
POL S 122: THE UNITED NATIONS

Bellevue College, Winter 2012

T/TH 1:30 to 2:20 in D259

Professor: Tim Jones (Please call me “Tim”)

Office: A200B

Office Hours: T/W/TH 10 am to 11 am, and by appointment.

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“More than ever before in human history, we share a common destiny. We can master it only if we face it together. And that, my friends, is why we have the United Nations.”

~Former UN Secretary General Kofi Anan

“Humor has a way of bringing people together. It unites people. In fact, I’m rather serious when I suggest that someone should plant a few whoopee cushions in the United Nations.”

~Comedian Ron Dentinger

COURSE DESCRIPTION

This three-credit course is the second in a ten-credit sequence of three courses designed for students participating in Bellevue College's (BC) Model United Nations (MUN) program. The sequence is specifically designed to prepare students to participate in the National Model United Nations (NMUN) conference in New York, NY, April 3-7, 2012. At this conference 5,000 student "delegates" from around the world come together to simulate UN committee proceedings as representatives of a country other than their own. This year we will be representing Cuba. Student delegates at the conference write position papers, draft resolutions, negotiate with supporters and adversaries, and navigate the UN's rules of procedure in an attempt to mobilize international cooperation to resolve real international problems. This is an amazing opportunity to travel to New York City, to meet with real foreign diplomats, and to visit the United Nations Headquarters. It is also a unique learning opportunity that will help you foster skills related to research, writing, public speaking, problem solving, consensus building and conflict resolution. Last quarter we focused on world geography and the United Nations in general. This quarter you be assigned to a committee and you will spend most of the quarter preparing to represent Cuba on that committee in New York. Specifically, I expect all of you to become experts (to the greatest extent possible) on (a) the *committee* to which you are assigned, (b) the *topics* that will be covered on your committee in New York, (c) *Cuba's position* on each of those topics, and (d) the *rules of procedure* for the conference in New York.

COURSE OBJECTIVES

1. To develop an understanding of, and appreciation for, the United Nations.
2. To examine issues of global importance from the perspective different countries.
3. To develop informed opinions about issues of global importance.
4. To prepare you for the 2012 National Model United Nations Conference in New York City.
5. To practice diplomatic skills such as research, writing, public speaking, problem solving, consensus building, conflict resolution, compromise and cooperation.

COURSE POLICIES

This is a unique course in that it is largely student-driven. I will do my best to facilitate our interactions in a fun and interesting way, and to assess your learning fairly. I expect you to do your best to actively participate in all facets of the course. ***If you do not understand something you need to take the initiative to find out the answer.*** I cannot read minds so it is up to you to try to seek clarity when it is lacking.

ASSIGNMENTS AND EXAMS

All assignments must be typed, printed out, stapled, and handed in at the beginning of class. Emailed assignments will not be accepted. If you are going to be absent on the day that an assignment is due it is your responsibility to get a classmate to turn it in for you. All major due dates are indicated in this syllabus. Because I believe that one of the major lessons that students learn in college is the importance of meeting deadlines, I will not accept any late work unless it has been approved by me BEFORE the date it is due or you can document some sort of emergency. ***All assignments turned in late will receive a***

grade of 0.0. Likewise, missed exams will receive a grade of 0.0. Make-up exams will not be administered unless you receive prior permission from me or you can document some sort of catastrophe (such as being medically unable to take the exam).

DISABILITY RESOURCES

If you are a student who has a disability or a learning challenge and you feel you may need accommodations in order to be successful in college, please contact the Disability Resource Center (DRC) as soon as possible. The DRC office is located in B132. The phone number is 425-564-2498, and the website is: <http://www.bellevuecollege.edu/drc>. If DRC provides you with documentation indicating that you have a disability that requires academic accommodation, please present that documentation to me at the beginning of the quarter so that we can begin working together as soon as possible to accommodate your needs in this class. The longer you wait to seek accommodation, the more difficult it will be for me to provide that accommodation.

