

University of Mississippi
Fall 2012

INST 211: The United Nations
M 5:30-6:30 — Croft 107

Dr. Miguel Centellas
Office: Deupree Hall 335
Office Hours: 11:00-12:30 MWF

Office phone: (662) 915-7403
Email: mcentell@olemiss.edu

COURSE DESCRIPTION

This is a special two-semester readings course about the history, structure, and contemporary role of the United Nations. Although the course will cover a range of issues facing international politics today, these will be explored through a focus on how the United Nations—and its various institutional organs—deals with these issues. The purpose of this course is to prepare a team of students to attend the National Model United Nations (NMUN) conference in New York.

In this course, you will learn:

- (1) The history and structure of the United Nations
- (2) Key issues facing the United Nations today
- (3) The UN's role in contemporary international relations
- (4) How to prepare for a model United Nations conference

In the fall semester we will focus on the first three objectives; in the spring semester we will focus on the last objective, in anticipation of the spring NMUN conference in New York.

COURSE TEXTBOOKS

The following book is *highly recommended* for this course, and will be used next semester as well.

United Nations. 2011. *Basic Facts About the United Nations*. New York: United Nations. ISBN 13: 9789211012354

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

This course is a “Z Grade” (pass/fail) course. You must earn a score of 70/100 in order to successfully “pass” the course and be eligible to attend the NMUN conference in New York. Course requirements and their share (in points) of the final grade are summarized below:

Participation	30	
Weekly reports (x2)	20	(10 each)
Midterm exam	30	
Final report	20	
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Total	100	

Participation. Active, engaging, and meaningful participation is essential. You must regularly attend weekly discussion sessions, and come prepared to discuss the assigned material. Participation grades are my subjective evaluation of your overall performance, but substantial absences will count against you.

Midterm Exam. This course has one midterm exam. It is worth 30 points, and combines multiple choice and short answer questions. The exam will focus on the basic history and structure of the United Nations.

Weekly Reports. Each of you is responsible for two (5-minute) weekly research reports. The reports should summarize relevant information on a key issue facing the United Nations, based on research using appropriate sources (primarily documents from the UN and its ancillary organizations). In addition to helping you research for the spring model UN competition, oral reports will help prepare you to be comfortable speaking in public.

Final Report. Each of you will write a brief (2-3 page) position paper on a selected country and a specific issue. Your position paper will explain your assigned country's policy position (what it would argue at an international forum, like the UN) on that issue. The report serves as a rehearsal for the spring semester, which will be devoted to preparing for the NMUN conference in New York.

ADDITIONAL ISSUES & CLASS RULES

Please be sure you follow these basic class rules and policies throughout the semester:

Classroom Behavior. I do not allow the use of cell phones, laptops, or other electronic devices in class without permission. I also expect you to consistently behave in ways that demonstrate your respect for me and the course, your fellow students, and yourself.

Missing Assignments. If you prepare for contingencies (by not starting to work on assignments the night before), you should not miss any assignments. Even if your work is incomplete, submitting what you have accomplished prior to any emergency is better than earning a zero. Extensions will only be granted for extreme circumstances, and at my discretion.

Communication. Email is the most common way for students and faculty to communicate outside of class. I try to answer messages promptly, but do not expect emails sent *after 6pm* to be answered until *after 8 am* the following day. Additionally, remember to keep messages professional and respectful (e.g. use salutations, such as "Professor Centellas" or "Dr. Centellas"). Also, check your university email account regularly; I will use that address when sending important messages related to the course.

Student Disability Services. If you have a *documented* disability as described by the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 (P.L. 933-112 Section 504) or the American s with Disabilities Act (ADA) and would like to request academic and/or physical accommodations, please contact Student Disability Services at 234 Martindale Center (662-915-7128). Course requirements will not be waived, but reasonable accommodations may be provided as appropriate. Please consult <http://www.olemiss.edu/depts/sds/> for more information on student disability services.

Academic Integrity & Plagiarism. All work submitted under *your* name is assumed to be *your* original work. The penalty for plagiarism and/or cheating in this class ranges from failure of the assignment to failing the course. Additional penalties are also possible. All students should familiarize themselves with the relevant guidelines and procedures in the *M Book*.

COURSE SCHEDULE

Week 1	8/20	Introduction: Hand out syllabus and go over course requirements
Week 2	8/27	History and Structure of UN; The General Assembly <i>Basic Facts</i> , pp. 3-7
Week 3	9/03	<i>Labor Day break—no class</i>
Week 4	9/10	Security Council <i>Basic Facts</i> , pp. 7-12
Week 5	9/17	Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) <i>Basic Facts</i> , pp. 12-16
Week 6	9/24	International Court of Justice (ICJ) <i>Basic Facts</i> , pp. 16-17
Week 7	10/01	The UN Secretariat <i>Basic Facts</i> , pp. 17-27
Week 8	10/08	<i>Midterm Exam</i>
Week 9	10/15	Weekly reports
Week 10	10/22	Weekly reports
Week 11	10/29	Weekly reports
Week 12	11/05	Weekly reports
Week 13	11/12	Weekly reports
<i>Thanksgiving break</i>		
Week 14	11/26	Final position paper reports due
