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Fall 2019

## DIPL 6202 Politics at the United Nations: Relevance and Reform

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**DIPL 6202: POLITICS AT THE UNITED NATIONS: RELEVANCE AND REFORM**  
Seton Hall University, School of Diplomacy and International Relations

Fall 2019 – Monday 5:00-7:00 p.m. Stafford Hall, Room 07 (Lower Level)

Adjunct Faculty: **Dr. PL de Silva**

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### **PURPOSE OF THE COURSE**

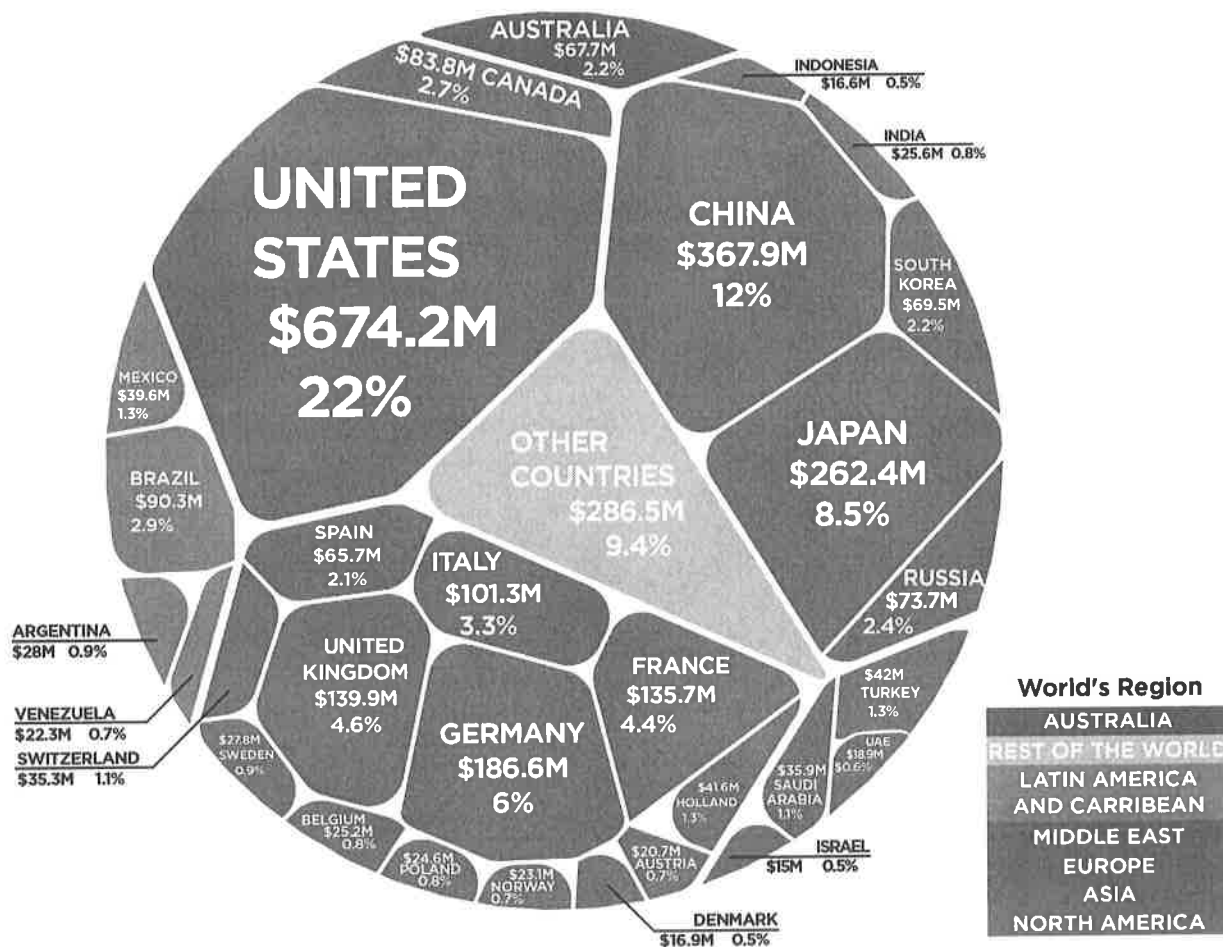
The focus and aim of this Course - **DIPL 6202: Politics at the United Nations: Relevance and Reform** - is to examine the pivotal importance of the United Nations system at this critical juncture in global affairs, amidst the backdrop of a rise in undemocratic and illiberal politics in a number of countries. The United Nations is the world's premier multilateral organization whose voting membership is made up of sovereign nation-states. And therefore, its success or failure is solely dependent upon the performance or non-optimal performance of its member states in exercising their political will for the greater good. And it is within the prism of political interactions between member states that we can ascertain the Relevance of the UN, and assess the merits of UN Reform.

