This course is an introduction to the topic of international organization, efforts by states and non-state actors to realize collective goals through cooperation. We will focus on formal, state-dominated institutions such as the United Nations and the European Union as opposed to topics in international law or non-governmental actors. We seek to answer two major questions. First, how have states in the past collaborated to reach mutually beneficial outcomes and how successful have they been? Second, how can these organizations be adapted to address entirely new questions that have emerged today?

Unlike other international relations courses you may have taken, this class will begin with a substantive section on the United Nations, the most well known of the international organizations. This will provide an empirical foundation to ground our discussion about theories of international organization and cooperation. Schools of thought are not just academic; implicitly they form the worldviews of those in the real world engaged in foreign affairs and inform their beliefs about what international organizations can and cannot do. We will see this in the section on political approaches to international organizations. From there we will transition from questions of political order to economic order through an investigation of the history and the present challenges facing the World Trade Organization and the International Monetary Fund, as well as the global movements that have emerged to reform them. Finally we will investigate the North Atlantic Treaty Organization, the International Atomic Energy Agency, the European Union and the human rights regime comprised by war crimes tribunals and the International Criminal Court.

For each organization we explore, the first part will be historical. We will learn the complete history of these organizations – the problems they were designed to solve, the concepts that underlie their organization, and the evolution of their role in the face of changing international conditions. This portion of the class will be explanatory. We are interested in trying to account for why political decision-makers made the decisions they did, whether they failed or succeeded, and what this says about the nature of international politics and our ability to reshape our environment and solve international problems.

The second portion of each section is devoted to the challenges faced by each international organization. Almost every international organization we study is experiencing a time of crisis generally either because the issues the organizations were originally created to tackle are not those that they currently address or because the geopolitical environment has changed. This has led to urgent calls for institutional and substantive reform, a question that we will discuss in class. Here our focus moves from explanation to prescription. Knowing what we do about international organizations, how should we reform these institutions to better solve the problems they face? This portion of the class moves us into deeply political questions, many of which have moral implications. For instance, how should the WTO balance its objectives of trade liberalization against the need for countries to protect vulnerable workforces? Should we indict war crimes whose consent might be needed to end conflicts? This class asks you both to be a rigorous, academic analyst of international relations but also a practical problem-solver.
Class rules:
Turn your cell phone off. Do not surf the web or check e-mail. No text messaging. If I catch you using any of these devices, I will ask you to leave the classroom and deduct one letter grade from your participation grade per infraction. I know when you are doing this. You are not smarter than me.

For those with disabilities, I need to know as soon as possible about your disability and your requirements. Students requesting academic accommodations based on disability must register with Disability Services and Programs (DSP) each semester. A letter of verification for approved accommodations must be obtained from DSP (once adequate documentation is filed). Please deliver a copy of the letter to the professor as soon as possible and, at the very latest, as indicated on the DSP website, three weeks before the requirement on which you are requesting an adjustment.

Course materials:
The textbook, Margaret Karns and Karen Mingst, *International Organizations: The Politics and Processes of Global Governance* (Lynne Rienner), is optional. To save trees and your pocketbooks, other course materials will be available online in Blackboard.

We will read a number of primary sources, such as the actual texts of the charters that create international organizations. This is great training for future lawyers and political staff. There is a textbook, but its primary function is to give you a basic foundation in the main functions and issues confronting the institutions we discuss. I suggest that you complete the readings prior to class, and go back over them afterwards in light of what we have discussed. I will also, in some instances, provide questions for some pieces to look for while you are reading.

Office hours: I will be available for office hours from 12 to 2 on Mondays or by appointment. Please write me at brathbun@usc.edu. Please be polite. No commands or “I need you to do X.” I will respond in kind. Begin with “Dear Professor Rathbun,” end with “yours truly.” I will do the same. Sign your name. Please visit. Make sure I know you.

Grading
Your grade will be made up of the following components:

- **Participation:** 10%  In-class participation. I will ask questions during lecture, we will devote certain class sessions to debates on certain topics, and there will be online discussion forums throughout the semester.
- **Two midterms:** 50% Each is worth 25% based on answers to short answer questions. February 19 and March 26.
- **Final:** 35% Comprehensive including longer essay questions on the main themes of this course. Scheduled for Monday, May 12, 2-4pm in our regular classroom.
- **Attendance at academic talks:** 5% You will attend two academic lectures related to class material and write up summaries and critiques.
COURSE OUTLINE AND READINGS

Week 1: Introduction


Selections from “theonion.com”

Weeks 2 and 3: United Nations
The United Nations was the international community’s second effort at creating universal security and political order after a major war. We will discuss its origins and how it was different from the system set up after WWI. The Kupchans reading explains the various options states have at moments like these. The United Nations Charter was the result of a largely tripartite negotiation between the British, the Americans and the Soviets.


United Nations Charter ([http://www.yale.edu/lawweb/avalon/un/unchart.htm](http://www.yale.edu/lawweb/avalon/un/unchart.htm))

General Assembly Resolutions 1514, 2621

Weeks 4 and 5: Theoretical and Political Perspectives on International Organizations
Academies disagree about what international organizations can or can’t do, a divide sometimes captured by the terms “realists” and “idealists.” However, even the latter are optimistic for different reasons. We will review the contributions of realists, rationalists and constructivists to our understanding of international organizations, using what we know about the United Nations as a way to apply these abstract concepts. However, we must also recognize that these theories are not purely theoretical, but rather guide decision-makers as implicit biases in how they go about making policy. They even guide us.

