NON-GOVERNMENTAL ORGANIZATIONS AT THE UNITED NATIONS

Professor Douglas O. Walker
Robertson School of Government
Regent University
NON-GOVERNMENTAL ORGANIZATIONS AT THE UNITED NATIONS

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Description and Purpose of Course

This course provides an overview of the United Nations System of Organizations and their work in the areas of international peace and security, economic and social development, human rights and humanitarian action, and international law. It examines the historical foundations of the System, its institutional structure, contemporary issues facing the international community, and representation in the United Nations.

The academic portion of the course is taught by Professor Douglas Walker of the Robertson School of Government. It focuses on the organization, history, and issues addressed by the United Nations. Among the topics covered are: The principal organs of the United Nations; The issue of sovereignty; The United Nations Charter; The functions and powers of the General Assembly; The rules, regulations and procedures governing the work of the Security Council and the Secretary-General; The administration and budget of the United Nations; and The machinery of the Secretariat in the areas of peacekeeping, economic and social development, humanitarian action and international law.

A review is then made of developments under each of the seven Secretaries-General that have headed the Organization, including a brief survey of the main developments in international peace and security, humanitarian action, human rights and economic and social development that took place under each Secretary-General. An assessment is made of the success or failure of each Secretary-General in dealing with the issues and controversies that arose during his time as Secretary-General.

Special attention is placed on the issues and problems that currently seize the attention of the United Nations and will shape its agenda in the future. Among the topics discussed are the various proposals for the reform of the Organization and its agencies, questions of world peace and development, and the contribution that non-governmental organizations can make when formulating international policy in response to current global problems.

The representational portion of the course is supervised by Professor Mark Mostert of the School of Education and the direction of Mr. Peter Smith of the Society for the Protection of Unborn Children. In the representational portion, students are expected to attend meetings of

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1 Version 1  (August 2009). Subject to change.
General Assembly and ECOSOC committees in support of Pro-Family NGO lobbying efforts. In-depth research on issues discussed at the meetings must be prepared ahead of the meetings to which they have been assigned. Training on how to interact with delegates and other NGOs in an international diplomatic setting will also be undertaken.

At least one assignments at United Nations Headquarters as an accredited delegate of an NGO engaged in Pro-Family lobbying activities is required. Although the exact dates when students must be in New York are not yet set, students will have to be there for 5 or 6 days sometime between 12 – 23 October and 9 – 20 November, when important sessions of the General Assembly’s Third (Social) Committee are scheduled to discuss resolutions of interest to the pro-family community.

The primary efforts of the NGOs to which students are assigned are twofold: a. To influence the language of documents via members of country delegations; and b. To introduce resolutions on pro-family issues and have these resolutions adopted by the General Assembly, ECOSOC, or one of their committees.

It is hoped that the assignments as NGO delegates will provide Regent students with experience working at the hub of international geopolitical influence and an opportunity to interact with and build interprofessional relationships with members of country delegations and like-minded NGOs. It is expected that Regent students will provide Christian leadership among the delegations and colleagues with whom they come in contact. In this regard, students from Regent are Christian graduate students, and should set an example for students from other universities who might attend these meetings.

Course Objectives

• To develop an understanding of the historical development and role of the United Nations and its set of agencies in the global economic and political system;

• To examine the organizational structure of the United Nations System, review the rules and regulations governing the global economic and political order, learn about the purpose, structure and operation of the network of national and international institutions in light of the common problems before all countries, and assess the success of the different agencies in carrying out their responsibilities;

• To understand the causes and nature of the major problems in the national system and how the United Nations formulates and coordinates policies to deal with them, and the role of non-governmental organizations in policy development at the global level;

• To study the policies of different groups of countries and how they are harmonized (or fail to be harmonized) in the United Nations; and

• To develop the skills as a delegate and diplomat assigned to an international forum for the purpose of presenting a policy point of view and influencing discussions and outcomes on contentious policy questions.
Course Outline

The first part of the course introduces the course and covers the organization and functioning of the United Nations and its agencies:

• The United Nations and its agencies;
• The principal organs of the United Nations;
• The role of the United Nations in international peace and security;
• The role of the United Nations in human rights;
• The administration of the United Nations (budget and personnel systems); and
• The call for reform of the organization and its agencies.