### **POLITICS AT THE UNITED NATIONS**

The Achilles Heel of the United Nations is the repeated abuse of veto powers along narrow national interests by the five permanent members (P-5) of the UN Security Council (i.e. United States of America, Russia, China, United Kingdom and France), since the end of World War Two. Addressing the debates arising out of this structural weakness between the status quo and reformists, Peter Nadin (2017) points out that: "To secure the council's enduring legitimacy, the reformists have argued for the creation of a permanent 11 (P-11), which would be inclusive of the current P-5 and a selection of the great and emerging powers of Asia, Africa, Latin America, and Europe." Potential contenders for the six new permanent seats are: India and Japan (Asia-Pacific), Brazil (Latin America), Germany (Western Europe), Algeria, Egypt, Ethiopia, Nigeria and South Africa (Africa).

In addition, today, one of the other primary bones of political contention among UN member states is about the funding of the United Nations - which we shall examine in greater detail during the course - with detractors calling for reform and using ‘de-funding’ as a weapon of choice. The graphic below on United Nations Budget Contributions by Country 2019 provides a perspective of some of the key member states involved in the “politics of funding”. Another point of contention is the science behind climate change, between deniers and those member states actively supporting counter-measures, which we shall also discuss.

## United Nations Budget Contributions by Country 2019 Gross Contribution & Percentage Share



**Article and Sources:**

<https://howmuch.net/articles/united-nations-budget-contributions-by-country-2019>  
 UN-<https://undocs.org/en/ST/ADM/SER.B/992>



## THE UNITED NATIONS SYSTEM

The Principal Organs of the United Nations System are:

- General Assembly (UNGA)
- Security Council (UNSC)
- Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC)
- Secretariat
- International Court of Justice (ICJ)
- Trusteeship Council

NB: Please see the organogram of the United Nations System for greater details:

[https://www.un.org/en/pdfs/18-00159e\\_un\\_system\\_chart\\_17x11\\_4c\\_en\\_web.pdf](https://www.un.org/en/pdfs/18-00159e_un_system_chart_17x11_4c_en_web.pdf)

## HISTORY

The United Nations was established 74 years ago on 26 June 1945, by 51 original member states, when they signed on to the UN Charter in San Francisco - which was at a point in world history when the allied armies were fighting and defeating, fascist and illiberal forces for the duration of World War Two.

Thomas Weiss et al note that:

“The UN system was born plural and decentralized and was never intended to approximate a formal world government. It was born of pragmatism and a pressing need to change the way states conducted their international affairs. The founders saw the UN as a way of harnessing state power for the management of pressing global problems. ... The primary purpose of the UN is to maintain international peace and security, and addressing socioeconomic issues” (Weiss, Forsythe, Coate and Peace, 2017).

In order to assess the Relevance of the UN we will focus in greater detail on Peacekeeping Operations, Human Rights and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) - which are all a means to “indirectly prevent war,” armed conflict and forced migration by “promoting economic prosperity at home and abroad” (Ibid).

## COURSE REQUIREMENTS

1. **Class presentations:** Class sessions will be organized around student led discussions of the weekly readings. Each student is expected to make at least two such presentations during the course of the semester. These presentations should not exceed 10 minutes. Students should briefly summarize the readings (i.e. key arguments, information, methodology, etc), offer a critique/commentary of their strengths and weaknesses, and provide one or two questions, which will serve as a basis for class discussion of a given topic.

2. **Written tests:** We begin with a Political geography test where students must identify UN member states on a blank world map; followed by two, in-class, Written Examinations - students are expected to answer five questions for each. Exam questions are derived from lecture notes therefore regular class attendance is a priority. The Final Examination is a “take home” **due on December 16**. Please be mindful that the **deadline to enter Grades is Thursday, December 19**.

3. **Research paper:** Students will submit a research paper in consultation with the faculty member that will not exceed 15 pages on a chosen topic that relates to the subject matter of the course. Papers will be graded on the strength of argumentation, critical thinking displayed, quality of writing and style, factual accuracy substantiated by footnotes and references, all of which demonstrate the quality of research.

In order to ensure an early/timely start to research work and obtain helpful feedback, students must submit a one-page proposal broadly outlining their paper, complete with planned methodology and sources. These proposals will be orally presented to the class during Session 4 on Monday, September 23. Students are advised to maintain ongoing dialogue with the faculty member vis-à-vis their progress throughout the Semester.

