International Organizations in World Politics

Course Description
This course explores the role international organizations (IOs) play in world politics. The central questions we will ask about these organizations are: why were they created and by whom? What is their mission today and how has that mission changed over time? What tools of influence do IOs have to accomplish their goals and, conversely, what are the limitations on their effectiveness? What are the major challenges facing these IOs today that will shape politics in consequential ways?

We begin by reviewing several contending perspectives on the importance and utility of international organizations. We ask why states would want to set up these organizations in the first place and how, theoretically, we should expect them to behave. We also investigate sources of dysfunction and pathology. The course then examines the historical development, activities, and performance of specific institutions in the major policy areas of security, trade, finance, economic development, environmental protection, and humanitarian assistance. We will examine organizations of many types—big flagship intergovernmental IOs like the UN, but also non-governmental organizations, activist networks, and multinational corporations—all of which are organized across borders and have big transnational effects.

Course Requirements
Grading will be based on:
* Two take-home exams (100 point each);
* A draft of the first part of the research paper project due Nov. 1 (100 points);
* The final research paper due Nov. 29 (200 points)

The first take-home exam will cover both reading and lecture material up through October 18; the second will cover both reading and lecture material from Oct 23 through the end of the semester. Dates for these are noted in the course schedule, below. The draft paper is due NOVEMBER 1 and the final research paper is due at the beginning of class on NOVEMBER 29.
Readings

Course readings are available through Blackboard.

In addition, all students are expected to keep informed about current events. Daily reading of a major news source (New York Times, Washington Post, BBC, Economist.com, Financial Times or similar) is required. A good blog is Stewart Patrick’s “The Internationalist.” The Council on Foreign Relations' Global Governance Monitor is also an excellent resource. Links to both are in the “General Resources” folder in the “Readings” tab of Blackboard.

Many classes will begin with a discussion of recent news concerning international organizations, so I expect students to stay informed about world events.

Research Paper

For the research paper, you will pick an important problem in world politics and design or reform an international institution to fix or improve it. Specifically, your paper will:

1) present a clear analysis of the problem, including an examination of the major actors that shape this issue and their goals;
2.) analyze efforts made to date to address your problem (if any) and explain why these have been insufficient;
3.) present a plan whereby the problem might be solved or reduced, either by reforming (an) existing international organization(s) or creating new ones;
4.) explain why this new or reformed institution will have the technical capacity--the resources, mandate and organizational design--necessary to solve the problem where actors previously could not;
5.) explain why the proposed institution or reform will be viable politically and will attract the political support necessary from crucial actors.

These last three tasks are particularly important. Good policy making involves devising plans to make things better. Describe why your recommendation for institutional change is the right one to address the problem both technically and politically. Your organization may be an IGO or an NGO. It may be regional or it may be global. It must, however, involve nationals from three or more countries and involve problem-solving efforts that cross boarders in some way. If you are uncertain about the suitability of your proposal, check with the professor before you start.

A graded 3-4 page draft of tasks 1 & 2 only is due NOVEMBER 1. In it you will present a clear analysis of the problem you want to solve and the efforts made to date to address it. You should not attempt to develop a solution in this paper. Instead, your paper should do the following:

1. Present a clear analysis of the problem, including an examination of the major actors that shape this issue and their goals. Who is suffering from this problem, who is creating the problem, and what are the motives or interests of all involved?
2. Analyze efforts made to date to address your problem (if any) and explain why these have been insufficient. *Who has tried to solve this problem? What have they tried? Did it work? Why or why not?*

Remember, you only have 3-4 pages for these two tasks so be succinct. The grading rubric for this draft paper (worth 100 points) is posted in Blackboard.

The final research paper (worth 200 points), addressing all 5 tasks and satisfying the rubric posted on Blackboard, is due **NOVEMBER 29**.

If you are unsure how to research your chosen topic, a place to start is with David Ettinger’s International Affairs Research Resources page at: [http://libguides.gwu.edu/intrel](http://libguides.gwu.edu/intrel). This list is also posted in General Resources on Bb.

Good papers will be well informed and clearly argued. This is an exercise in critical thinking and problem solving. Students will be evaluated on how clearly they have thought through the logic of their chosen problem and whether their proposed solution plausibly remedies or at least ameliorates the problem. Brevity is a virtue, particularly in the policy world. The 10-page limit (double spaced, standard margins) is firm. Extra pages will not help you.

