



PSCI 376/PSCI 377: Model United Nations

Spring 2009 (CRN: 24132/24972)

Humboldt State University

Mondays, 5:30-8:20, FH 177

Dr. Noah Zerbe
Office: FH 139
Office Hours: T 10:30-11:30 / W 11-12
or by appointment

Phone: 826.3911
E-mail: noah.zerbe@humboldt.edu

Course Description

The Model United Nations (MUN) course is designed to examine the primary functions of the United Nations and its diplomatic role with respect to the political, economic, and cultural concerns of the global community. Through research, discussion, negotiation, and debate, students will develop plausible solutions to contemporary global problems. These issues include, but are not limited to, human rights, protection of the environment, economic development, disarmament, the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, and the complexities surrounding war and peace.

Most of the work that will be carried out in this course is in preparation for participation in the Model United Nations of the Far West (MUNFW) Conference, which will be held in San Francisco from April 17-21, 2009.

A note to students enrolled in PSCI 377: Model United Nations II. This course further hones skills initially developed in PSCI 376: Model United Nations, which is a prerequisite for this course. Because you have already covered the materials presented in the first portion of the course, attendance in class sessions prior to week 4 (February 16) is optional. In week 4 we begin preparations for the conference program; regular attendance after that meeting is expected of all students.

Learning Outcomes

Upon successful completion of the course, students should be able to:

- Articulate the foreign policy of the selected country;
- Define the structures and general procedures of the United Nations;
- Describe important historical issues affecting the UN and evaluate the organization's effectiveness;
- Analyze an issue currently before the United Nations from the selected member nation's perspective;
- Understand and competently use the rules of procedure, diplomatic protocol, and negotiating techniques common to UN delegates; and
- Explain the rationale, format, and instructional methods of the Model United Nations simulation.

Building on the hands-on nature of the Model United Nations format, students should also be able to:

- Improve their public speaking and negotiation skills;
- Evaluate and interpret documentary materials, maps, charts, and statistical tables; and
- Analyze historical data to understand contemporary conflicts and issues

This course is part of the experiential component of the political science major. Specifically, it addresses the following departmental learning objectives 2 and 3:

2. Students research and develop empirical analysis of political phenomena utilizing appropriate methodologies.
3. Students utilize practical experience to reflect upon political relations of power, social responsibility, sustainability, and the obligations of citizenship in a globalized world.

This course explicitly contributes to students' acquisition of skills and knowledge relevant to HSU Learning Outcomes 1, 2, 4, and 5:

1. Effective communication through written and oral modes.
2. Critical and creative thinking skills in acquiring a broad base of knowledge and applying it to complex issues.
4. Appreciation for and understanding of an expanded world perspective by engaging respectfully with a diverse range of individuals, communities, and viewpoints.
5. Preparation for career success.

General Course Information

Required Texts

There is no required text for this course. However, students will be responsible for keeping abreast of contemporary developments in international relations in general and issues before the United Nations in particular. For general international relations news, please read one or more of the following newspapers daily:

- The New York Times (www.nytimes.com)
- The International Herald Tribune (www.iht.com)
- The Economist (<http://www.economist.com>)
- The Financial Times (<http://www.financialtimes.com>)
- The Christian Science Monitor (www.csmonitor.com)

For United Nations news, please read the UN wire daily. It is available online at www.unwire.org.

In addition, you should endeavor to keep abreast of current events in the country you will be representing. English language news sources are readily available online for nearly every country in the world. As a delegation, you are responsible for identifying the primary news sources for your country and keeping on top of contemporary developments there.

Course Requirements

Participation in the Model United Nations of the Far West Conference is a central component of this course. Most of the assignments listed below are required for effective participation in the conference. Students who cannot participate in the conference should not enroll in this course.

