



Mahidol University  
International College

## ICIR 222 International Organizations

### Course Description & Aims:

This course is an outline of the major international organizations (IOs) today. It will look at their structure, duties, directions, obligations, and success. The course focuses on the large International Governmental Organizations (IGOs) such as the United Nations as well as Non Governmental Organizations (NGOs), and Multinational Corporations (MNCs). Theories concerning IOs will be discussed at the beginning of the course to guide students through the rest of the materials. The various IOs are examined in two ways: firstly, a description of their structure, function, and activities. Secondly, there will be a critical analysis of their role in global politics, the success of their mission, and potential biases or agendas which affect their activities. The course will examine the problems of cooperation in the international system and how institutions are designed and constructed to overcome these problems. Particular emphasis will be placed on students' ability to think critically, both about the nature of problems that face states as well as development of global governance mechanisms.

The development of international organizations since the 19th century; their nature, function, and purpose; contemporary global and regional international organizations (the United Nations, ILO, WTO, and the IMF; the EU, ASEAN, NAFTA, APEC, etc.); their effectiveness and future. Students will remember; understand; analyze; assess organizations from a comparative perspective.

Lecturer: Dr. Natanaree Posrithong

Office number and hours:

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### Assessment

Quiz on theories and history of IOs	20%
Group presentation	15%
Proposal for individual project	15%
Term paper	40%
Class participation	10%

### Course Learning Outcomes

At the completion of the course the student will be able to:

1. Outline major international relations theories on International Organization
2. Describe the structure and function of the main IGOs such as the United Nations
3. Analyze the social, political, and economic influences effecting IOs
4. Explain some of the current concerns to international organizations such as conflict, the environment, resource management, and the rule of law.

Topic No.	Topic
1	Introduction, Differences of International Organizations
2	Theories of International Organizations
3	Early Development: Concert of Europe to the League of Nations
4	The UN: Basic Principles and Organization
5	UN Case Studies/ <b>Quiz</b>
6	Post World War II Organizations
7	Group Presentations
8	Bretton Woods Institutions: origins, structure
9	International Non-Governmental Organizations
10	Regional Organizations
11	Field trip/ Individual Project Wrap-up
12	Future trends of International Organizations

### **Assessment Methods & Criteria**

#### **1. Quiz on theories and history of International Organization 20%**

The quiz will be held in Week 5 and cover the topics from week 1 to 5. The Quiz is divided into 2 parts. Part I consists of short-answer questions on theories and early developments of world's international organizations. Part II focused on the analysis of the case study. Students will apply UN resolution methods to solve the scenario of the international dispute.

#### **2. Group Presentation 15%**

In a group of maximum 4 students, they will be 20 minutes to present their chosen organization to the entire class and this must include some sort of visual medium (poster, powerpoint, video, etc...). Students should demonstrate the aims of the organization, its structure, type of organization, and the strengths and weaknesses. The group presentation would be evaluated based on the incorporate critical thinking in an effort to analyze the organization with other classmates.

#### **3. Proposal for Individual Project 15%**

From the chosen international organization for the group presentations, students will draft a proposal to tackle the problem encountered by the organization. The proposals should be between 500 and 800 words and should include the following.

- A working title
- An outline of the main points to be discussed in the final paper
- An explanation of what sources students will use and how they will benefit the projects
- A preliminary bibliography.

#### **3. Term paper 40%**

The term paper allows students to demonstrate the acquired knowledge over the course of this class. It should develop from the approved project proposal and submit in Week 12. There are three parts: 1) the main issue area you deem necessary for attention/expenditure and why; 2) an analysis of how addressing this issue and allocating money towards it can help increase global governance effectiveness in the arena of your choosing; and 3) your project outline and logistics. This paper should be no longer than 2000 words. It is a standard paper that should include an introduction, the main sections and a conclusion. It must be properly cited, including in-text citations and a bibliography/works cited page.

#### **4. Participation 10%**

Students will receive between 0% and 5% for attendance, with lateness also being taken into consideration. Students will also receive between 0% and 5% for participating in class; this includes being an active member of a group during group work activities, and asking and answering questions.

## Introduction, Differences of International Organizations

**Topic description:** Students will be introduced to the course outline and forms of assessment. The lecturer will explain the differences between International Governmental Organizations, Non-Governmental Organizations, and Multinational Organizations.

**Expected learning outcomes:** Students will be able to explain the differences between international organizations around the world.

### **Readings and activities:**

- In class: Brainstorming for the list of the most prominent IGOs and NGOs
- Volker Rittberger and Benrhard Zangl (2006). *International Organization: Politics, Politics, and Policies*. London: Palgrave.

