
Course plan

B2.515 - Introduction to the UN System

Credits: 4.0

Subject coordinator

Miguel Ángel Elizalde Carranza

Course instructors

Cristian Gimenez Corte , Leila Benkirane and Patricia de Briones .

Index

Presentation

Description

The course as part of the programme as a whole

Professional fields it is linked to

Prior knowledge

Objectives and competencies

Content

Resources

Support tools and learning resources

Bibliography and information sources

Key dates

Presentation

Description

Diplomats, government officials, international civil servants, consultants, and other actors must be able to understand and often work with the United Nations, and UN agencies, in order to achieve their objectives and advance their interests. As an increasingly globalized world continues to underline the importance of multilateral dialogue and cooperation in confronting this century's challenges, the UN will remain a central forum for progressing ideas and a platform for action.

The course on Introduction to the United Nations Systems aims to provide an overview of the United Nations system by analyzing the historical origins of international organizations, and then focusing on the United Nations Organizations, its principal organs; their structure, functions and financing.

The course is divided into three activity-centered units. The first Unit will be dedicated to present the history and **origins of the United Nations**, focusing on its predecessor: The League of Nations. As the League of Nations was established mainly to provide for collective security, this first part includes also the analysis of the main functions and powers of the **United Nations Security Council**, one of the crucial organs of the current international system.

The second Unit of the course will be focused on the work, function and structure of the remaining **UN principal organs**, namely the Secretariat, the General Assembly, the Economic and Social Council and the International Court of Justice.

The third Unit will be focused on the **financing system of the United Nations**. Students will examine the three pillars of financing the UN and will also explore a series of proposals for reform to improve the financial situation of the Organisation.

The course as part of the programme as a whole

The Master's Degree in International Affairs and Diplomacy and related qualifications (UOC - UNITAR) is designed for diplomats, international civil servants (staff members of international organizations), and government officials involved in international affairs, as well as those persons involved in international relations or seeking a career in this field. The course Introduction to the United Nations will provide the students with a comprehensive understanding of the functioning of the United Nations System, its main organs and its financing.

Professional fields it is linked to

- National bodies (such as government ministries and departments, civil services, think-tanks and policy advisory groups)
- Embassies, consulates, and missions to international organizations
- International organisations (such as the UN, UN agencies, EU departments, World Bank, NATO, WTO)
- Campaign groups, aid agencies and other nongovernmental organizations (NGOs)
- Companies operating at the international level
- Journalists and other media professionals
- International consultants,
- Banking, financial services and corporate consultancy
- University lecturers, researchers and scholars

Prior knowledge

No prior knowledge is required, although some notions of International Relations theories might be useful.

Objectives and competencies

The course Introduction to the United System aims to help the students:

- Understand the United Nations system's goals, function and structure
- Explain the work of the UN's principal organs and their development
- Identify current and salient issues relevant to the UN
- Explain a brief history of the UN system and its predecessors
- Develop independent research and analytical skills

Content

UNIT	CONTENT	MATERIALS	ACTIVITIES
		Week 1:	
	Week 1: What is the UN System. Historical background: the League of Nations and the UN	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> MacKenzie, D. 2010, A World Beyond Borders: An Introduction to the History of International Organizations, Toronto, University of Toronto Press., Chapter I: An introduction to International organizations, Chapter II: The League of Nations, pp. 1-30. 	
	Week 2: The UN Security Council.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reinalda, B. 2014, 'From the Congress of Vienna to Present-Day International Organizations', UN Chronicle, LI (3), 1-2. 	
Week 1: Introduction to the United Nations System		Week 2:	CAT 1
2: The Security Council	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Introduction to the Security Council 2. Functions and powers 3. Composition of the Security Council 4. Decision Making Process 5. Security Council Reform 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Weiss, T., Daws, S. 2018, The Oxford Handbook on the United Nations, 2nd edn, Oxford, Oxford University Press. United Nations, Charter of the United Nations, 24 October 1945, 1 UNTS XVI (Chapters V to VII). United Nations Security Council, United Nations Security Council, United Nations (official website). United Nations Security Council, United Nations Security Council FAQ, United Nations (official website). 	
	Week 3:	Week 3:	CAT 2