Papers should be written in clear, correct prose. **If you have writing difficulties, be sure you draft your paper early enough that you can seek help** from the Writing Center located in the Gelman Library or a friend to clean up structure, grammar, and mechanical problems before turning in a final draft. Writing counts in the assessment of the assignment. For more information on Writing Center visit: [https://writingcenter.gwu.edu](https://writingcenter.gwu.edu).

All sources must be properly cited in one consistent, recognized format. Proper formats for footnotes or endnotes and bibliography are discussed in The Chicago Manual of Style, the MLA Handbook, and Kate L. Turabian, *Manual for Writers of Term Papers, Theses, and Dissertations*. **Note that web materials also require full and correct citation.** If you are unsure how to do this, details are posted on Gelman’s Citation Style Guides homepage at: [http://libguides.gwu.edu/styleguide](http://libguides.gwu.edu/styleguide). If you still have questions, the reference desk at Gelman Library can help you.

**All papers must be submitted with a coversheet stating the following and signed by you:** “I understand the GW Code of Academic Integrity and have completed this paper according to its guidelines. The work herein is mine alone.” More information about GW’s Code of Academic Integrity can be found at: [http://www.gwu.edu/~ntegrity/code.html](http://www.gwu.edu/~ntegrity/code.html). Failure to comply with the code will be heavily penalized.

The grading rubric for the paper is posted on Blackboard. Be sure to check it before you turn in your paper. Have you met the criteria it sets out?

**Drafts are due at the beginning of class on NOVEMBER 1.** Bring a printed paper copy to class that day with the academic integrity statement signed. **Prior to class you must also submit the paper electronically via SafeAssign on Blackboard.**

**Final research papers are due at the beginning of class on NOVEMBER 29.** Bring a printed paper copy to class that day with the academic integrity statement signed. **Prior to class you must also submit the paper electronically via SafeAssign on Blackboard.**
**Missed classes:** It is the student’s responsibility to be informed of any changes in reading requirements and to obtain notes from other students from any missed classes.

**Missed exams, late papers, medical excuses:** Make up exams and deadline extensions for papers require a written medical excuse stating the dates on which the student was incapacitated. Students requesting medical accommodations are expected to contact the professor as soon as health allows and provide documentation promptly. Unexcused late papers will be penalized 5 points per calendar day, calculated from the beginning of class on the due date. Unexcused missed exams are marked as zero.

**Technology policy:** The classroom is a technology free zone for students. Lectures provide much of the material exams so distractions are not helpful. If it has a screen, makes noise, or has off switch, it needs to be off or stowed in an inaccessible place.

**University Policy on Religious Holidays**
1. Students should notify faculty during the first week of the semester of their intention to be absent from class on their day(s) of religious observance.
2. Faculty should extend to these students the courtesy of absence without penalty on such occasions, including permission to make up examinations.
3. Faculty who intend to observe a religious holiday should arrange at the beginning of the semester to reschedule missed classes or to make other provisions for their course-related activities.

**Support for Students Outside the Classroom**
**Disability Support Services (DSS)**
Any student who may need an accommodation based on the potential impact of a disability should contact the Disability Support Services office at 202-994-8250 in the Rome Hall, Suite 102, to establish eligibility and to coordinate reasonable accommodations. For additional information please refer to: https://disabilitysupport.gwu.edu/

**Mental Health Services 202-994-5300**
The University's Mental Health Services offers 24/7 assistance and referral to address students' personal, social, career, and study skills problems. Services for students include: crisis and emergency mental health consultations confidential assessment, counseling services (individual and small group), and referrals. counselingcenter.gwu.edu/

**Average minimum amount of independent, out-of-class, learning expected per week:**
In a 15-week semester, including exam week, students are expected to spend a minimum of 100 minutes of out-of-class work for every 50 minutes of direct instruction, for a minimum total of 2.5 hours a week. A 3-credit course should include 2.5 hours of direct instruction and a minimum of 5 hours of independent learning or 7.5 hours per week.
Safety and security

In the case of an emergency, if at all possible, the class should shelter in place. If the building that the class is in is affected, follow the evacuation procedures for the building. After the evacuation, seek shelter at a predetermined rendezvous location.

**Learning Objectives.** As a result of completing this course, students should be able to:
1. Identify and explain the functioning of key international organizations.
2. Evaluate and discuss critically the role of key international organizations in shaping international political outcomes.
3. Design new, or reform existing, organizations that will help solve identified problems.
4. Research and write competently at an upper-division undergraduate level.