## Theories of International Organizations

**Topic description:** Students will be introduced to theories of international organization. Different theories from Plato, Confucious, Grotius, Kant, and Bentham will be explored. The lecturer will also provide historical backgrounds of each main theory for the better understanding of international organization theories. The Peloponnesian War, American Revolution, and French Revolution will also be discussed in class.

**Expected learning outcomes:** Students will be able to relate key theories of international organizations.

### **Readings and activities:**

- Wohlforth, William and Stephen G. Brooks. *International Relations Theory and the Case Against Unilateralism*. *Perspectives on Politics* 3(3):509-24.
- J Samuel Barkin (2006). "Regimes and Institutions." *International Organization: Theories and Institutions*. London: Palgrave.
- In class: students will get together in groups and discuss various theories of international organizations, their pros and cons and how they functioned in history.

## Early Development: Concert of Europe to the League of Nations

**Topic description:** Students will explore the origins of the Concert of Europe and the League of Nations as the earliest international governmental organizations in the world. The structure, motives of major member states, conflicts, strengths and weaknesses will be discussed in class. Failures of the League of Nations in the 1930s will be determined through case studies of the Japanese aggression in China, the Italian invasion of Ethiopia and Nazi invasions in Europe.

**Expected learning outcomes:** Students will be able to understand and analyze the strengths and weaknesses of the early pattern of international organization development.

### **Readings and activities:**

- Bennett, A. L. (1984). *International organizations; principles and issues*. Prentice Hall: New Jersey.
- Take home reading for class discussion: Elrod, R. B. (1976). *The concert of Europe: A fresh look at an international system*. *World Politics*, 28(2), 159-174.
- In class: the quadruple allied countries at the founding of the Concern of Europe namely, Britain, Russia, Austria, and Prussia are assigned to groups of students. In groups, students brainstorm on the agenda they prepare on behalf of their countries at the first meeting in Vienna. The role-plays reflect the political motives and interests of each major power after the Napoleonic wars.

## The UN: Basic Principles and Organization

**Topic description:** The lecturer outlines the history and purpose of the United Nations that was founded in 1945 as the result of World War II. The objectives, principle organs, functions, roles of General Assembly and Security Council will be explored. In addition, the membership issue will be the introduced in the class discussion

**Expected learning outcomes:** Students will be able to understand origins and the function of the United Nations as the model of intergovernmental organizations.

### **Readings and activities:**

- Bennett, A. L. (1984). *International organizations; principles and issues*. Prentice Hall: New Jersey.
- Ziring, L., Riggs, R. E., & Plano, J. C. (2005). *The United Nations: International organization and world politics*. Cengage Learning.

## UN Case Studies/ Quiz

**Topic description:** Student will be able to explore the roles of UN each forum that deals with various international issues covered by the Charter. Students also will analyze steps to be followed by states involved in disputes from the step of negotiation, good offices, inquiry, mediation, conciliation, arbitration, to judicial. Two disputes will be studied in detailed; the Phra Vihear Dispute and Korean War.

**Expected learning outcomes:** Students will be able to analyze the effectiveness of the UN methods in maintaining peace and prevent international disputes.

### **Readings and activities:**

- Bennett, A. L. (1984). *International organizations; principles and issues*. Prentice Hall: New Jersey.
- Talmon, S. (2005). The Security Council as world legislature. *American Journal of International Law*, 99(1), 175-193.
- In class: in pair, students study the two case studies. They will discuss and apply the appropriate step to stop the disputes.
- In class: students will be taking the written in-class quiz of 20%. The quiz will be held in Week 5 and cover the topics from week 1 to 5. The Quiz is divided into 2 parts. Part I consists of short-answer questions on theories and early developments of world's international organizations. Part II focused on the analysis of the case study. Students will apply UN resolution methods to solve the scenario of the international dispute.

## Post World War II Organizations

**Topic description:** The students will explore the post World War II organizations between the superpowers, the USA and USSR. Influenced by the Cold War, students will study the shift toward capitalist democracy in the Western camp and the slow economic growth of the eastern bloc.

**Expected learning outcomes:** Students will be able to analyze the role of the Cold War in the development of international organizations.

### **Readings and activities:**

- Annan, K. (1999). Two concepts of sovereignty. *The economist*, 18(9), 1999.
- Dinan, D. (2004). *Europe recast: a history of European Union* (Vol. 373). Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan.

## Group Presentations

**Topic description:** In a group of maximum 4 students, they will be 20 minutes to present their chosen organization to the entire class and this must include some sort of visual medium (poster, powerpoint, video, etc...). Students should demonstrate the aims of the organization, its structure, type of organization, and the strengths and weaknesses. The group presentation would be evaluated based on the incorporate critical thinking in an effort to analyze the organization with other classmates.

**Expected learning outcomes:** Students will be able to explain and analyze roles, objectives, and types of international organizations. This activity also encourages team effort among students in the group.