Specifically, your grade in this course will be based on the following assignments:

Map Quiz (5%):

The world is comprised of approximately 190 separate states. Although these states are the principal actors in international relations, many Americans are unfamiliar with even the most important of them. A study sheet consisting of a list of countries and a blank world map on which you should be able to locate those countries will be distributed via Moodle. On the quiz, you will be asked to identify the location of a set of these countries. This assignment is designed to introduce students to the basic geography of the international system. The map quiz is scheduled for February 16.

P-Rules Quiz (5%):

The Model United Nations of the Far West conference utilizes a specific set of rules, known as the “P-Rules” in order to facilitate debate. Mastery of the fundamentals of the P-Rules is central to effective participation in the conference. To that end, we will have an in-class P-Rules quiz on February 23.

Country Profile (10%):

All delegations are required to submit a 3-5 page country profile to participate in the MUNFW Conference. Writing the country profile will be the responsibility of all students assigned to the country. Specific details on the format of the country profile will be made available on the course Moodle site. Country profiles are due February 16. Country profiles must be submitted via e-mail in Word format and should be entitled “country name-profile.doc” (e.g., Thailand_profile.doc).

Policy Statements (15%):

In preparation for the MUNFW Conference, you will be expected to prepare three position papers on the issues that will be considered at the conference. Each paper will reflect your assigned country’s policy vis-à-vis the specific committee’s agenda. Position papers should define the scope of each topic, clearly explain how that topic relates to your country’s national interest, and state your country’s position on these issues. A sample position paper will be distributed via Moodle. Policy statements are due Monday, March 2. Policy statements must be submitted via e-mail in Word format and should be entitled “country name_policy_1.doc” (e.g., Thailand_policy_1.doc).

Draft Resolution (5%):

In preparation for the MUNFW Conference, you will write a draft resolution on a topic of your choice selected from the assigned committee agenda. Resolutions must follow the specific format outlined in the MUNFW Handbook, and a sample resolution will be distributed via the course Moodle site. Draft resolutions are due March 9. Resolutions must be submitted via e-mail in Word format and should be entitled “country name_committee_res.doc” (e.g., Thailand_GA_res.doc).

Plenary Speeches (5%):

In preparation for the MUNFW Conference, you will write a plenary speech for each topic covered in your committee. Your speech should be no more than two typed, double-spaced pages. Plenary speeches are due on April 6 and may be submitted either via e-mail or in class.

Delegate Notebook (20%):

Your notebook represents the culmination of your research and preparation for participation in the MUNFW Conference. It will act as a ready reference source during committee discussions, and should include any information or research you feel is important. At a minimum, your notebook should include the following sections:

1. Table of Contents and summary of key information.
2. Descriptive analysis of your country, based on the country profile outlined above and including basic social, economic and governmental facts and characteristics of your country.
3. Committee Background: Referencing UN sources, you should demonstrate an understanding of the purpose of the committee and a familiarity with the impact of the committee on world affairs. You should demonstrate familiarity with key decisions, resolutions and actions adopted by or taken by the committee, and the impact and role of your country in the work of the committee.
4. Policy Statements (duplicated from above requirement).
5. Topic Summary: This should reference the broader academic literature on the topics your committee intends to address. You should demonstrate an understanding of alternative views on the issues your committee intends to address. This should not simply be a recitation of the topic summaries in the committee guide or of the policy statements included above. Instead, the topic summary should reflect the broad understanding of your research on the topics. Note that the citations in the committee guide for additional information provide a useful starting point for this research.
6. Diplomatic Strategy: Consider the following questions in narrative form. Note that your diplomatic strategy should be developed in consultation with the other members of your delegation. What is your overall strategy for the conference? What order of agenda items? Why? With which states do you intend to caucus? Which states are enemies/allies? Which issues do you not want the committee to focus upon? What are you going to do if your preferred agenda topic is not chosen?
7. Data: A section in the binder should include lists of key facts – statistics on social, economic or other conditions that you will use as talking-points during the conference. They must include proper citations so you can account for them.