		<ul style="list-style-type: none">· Weiss, T., Daws, S. 2018, The Oxford Handbook on the United Nations, 2nd edn, Oxford, Oxford University Press.
Week 3: The General Assembly of the United Nations	Introduction to the General Assembly <ul style="list-style-type: none">· Introduction to the General Assembly· Composition of the General Assembly· Functions and Powers· Decision Making Process· Subsidiary Organs	<ul style="list-style-type: none">· United Nations, Charter of the United Nations, 24 October 1945, 1 UNTS XVI (Chapter IV)· United Nations, United Nations General Assembly Chapter IV, United Nations (official website)
	Week 4:	Week 4:
	<ul style="list-style-type: none">· Introduction to ECOSOC· Functions and Powers	<ul style="list-style-type: none">· Weiss, T., Daws, S. 2018, The Oxford Handbook on the United Nations, 2nd edn, Oxford, Oxford University Press.· United Nations, Charter of the United Nations, 24 October 1945, 1 UNTS XVI (Chapter IX).· United Nations, ECOSOC, United Nations (official website).
Week 4: The Economic and Social Council	Week 5: <ul style="list-style-type: none">· Introduction to the ICJ· Functions and powers· Composition of the ICJ	Week 5: <ul style="list-style-type: none">· Weiss, T., Daws, S. 2018, The Oxford Handbook on the United Nations, 2nd edn, Oxford, Oxford University Press.
Week 5: The International Court of Justice	Week 6: <ul style="list-style-type: none">· Introduction he Secretariat· The role of the Secretary General· Functions and structure	<ul style="list-style-type: none">· United Nations, Charter of the United Nations, 24 October 1945, 1 UNTS XVI (Chapter XIV)· United Nations, Statute of the International Court of Justice , 18 April 1946
Week 6: The Secretariat of the United Nations	<ul style="list-style-type: none">· UN personnel	<ul style="list-style-type: none">· United Nations, International Court of Justice, United Nations (official website)
		Week 6: <ul style="list-style-type: none">· Weiss, T., Daws, S. 2018, The Oxford Handbook on the United

Nations, 2nd edn, Oxford, Oxford University Press.

- United Nations, Charter of the United Nations, 24 October 1945, 1 UNTS XVI (Chapter XV)

- United Nations, Secretariat, United Nations (official website)

- United Nations, United Nations Secretary-General, United Nations

Week 7 and 8:
Financing the United Nations System

1. Assessed and voluntary contributions across the UN system.

- Weiss, T., Daws, S. 2018, The Oxford Handbook on the United Nations, 2nd edn, Oxford, Oxford University Press.

CAT 3

- United Nations, UN Finance Table and Charts, Global Policy Forum.

Resources

Support tools and learning resources

Bibliography and information sources

Unit 1: Introduction to the United Nations System and the Security Council

Week 1: Introduction to the United Nations System

Mandatory Readings

MacKenzie, David (2010), A World Beyond Borders: An Introduction to the History of International Organizations, Toronto: University of Toronto Press., Chapter I: An introduction to International organizations, Chapter II: The League of Nations, pp. 1-30 ((30 ps)) In Resources -del aula

UN, From the Congress of Vienna to Present-Day International Organization, pp. 1-2 (02pp) <https://unchronicle.un.org/article/congress-vienna-present-day-international-organizations> [public/free access]

Additional Materials

UN, Basic Facts about the United Nations, 42nd Edition, 2015, Chapter I, UN Charter, Structure and System, pp 02-32, https://read.un-ilibrary.org/united-nations/basic-facts-about-the-united-nations-42nd-edition_6dbc0d6c-en#page1

Katz Cogan, J.; Hurd, I.; Johnstone, I.; The Oxford Handbook of International Organizations, November 10, 2016, Oxford University Press, Part I: Introduction and Part II: History.

