN and (increasingly) the EU, as well as those with more specialized functions, like NATO (security), the WTO (trade), the IMF and World Bank (finance and development), WHO (global health), and the ICC (criminal justice). These organizations are the creations of states, but we will also look at nongovernmental organizations, like Greenpeace and Human Rights Watch. Such organizations, as well as many less formal transnational networks, are the creations of private actors, but designed to serve the global public good.

Learning Objectives

The general objective of this course is to develop the student’s capacity to critically examine problems in international organization and global governance, consider the range of possible solutions to those problems, and communicate the results of this analysis to others. These objectives are to be accomplished by exposing students to relevant literature from the field of international organization. By the end of the term, students should be able to:

- show a familiarity with a wide range of substantive issues in international organization;
- understand the basic functioning of the most important institutions in international society;
- articulate coherent positions on key normative debates arising from the quest for global governance;
• design and execute a research project on some problem related to international organization, and communicate the findings to others.

Requirements and Evaluation

Undergraduate course grades are based on a midterm exam (40%) and either a final exam or a term paper (60%). The exams consist of questions requiring both short answers and longer essays. The term paper requires a significant research effort and a 15-20 page analysis. Graduate course grades are based in a midterm exam and a term paper of 25-30 pages. Graduate students may also meet separately throughout the term (dates and time to be arranged) to discuss readings and research projects. For all students, attendance is required and participation in class discussion is expected.

Readings

All assigned readings are available online; there are no books to purchase for the course. Unless the reading includes a link to a web or D2L file, it is available online from the PSU library. You must retrieve these readings (all journal articles) by logging into the PSU library website and locating and downloading the article from one of the library’s full-content subscription services.

In addition to the assigned readings, you should be reading, on a regular basis, the New York Times, the Washington Post, or some other newspaper with thorough international coverage. Your performance in the course will reflect your familiarity with current issues of international organization and governance, and not just an understanding of lecture material and course readings.

Conduct and Courtesy

Students are responsible for being familiar with the PSU Student Code of Conduct, especially the section concerning academic misconduct -- that is, plagiarism or other forms of academic dishonesty. If you are unsure of the definition or consequences of academic misconduct, consult your instructor.

Because they are distracting to others, cell phones (voice or text) and MP3 players may not be used during lecture and should be turned off at the start of class. Laptops and tablets may be used to take notes, but not for email, web browsing, or social media. Electronic devices may not be used to photograph, video, or stream course lectures or discussion, but lectures may be audio recorded with permission of the instructor.

Student Resources

If you have, or think you may have, a disability that may affect your work in this class and feel you need accommodations, contact the Disability Resource Center to schedule an appointment and initiate a conversation about reasonable accommodations. The C.A.R.E. Team, hosted by the Dean of Student Life, is available to consult with you regarding any issues of students in distress, including sexual misconduct.
WEEKLY SCHEDULE and ASSIGNMENTS

25-29 Sep  | Sovereignty and Global Governance


2-6 Oct  | Global IOs: The League of Nations and the UN

- slides


- slides


18-20 Oct  | NATO and European Security

- slides
23-27 Oct  Regional Organization and Integration: European Union

- slides

30 Oct  MIDTERM EXAM

1, 3 Nov  Economic Governance: The WTO


6, 8 Nov  International Development: Bretton Woods Institutions


13-17 Nov  Law and Justice: International Courts and Humanitarianism

- slides
20, 22 Nov  Global Environmental and Health Regimes


27 Nov – 1 Dec  Global Civil Society

- Margaret E. Keck and Kathryn Sikkink, Activists Beyond Borders: Advocacy Networks in International Politics (Cornell University Press, 1998), chap. 1. (D2L)
- slides

7 Dec (Thu)  FINAL EXAM, 12:30-2:20
8 Dec (Fri)  TERM PAPERS DUE, 4:00 pm

This syllabus is available online at web.pdx.edu/~kinsella/ps447f17.pdf and course materials can be linked from there.

Last updated on 6 December 2017.