

POLS 4396:
Model United Nations (MUN)
Fall 2022

Instructor: Ryan Kennedy
Office: 447 Philip G. Hoffman (PGH)
Phone: 713-743-1663
Email: rkennedy@uh.edu
Class Time: 10:00-11:30 T/Th
Office Hours: Monday 2:00 – 4:00 PM

Teaching Assistant: Bonhoon Koo
Email: bonhoonku@gmail.com
Office Hours: Wednesday 1:00 – 3:00 PM

Course Description:

The course teaches international politics and diplomacy through simulations of the United Nations. During this course, students will learn about how the United Nations works, what topics it covers, and how states behave within the UN.

By the end of the course, students will have done substantial research into the topics before the UN, the policies and politics of a country, written topic guides, position papers and resolutions for their country, practiced negotiation, and participated in a General Assembly simulation.

This is not a course on the history of the UN or international organizations. Students are encouraged to enroll in other courses which cover these topics. This course focuses on learning through simulation and participation, and will only briefly touch on the basics of the UN and international organizations.

Some of you will be asked to represent countries, and take positions, that you might not agree with. Indeed, it is highly unlikely that you will agree with all of your country's positions. Part of the value in this course comes from learning about and understanding positions you may not personally hold. Many times ambassadors to the UN will not agree with the policies of the countries they represent, but they do not have the option of giving less effort because of it. You will learn more and be more effective in the simulation if you accept that you will not always agree with the position of your country and accurately represent them to the best of your ability.

Finally, students should note that, while the reading load for this course is relatively light, the expectations and work load for this course are high. Students will be giving several presentations, numerous speeches, preparing position papers, and writing resolutions. In addition, negotiation activity and preparation outside of the class' formal sessions is strongly encouraged. These activities will be fun and rewarding, but students should not expect this to be an easy A.

Learning Objectives:

- Students will be able to demonstrate a fundamental understanding of the United Nations system and how it works.
- Students will be able to apply parliamentary procedure in simulation meetings.
- Students will be able to collaborate and identify multiple perspectives on issues before the international community.

- Students will be able to present their views in a coherent and persuasive manner.
- Students will be able to create coherent policy proposals and to critically examine the proposals of others.
- Students will be able to critically evaluate their work in the context of negotiations.

Assignments and Grading:

Students will be asked to write a paper discussing an issue before the UN General Assembly in our simulation. These will be 5 pages (not including references, cover page, tables and figures, etc.) and should be thoroughly researched. Students will also write two position papers. One of these will be for public consumption and one of them will be “white papers” for internal use. The public position papers should be two to three pages. The internal position paper should be 5 pages. Although these are short papers, they should be thoroughly researched, and make reference to UN documents and the students’ research on his/her country.

Students will also be asked to write three resolutions for the General Assembly simulation. These resolutions should make reference to previous UN actions, statements, and/or documents. Supporting documents will be turned in along with the resolutions.

A large portion of your grade will be based on participation. **You cannot have a good class participation grade with poor attendance.** If you must miss a class where you are scheduled to present, please let me know immediately. Participation includes making formal speeches and motions in the simulation, as well as being active in informal negotiations and caucusing. There are several methods for informal negotiations. In addition to suspensions and informal sessions in the class, I encourage students to continue negotiations outside of the classroom and keep me apprised of their progress. **In any classroom or internet discussions, be respectful and courteous to your classmates. Decorum is an important part of the UN, violations of such decorum will be considered poor performance when it comes to evaluating the quality of your participation in the simulation. Harassment or bullying will not be tolerated and may be reported to the University.**

Early in the semester, students will have an individual presentation about the issues before the General Assembly (about 5 minutes per presentation). There will be another presentation (about 5 minutes) on the position of your country on the issues being discussed, including the priorities for your country. Students are also expected to pass a rules quiz on GA procedures (which is pass/fail), and to take a quiz on the history and structure of the UN. Students who do not pass the quiz the first time, will be allowed to re-take the quiz until they pass.

As we go through the simulation, students will be asked to submit three 1-2 page progress reports that detail what they have been trying to accomplish in the simulation and the steps they have taken towards accomplishing those goals. These are essentially briefs for your home governments and should detail negotiations that have taken place, resolutions passed, and other accomplishments or challenges.

Finally, students will be asked to write a three page reflection paper in which they will discuss their experience, and in particular, how they viewed their role in negotiations and what they learned from the experience.

You will keep all your materials, including your position papers and supporting research in a computer folder for easy reference during the simulations. You will also turn this in at the end of the semester for evaluation.