ACADEMIC INTEGRITY

Cheating and plagiarism (using the ideas or words of another as one's own without crediting the source) are violations of the Student Code of Conduct at Bellevue College (http://bellevuecollege.edu/policies/2/2050P_Student_Code_%28Procedures%29.asp). Such behavior will result in a grade of 0.0 for the assignment/exam in question. Please note that these are serious offences, which can result in possible probation or suspension from Bellevue College and go on your permanent record. If you have questions about academic integrity, please familiarize yourself with BC's Student Code of Conduct and/or come talk to me during my office hours.

COURSE MATERIALS

There is only required text for the course: *Cuba: What Everyone Needs to Know*. This text is available on Amazon for \$10.18 (<http://www.amazon.com/Cuba-What-Everyone-Needs-Know/dp/019538380X>). In addition, you are expected to print and read the *2012 Delegate Preparation Guide* and the *Committee Background Guide* for the committee to which you are assigned. Both of these guides can be downloaded for free from the NMUN website: http://www.nmun.org/nmun_ny.html. All supplemental readings will be made available in class or on our course website (<http://vista.bellevuecollege.edu>).

KEEPING UP WITH THE NEWS

It is very important that you keep up with current events related to international relations, in general, and Cuban foreign policy, in particular. I recommend that you check in daily with a foreign news site such as *BBC* (www.bbc.co.uk) or *Al Jazeera* (<http://english.aljazeera.net>). I also recommend that you sign up for the UN News Wire (https://www.smartbrief.com/un_wire/index.jsp), and that you check in regularly with Cuba's diplomatic website (<http://www.cubadiplomatica.cu/en/Home.aspx>).

GRADED WORK

Attendance	(20 pts)	5%
Participation	(80 pts)	20%
Geography Exam	(40 pts)	10%

Final Exam	(50 pts)	12.5%
Draft Resolution	(50 pts)	12.5%
Research Binder	(80 pts)	20%
Position Paper	(80 pts)	20%
	(400 pts)	100%

GRADEPOINT CONVERSION CHART

Grade	Points	Percentage	Grade	Points	Percentage
A	372-400	93-100%	C	292-311	73-77%
A-	360-371	90-92%	C-	280-291	70-72%
B+	352-359	88-89%	D+	272-279	68-69%
B	332-351	83-87%	D	240-271	60-67%
B-	320-331	80-82%	F	0-239	59% & Below
C+	312-319	78-79%			

ATTENDANCE (20 PTS ~ 5%)

Your presence in class is important. As such, one or more unexcused absences will lower your grade, and continue to do so as you miss more classes. We are scheduled to meet twenty times this quarter. One unexcused absence or late arrival will not adversely affect your grade, but ***starting with your second unexcused absence or late arrival you will be docked points exponentially.*** Specifically, you will be docked 1 point for your second unexcused absence, two additional points for your third unexcused absence, three additional points for your fourth unexcused absence, four additional points for your fifth unexcused absence, five additional points for your sixth unexcused absence, and six additional points for your seventh unexcused absence. After seven absences you will receive a zero for attendance. To excuse an absence or late arrival, you must discuss it with me beforehand, unless it is the result of a documented emergency. Excused absences include documented doctor's visits, family emergencies, and sometimes school or work-related issues. If you miss class, you are expected to connect with one or more of your classmates to find out what you missed. I am happy to clarify what you missed during my office hours, but I will only do so after you have checked with at least one of your classmates first.

PARTICIPATION (80 PTS ~ 20%)

This is not a traditional class in which I as the professor do all of the talking—in fact, I will do very little talking at you this quarter. This is a student-driven course that requires student initiative and participation. It is impossible for you to participate if you are not in class, but participation is about more than just attendance. You are expected to come to every class having completed the day's readings, viewings, and assignments. You are also expected to regularly contribute to our in-class discussions—even if you are shy. Please come to every class with a pen or pencil, some paper, and a copy of the materials assigned for that day. Please also make sure you participate fully in the in-class simulations as these are an important preparation for the conference.

GEOGRAPHY EXAM (40 pts ~ 10%)

An important part of understanding international relations is being familiar with how the world is divided up politically—in other words, knowing where countries are on a map. As motivation to expand your knowledge of world geography, I will administer a *comprehensive world geography exam on Thursday, March 15th*.