The second part of the course surveys the early decades of the United Nations and its growing influence under the first three Secretary-Generals:

• Trygvie Lie, Norway (1946-1952): The United Nations Finds Its Way
  The establishment and charter of the United Nations
  The partitioning of Palestine
  The Universal Declaration of Human Rights
  The Berlin airlift
  The Korean War

• Dag Hammarsjold, Sweden (1953-1961): The United Nations Asserts Itself
  The Vietnam War
  The Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees awarded Nobel Peace Prize
  The Suez Crisis
  The War in the Congo and the death of Dag Hammarsjold

  The Cuban Missile Crisis
  UNICEF wins the Nobel Peace Prize
  The 1967 Mid-East War
  Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons

The third part of the course surveys the United Nations in a rapidly changing world and the Secretaries-General that have contended with mounting difficulties:

• Kurt Waldheim, Austria (1972-1981): The United Nations Grows in Size and Declines in Influence
First United Nations Environmental Conference
Mid-East War between Israel, Egypt and Syria, and the oil boycott
Recognition of the Palestinian Liberation Organization by the General Assembly
General Assembly passes “Zionism is a form of racism” resolution
Mandatory arms embargo against South Africa
UNHCR again wins Nobel Peace Prize
WHO declares smallpox wiped out

  - Cease-fire in Iran-Iraq War
  - Collapse of Soviet domination of Eastern Europe
  - Signing of first global environmental protection treaty
  - United Nations peacekeeping operations win Nobel Peace Prize
  - Independence of Namibia
  - Apartheid is repealed in South Africa
  - Trade sanctions on Iraq
  - The Gulf War
  - Soviet Union collapses

  - Genocide in Rwanda
  - Conflict in Bosnia
  - Adoption of the Comprehensive Nuclear Test-Ban Treaty

  - UN address the HIV/AIDS epidemic
  - Development of Millennium Development Goals
  - Annan and the United Nations jointly awarded the Nobel Peace Prize
  - U.S. invasion of Iraq
  - Growing internal investigations of the UN
  - Oil-for-food scandal
  - Growing conflict between the UN and the U.S.
  - Efforts at UN reform

- Ban Ki-moon, South Korea (2007-): A United Nations Searching for Relevance
  - Proposals for major restructuring of the political units of the Secretariat
  - Global warming as a key United Nations issue
  - The continuing search for peace in the Mid-East
  - The questions of Darfur and Myanmar

The fourth part of the course looks at the major issues before the United Nations:

- The United Nations and world peace
The situation in the Mid-East
The question of Palestine
The question of Iran and WMDs
The situation in Iraq
The situation in the Sudan and in the Democratic Republic of the Congo
The problem of terrorism
The question of the United Nations and peacekeeping
The question of the United Nations and peacemaking
The reform of the Security Council

• The United Nations and world development

The current world financial crisis
The reform of international economic and financial institutions
The question of the global environment and global warming
Achievement of the Millennium Development Goals
The question of governance, institution building and development
The eradication of global poverty
The world demographic profile and trends
The question of energy and natural resources
The question of global disparities in development
The question of the contribution of trade to development

• Reform of the United Nations

Reform of the Security Council
The question of the veto
The question of a military role for the United Nations and a standing army
The question of the finances of the Organization and possible taxes to support its work

The course concludes with a discussion of the future of the United Nations in a changing world.

Course Competencies

Students will be able to:

• Identify the main international institutions of the United Nations System and their role in the governance of the economic and political system that defines the international order;

• Understand how the rules, regulations, and procedures governing the work of the General Assembly, Security Council and other units of the United Nations affect its ability to deal with questions of international development, peace and security;

• Relate past events and trends that have taken place in the international arena to the work of the United Nations and its agencies, and use that knowledge to assess the possible contribution (or lack of contribution) the System can make in overcoming contemporary problems before the international community;
• Recognize how global economic and political institutions operate and affect the relations of countries with one another and their ability to overcome the domestic problems they confront today;

• Evaluate policy proposals and courses of action under discussion in international fora in terms of the ability of international institutions to contribute to their solution; and

• Develop an historical perspective on the problems that have confronted the world during the past half-century and the ways in which international cooperation has been helpful in solving common problems and the ways in which it has not been able to contribute to promoting peace and development in an increasingly interdependent but fractured world.

Course Requirements

A set of Short-answer questions is assigned each week. QSets are important both because they enter directly into the grade received with a weight of 20 per cent and because they reflect material that appears on the examination. They are due at the end of the week after assignment.

Each student will prepare a review of the tenure of a Secretary-General for presentation before the Class. The presentation should cover a brief biography of the Secretary-General and cover the main economic and political challenges he faced during the time he was in office. It should conclude with an assessment of the success or failure of Secretary-General and the United Nations during these years. The presentation has a weight of 20 per cent of the final grade.

Two Notes are due at times indicated in the Course Schedule. The first of these notes is on a major issue before the international community and the efforts the Organization has made to deal with it. The second note provides a summary assessment by the student of the usefulness of the United Nations as an international organization devoted to maintaining world peace and supporting world development. Each note has a weight of 10 per cent.

The representational portion of the course is undertaken at United Nations Headquarters and involves serving as an NGO delegate at meetings of the Third Committee of the General Assembly. It is weighted 30 per cent of the final grade. A main concern is the extra costs imposed on students for travel and accommodations while at the United Nations. Two weekly visits to New York are required, and each one will cost about $600-$750. Since this is missionary and advocacy work in support of the faith and the Pro-Family cause, it is suggested that students ask their home church for a missionary grant to defray some of the extra costs involved in lobbying at the United Nations.

