POLI 563B: International Organizations
Department: Political Science

Time: Thursdays 9.00 am – 12.00 noon
Location: Buchanan C403

Instructor: Katia Coleman
Buchanan C405
Office hours: T & Th 2.00 – 3.00 pm, or by appointment
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Course Description:

This seminar examines important debates about the role(s) of international organizations in international relations and provides an empirical introduction to several major contemporary intergovernmental organizations. It is designed to allow participants to gain empirical knowledge about a range of organizations; deepen their understanding of the various theoretical perspectives on international organizations; critically assess competing conceptual arguments about the role of these institutions; and think critically about whether, how, and under what conditions international organizations affect world politics.

Learning Objectives:

This course has five core learning objectives. Students will be able to:

1. Recognise the diversity of international organizations in the current international system, and build their empirical knowledge about key contemporary international organizations;

2. Recognise the existence, importance and trajectory of several key conceptual debates about the role of international organizations in contemporary international relations;

3. Engage critically with contemporary academic writing on international organizations, including by assessing the cogency of conceptual arguments and the persuasiveness of the empirical evidence provided to substantiate these arguments;

4. Connect academic debates about international organizations with current events, as reported in contemporary news reports;

5. EITHER hone their analytical and empirical research skills through an independent research paper OR develop their ability to write and pass a PhD-level examination focussed on international organizations by writing a mock comprehensive exam.

Prerequisites: Enrolment is restricted to MA and PhD students in Political Science.
Acknowledgement

UBC’s Point Grey Campus is located on the traditional, ancestral, and unceded territory of the Musqueam people. The land it is situated on has always been a place of learning for the Musqueam people, who for millennia have passed on in their culture, history, and traditions from one generation to the next on this site.

Course Requirements and Grading:

Students are required to: attend class regularly; prepare for class by reading and reflecting on the materials assigned below; participate constructively seminar discussions; prepare for and lead one ‘bringing in the news’ session; and write one short theoretical response paper and EITHER a research paper OR a mock comprehensive exam. These elements are described in more detail below. Grades for seminar participants will be based on the following:

- Participation: 30%
- Bringing in the News: 17.5%
- Short Paper: 17.5%
- Research Paper/Comp Exam: 35%

**Seminar participation.** Students are expected to attend the seminar regularly and to participate actively and constructively in seminar discussions. Debate is encouraged, and seminar participants should feel free to explore new ideas. Participants may not always agree with each other, or with the instructor: on many IR questions, reasonable people can disagree profoundly. Debate is most fruitful, however, when all participants treat each other with respect, take each other’s opinions seriously, and are willing to engage with new arguments and insights.

Seminar members will be asked to provide two anonymous written evaluations of each other’s contributions to class discussions (one at mid-term, the other at the end of the term), and these evaluations will factor into the seminar participation grades. Please let the instructor know immediately if you have any concerns about this.

**Bringing in the News.** This course often explores theoretical debates, but it seeks to ground discussions by bringing in concrete and contemporary empirical examples. Each seminar participant will take responsibility for helping to situate one week’s seminar discussion empirically by providing an example of a recent event or development that is relevant to the week’s readings. In Weeks 2 through 7, this will be an occurrence involving any intergovernmental organization (IGO) or regime that either illustrates the week’s readings or draws them into question. In the later weeks, this will be a recent action by or development in the organization studied.

Leading a “bringing in the news” discussion involves identifying a relevant recent event/development, describing it for the rest of the class, providing an initial argument about its relevance to the week’s theme, and responding to seminar members’ questions about the topic. Students should:

1. Circulate a short memo to seminar participants that identifies the event/development they will be focusing on (1-2 sentences), briefly states how they see it connecting to the week’s
readings (2-3 sentences) and links to one news article about the event/development. Memos are due by 4pm on the day before the relevant seminar;

2. Give a 10 to 12-minute (ruthlessly timed!) presentation in class providing: brief background information on the relevant international organization; an overview of the event/development; and a discussion of how it relates to the week’s theme, bringing in as many of the readings as are relevant. The event/development may support or illustrate some of the arguments made in the week’s readings, but you can also argue that it contradicts one or more of the readings or illustrates a different dynamic from those identified in the literature.