The Covenant of the League of Nations https://avalon.law.yale.edu/20th_century/leagcov.asp

The Charter of the United Nations. <https://www.un.org/en/documents/charter/>

Reinalda, B. (2009), Routledge History of International Organizations: From 1815 to the present. New York: Routledge, 2009. In Resources -del aula

Eloranta, J. "Why did the League of Nations Fail?" Cliometrica (2011) 5:27-52. <https://dokumen.tips/documents/full-text-5584607299727.html>

Web links

List of International Organizations - <https://unstats.un.org/unsd/iiss/List-of-International-Organizations.ashx>

Recommended Video Lectures.

The Legal Personality of International Organizations - https://legal.un.org/avl/intro/welcome_avl.html

Week 2: The Security Council of the United Nations

Mandatory Readings

Weiss, T.; Daws, S. (ed); The Oxford Handbook on the United Nations (Oxford Handbooks), 2nd Edition, 2018, Part III. Chapter 7: Security Council ((25 ps))

The Charter of the United Nations, <https://www.un.org/en/documents/charter/> (Chapters V to VII)

The Security Council official webpage - <https://www.un.org/en/sc/>

FAQ on the Security Council - <https://www.un.org/en/sc/about/faq.shtml>

Additional Materials

UN, Basic Facts about the United Nations, 42nd Edition, 2015, Chapter II, International Peace and Security, pp 57-69 (for a general overview on the current developments related to the SC) - https://read.un-ilibrary.org/united-nations/basic-facts-about-the-united-nations-42nd-edition_2faf3279-en#page1

UN, Report of the Security Council for 2017, A/72/2, General Assembly Official Records Seventy-second Session Supplement No. 2, United Nations, New York, 2018, <https://undocs.org/A/72/2>

Luck, E.C.; UN Security Council - Practice and promise, Routledge Global Institutions (ed. by Thomas G. Weiss), London, 2006, pp 1-28; 111-132

Unit 2 The Principal Organs of the United Nations

Week 3: The General Assembly

Mandatory Readings

Weiss, T.; Daws, S. (ed); The Oxford Handbook on the United Nations (Oxford Handbooks), 2nd Edition, 2018, Chapter 6: The General Assembly, ((17 pg))

The Charter of the United Nations, <https://www.un.org/en/documents/charter/> (Chapter IV)

The General Assembly official website - <https://www.un.org/en/ga/>(Chapter IV)

Additional Materials

United Nations Handbook 2017-18, Published by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade/Manat ū Aorere, Private Bag 18-901, Wellington, New Zealand, pp. 11-76 (for general and updated information on the GA)

- https://www.mfat.govt.nz/assets/Peace-and-Security/United_Nations_Handbook_2017_18.pdf free/public access

IPI, High Level Report, From Promise to Practice: Revitalizing the General Assembly for the New Millennium, Summary and Programme of Action of the High-Level Retreat, 2003, pp. 1-9 - <https://www.ipinst.org/2003/05/from-promise-to-practice-revitalizing-the-general-assembly-for-the-new-millennium>

UN, Basic Facts about the United Nations, 42nd Edition, 2015, pp. 5-6 and pp 58-59 (for a general overview on the current developments related to the GA) - https://read.un-ilibrary.org/united-nations/basic-facts-about-the-united-nations-42nd-edition_2faf3279-en#page1

Week 4: The ECOSOC

Mandatory Readings

Weiss, T.; Daws, S. (ed); The Oxford Handbook on the United Nations (Oxford Handbooks), 2nd Edition, 2018, Chapter 8: The Economic and Social Council ((12 pp)).

Charter of the United Nations - <https://www.icj-cij.org/documents/index.php?p1=4&p2=1&p3=0>(Chapter IX)

ECOSOC Official webpage - <https://www.un.org/ecosoc/en/>

Additional Materials

UN, Basic Facts about the United Nations, 42nd Edition, 2015, Chapter I, UN Charter, Structure and System, pp 128-194, https://read.un-ilibrary.org/united-nations/basic-facts-about-the-united-nations-42nd-edition_6dbc0d6c-en#page1 public/free access

Weiss, Thomas; ECOSOC IS Dead, Long Live ECOSOC, Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung| Global Policy and Development, New York. - <https://library.fes.de/pdf-files/bueros/usa/07709.pdf>

UN, SG Report - December 2017, Repositioning the United Nations development system to deliver on the 2030 Agenda: our promise for dignity, prosperity and peace on a healthy planet - <https://www.un.org/ecosoc/en/node/3553102>

Week 5: The International Court of Justice.

