Welcome to “International Organization.” In this colloquium we will explore the various structures, institutions and processes that order international relations and global governance. Students should have at least one previous course in international relations theory.

The colloquium is divided into two major sections. In the first part we will read works on general topics relating to international organization including the functions of international institutions, accountability in international governance and the role of international norms. We will consider a number of different theoretical approaches (including realism, liberal institutionalism and constructivism) and familiarize ourselves with important debates in international relations theory.

In the second part of the course we will use these theoretical frameworks to examine current problems and controversies in international organization. We will evaluate the effectiveness of the United Nations, examine the role that NGOs are now playing in world politics, debate the impact of international law, assess the importance of international efforts to promote transitional justice and explore the emerging importance of new non-Western actors on the institutions of global governance. Throughout the course we will ask what elements of the international system are enduring and what actors or processes are, indeed, new. We will also relate what we are doing in class with developments in the “real world,” especially international responses to the on-going financial/debt crisis and efforts to implement transitional justice.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES: The course will introduce students to the major debates on International Organization within the international relations field. Students who complete the course will learn how to:

1. Identify the various actors, institutions and processes that order international relations.
2. Familiarize themselves with the major techniques of governance employed by international organizations such as conditionality and ratings.
3. Evaluate the merits and shortcomings of scholarly arguments about international organization.
4. Assess the quality of evidence and methodology employed by authors in support of their theoretical claims.
5. Distinguish between primary and secondary sources and employ each appropriately in a research paper.
6. Apply the analytical constructs learned in the theoretical portion of the class to produce an original study on some aspect of international organization or global governance.

REQUIREMENTS AND GRADING

Class: The most important requirement is to read the weekly assignments and come to each class fully prepared for discussion; after all, this is your seminar and our group time is limited. The instructor’s primary role will be to introduce the week’s topic and then facilitate class discussion and debate. Class participation will count 20% of your final grade. If you are uncomfortable speaking in a public setting, please let me know as soon as possible - we can work something out.

Presentation: Each seminarian will be asked to sign-up and lead class discussion for a week (usually in coordination with a partner). Presentations should be no longer than 10 minutes each and SHOULD NOT summarize the arguments of the readings (the assumption is that everyone will come to class having completed the assigned reading). Instead, you should present reactions, critical observations or commentaries on the major themes, topics and noteworthy debates that are brought up by the readings and merit further discussion. The presentation will be factored into your class participation grade.

Research Paper: In addition, students will be required to complete a major research paper (about 25-30 pages, 60% of final grade). All papers must explore some theoretical issue in the study of international organization and will require additional empirical research based on primary and secondary materials. Paper guidelines and sample topics will be distributed during Week 3 (September 24). A one-page summary of your topic with preliminary bibliography is due Week 6 (October 15). After you turn in your preliminary topic, you should contact me for an appointment to discuss your topic (this is your responsibility, not mine). An optional rough draft of the paper will be due by Friday November 30th at noon. The final draft is due on Monday, December 10th, 2011 at 4:00pm. Late papers will be penalized one-third of a grade for every additional day (including weekends) beyond this deadline.

PLEASE NOTE: I do not grant unsolicited incompletes (nor solicited ones without a documented emergency). If you do not hand in a paper, you will be assigned the grade of “F”, not “I.”

Memos: Finally, in addition to the research paper, every student must turn in TWO memos during the course of the semester. The memos (about 2.0 – 2.5 pages single-spaced) should present your reactions to and assessments of the week’s key issues and/or debates. You must turn in AT LEAST ONE of the memos by or on Week 6 (October 15). All memos are due (I prefer e-mailed Word files or PDF attachments) by 9:00 am on the day of class (Mondays). Together, they will constitute the final 20% of your grade.
READINGS: The following books are required and are available for purchase at the Columbia University bookstore:


All other readings are available on reserve at Barnard College Reserves and electronically through Courseworks and Barnard College Library E-reserves. However, access to the readings is restricted to Columbia UNI ID holders who are actively registered in the course. If you cannot get a reading via Courseworks/Reserves, then look for it individually under the journal title in E-journals (if you don’t understand what this is, ask a librarian!).

Part I. Theoretical Approaches to International Organization

Week 1 (September 10): Course Overview and Introduction

If the international system is “anarchic,” then where do order and international governance come from? What is the difference between “international organization” and what we refer to as “international organizations”? How can we have international governance without a world government?

Week 2 (September 17) International Institutions I: Neoliberal Institutionalism and Regimes

What functions do international institutions perform according to neoliberal theory? How does this view of regimes differ from that of realist or sociological (or “reflectivist”) understandings? Are regimes merely “intervening variables” or do they exert an independent influence on international relations? How do regimes “socialize” participants?