**Course Schedule**

8/28 **Introduction**

Central questions and issues: *What are the various ways we organize internationally? Where do rules and order come from in world politics? Compare/contrast international organizations, institutions, regimes, NGOs, IGOs. What sources of power do they have? How do they relate to sovereign states?*

Read:


8/30-9/6 **Theoretical tools for understanding IOs (2 sessions)**

Central questions and issues: *Who creates international organizations and why? What factors shape the way these institutions behave and why might they not behave as their designers intend? What is principal-agent analysis and how is it helpful for understanding IOs? What is “organizational culture” and how does it help us understand IOs?*


9/4 **NO CLASS. LABOR DAY**
8/30-9/6  **Theoretical tools for understanding IOs (2 sessions)**
Central questions and issues: Who creates international organizations and why? What factors shape the way these institutions behave and why might they not behave as their designers intend?
- Nelson and Weaver, “Cultures of International Organizations” *Oxford Handbook of International Organizations*.

9/11  **Multilateralism as a Policy Choice**
Central questions and issues: What is multilateralism? How is multilateralism related to IOs? Why would states choose multilateral policies over alternatives? Why are multilateral policies often difficult to pursue?
Read:

9/13  **Politics of Organizational Structure.**
Central questions and issues: How do features of an IO’s structure shape its behavior? What are the various options for structuring an IO and what are the implications of these various choices? How are political requirements of these organizations in tension with the technical requirements for good job performance, and how have organizations managed these tensions (or not)?
No reading.

9/18  **Historical Backdrop: the evolution and proliferation of modern international institutions through 1945.**
Central questions and issues: How did we get to a world full of multilateral IOs? What alternatives have been tried historically and how did those systems work? What is the logic underlying a Balance of Power system, a Concert system and a Collective Security system? How does each work? Where have they been tried? What are their strengths and weaknesses?
Read:
- Inis Claude, *Swords into Plowshares* chs. 2-3.
9/20  **The United Nations: where it came from, how it works**  
Central Questions and Issues: How is the UN organized and why does it look this way? What is its mission? How does it make decisions? Where does it get its resources? What are its strengths and weaknesses?  
Browse:  
Read:  

9/25-27  **Peacekeeping and the UN’s role in security politics**  
Central questions and Issues: What tools does the UN have to deal with issues of conflict and war? What is peacekeeping? How and why has it changed over time? What factors promote or hamper peacekeeping success?  
Read:  
- “Thinking the UNthinkable” The Economist Nov 11, 2010.  
http://www.economist.com/research/articlesBySubject/displaystory.cfm?subjectid=10519735&story_id=17463443  
- “Who fights, and who pays for UN peacekeeping missions” Economist June 1, 2016.  
http://www.nytimes.com/2010/03/06/world/africa/06iht-ffpeace.html?_r=1&emc=eta1  
- Megan Roberts, “UN Peacekeeping: Where are all the women?”  
https://www.cfr.org/blog/un-peacekeeping-where-are-all-women  
- Alex Bellamy
10/2  Saving Failed States, Sovereignty, and Responsibility to Protect
Central questions and issues: What is a failed state? What causes state failure? What problems do they present and what can be done about them? What is Responsibility to Protect, why is it controversial, and what are its implications for sovereignty?

Browse:
- Alex Bellamy, “R2P Turns Ten” Ethics and International Affairs Summer 2015.

10/4  NATO
Central questions and issues: Why was NATO created and how is it structured? What unique features does it have? What is NATO’s mission today and what challenges does it face?

Browse:
- NATO website: http://www.nato.int/nato-welcome/index.html

10/9  NO CLASS—FALL BREAK

10/11  Middle and Smaller Powers at the UN—Participating Strategically
Guest lecture: Caroline Dunton
Central questions and issues: How do states that are not members of the P5 and/or are middle powers leverage their influence globally? Why do they value multilateralism and participation in organizations such as the United Nations? What value does a rotating seat at the Security Council provide? How do these states relate to big countries such as the United States in the context of the United Nations? How have their initiatives that we’ve previously discussed (i.e. R2P, Peacekeeping) influenced global dynamics and outcomes at the UN?

Read:
TBA
Nuclear weapons, terrorism and other challenges
Central questions and issues: What kinds of problems do nuclear weapons pose to global governance? What organizations have we created to manage those problems, how do they work, and what are their strengths and weaknesses? What is deterrence and how does it work? Is nuclear proliferation a problem and, if so, what can be done about it? What is terrorism and what role do IOs play in managing it?