Note that evaluating a briefing binder is very subjective. For that reason, it is your responsibility to demonstrate that you have read and comprehended the material. Binders will be ranked on the basis of apparent organizational clarity, comprehensiveness, relevance, and depth. At a minimum, you should demonstrate that you have read at least 2-3 of the citations and/or bibliographic references outlined in the committee guide for the conference. You can put each article in your binder. You can also summarize key points derived from each reading. These summaries, or their equivalent, should be included in your binder. The more you write, the more convinced I am that you have done the work.

Reflection Paper (15%):

After participating in the MUNFW Conference, you will be responsible for a short paper in which you reflect upon and critically evaluate your MUN experience, including a self-assessment of your preparation for and performance at the conference, your personal learning growth, and recommendations for the course and simulation in the future. The reflection paper is due April 27.

Participation (20%):

In order to satisfy the objectives of this course, you must regularly attend class and be prepared for class discussions. Preparing for MUNFW requires a team effort, and you will be working in small groups as you help one another prepare for the conference. There will be frequent in-class presentations, debates, and simulations, and you will be expected to provide your classmates with feedback on their work.

A brief note on course requirements and participation:

Many of the assignments for this course must be submitted to the Model United Nations of the Far West Secretariat as a precondition for participation in the MUNFW conference. Guides to assist in the development of your country profiles, policy statements, and draft resolutions are available through the course Moodle site.

Because I must submit all documents to the MUNFW Secretariat for their review, the deadlines listed in the syllabus provide sufficient time for me to read the submissions before transferring them to MUNFW. This means that the deadlines are firm and I cannot grant extensions for the assignments. Any delegation which does not submit materials on time will not be credentialed for participation in MUNFW and will be unable to attend the conference.

The main purpose of our weekly classes to prepare you for participation in the Model United Nations of the Far West conference. Participation in the conference is required for completion of this class. While at the conference, you are representing Humboldt State University. I therefore expect that you act in a professional and dignified manner. Further, unless you discuss the matter with me ahead of time, I expect that you will attend all conference sessions and meetings, without exception.

At least two weeks prior to attending the conference, you must meet with Linda Wilson in the Department of Politics office (FH 180) to complete the necessary permission forms and university-mandated paperwork. If you do not complete this paperwork, the university will not allow you to participate in the conference. Please let me know if you have any questions.

Country and Committee Assignments:

This year, we will represent the following four countries: Democratic Republic of the Congo, Italy, Qatar, Rwanda, Sri Lanka, Sweden, and Venezuela. Country assignments will be made in week 2. I will try to accommodate your preferences for country and committee assignments to the best of my ability. Topics and committee assignments can be found at the end of the syllabus.

	DRC	Italy	Qatar	Rwanda	Sri Lanka	Sweden	Venezuela
General Assembly <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Security Council Reform • UN Cooperation in Humanitarian Disaster Relief 	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Second Committee <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Agriculture Subsidy Impact • Assessing and Reforming the Bretton Woods Institutions • Food Safety or Addressing Supply Shortages 	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Fourth Committee <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Implementing the Geneva Conventions Regarding Torture • Addressing Terrorism • Dismantling the Refuse of the Cold War 	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
UN Environment Programme <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Global Warming and Potable Water • Protection of Climate for Present and Future Generations • Bio-Fuels and Food Production 	X	X				X	X
Human Rights Council <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Right to a Nationality • The Duty to Protect: Preventing Genocide • The Rights of Children: Child Soldiers and Child Labor 		X	X				
NATO <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Considering NATO Expansion • Strengthening the Partnership for Peace 		X					
Security Council <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provisional agenda 		X					
World Press <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Optional, story-based coverage 	O	O	O	O	O	O	O

General Course and University Policies

A Note on Written Work:

All written assignments submitted for this course should be properly formatted and cited. I expect that you will proofread your work before submitting it to me, and ideally you will have someone else proof it as well. Consequently, a maximum of two errors (grammatical, improper citation, etc.) per page will be accepted. One point will be deducted from your grade on the assignment for each error beyond the second on each page. All citations must be in APSA format. A style guide is available at

<http://www.wisc.edu/writing/Handbook/DocAPSA.html>.