The breakdown of grades is as follows:

GA Topic paper	30 pts.
GA Topic Presentation	10 pts.
GA Internal Position Paper	30 pts.
GA External Position Paper	20 pts.
GA Position Presentation	10 pts.
GA Resolutions	30 pts.
GA rules quiz (pass/fail)	20 pts.
UN Quiz	20 pts.
Progress Reports	30 pts.
Reflection Paper	20 pts.
Binder	30 pts.
Participation	100 pts.
Total	350 pts

The grading scale (in percent) is:

93-100	A
90-92	A-
87-89	B+
83-86	B
80-82	B-
77-79	C+
73-76	C
70-72	C-
67-69	D+
63-66	D
60-62	D-
< 60	F

[Note: This is a percentage grade. If a curve is applied, there may be a discrepancy between the percentage grade and the points grade.]

Readings:

No books are required for this class. All necessary readings can be downloaded from Blackboard. There are a number of Model United Nations conferences. We will be using the rules, procedures and preparation materials for the one I am most familiar with, the American Model United Nations conference (www.amun.org). A large amount of outside reading will be necessitated, however, as students formulate their position papers and resolutions.

COVID-19 Absences:

If you are experiencing any COVID-19 symptoms that are not clearly related to a pre-existing medical condition, do not come to class. Please see [Student Protocols](#) for what to do if you experience symptoms and [Potential Exposure to Coronavirus](#) for what to do if you have potentially been exposed to COVID-19. Consult the (select: [Undergraduate Excused Absence Policy](#) or [Graduate Excused Absence Policy](#)) for information regarding excused absences due to medical reasons.

COVID-19 Information:

Students are encouraged to visit the University's [COVID-19](#) website for important information including diagnosis and symptom protocols, on-campus testing, and vaccine information. Please check the website throughout the semester for updates.

Vaccinations:

Data suggests that vaccination remains the best intervention for reliable protection against COVID-19. Students are asked to familiarize themselves with pertinent [vaccine information](#) and to consult with their health care provider. The University strongly encourages all students, faculty and staff to be vaccinated.

Reasonable Academic Adjustments/Auxiliary Aids:

The University of Houston complies with Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 and the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990, pertaining to the provision of reasonable academic adjustments/auxiliary aids for disabled students. In accordance with Section 504 and ADA guidelines, UH strives to provide reasonable academic adjustments/auxiliary aids to students who request and require them. If you believe that you have a disability requiring an academic adjustments/auxiliary aid, please contact [the Justin Dart Jr. Student Accessibility Center](#) (formerly the Justin Dart, Jr. Center for Students with DisABILITIES).

Excused Absence Policy:

Regular class attendance, participation, and engagement in coursework are important contributors to student success. Absences may be excused as provided in the University of Houston [Undergraduate Excused Absence Policy](#) and [Graduate Excused Absence Policy](#) for reasons including: medical illness of student or close relative, death of a close family member, legal or government proceeding that a student is obligated to attend, recognized professional and educational activities where the student is presenting, and University-sponsored activity or athletic competition. Under these policies, students with excused absences will be provided with an opportunity to make up any quiz, exam or other work that contributes to the course grade or a satisfactory alternative. Please read the full policy for details regarding reasons for excused absences, the approval process, and extended absences. Additional policies address absences related to [military service](#), [religious holy days](#), [pregnancy and related conditions](#), and [disability](#).

Recording of Class:

Students may not record all or part of class, livestream all or part of class, or make/distribute screen captures, without advanced written consent of the instructor. If you have or think you may have a disability such that you need to record class-related activities, please contact the [Justin Dart, Jr. Student Accessibility Center](#). If you have an accommodation to record class-related activities, those recordings may not be shared with any other student, whether in this course or not, or with any other person or on any other platform. Classes may be recorded by the instructor. Students may use instructor's recordings for their own studying and notetaking. Instructor's recordings are not authorized to be shared with *anyone* without the prior written approval of the instructor. Failure to comply with requirements regarding recordings will result in a disciplinary referral to the Dean of Students Office and may result in disciplinary action.

Syllabus Changes:

Due to the changing nature of the COVID-19 pandemic, please note that the instructor may need to make modifications to the course syllabus and may do so at any time. Notice of such changes will be announced as quickly as possible through email and Teams announcements.

Resources for Online Learning:

The University of Houston is committed to student success, and provides information to optimize the online learning experience through our [Power-On](#) website. Please visit this website for a comprehensive set of resources, tools, and tips including: obtaining access to the internet, AccessUH, and Blackboard; requesting a laptop through the Laptop Loaner Program; using your smartphone as a webcam; and downloading Microsoft Office 365 at no cost. For questions or assistance contact UHOnline@uh.edu.

UH Email:

Please check and use your CougarNet email for communications related to this course. To access this email, [login](#) to your Microsoft 365 account with your CougarNet credentials.

