

**I.S. 133: Model United Nations  
Rhodes College, Spring 2008  
CRN 19081**

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Tuesday 6:00-8:00 pm  
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Office Hours: Mon., Wed. 12:30 – 2:00 p.m.  
And by appointment

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“If the United Nations is to survive, those who represent it must bolster it;  
those who advocate it must submit to it;  
and those who believe in it must fight for it.”

-- Norman Cousins

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**Course Overview**

Model UN is a simulation of the United Nations and this course is designed to offer students a hands-on approach to learning about the workings of the United Nations. Although parts of some class sessions will be taught in lecture format in order to introduce students to the history, structure, politics, and basic operations of the United Nations, the majority of the class will be conducted in workshop/debate format. The workshop/debate sessions will consist of student debate, role playing, resolution drafting and voting.

Students will be assigned an individual country to represent and will simulate the role of their country's spokesperson by discussing and debating the particular issue on the agenda. Students will also draft resolutions, caucus with representatives who are role-playing as other countries, and work to solve the problems facing the United Nations. By its very nature, the quality and tone of debate will be dramatically different than in the “real” UN. In the UN, representatives and their consular staffs spend months in preparation, “behind doors” caucusing and interacting with other nations before an issue is brought to vote. A UN representative, or head of state, will almost always make a prepared speech that will not always be “news” to the other representatives present.

During the individual class meetings, students will only have a very short time to assume the role of their nation's representative and simulate the actions of the UN. This forces representatives to verbally react to circumstances as they arise and even change their position when it is reasonable to do so in light of new facts. Representatives should not simply read from their country's established record on the issue presented; they should be prepared to compromise with the other nations represented and where needed to adapt their policies to meet the current circumstances of the world as simulated. Note that this in no way gives representatives license to act out of character. Representatives should generally research and follow the policies of their country, modifying these as new circumstances dictate.

**Course Readings**

There are two texts for the course. First, *The United Nations: Reality and Ideal, 4th ed.*, by Peter Baehr and Leon Gordenker provides a useful descriptive backdrop for studying the United Nations and is available in the campus bookstore. This text is particularly recommended for those students who are taking I.S. 133 for the first time this semester. Second, former U.S. Ambassador to the United Nations John Bolton's *Surrender is Not an Option* provides a firsthand account of Bolton's candid insights,

successes, frustrations, and critiques of the organization during his service at the U.N. Please see me if you are interested in other supplemental reading materials about the United Nations.

### **Texts**

- Peter Baehr and Leon Gordenker. *The United Nations: Reality and Ideal, 4th ed.* Palgrave Macmillan. 2006.
- John Bolton. *Surrender is Not an Option: Defending America at the United Nations and Abroad.* Threshold Editions. 2007.

### **Course Requirements**

This course will be taken by all students on a Pass/Fail basis. In order to pass, students must receive a grade of 75% or higher. The final grade for the course will be determined by several sources. Students are required to complete one short essay (of 4-5 typed, double-spaced pages) that will be due on October 14<sup>th</sup>. (The essay will address one of the two topics listed below, and more details on this essay assignment will be provided in a class handout.) Students will also be required to submit three resolutions. The resolutions are to be submitted via email attachment to Anna Laymon (layam@rhodes.edu) by 9:00 p.m. on the Sunday before each class. Late resolutions will not be accepted and students will receive the grade of 0 for failing to submit a resolution by the deadline. Additional details regarding all writing assignments are provided in the I.S. 133 syllabus supplement (available on the college files server).

Attendance and participation in class are very important and will represent a significant portion of the student's final course grade. Students are expected to come to class prepared to debate the issues on the scheduled agenda. Participation grades will be based on the quality and quantity of student participation. Among other considerations, the quality of student participation will be evaluated on the basis of remaining "in character" during the workshop portion of the course. An occasional quiz over the resolution under consideration may contribute to the attendance and participation component of the student's grade. In addition to the traditional class attendance and participation component, students will also be encouraged to contribute to the Rhodes Mid-South Model United Nations (MS-MUN) Conference in order to partially satisfy the "Conference Participation" component of the course grade. The MS-MUN meeting will be held over a weekend in February 2009. To satisfactorily fulfill the "Conference Participation" component, I.S. 133 students will spend a minimum of three hours assisting the conference organizers in hosting the conference (in various capacities). Specific assistance duties will be provided by the instructor at a later time.

Your final grade for the course will be derived as follows:

|                                     |     |                   |                |
|-------------------------------------|-----|-------------------|----------------|
| Class Attendance and Participation* | 35% | Three Resolutions | 30% (10% each) |
| Conference Participation            | 10% | Short Essay       | 25%            |

\*Participation is also assessed on a graduated scale according to the number of times a student has taken this course in the past.

Essay Topic 1.) Discuss your country's position on the U.N.'s "responsibility to protect" approach.

Essay Topic 2.) Discuss your country's position on the role of the U.N.'s International Criminal Court (ICC).

### **Course Objectives**

The following student learning objectives for the course have been identified:

- 1.) Develop a solid, substantive understanding of the history, structure, politics, and operation of the United Nations;

- 2.) Through simulation and background research, students will gain a greater appreciation for the complexity and difficulty associated with obtaining a consensus in multi-national diplomatic organizations like the United Nations;
- 3.) Enhance critical thinking, effective writing, and confident debating skills through participation in the classroom workshops; and
- 4.) Prepare students to compete as part of the Rhodes Model UN Team.

### **Guidelines**

- Excessive (as determined by the instructor) absences may result in a diminished (or failing) course grade.
- Each student must complete all assignments.
- All work should be completed on time. Late work will not be accepted.
- All students are expected to adhere to the College's Honor Code.
- Your instructor will gladly discuss your individual progress at any time.

### **Course Schedule**

**Week One (9/2/08):** Introduction

**Week Two (9/9/08):** Debate over the justification and usage of the "responsibility to protect" in the Russia-Georgia conflict

Reading: Bolton, Chs. 6 and 7

Recommended Reading: Baehr and Gordenker, Chs. 1-3

Notes: a.) Each student will make a 3-5 minute speech at the start of class introducing their country to the other delegates.

b.) Class will start at 5:30 tonight only. All students are encouraged to join Prof. Ceccoli in attending the Michael Deibert lecture at 7:00 in Blount Auditorium.

**Week Three (9/16/08):** Continuation of debate over the justification and usage of the "responsibility to protect" in the Russia-Georgia conflict

Reading: Bolton, Ch. 9

Recommended Reading: Baehr and Gordenker, Ch. 6, pp. 159-182 (The U.N. Charter)

**Week Four (9/23/08):** Debate on the attempt by the International Criminal Court Prosecutor to serve an arrest warrant against Sudanese president Umar al-Bashir

Reading: Bolton, Ch. 13

Recommended Reading: Baehr and Gordenker, Ch. 4

**Week Five (9/30/08):** Continuation of debate on the attempt by the International Criminal Court Prosecutor to serve an arrest warrant against Sudanese president Umar al-Bashir

Reading: Bolton, Ch. 10

Recommended Reading: Baehr and Gordenker, Ch. 5

**Week Six (10/7/08):** Debate over alleged Israeli and Hezbollah violations of Security Council Resolution 1701 (which ended the second Israel-Lebanon war)

Reading: Bolton, Ch. 14

Recommended Reading: Baehr and Gordenker, Ch. 7

**Week Seven (10/14/08):** Continuation of debate over alleged Israeli and Hezbollah violations of Security Council Resolution 1701

Essay Due at the Beginning of Class