FINAL EXAM (50 pts ~ 12.5%)

Your *final exam will be administered in class on Tuesday, March 20th*. The exam itself will consist of a mix of question types, including: true-false, multiple-choice, identifications, short answer, and essay. A study-guide will be made available to you a week before the exam.

DRAFT RESOLUTION (50 pts ~ 12.5%)

This assignment requires you to write a draft resolution for the NMUN conference in New York. You will not be able to submit this resolution at the conference—as the Delegate Preparation Guide states that, “the NMUN will not accept any pre-written resolutions or reports”—but it will give you important resolution writing experience. It will also indicate to me your preparedness for the conference and your level of diplomatic strategic thinking. As with the position paper assignment (described above), if another person has been assigned to your committee, you will need to work with that person on this assignment. Specifically, each of you needs to submit an innovative resolution that you think would pass at NMUN on one of the topics being considered by your committee. Before drafting your resolution, please read the sections of the Delegate Preparation Guide entitled “Resolution and Report Writing” (pp. 18-23) and “Sample Resolution and Report” (pp. 51-55). However, you do NOT need to reproduce the line numbers in parentheses on the left hand side of the sample resolution as the computer will do this for you automatically at the conference. All draft resolutions need to include exactly eight preambulatory clauses and eight operative clauses. Moreover, each draft resolution should be sponsored by Cuba and the four countries you think would be most likely to co-sponsor the resolution at the conference. The deadlines for this assignment are as follows: a *rough draft is due in class on Thursday, March 1st*. On Tuesday, March 6th, as a class we will give and receive feedback on our draft resolutions, and then your *final draft is due on Thursday, March 8th*.

POSITION PAPER (80 pts ~ 20%)

A position paper is a succinct policy statement about a particular country’s views regarding the topics being addressed in committee. For this assignment you need to write a position paper from the perspective of Cuba about the topics being addressed in the committee to which you are assigned for the New York conference—regardless of whether you are actually attending the conference. If another person has been assigned to your committee, which is likely, you will need to work with that person to write your position paper. To begin, I would recommend reading the sections of the Delegate Preparation Guide entitled “Researching Your Committee” (pp. 6-8), “Researching Your Agenda Topics” (pp. 8-9), and “Sample Resolution and Report” (pp. 50-55). I would also recommend reading and re-reading the *Committee Background Guide* for the committee to which you are assigned. In addition, you will need to conduct substantial independent research—to learn about your committee topics from Cuba’s perspective. Finally, I

would recommend seeking guidance from a classmate who has attended a previous MUN conference. MUN, at its best, is student-driven, and this assignment is going to require you to be proactive, creative, and diligent. By the end of February, I expect each of you to be an expert—to the greatest extent possible—on (a) the *committee* to which you are assigned, (b) the *topics* that will be covered on your committee in New York, and (c) *Cuba's position* on each of those topics. ***A rough draft of your position paper is due on Tuesday, February 14th***, which means you have about five weeks to become an expert in these areas. On Thursday, February 16th you will give and receive feedback on your position papers, and then ***your final draft is due on Thursday, February 23rd***. Prior to submitting your position paper make sure you follow the submission guidelines exactly as they are outlined in the Delegate Preparation Guide (p. 9).

RESEARCH BINDER (80 pts ~ 100 %)

All students must keep a research binder this quarter. This binder will help you organize your research and it will be an important reference for you at the New York conference. Binders will be evaluated on the degree to which they are well organized, thorough, and represent a sound collection of quality resources. You may organize your binders however you see fit, but I expect you to have separate sections addressing the following topics: (1) general country information, (2) general committee information, (3) specific research on issue one, (4) specific research on issue two, (5) specific research on issue three, (6) information on the rules of procedure, (7) information on resolution writing, and (8) general information on the conference. A detailed table of contents should introduce the material in the binder, and the binder needs to look like it has been used. Your research binder is worth 50 pts and it is ***due on Tuesday, March 14th***.