*Theoretical Perspectives*


Political Perspectives


Weeks 5 and 6: International Economic Order
After World War II, the international community not only created institutions to promote peace but also to promote prosperity. The United States was convinced that high tariffs and unilateral exchange rate policies exacerbated relations among states and hampered economic growth. The “three sisters” of the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT), the International Monetary Fund (IMF), and the World Bank were dedicated to liberalizing and standardizing trade practices, guaranteeing stable monetary relations and promoting development, respectively. Both, however, have evolved significantly since their inception, and face growing crises particularly over issues of North-South relations between the developing and the developed world. They have provoked the ire of transnational activist groups comprised of coalitions of diverse actors with different grievances.

GATT and the World Trade Organization

Karns and Mingst, pp. 380-386.

“Understanding the World Trade Organization,” chs. 1-3
http://www.wto.org/english/thewto_e/whatis_e/tif_e/utw_chap1_e.pdf
http://www.wto.org/english/thewto_e/whatis_e/tif_e/utw_chap2_e.pdf
http://www.wto.org/english/thewto_e/whatis_e/tif_e/utw_chap3_e.pdf


The International Monetary Fund


Barnett and Finnemore, excerpts.

FIRST MIDTERM ON FEBRUARY 19

Week 7: The Anti-Globalization Movement


**Weeks 8 and 9: The European Union**
The European Union is arguably the most powerful international organization in the world, but one whose power has grown gradually. It began as the European Coal and Steel Community, the product of a dramatic French plan to create supranational control over industries vital to security and prosperity in the wake of World War II in order to produce lasting peace between historical adversaries France and Germany. It expanded into a customs union called the European Economic Community and later formed a single market of all goods and services, changing its name to the European Community. After the Cold War ended, the members embarked farther on the path of integration, creating a common currency and forming the European Union, which took on political functions including a nascent defense policy.

Karns and Mingst, pp. 159-174, 393-396

The “Schuman Declaration” (1950).


Joschka Fischer, “From Confederacy to Federation: Thoughts on the Finality of European Integration” (2000).

**Week 10: North Atlantic Treaty Organization and Alliances**
NATO began as a transatlantic alliance to counter the threat of the Soviet Union. After the Cold War ended, NATO defied the predictions of many that it had lost its raison d’etre, adapting to a new role of crisis management in the Balkans and consolidating democracy in Eastern Europe by admitting former adversaries. Most recently NATO took on its first mission outside of Europe, deploying peacekeepers to Afghanistan, but the operation has become one of war-fighting against the emergent Taliban. However, lingering hostility between the U.S. and European members over the war in Iraq, and the asymmetric burdens being borne by different members in Afghanistan have put NATO in a crisis, which we will discuss.

Karns and Mingst, pp. 154-158
North Atlantic Treaty (http://www.yale.edu/lawweb/avalon/nato.htm)


SECOND MIDTERM ON MARCH 26

**Week 11: The International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) and the Nonproliferation Treaty**
The Treaty on the Nonproliferation of Nuclear Weapons forbids parties who did not possess nuclear weapons at the time of the treaty’s conclusion from developing weapons technology, but members are permitted to develop peaceful uses of nuclear energy with aid from the International Atomic Energy Agency, provided that access is given to the agency to safeguard and inspect their nuclear programs. The IAEA and NPT are credited with significantly limiting the number of nuclear weapons states. However, the regime has come under increasing stress in recent years by the efforts of members Iraq, North Korea and Iran, to develop weapons programs. In addition to its history, we will discuss whether and how the regime can play a role in ensuring the further spread of nuclear weapons technology through black markets in nuclear supplies such as that run by Pakistani A.Q. Khan.

Karns and Mingst, pp. 329-332


**Week 12: International Courts and Tribunals**
After World War II, the United States and its allies created the Nuremberg tribunal to prosecute Nazi war criminals for violations of war crimes and crimes against humanity. But it was another several decades before the international community again assembled a tribunal, this time under UN authority, for the prosecution of individuals for their conduct in international conflicts -- the International Criminal Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia, followed by others in Rwanda, Sierra Leone, and Cambodia. The ad hoc and post hoc nature of the tribunals led to a movement to create a permanent standing court for the prosecution of individuals – the International Criminal Court, which is just to begin its first trial. We will discuss why the ICC has been so controversial in the United States as well as whether justice can be reconciled with peace and stability.

Karns and Mingst, 92-95


Weeks 13 and 14: Peace Operations

The United Nations and other international organizations undertake peace operations in which they attempt to bring about the resolution of conflicts, sometimes even through force. Bosnia, Kosovo, Rwanda, and Libya are some of the recent examples. We will discuss the rationale behind peacekeeping, why and when IOs undertake it, and when it works and when it does not.

Karns and Mingst, pp. 277-9, 306-324


Week 15: Review and Catch-up Week