Read:

NGOs and security politics
Central questions and issues: What are NGOs? How are they structured? What tools do they have to accomplish their goals?

Read:

Take-home exam on first half of the course.

Humanitarian action—comparing IGO and NGO strategies
Central questions and issues: Why do states care about humanitarian issues? What are the strengths and weaknesses of IGOs versus NGOs as tools for accomplishing humanitarian goals? What is UNHCR? What are refugees and how are they different from IDPs? What is the ICRC and how is it related to the building on E Street? What is Amnesty International? What does it do? Where did it come from?

Browse:

Read:
- David Milliband and Ravi Gurumurthy, “Improving Humanitarian Aid: How to make relief more efficient and effective.” Foreign Affairs July/August 2015.
doing-business-like-a-refugee

10/25  
**Human Rights and advocacy networks**

*Central questions and issues:* *What are human rights? Where do they come from? What are transnational advocacy networks? Why are they effective? What tools do they use?*

**Read:**

10/30  
**International Courts—the ICJ, the ICC, and others**

*Central questions and issues:* *What role do international courts and tribunals play in global governance? How do these organizations differ from one another? What are their varied strengths and weaknesses?*

**Read:**

11/1  
**PARTIAL DRAFT OF RESEARCH PAPER DUE**

11/1  
**Bretton Woods—history.**

*Central questions and issues:* *What problems were policy makers trying to solve at Bretton Woods? Why did they create the IOs they did?*


11/6  
**Money and the International Monetary Fund**

*Central questions and issues:* *How has the IMF changed since its founding and why? What does it do today? What are its strengths, what are its challenges? What other organizations have been created to manage financial issues and what are their roles?*

**Browse:**
- IMF website, About the IMF at http://www.imf.org/external/about.htm

**Read:**
Development and the World Bank
Central questions and issues: What does “development” mean and how do we do it? How has the World Bank changed since its founding? What does it do today? What are its strengths and challenges? How does the Bank relate to other IOs working on development problems?
Browse:
Read:
- Christopher Blattman and Paul Niehaus, "Show them the Money" Foreign Affairs May 2014.

Trade and the WTO
Central questions and issues: Why was no trade IO created in 1944 and how was trade organized until creation of the WTO? Why was the WTO founded? How does it work? What are its strengths and challenges? What is the TPP and why is it controversial?
Read:
- Chad Bown et al. “Multilateral or Bilateral Trade Deals? Lessons from history.” Chapter 14 in Chad Bown, ed., Economics and Policy in the Age of Trump.

Private firms as international authorities
Central questions and issues: How can private firms become authoritative and influential in global governance? Why do states (and others) defer to them and put them in charge?
Read:
11/20-27  **The Environment (2 sessions)**
Central questions and issues: *Why is there no global environmental organization analogous to the IOs we have for money and trade? What are collective action problems, free riding, free booting and how do they shape politics in this area? What is UNEP’s role? What roles are played by private actors and NGOs in environmental politics?*

Read:
- Elizabeth DeSombre, “Global Environmental Governance” in Weiss and Wilkinson

11/22  **THANKSGIVING—NO CLASS**

11/20-27  **The Environment (2 sessions)**
Central questions and issues: *Why is there no global environmental organization analogous to the IOs we have for money and trade? What are collective action problems, free riding, free booting and how do they shape politics in this area? What is UNEP’s role? What roles are played by private actors and NGOs in environmental politics?*

Read:
- Elizabeth DeSombre, “Global Environmental Governance” in Weiss and Wilkinson

11/29  **RESEARCH PAPER DUE**

11/29  **Governing Cyberspace**
Central questions and issues: *Who governs the internet? What kinds of organizations have power in this space and why? What is a Multistakeholder Model of governance and how does it compare with other governance models?*

12/4-6 The European Union (2 sessions)
Central questions and issues: What kind of an entity is the EU? Is it an IO? A superstate? Something new? How does the EU work? What are its strengths and challenges?

Browse:
- EU website at https://europa.eu/european-union/about-eu_en

Read:
- Glyn Morgan, *The Idea of a European Superstate*, 1-23
- “Six Flavours of Brexit” *The Economist* July 22, 2017

12/11 New forms of multilateralism for the 21st century
No reading.

Take home exam on second half of the course.