### **Readings and activities:**

- Students choose one of the organizations from the following list to present to the class:
  - International Labour Organization
  - World Health Organization
  - International Monetary Fund
  - Food and Agriculture Organization
  - International Committee of the Red Cross
  - World Tourism Organization
  - Doctors without Borders
  - Save the Children
  - BRAC
  - Human Rights Watch
- In the presentations, the groups must address these questions:
  - What are the IO's aims/goals? What is noteworthy about the aims of this organization?
  - How is this IO structured? When was it founded? Is the timing or organization significant?
  - What is the membership of this organization? Are members of this IO clustered in any particular geographical region or political bloc? What does this imply?
  - Where is the IO headquartered? Where does it get its budget from/who pays for the IO? Is this significant? Why/why not?
  - What type of organization is this (functional v. membership spectrum, regulatory/issue area/etc.)? IGO or INGO? Is it alive or deceased? Is it derived from a treaty or is it an emanation IO? Is it part of a family of organizations? If so, which?
  - What are the strengths/weaknesses of this IO? (think: ability to act effectively, efficiently, independently, etc.)
  - Why would someone care about this IO? What other important information should we know about this IO?
  - How is it "doing"? Is it accomplishing its goals? Is it still functioning rather well? What new challenges is it facing, etc?

### Bretton Woods Institutions: origins, structure

**Topic description:** Students will be introduced to the history of Bretton Woods and its structure. The students will be introduced to the IMF, World Bank and WTO.

**Expected learning outcomes:** Students will be able to analyze the economic influence in the development of financial organizations.

### **Readings and activities:**

- In class: Watch the documentary *G-20 Leaders Outline Joint Efforts to Avoid Future Economic Crises* (Compiled by PBS) and discuss.

- Bordo, M. D., & Eichengreen, B. (Eds.). (2007). *A retrospective on the Bretton Woods system: lessons for international monetary reform*. University of Chicago Press.

### **International Non-Governmental Organizations**

**Topic description:** Students will be introduced to the purpose of social NGOs which is to advocate for ordinary people who have no access to power structures and governments. The class will be introduced to the classification of NGOs by purpose such as human rights, labor advocacy, child protection, environmental protection, etc.

**Expected learning outcomes:** Students will understand that the structures of NGOs and their challenges.

**Readings and activities:**

- Charnovitz, S. (2006). Nongovernmental organizations and international law. *American Journal of International Law*, 100(2), 348-372.
- Chartier, D. (2006). Can we understand the role of NGOs in environmental politics without questioning the nature of the changes they propose and the scales they work at?. *Graduate Journal of Social Science*, 3(1), 49-60.
- In class: In groups discussion, students compare and contrast various IGOs, NGOs and transnational organizations with respect to their structures, functions and activities.

### **Regional Organizations**

**Topic description:** Students will explore to the concept of regional blocks. Integration theory will be introduced. Classifications of regional organizations will be discussed. The European Union and ASEAN are the case studies of this topic

**Expected learning outcomes:** Students will be able to explain the significance of regional organizations in the balance of world's power.

**Readings and activities:**

- Pollack, M. A. (2001). International relations theory and European integration. *JCMS: Journal of Common Market Studies*, 39(2), 221-244.
- Bennett, A. L. (1984). *International organizations; principles and issues*. Prentice Hall: New Jersey.

### **Field trip/ Individual Project Wrap-up**

**Topic description:** Students will have a chance to visit prominent international organizations in Bangkok in one day. Possible visits can be arranged for the United Nations Bangkok, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, embassies, and NGOs. In the same week, students must wrap-up their individual projects. Project designs can be exchanged among students in smaller groups. Constructive criticisms are encouraged in this activity.

**Expected learning outcomes:** Students will be able to analyze the differences of the organizational operations between IGOs and NGOs.

**Readings and activities:**

- Students will attend briefings from the organizations during the educational visit. They will also have a chance to see the facilities of the most prominent international organizations in Bangkok.
- Students are given the opportunity to exchange their individual project designs in order to get constructive feedbacks from classmates and the instructors.

## **Future Trends of International Organizations**

**Topic description:** Students will analyze the political and economic factors that cause the challenges to the functions of the IOs. Problems of financial funding and the political balance of power will be discussed. At the end of the course, students will be able determine a suitable approach that IOs should adopt and be prepared for in the future.

**Expected learning outcomes:** Students will be able to explain the reasons for challenges that IOs are encountering. Furthermore, they will determine the suitable approach for IOs to overcome those challenges.

### **Readings and activities:**

- Take home: Karns, M. A., Mingst, K. A., & Stiles, K. W. (2004). "Dilemmas in Global Governance", *International Organizations: The Politics and Processes*. Boulder, Colorado: Lynne Rienner Publishers, Inc.