Academic Honesty Policy:

High ethical standards are critical to the integrity of any institution, and bear directly on the ultimate value of conferred degrees. All UH community members are expected to contribute to an atmosphere of the highest possible ethical standards. Maintaining such an atmosphere requires that any instances of academic dishonesty be recognized and addressed. The [UH Academic Honesty Policy](#) is designed to handle those instances with fairness to all parties involved: the students, the instructors, and the University itself. All students and faculty of the University of Houston are responsible for being familiar with this policy.

Title IX/Sexual Misconduct:

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Security Escorts and Cougar Ride:

UHPD continually works with the University community to make the campus a safe place to learn, work, and live. Our Security escort service is designed for the community members who have safety concerns and would like to have a Security Officer walk with them, for their safety, as they make their way across campus. Based on availability either a UHPD Security Officer or Police Officer will escort students, faculty, and staff to locations beginning and ending on campus. If you feel that you need a Security Officer to walk with you for your safety please call [713-743-3333](tel:713-743-3333). Arrangements may be made for special needs.

Parking and Transportation Services also offers a late-night, on-demand shuttle service called Cougar Ride that provides rides to and from all on-campus shuttle stops, as well as the MD Anderson Library, Cougar Village/Moody Towers and the UH Technology Bridge. Rides can be requested through the UH Go app. Days and hours of operation can be found at <https://uh.edu/af-university-services/parking/cougar-ride/>.

Helpful Information:

Coogs Care: <https://uh.edu/dsa/coogscare/>

Student Health Center: <https://www.uh.edu/healthcenter/>

Class Schedule

Week 1: Introduction and Assignments (8/23, 8/25)

- Introduction to the course
- Country and topic assignments
- Discussion of topic reports

Week 2: Introduction to the UN (8/30, 9/1) [Last Day to Add a Class, 8/29]

- History and structure of the UN
- The General Assembly
- Issues before the United Nations
- Readings:
 - AMUN Introduction to the United Nations
 - Origin and History of the UN
 - The UN Charter
 - A Practical Guide to the United Nations General Assembly
 - Report of the Secretary General on the Work of the UN

Week 3: Introduction to Model UN (9/6, 9/8) [Last Day to Drop Without a W, 9/7]

- Rules and procedures
- Writing a resolution
- Writing an internal and external position paper
- Readings:
 - AMUN Research and Preparation
 - AMUN Introduction to UN Documents
 - GA Rules and Procedures
 - GA Rules Short Form
 - Document Format and Style
- Assignments:
 - UN History and Structure Quiz (due by midnight Thursday)

Week 4: Issues Before the General Assembly (9/13, 9/15)

- Student presentations of topic reports
- Assignments:
 - Issue Before the UN Paper (due by midnight on Saturday)
- [NOTE: Professor will be traveling on the 15th, so class will be cancelled on the 15th.]

Week 5: Strategy and Negotiation in Model United Nations (9/20, 9/22)

- Position presentation and strategy
- Setting the agenda
- Role playing
- Strategies in Model UN
- Readings:

- Simulations, Roles and Roleplaying
- Assignment:
 - Rules Quiz (should have taken at least once before midnight Thursday)

Week 6: Practice GA Simulation (9/27, 9/29)

- Rules practice
- Stump the chair
- Student chairing
- Readings:
 - Student Issue Papers
- Assignments:
 - Internal and External Position Papers (due by midnight on Saturday)

Week 7: Opening of the UH General Assembly (10/4, 10/6)

- Student position presentations
- Readings:
 - External Position Papers
- Assignment:
 - Must pass Rules Quiz by midnight Thursday
 - Resolutions Due by midnight Thursday

Week 8: General Assembly Simulation (10/11, 10/13)

- Readings:
 - Resolutions

Week 9: General Assembly Simulation (10/18, 10/20)

- Readings
 - Resolutions and Amendments
- Assignments:
 - Progress report 1 (due by midnight Saturday)

Week 10: General Assembly Simulation (10/25, 10/27)

- Readings:
 - Resolutions and Amendments

Week 11: General Assembly Simulation (11/1, 11/3)

- Readings:
 - Resolutions and Amendments
- Assignments:
 - Progress report 2 (due by midnight Saturday)

Week 12: General Assembly Simulation (11/8, 11/10)

- Readings:
 - Resolutions and Amendments

Week 13: General Assembly Simulation (11/15, 11/17) [Last Day to Drop with a W, 11/17]

- Readings:
 - Resolutions and Amendments

- Assignments:
 - Progress report 3 (due by midnight Saturday)

[Thanksgiving Break, no class 11/22 and 11/24]

Week 14: General Assembly Simulation and Reflection (11/29, 12/1)

- Readings:
 - Resolutions and Amendments
- Assignments:
 - Reflection Paper (due by midnight Tuesday)
 - Binder (due by midnight Tuesday)