3. Lead a 5-minute Q&A and discussion session on the topic.

Seminar participants will be asked at the first seminar meeting to commit to the Week in which they will be responsible for “bringing in the news.” They should choose a week in which they do not intend to submit a short theoretical paper (see below).

Short Theoretical Paper. Each seminar participant must submit a 6-7 page paper for one of the seminars in Weeks 2 through 7. The paper should respond to the question listed above the week’s readings. More specifically, it should do three things (yes, in 6-7 pages…):

a) highlight the commonalities and differences in how the readings’ authors would respond to the question;

b) present a reasoned argument on how convincing these individual answers are;

c) reflect critically on the strengths and weaknesses of the week’s overall approach to international organizations.

Papers do not need to accomplish these tasks in order, but all three elements must be clearly developed. Papers need not give equal consideration to all texts, but should mention each text at least briefly. Papers are due in class on the day the readings are being discussed. The late penalty for this assignment is 5 percentage points (!) per 24-hour span after the due date. Students will be asked to commit to their paper topics at the first seminar meeting.

Research Paper OR Mock Comprehensive Exam There is a choice in the final assignment for this course. One option is to write a mock comprehensive exam, the other is to write a research paper. PhD students who intend to write their comprehensive exam in IR are strongly encouraged to write the mock comp exam, but may write a research paper if this supports their academic trajectory better. All other seminar participants are free to choose whichever option they prefer.

Mock comprehensive exams will be written under conditions that reflect the actual exam regulations, described in the Department’s Graduate Handbook (politics.ubc.ca/graduate/poli-graduate-handbook-html/). Research papers should be 20-21 pages long (double-spaced, 12-point font, 1-inch margins, page count may exclude bibliography and any appendices, within reason) and may focus on any contemporary intergovernmental organization or international regime. They should clearly pose a theoretically interesting research question related to international organizations, be explicit about why the question is important, and provide an argument about the answer to this question based on empirical research. Research topics must be discussed with the instructor and approved by Week 9 at the latest. Papers must include a title page and abstract, and follow a formal citation style. Papers must be submitted to TurnItIn (see below).

The mock comp will be held on Thursday 5 December (i.e. one week after the last class), which will also be the due date for the research papers. The late penalty for research papers is 3 points per 24-hour span after the due date.
General Course Policies

Attendance:
Regular attendance is expected of all students, but some absences are covered by UBC’s academic concessions policy (www.calendar.ubc.ca/vancouver/index.cfm?tree=3,329,0,0). Students who are unavoidably absent should speak to Prof. Coleman immediately on their return to classes to clarify the reasons for their absence and to discuss catching up on missed material.

Religious Holidays:
UBC permits students who are scheduled to attend classes or write examinations on holy days of their religions to notify their instructor in advance of their wish to observe these days by absenting themselves from the class or examination. Instructors will provide students the opportunity to make up work or examinations missed without penalty. (Policy # 65.)

Disabilities:
UBC is committed to the academic success of students with disabilities. UBC’s policy on Academic Accommodations for students with disabilities aims to remove barriers and provide equal access to University services, ensure fair and consistent treatment of all students, and create a welcoming environment. Students with a disability should meet with an Accessibility advisor to determine what accommodations/services they are eligible for, and provide the letter of Accommodation received to the instructor at the beginning of term or at the earliest available opportunity.

Appealing Grades:
Students who wish to appeal grades assigned to their academic work may do so. Initial re-grades will be done by Prof. Coleman. Regrade requests should include a written note explaining why the grade assigned does not appear accurate. Please note that grade can decrease as well as increase as a result of a re-grade. If the student remains unsatisfied with this process, he/she may proceed to the head of the department or further to a formal committee established in accordance with University policies.

University Values and Priorities:
UBC provides resources to support student learning and to maintain healthy lifestyles but recognizes that sometimes crises arise and so there are additional resources to access including those for survivors of sexual violence. UBC values respect for the person and ideas of all members of the academic community. Harassment and discrimination are not tolerated nor is suppression of academic freedom. UBC provides appropriate accommodation for students with disabilities and for religious and cultural observances. UBC values academic honesty and students are expected to acknowledge the ideas generated by others and to uphold the highest academic standards in all of their actions. Details of the policies and how to access support are available (https://senate.ubc.ca/policies-resources-support-student-success).

