Course Description and Objectives

The aim of the course is to examine the problems and possibilities of peace operations conducted by the United Nations. Throughout the Cold War, the United Nations undertook a small number of traditional peacekeeping missions (PK) that helped to bring peace and security to some war torn regions. Most of those missions were small and basically uncontroversial (except Congo). No ambitious operations could be undertaken politically because Cold War antagonisms prevented the Security Council from approving ambitious interventions — the Security Council was politically deadlocked by the possibility of the use of the veto by one of its five permanent members. In the early 1990’s, just after the Cold War ended, there was a huge growth in the number of peacekeeping missions undertaken by the UN. Whereas in 1987 there were 7 operations with 10,000 personnel deployed, by March 2013 there were 15 peacekeeping operations with over 92,000 personnel deployed. Most of these new missions were much more ambitious than traditional peacekeeping missions—often called “Second-Generation Peacekeeping.” These missions included aggressive humanitarian intervention, democracy building and peacemaking among other goals. These interventions were sometimes deemed “successful” as in Namibia or Mozambique or “failures” at other times as in Rwanda, Somalia or the former Yugoslavia. In fact, all the missions had elements of success and failure, as is clearly true in the former Yugoslavia. There is much to be learned from these numerous peace operations.

This course is an introduction to the United Nations and its role in the maintenance of peace and international security. It is designed to provide a general knowledge about peace operations, ask some basic questions about the state of the world today, and suggest some ways we might begin to answer these questions. Students should leave this course not only better informed about politics and problems, but also better able to read critically, to think systematically, to analyze problems, to collect and evaluate information efficiently, organize and present ideas systematically, to communicate effectively, and apply knowledge from one area to new issues. The course aims at developing independent and critical reasoning and applied thinking.
Course Requirements and Grading

1) An Oral Presentation (40% of the grade). Each week, two students will be assigned a UN peacekeeping operation to investigate. Students will report their findings to the class. The team will be investigating a peacekeeping operation carried out by the United Nations. It will be the job of your team to sufficiently outline and explain the fundamental mission of the UN. Moreover, you are responsible for outlining the successes and drawbacks of the mission. Each member of the team will have a role in gathering the information, preparing the information for presentation, and presenting the information to the class. The following roles will also be assigned: The geographer will construct a map of the region in question. Points of interest will include representation of the conflicting parties and the UN Peacekeepers. The fact finder will investigate the political history of the area of study and the history of the UN involvement. The fact finder will thus outline the political history of the region in question and the history of the conflicting parties involved. Please note that the historical presentation should not be too long compared to the operation’s analysis itself. The historian(s) should include a description of the culture of each conflicting party (language, nationality, type of government, type of economy, etc.). A typewritten outline of the presentation is required.

2) Final Take-Home Exam (40% of the grade) during the last week of the session. 1500 Words maximum. Please be aware that a Take-Home Exam imply the use of various sources including your notes and other documents.

3) Class Participation & Discussion (20% of the grade). Your participation in this class is extremely important. As such, class participation will constitute 20% of your final grade. The class participation grade will derive from regular attendance and everyday discussion and analysis. Please be aware that skipping class (unexcused absences) will impact your grade in this area.

Grading Criteria for the presentation are based on the content and the form and they are the following:

Form:

Clarity, coherence, and structure of the argument; reference to pertinent works; use of maps and graphic materiel. Please note that you should avoid reading your presentation.

Content:

Analysis of the most important elements related to the case study; comprehensiveness; critical and original thinking.
REQUIRED READINGS


Week 1: Introduction: The Creation and Evolution of an International Institution
Course objectives and work assignments.

Week 2: Peacekeeping and International Relations Theories
Case Study # 1: UNEF 1 (Suez 1956-1967)

Week 3: Peacekeeping Before and Outside the UN
Case Study # 2: ONUC (Congo 1960-1964)

Week 4: The Evolution of UN Peacekeeping: From “Traditional” to “Complex” PK
Case Study # 3: UNFICYP (Cyprus 1964-Present)

Week 5: The United Nations and the “Indispensable Nation”
Case Study # 4: UNDOF (Golan Heights 1974-Present)

Week 6: The UN and Regional Organizations
Case Study # 5: UNIFIL (Southern Lebanon 1978-Present)

Week 7: Towards a UN Standing Army?
Case Study # 6: UNTAG (Namibia 1989-1990)

Week 8: The UN and the Privatization of Violence and Security
Case Study # 7: UNTAC (Cambodia 1992-1993)

Week 9: Gendering War and Peacekeeping
Case Study # 8: UNPROFOR (Former Yugoslavia 1992-1995)

Week 10: Limits and Alternatives to Peacekeeping
Case Study # 9: UNOSOM 1 and 2 (Somalia 1992-1995)

Week 11: The Reform Initiatives since The Agenda for Peace
Case Study # 10: (UNAMSIL Sierra Leone 1999-2005)

Week 12: Conclusion
Case Study # 11: MONUC/MONUSCO (Democratic Republic of Congo 1999-Present)
REFERENCES


JAMES, Alan (1990) Peacekeeping in International Politics, Basingstoke, Macmillan & IISS.


