**INST 211: The United Nations**

Time 4:30-5:20 — Croft 107

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Dr. Miguel Centellas  Office: Deupree Hall 335  Office Hours: 8:30-9:30 M–F | 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) about key issues facing the United Nations today, (3) about the UN’s role in contemporary international relations, and (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 April NMUN conference in New York.

**Course Textbooks**

The following books are *required* for this course, and will be used next semester as well.

Arieff, Irwin, ed. 2010. *A Global Agenda: Issues Before the United Nations, 2010-2011.* New York: United Nations Association of USA. ISBN 9780984569106

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

We will use these texts next semester as well. In particular, we will look more closely at *Basic Facts* next semester, as each of you prepare for a specific role at the NMUN conference in New York.

**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 | 25 |  |
|  | Final report | 25 |  |
|  | 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 25 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 weekly media oral reports. The reports should summarize relevant information on a key issue facing the United Nations, based on assigned readings and media reports. In addition to helping you connect current events to the UN’s role in international politics, these 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. You will be randomly assigned a country, but will be able to select from a choice of issues covered in class. 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 know in advance that you will miss an assignment deadline, you may submit the assignment early—and then appeal for an extension. If you prepare for contingencies (by not starting to work on assignments the night before they are due), you should be safe. Even if your work is not complete, submitting what you have accomplished prior to the emergency is better than earning a zero. Extensions will only be granted under 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.* As a student at the University, all work submitted under your name, for your credit, is assumed to be your original work. While teachers hope and expect for you to incorporate the thinking of others in your work, you must credit others’ work when you use it. In your written assignments, there are only three methods for properly importing the works of others: quotations, paraphrase, and summary. Broadly speaking, plagiarism is completely avoidable. However, if you are ever unsure if you are committing plagiarism, consult with us prior to submitting the assignment.

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. Students should familiarize themselves with the relevant guidelines and procedures in the *M Book*.

**COURSE SCHEDULE**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Week 1 | 8/22 | Introduction: Hand out syllabus and go over course requirements |
| Week 2 | 8/29 | History and Structure of UN  *Basic Facts*, pp. 3-5 |
| Week 3 | 9/05 | The General Assembly  *Basic Facts*, pp. 5-7 |
| Week 4 | 9/12 | Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC)  *Basic Facts*, pp. 12-16 |
| Week 5 | 9/19 | The UN Secretariat  *Basic Facts*, pp. 17-27 |
| Week 6 | 9/26 | Security Council  *Basic Facts*, pp. 7-12 |
| Week 7 | 10/03 | International Court of Justice (ICJ)  *Basic Facts*, pp. 16-17 |
| Week 8 | 10/10 | Midterm exam |
| Week 9 | 10/17 | *A Global Agenda*, Chapter 1: Taming Chaos: Strategies for Global Security |
| Week 10 | 10/24 | *A Global Agenda*, Chapter 3: The Evolving US-UN Relationship |
| Week 11 | 10/31 | *A Global Agenda*, Chapter 4: Aid: Finding a Path for the Future |
| Week 12 | 11/07 | *A Global Agenda*, Chapter 6: Seeking Common Ground on Climate Change |
| Week 13 | 11/14 | *A Global Agenda*, Chapter 8: Changing with the Times |
|  |  | Thanksgiving break |
| Week 14 | 11/28 | Final position paper reports due |