Academic Integrity and Responsibility:
As a member of this seminar, you are responsible for contributing to the course objectives through your participation in seminar discussions and your work on your assignments. In the process of coming into your own as an independent, responsible participant in the academic community, you are encouraged to seek advice, clarification, and guidance in your learning from your instructor. If you
decide to seek help beyond the resources of this course, you are responsible for ensuring that this help does not lead you to submit others’ work as your own. Academic communities depend on their members’ honesty and integrity in representing the sources of reasoning, claims, and wording that appear in their work. Like any other member of the academic community, you will be held responsible for the accurate representation of your sources: the means by which you produced the work you are submitting. If you are found to have misrepresented your sources and to have submitted others’ work as your own, penalties may follow. Your case may be forwarded to the Head of the Department, who may decide that you should receive zero for the assignment. The Head will report your case to the Dean’s Office, where the report will remain on file. The Head may decide, in consultation with your instructor, that a greater penalty is called for. If so, he/she will forward your case to the Dean’s Office. After an interview in the Dean’s Office, your case may be forwarded to the President’s Advisory Committee on Academic Misconduct. Following a hearing in which you will be asked to account for your actions, the President may apply penalties including zero for the assignment; zero for the course; suspension from the university for a period ranging from 4 to 24 months; a notation on your permanent record. The penalty may be a combination of these.

Like any academic author submitting work for review and evaluation, you are guaranteeing that the work you submit for this course has not already been submitted for credit in another course. Your submitting work from another course, without your instructor’s prior agreement, may result in penalties such as those applied to the misrepresentation of sources.

**TurnItIn:**

In accordance with departmental policy, in this course you will be required to submit your research paper in electronic form to a service called TurnItIn. UBC subscribes to this service, which checks written material for originality by searching for matching text. This service is in increasing use in universities as protection for students against the impact of academic fraud on scholarship competitions, graduate and law school admissions, and degree reputation. Students will submit their research papers to the TurnItIn website, where software scans the paper against a database which includes public websites, paper writing services, essays submitted to TurnItIn, and journal articles. The service then produces a report on the paper’s originality. The instructor will review the reports, and where necessary, the papers themselves. For more information on TurnItIn, reasons for its use, and general policies, see the UBC Vice President Academic and Provost web site, at: [http://www.vpacademic.ubc.ca/integrity/turnitin/index.htm](http://www.vpacademic.ubc.ca/integrity/turnitin/index.htm)

Students are required to submit one hard copy of their research paper in class and submit the same paper electronically to TurnItIn.

The following directions are taken (with minor modifications) from the UBC VP Academic website:

To submit your paper to TurnItIn, log on to the TurnItIn site, at: [www.turnitin.com](http://www.turnitin.com). You will be asked to create a unique “user profile,” consisting of an ID (e-mail address) and password (see upper right hand corner of the TurnItIn homepage). Once this ID is created, you will be able to add courses to your profile. To add a course, you will need the “course ID” which for this course is **21802353** and the course “enrollment key” which for this course is **IOGrad2019**.

Once added to a course, you will be able to submit your research paper to the service. You will be asked to provide your name and student number, as well as some details about your assignment. This
information will be used only to identify your submission to your instructor. Please ensure that there is NO IDENTIFYING INFORMATION included in the text of your assignment, including headers. This is for your own privacy – if you do submit identifying information by mistake and you are not concerned, you can leave it as is. You will be asked to cut and paste the body of your assignment, and the bibliography into separate fields within the website. Simply confirm the submission, and TurnItIn will issue a receipt via e-mail. If you encounter difficulties submitting your bibliography, do not be concerned. The important element is the body (text) of the paper.

Please note that TurnItIn stores information on servers located in the United States. If you do not wish to use your name when creating your TurnItIn account, please use the first 5 digits of your student number as an alias instead. If you wish to use a different alias, please inform Prof. Coleman.

Assignments are not accessible to the public once submitted to TurnItIn, and you, as the author, retain ownership of your original material. Your work will be added to TurnItIn’s archive for comparison against subsequently submitted material, thus ensuring that your work is not plagiarized.