Moodle Site:

Course information will regularly be posed to the course Moodle Site. Moodle is the freeware alternative to Blackboard. I will provide a brief overview on accessing and using Moodle on the first day of the course. You can access the course site at learn.humboldt.edu.

Academic Honesty:

Plagiarism or other forms of cheating will not be tolerated, and will result in an automatic zero for the assignment, failure of the course, and potentially more serious sanctions from the University according to the Academic Honesty policy. Please don't do it. Students are responsible for knowing policy regarding academic honesty. For more information, visit: Academic Honesty Policy (http://studentaffairs.humboldt.edu/judicial/academic_honesty.php).

Support:

HSU offers excellent resources to help you succeed in your academic endeavors. These include the Library, Computer Labs, Computer Help Desk, Academic Support Center, Learning Center, and Writing Center. I strongly encourage you to take advantage of them!

Disability Resources:

If you have a documented disability and would like to discuss academic accommodations, please contact me as soon as possible. Our campus Student Disability Resource Center (SDRC) can assist you with the accommodation process and can be reached at (707) 826-4678 or (707) 826-5392 (TTD). The SDRC is located in House 71 (Little Apartments) off Library Circle. See <http://www.humboldt.edu/~sdrc/> for more information.

Course Calendar

Note: The calendar provided below is subject to change with appropriate notice.

January 26: Course Introduction

Country and committee requests submitted.

February 2: Structure of the United Nations System

Attendance for this session is optional for students enrolled in PSCI 377.

Required Readings:

- Linda Adams and Janet Adamski. “The Structure of the United Nations.” Ch. 1 (pp. 21-32) in *Model United Nations: Student Preparation Guide*. (Debuque: Kendal Hunt, 2002).
- Lawrence Ziring, et al., “Legal Frameworks, Institutional Structures, Financial Realities.” Ch. 2 (pp. 31-72) in *The United Nations: International Organization and World Politics*, 4th edition. (Belmont: Thompson Wadsworth, 2005).

February 9: Diplomacy and Politics at the United Nations

Attendance for this session is optional for students enrolled in PSCI 377.

Required Readings:

- Read: Jochen Prantl and Jean Krasner. “Informal Groups of Member States.” Ch. 10 (pp. 311-57) in *The United Nations: Confronting the Challenges of a Global Society*. (Boulder: Lynne Rienner, 2004).
- Skim: Department of State. 2005. “Country Voting Practices at the United Nations.” (introduction and relevant country voting patterns).
- Model United Nations of the Far West Delegate Handbook

February 16: UN Rules and Procedures

Required Readings

- MUNFW Rules of Procedure
- Individual readings based on committee and country assignments

Assignment Due:

- Country Profiles Due
- Map Quiz (in-class)

February 23: Country Profiles

Required Readings

- Diplomatic Strategy package.
- Individual readings based on committee and country assignments

Assignment Due:

- P-Rules Quiz (in-class)

March 2: Simulation (Topic TBA)

Assignment Due:

- Policy Statements

March 9: Simulation (Topic TBA)

Required Readings

- MUNFW Issues Book. Available online.
- Individual readings based on committee and country assignments

Assignment Due:

- Draft Resolutions

**March 16: Spring Break
No Classes**

March 23: Simulation (Topic TBA)

Required Readings

- Individual readings based on committee and country assignments

March 30: Simulation (Topic TBA)

Required Readings

- Individual readings based on committee and country assignments

April 6: Conference Final Preparation

Required Readings

- Individual readings based on committee and country assignments

Assignment Due:

- Plenary Speeches

**April 17-21: MUNFW Conference
San Francisco**

April 27: Conference Debriefing

Assignment Due:

- Notebooks and Reflection Papers