Mandatory Readings

Weiss, T.; Daws, S. (ed); The Oxford Handbook on the United Nations (Oxford Handbooks), 2nd Edition, 2018, Chapter 10: The International Court of Justice((22 ps))

Charter of the United Nations - <https://www.icj-cij.org/documents/index.php?p1=4&p2=1&p3=0> (Chapter XIV)

Statute of the Court - <https://www.icj-cij.org/documents/index.php?p1=4&p2=2&p3=0>

International Court of Justice Official website - <https://www.icj-cij.org/en>

Additional Materials

Lang, A. (2013), The role of the International Court of Justice in a context of fragmentation. International and Comparative Law Quarterly,62(4), 777-812. In Resources -del aula

Suggested Video Lecture:

Ms. Vera Gowlland-Debbas, The International Court of Justice as the Principal Judicial Organ of the United Nations - https://legal.un.org/avl/ls/Gowlland-Debbas_CT_video_1.html

Week 6: The Secretariat

Mandatory Readings

Weiss, T.; Daws, S. (ed); The Oxford Handbook on the United Nations (Oxford Handbooks), 2nd Edition, 2018, Chapter 11: The Secretariat. Independence and Reform, and Chapter 12: The Secretary-General((19 ps))

The Charter of the United Nations, <https://www.un.org/en/documents/charter/> (Chapter XV)

The Secretariat official website - <https://www.un.org/en/sections/about-un/secretariat/>

The Secretary-General official website - <https://www.un.org/sg/en>

Additional Materials

Gimenez-Corte, C., Shake It Up: The Case for Reforming the United Nations (or a Real Global Governance Model for the Ideal of World Peace). Global Challenges Foundation, (May 2, 2018), pp. 3-14. Available at SSRN: <https://ssrn.com/abstract=3267539> or <https://dx.doi.org/10.2139/ssrn.3267539>

Weiss, Thomas G., What Happened to the Idea of World Government, International Studies Quarterly (2009) 53, 253-271, <https://www.worldfederalistscanada.org/documents/09TWeissreWrlGovt.pdf>

Gimenez-Corte, C, What's wrong with the United Nations? (And why nobody cares) (July 26, 2018). International Politics Reviews, May 2018, Volume 6, Issue 1, pp 30-41, DOI: 10.1057/s41312-018-0061-9. Available at SSRN: <https://ssrn.com/abstract=>

UN, Deliver as One, Report of the High-level Panel on United Nations System-wide Coherence in the areas of development, humanitarian assistance and the environment, New York, 2006, pp. 52-88, https://www.un.org/en/ga/search/view_doc.asp?symbol=A/61/583

United Nations Handbook 2017-18, Published by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade/Manatū Aorere, Private Bag 18-901, Wellington, New Zealand, pp. 206-238 (for general and updated information on the Secretariat) - https://www.mfat.govt.nz/assets/Peace-and-Security/United_Nations_Handbook_2017_18.pdf

Unit 3 Financing the United Nations

Weeks 7 and 8: Financing the UN

Mandatory readings

Weiss, T.; Daws, S. (ed); The Oxford Handbook on the United Nations (Oxford Handbooks), 2nd Edition, 2018, Chapter 13: Financing.((23 pp.))

UN Finance Tables and Charts - <https://www.globalpolicy.org/un-finance/tables-and-charts-on-un-finance.html>

Additional Materials

McClellan, A. y Volker, L., Financing the United Nations, Dialogues on Globalization, New York, April 2006, <https://library.fes.de/pdf-files/iez/global/50425.pdf>

Weisser, E. (2009) Financing the United Nations. Dialogues on Globalization, New York, March 2009, https://www.fes-globalization.org/publicationsNY/FES_FactSheetFinancingUN-EvameriaWeisser.pdf

Wasim Mir, The UN's Precarious Financial Situation Places Missions and People at Risk, IPI Global Observatory, April 2019, <https://theglobalobservatory.org/2019/04/un-precarious-financial-situation-places-missions-people-at-risk/>