A number of Blackboard Dialogues will be conducted during the semester where students will interact among themselves and with the professor on key policy questions. A summary class participation and dialogue entry grade enters the final grade for the course with a weight of 10 per cent.

With regard to Attendance, excessive, unjustified absences are strongly discouraged. Excessive tardiness and early departures will be treated as partial absences. Attendance will be taken regularly and will be included as part of the class participation grade.
Students are expected to read assigned materials, participate in classroom discussions, prepare written assignments, take examinations, and engage in Blackboard dialogues. A schedule of class meetings, reading assignments, homework assignments and activities for this course will be maintained on Blackboard.

Please check the Blackboard >Announcements' and >Course Documents' sections for this course several times each week for information about assignments and dialogue sessions.

Student Assessment

This is a lecture and distance learning course supplemented by participation by students in class, in the dialogues, and as NGO delegates at UN Headquarters. Unless otherwise indicated, students will be expected to read all assigned materials and be prepared to discuss them in-depth during both in class and in the dialogues. Each student is responsible for a presentation during one class session. It is important that you prepare for and show up for all classes, and that you participate. You will receive marks for both quality and quantity of your participation.

Grades are based on:

1. The Question Sets (20%)
2. Review of the tenure of a Secretary-General (20%)
3. The two notes (10% each)
4. Representation at the United Nations (30%)
5. Class participation, including attendance and on-line dialogue entries (10%)

Grading follows standard University policy with regard to the grading system and Incomplete, In progress, and Withdrawal-from-course grades.

Text, Readings and Reference Materials


Assigned readings: A list of supplementary readings is given in the Course Schedule.


Web sites: Links to the various agencies of the United Nations System is given at www.unsystem.org.

Integration of Faith and Learning

The Robertson School of Government seeks to restore our nation's Judeo-Christian heritage, to renew the traditional values of citizenship in the public affairs of the country, and to promote these ideals in all nations of the world. To that end, leadership and policy issues are rigorously analyzed from various academic perspectives in a broad, multidisciplinary approach, emphasizing the application of Judeo-Christian principles to theoretical and practical problems. The program is designed to produce principled graduates who are morally, spiritually, and intellectually well-grounded and who are also equipped with the practical and technical skills needed to meet today's challenges of leadership in government, policy-making, and politics.

Academic Integrity Policy

At a Christian University academic dishonesty cannot be tolerated. The professor has an obligation to be certain that each student's work is his/her own. Dishonesty in such academic practices as assignments, examinations, presentations or other academic work cannot be condoned. Failure to report any cheating by other students that you may witness is an Honor Code violation. It is University policy to record Honor Code violations permanently on the student's transcript, where they can be seen by prospective employers and graduate schools.

Disabilities Policy

Regent University and the Robertson School of Government strive to be as helpful and accommodating as possible to the needs of the disabled. Students with special needs in this regard should inform the professor so that appropriate arrangements can be made to ensure the student gains the full benefit from the course.

Student Information and Feedback

Students are referred to the Regent University Student Handbook for further information on the policies and procedures of the University.

At the end of the course, students will be given the opportunity to evaluate the course and make suggestions for improvements.

Office Hours and Meeting Availability

Professor: Douglas O. Walker
Office: Robertson Hall 318F
Telephone: x4616
E-mail: dougwal@regent.edu

Government 646: The United Nations and Non-Governmental Organizations
Office hours: Tuesdays, Wednesdays and Thursdays, 2:00 PM - 4:00 PM

No appointment is necessary. Meetings are in 20 minute blocks but can go longer if no other student is waiting.

Appointments: I am here to serve you. If meetings during regular office hours are not possible, please call or stop by my office. Questions may also be sent by e-mail.
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<tr>
<th>Week</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Session Title and Topics</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>26-Aug</td>
<td>Introduction to the Course</td>
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<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>02-Sep</td>
<td>Organization of the United Nations System</td>
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<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>09-Sep</td>
<td>The Work of the United Nations</td>
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**Growing Influence Under the First Three Secretaries-General**

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<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>23-Sep</td>
<td>Dag Hammarsjold (1953-1961): The United Nations Asserts Itself</td>
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**Secretaries-General With Mounting Difficulties**

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<tr>
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<td>21-Oct</td>
<td>Fall Break: <strong>NGO Participation at the United Nations</strong></td>
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<td>11</td>
<td>11-Nov</td>
<td>Ban Ki-moon (2007-): Continuing decline to irrelevance</td>
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**Major Issues Now Before the United Nations**

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<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>18-Nov</td>
<td>Reform of the United Nations: NGO Participation at the United Nations</td>
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<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>25-Nov</td>
<td>The United Nations and World Peace</td>
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<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>02-Dec</td>
<td>The United Nations and World Development</td>
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<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>09-Dec</td>
<td>The United Nations and the United States</td>
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**The Future of the United Nations**

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<th>Week</th>
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<tr>
<td>16</td>
<td>16-Dec</td>
<td>The United Nations and Global Governance</td>
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