Respectful University Environment:
UBC recognizes that “the best possible environment for working, learning and living is one in which respect, civility, diversity, opportunity and inclusion are valued.” The full UBC Statement on Respectful Environment for Students, Faculty and Staff can be found at www.hr.ubc.ca/respectful-environment/files/UBC-Statement-on-Respectful-Environment-2014.pdf. Students should read this statement carefully and take note of both the protections and the responsibilities that it outlines for all members of the UBC community. Students should also review the Student Code of Conduct, at: www.calendar.ubc.ca/vancouver/index.cfm?tree=3,54,750,0

This course values frank discussion, healthy debate, and the free and respectful exchange of ideas. Students are welcome to voice and defend their views, which may differ from those of other students or of the instructor. However, disrespectful behavior, including bullying and harassment, will not be tolerated. The instructor and teaching assistant will be professional and respectful in all their exchanges with students, and students will exercise similar professionalism and respect in their interactions with each other, with the teaching assistant, and with the instructor.

If you have any concerns about the class environment, please raise them with the instructor. You also have the options of contacting the Head of the Political Science Department, UBC’s Equity and Inclusion Office (http://equity.ubc.ca), or the UBC Ombudsperson for Students: https://ombudsoffice.ubc.ca

Equity and Harassment:
UBC is committed to equity (including but not limited to gender equity) and fostering a safe learning environment for everyone. All people should be able to study, work, and learn in a supportive environment that is free from sexual violence, harassment, and discrimination. UBC’s Policy #3 on Discrimination and Harassment defines harassment as: “unwanted and unwelcome attention from a person who knows, or ought to know, that the behaviour is unwelcome. Harassment can range from written or spoken comments to unwanted jokes, gifts, and physical assault, and may be accompanied by threats or promises regarding work or study opportunities and conditions. Harassment can be either a single incident or a series of related incidents.” Such behavior is not acceptable and will not be tolerated at UBC. If you or someone you know has encountered sexual violence or harassment,
you can find confidential support and resources at the AMS Sexual Assault Support Centre and the Equity and Inclusion Office. The SASC is an all-genders service that serves the UBC-Vancouver campus community and is committed to creating a safer campus community, free from sexualized violence. Their work is informed by feminism, anti-oppression and recognition of intersectionality. The Equity and Inclusion Office is committed to fostering a community in which human rights are respected and equity and diversity are integral to university life.

Resources are available at:

**Sexual Assault Support Centre (SASC);** 249M, Student Union Building, UBC  
604-827-5180; sasc@ams.ubc.ca; [http://amssasc.ca](http://amssasc.ca)

**Equity and Inclusion Office;** 2306 – 1874 East Mall (Brock Hall)  
604.822.6353; equity@equity.ubc.ca; [http://equity.ubc.ca](http://equity.ubc.ca)
Readings

Week 1 (5 September) – Introduction

Week 2 (12 September) – IOs as Tools Designed for Interstate Cooperation

Question: “How credible is it to envision international institutions as rationally designed tools for self-interested states?”


Week 3 (19 September) – IOs as Reflections and Tools of Power

Question: “What roles (if any) can international organizations play if the international system is structured by inter-state power politics?”

Week 4 (26 September) – IOs as Sites of Socialization

Question: “In what sense and under what conditions, if any, can international organizations change states’ identities and preferences?”


Week 5 (3 October) – International Secretariats as Independent (?) Actors

Question: “Under what conditions, if any, can the secretariat officials within international organizations exert independent influence over international politics?”

Week 6 (10 October) – IOs and Legitimacy


Week 7 (17 October) – Regime Complexity

Week 8 (24 October) – The United Nations


Week 9 (31 October) – The Global Financial Institutions: the IMF and the World Bank

Research paper topic must be cleared with me in writing by this date.

Week 10 (Need to reschedule from 7 November) – NATO

- Breedlove, P. 2016. NATO’s Next Act: How to Handle Russia and Other Threats. *Foreign Affairs.* 95(July/August): 96-105

Week 11 (14 November) – Regional Organizations

- We will discuss the structure of other reading assignments for this week in class.

Week 12 (21 November) – International Courts

Week 13 (29 November) – Conclusion, Paths not (sufficiently) taken and Final Assignment Discussion


- If you are writing the exam, please review the applicable sections of the department’s *Graduate Handbook* and IO sections of previous years’ comprehensive exams (on file with Josephine) and think about any questions you may have on either the format or the content of the exam.
- If you are writing a paper, be prepared to present a brief overview of your topic for class discussion, including your question, its theoretical relevance, how you intend to answer it, and your results to date (if any).