**Week 3 (September 24) Intl. Institutions II: International Organizations**

What explains the policies and actions of international organizations: the political interests of powerful state members or the interests and culture of an organization’s permanent staff? What is an “organizational culture” and under what circumstances does it become “pathological”? How does this approach differ from more rationalist or neo-institutional understandings of institutions? Was this the source of international inaction in Rwanda?


**Week 4 (October 1) International Norms and Societal Perspectives**

What do “social” theories purport to explain that “rationalist” theories cannot? How do we distinguish between behavior that is influenced by international norms and behavior dictated by state interests? How do norms become defined and disseminated in the international community and what role is there for “norm localization”? How does the study of “gender norms” differ from most traditional feminist approaches to IR? How did the framing of on-going violence in the Congo influence the policy responses by the international community and from where did these frames emerge?


**Week 5 (October 8) International Organizations and Accountability**


TBA readings on the Euro Crisis
Week 6 (October 15) Techniques of Ranking, Rating and Blacklisting
Note: Paper topic summaries are due today!

This week we will examine the politics that informs the emerging practice of international organizations, NGOs and private governors to rank, rate and blacklist countries across four different issue areas: the World Bank’s governance indicators, the bond ratings issued by credit rating agencies (Moody’s, Standard and Poors), FreedomHouse’s democracy ratings and the OECD’s listing of uncooperative tax havens. How has the global production of indicators altered understandings about what constitutes good governance? What do credit-rating agencies do and why do some commentators view them as private regulators of international financial markets? What are the consequences of a ratings downgrade and what criteria do agencies use to assess measures of risk? Are the ratings of democratization in FreedomHouse based on objective criteria or influenced by U.S. foreign policy considerations? Why was blacklisting such an effective instrument when used by the OECD against tax havens? And how have these rankings and ratings, often made by private actors, been institutionalized in global governance?


Recommended:

PART II. CURRENT PROBLEMS AND ISSUES IN INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATION

Week 7 (October 22) The United Nations System and the Responsibility to Protect

What criteria should we use to measure the United Nation’s influence on international relations? How is the body organized internally and what jurisdictional conflicts does this lead to? Should the U.N.’s security role be curtailed or expanded? Does the UN’s legitimacy matter for powerful nations? Did the Iraq war undermine the UN or promote the importance of the Security Council? What is the Responsibility to Protect and has it evolved into an accepted international norm?
TBA Articles on UN and Syria.

Recommended:

**Week 8** (October 29) Human Rights, International Law and Treaty Ratification

What have been the parallels in changes in the international sovereignty regime and the rise of internally accepted human rights practices and interventions? What types of states are the most likely to be affected by the signing of human rights treaties and why? If states do not expect to follow human rights treaties, then why do they sign them? What is more important for upholding international human rights practices: fulfilling treaty obligations or internalizing human rights norms?


**November 5, 2012:** ELECTION DAY HOLIDAY, no class.

**Week 9** (November 12) Transnational Networks, NGOs and their Critics

Do transnational NGOs herald the emergence of a global civil society? What strategies and tools do NGOs use to change state policies? Do all networks in international politics inherently share common liberal values and benign normative motivations? What are the unspoken material constraints on the actions of transnational NGOs? Does the current proliferation of NGOs in various sectors resemble a deliberative civil society or a competitive frenzy? What strategies do states employ to avoid pressures exerted by international NGOs?

Alexander Cooley and James Ron, “The NGO Scramble: Organizational Survival and
Week 10 (November 19) The Politics of International Transitional Justice

What is “transitional justice” and what have been the major developments in the international justice regime? What is Sikkink’s theory of change and what drives the alleged success of international justice efforts such as tribunals? How does Sikkink deal with the US case?


Week 11 (November 26) New Challengers to the Western-Led Order

Is the era of US and Western hegemony coming to an end? If so, how would we know and what are the implications for international governance? Does the rise of China as an international donor and public goods provider challenge traditional Western concepts of development, good governance and human rights?


Optional First Draft or Extended Outline of Paper Due on or Before Friday, November 30th at 12pm.

Week 12 (December 3) No Class Meeting Optional Individual Meetings to Discuss Papers

Please sign up for a slot in advance. You can also just drop by to talk about your paper, but this week sign-up time priority will be given to those who have actually turned in a rough draft.

Week 13 (December 10) Papers Due at 4:00pm

Last day of classes. No exceptions, no incompletes.