RPOS 375: International Organization

**Professor:** Bryan R. Early  
**Class Times:** MWF 11:30-12:25  
**Email:** bearly@albany.edu  
**Office Hours:** Uptown – M 12:30-2:00 PM  
Downtown, Milne 300A – W 1:00-2:00 PM

**Course Description**

This course will cover the foundational principles of international organization, the major theories that seek to explain the role played by international institutions in world politics, and a number of key institutions. The course aims to provide students with both a theoretical and practical understanding of international institutions. It will emphasize critical thinking skills that will be encouraged through course discussions, class debates, and an analytical research paper. The latter portion of the class will be devoted to the individual analysis of the following international institutions: the United Nations, NATO, the European Union, the International Monetary Fund, and the World Bank.

**Expectations**

Students will be expected to come to every class prepared to discuss the assigned readings. Attendance is expected and is especially important on the dates during which class debates take place. Students will be expected to turn in assigned work on time. Late work will face deductions.

**Grading**

**Attendance – 5%**

Attendance will be taken five times during the semester by the instructor. If students are absent without excuse on one of those days, they will lose 1% of their final grade. Students should notify the instructor of absences due to illness, family emergencies, or religious observances, which will be excused on a case-by-case basis.

**Participation – 15%**

Participation will be evaluated based upon the quality and regularity of students’ contributions to course discussions and the class debates. The instructor reserves the right to give pop quizzes that will factor into the participation grade if deemed necessary.
Midterm – 25%

This test will cover the first half of the semester’s course material. Its format will be a mix of multiple choice, short answer, and short essay questions.

Research Paper – 25%

Students will be expected to write a research paper analyzing an international institution, regime, or network. The assignment will call on students to draw on the theories discussed in the class in conducting their analysis. The instructor will provide further details about the assignment.

Final Exam – 30%

This will be a cumulative exam that will cover the entire semester’s course material. Its format will be a mix of multiple choice, short answer, and short essay questions.

Grading Policy

Tests and papers will be graded blind by the instructor and/or teaching assistant. If a student wishes to challenge how his or her exam or paper was graded, the student must submit a written statement describing what part of their assignment was improperly evaluated and why they think that was the case. This must be done within five days of having the assignment returned. Both the instructor and assistant will re-grade the entire project, compare their assessments, and mutually decide on a final grade. This grade may be higher or lower than the original grade given and will be final. Any clear mistakes or errors made by the instructor will be promptly corrected.

Policy on Academic Honesty

Please familiarize yourself with the undergraduate bulletin’s descriptions of cheating and plagiarism. If you are involved in plagiarism or cheating on an exam or research paper, the penalty will be failure in the course and you will be reported to judicial affairs. If you are not sure if something violates standards – feel free to ask ahead of time. In general, it’s always better to err on the side of citing too much than too little in your research papers. The university’s official policy can be found at: <http://www.albany.edu/undergraduate_bulletin/2003-2004/regulations.html>. Lastly, never cite Wikipedia in a research paper.

Accommodations

“Reasonable accommodations will be provided for students with documented physical, sensory, systemic, cognitive, learning and psychiatric disabilities. If you believe you have a disability requiring accommodation in this class, please notify the Director of Disabled Student Services (Campus Center 137, 442-5490). The office will provide the course instructor with verification of your disability, and will recommend appropriate accommodations.” For the University’s
policy, see: <http://www.albany.edu/studentlife/dss/Accommodation.html>. If you wish to discuss academic accommodations for this class please inform the instructor as soon as possible.

**Resources**

This course will be very reading intensive. The readings come from a mixture of required texts, course reserve chapter and articles, and articles that students will be required to look up themselves using the university’s electronic library resources. The instructor will indicate where the readings can be found in advance of their due dates.

**Required Texts**


**Course Schedule**

**Course Introduction [8/31]**

- We will discuss the outline and expectations for the course and begin talking about the international organization of global politics.

**Part I: Foundational Concepts**

**International Anarchy [9/2]**

Sovereignty and the Nation-State [9/4]


National Interests

Realist Perspective [9/9]

Liberal Perspective [9/11]

The Prospects for International Cooperation [9/14]


Part II: The Study and Explanation of International Organizations

An Overview of the Study of International Organization [9/16, 9/18]


Rational versus Reflective Approaches [9/21]


**Realism versus Institutionalism [9/23]**


**Neo-Functionalism [9/25]**


**The Approach of Studying International Regimes [9/30]**

- Stephen Krasner, “Structural Causes and Regime Consequences: Regimes as Intervening Variables,” pp. 73-84 in K&M.

**The Approach of Studying International Institutions [10/2]**

- J. Samuel Barkin, “Regimes and Institutions,” pp. 27-29 in OITI
- Michael Barnett and Martha Finnemore, “International Organizations as Bureaucracies,” pp. 16-44 in RFTW.

**NGOs, Transnational Networks, and Inter-Governmental Networks [10/5, 10/7]**

- Margaret Keck and Kathryn Kikkink, “Transnational Advocacy Networks in International and Regional Politics,” pp.162-776 in K&W.

Midterm Review [10/9]
Midterm Exam [10/12]

**Part III: Organizations and Issues**

**Collective Security [10/14]**
The United Nations

Introduction [10/16]

Legitimacy and the United Nations [10/19]
- Ian Johnstone, “The Role of the UN Secretary-General: The Power of Persuasion Based on Law,” p. 127-143 in PGG.

The UN Security Council [10/21]

Peacekeeping and the United Nations [10/23]
- Paul Diehl, “Forks in the Road: Theoretical and Policy Concerns for the 21St Century,” pp. 242-268 in PGG.

The UN and Human Rights [10/26]

UN Diplomats and Parking Tickets in NY City! [10/28]

UN Security Council Debate [10/30]

Midterm Returned / Class Session on Research Papers [11/2]

NATO [11/4, 11/6]

NATO Enlargement Class Debate [11/9]

The European Union

Background [11/11]
- Elizabeth Bomberg, Alexander Stubb, and John Peterson, “Introduction,” pp. 3-21 in EUHDW
- Desond Dinan, “How Did We Get Here?” pp. 22-44 in BSP

EU Institutions [11/13]
- Elizabeth Bomberg and Alex Stubb, “The EU’s Institutions,” pp. 45-70 in BSP

EU Member States and Expansion [11/16]
- Brigid Laffan and Alexander Stubb, “Member States,” pp. 71-91 in BSP
- Graham Avery, “EU Expansion and Wider Europe,” pp. 179-200 in BSP

EU and the Wider World [11/18]
- John Peterson, “The EU as a Global Actor,” pp. 201-220 in BSP
- John Peterson, Elizabeth Bomberg, Alexander Stubb, “Conclusion,” pp. 222-233 in BSP

EU Enlargement Class Debate [11/20]

The IMF and World Bank

Introduction [11/23]
- Ngaire Woods, “Introduction” pp. 1-14 in TG.

Persuasion and Expertise [11/30]
- Ngaire Woods, “The Power to Persuade” pp. 65-83 in TG.
- Michael Barnett and Martha Finnemore, “Expertise and Power at the International Monetary Fund,” pp. 45-72 in RFTW.

The Cases of Mexico and Africa [12/2]
- Ngaire Woods, “Mission in Mexico,” pp. 84-103 in TG.
Reforming IMF and World Bank [12/4]

Conclusion and Review [12/7]