### 3. **Compulsory Reading:**

United Nations (2015) *United Nations Charter*, New York: United Nations -  
<https://www.un.org/en/charter-united-nations/>

United Nations (2017) *The Sustainable Development Goals*, New York: United Nations - <https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/?menu=1300>

United Nations (2018) *Universal Declaration of Human Rights*, New York: United Nations - <https://www.un.org/en/universal-declaration-human-rights/>

#### 4. **Recommended Readings:**

de Silva, Purnaka L. (2018) “Regional Impact of Human Trafficking and Forced Migration” in Robin Andersen and Purnaka L. de Silva (Editors) *The Routledge Companion to Media and Humanitarian Action*, New York and London: Routledge - pp. 102-119

Dieng, Adama and Cruciani, Simona (2018) “When Media is Used to Incite Violence: The United Nations, Genocide, and Atrocity Crimes” in Robin Andersen and Purnaka L. de Silva (Editors) *The Routledge Companion to Media and Humanitarian Action*, New York, London: Routledge - pp. 60-67

François, Pierre-Olivier (2018) “*Last Station Before Hell: United Nations Peacekeepers*” in Robin Andersen and Purnaka L. de Silva (Editors) *The Routledge Companion to Media and Humanitarian Action*, New York and London: Routledge - pp. 428-434

Kamau, Macharia., Chasek, Pamela and O-Connor, David (2018) *Transforming Multilateral Diplomacy: The Inside Story of the Sustainable Development Goals*, London and New York: Routledge

Nadin, Peter (2017) *UN Security Council Reform*, London and New York: Routledge

United Nations (2017) *The Sustainable Development Goals*, New York: United Nations

Weiss, Thomas G. (2012) *What’s Wrong with the United Nations and How to Fix It* (Second Edition), Cambridge: Polity Press

Weiss, Thomas G., Forsythe, David P., Coate, Roger A. and Pease, Kelly-Kate (2017) *The United Nations and Changing World Politics* (Eighth Edition), Boulder, CO: Westview Press

#### 4. **Reference Material:**

Howard, Lise Morjé (2008) *UN Peacekeeping in Civil Wars*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press

Weinlich, Silke (2014) *The UN Secretariat's Influence on the Evolution of Peacekeeping*, New York: Palgrave Macmillan

Wills, Siobhán (2009) *Protecting Civilians: The Obligations of Peacekeepers*, Oxford: Oxford University Press

#### 5. **Web Links:**

- The main UN website - [www.un.org](http://www.un.org)

For all parts of the UN system including all Agencies, Funds, and Programmes - <http://www.unsystem.org>

- The United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) - <https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/?menu=1300>
- Global Policy Forum - [www.globalpolicy.org](http://www.globalpolicy.org)
- International Relations and Security Network - [www.isn.ethz.ch](http://www.isn.ethz.ch)
- United Nations Office on Genocide Prevention and the Responsibility to Protect - Publications & Resources - <https://www.un.org/en/genocideprevention/about-responsibility-to-protect.shtml>
- United Nations Office on Genocide Prevention and the Responsibility to Protect - Responsibility to Protect (R2P) - <https://www.un.org/en/genocideprevention/about-responsibility-to-protect.shtml>

## 6. Internships:

Students interested in Internships if possible at the UN or affiliated NGOs please contact the Faculty member during office hours on Mondays from 3:00-5:00 p.m.

### GRADING

**Final grades** will determined as follows:

- Research Paper: 50%
- Written Tests: 20%
- Class Participation and Oral Presentations: 15%
- One-page Proposal: 15%
- Demonstration of Initiative: discretionary bonus marks will be given to offset a bad grade or improve a grade

### ACADEMIC INTEGRITY

Plagiarism and other forms of academic dishonesty and misconduct will be reported to the Chair of Postgraduate Programs at the School of Diplomacy and International Relations. It may result in a lowered or failing grade for the course and up to possible dismissal from the School and Seton Hall University. See the university's **Student Code of Conduct** and **Standards of Academic Conduct** below:

<https://www.shu.edu/student-life/upload/Student-Code-of-Conduct.pdf>

<https://www.shu.edu/academics/diplomacy/academic-conduct.cfm>

### ACCOMMODATIONS

It is the policy and practice of Seton Hall University to promote inclusive learning environments. If you have a documented disability you may be eligible for reasonable accommodations in compliance with university policy, the Americans with Disabilities Act, Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act, and/or the New Jersey Law Against Discrimination. Please note that students are not permitted to negotiate accommodations directly with faculty. To request accommodations or



assistance, please self-identify with the Office for Disability Support Services (DSS), Duffy Hall, Room 67 at the beginning of the Semester. For more information or to register for services, contact DSS at (973) 313-6003 or by e-mail at [DSS@shu.edu](mailto:DSS@shu.edu)

## **POLICY ON INCOMPLETES**

Incompletes will be given only in exceptional cases on account of emergencies. Students wishing to request a Grade of Incomplete must provide documentation to support the request accompanied by a Course Adjustment Form (available from the School of Diplomacy and International Relations Main Office at McQuaid Hall) to the Faculty member **before** the date of the Final Examination. If the incomplete is approved, the Faculty member reserves the right to specify the new submission date for all the missing course work. Students who fail to submit the missing course work within this time period will receive a Failing Grade for all the missing course work and a Final Grade based on all course work that has been assigned. Any Grade of Incomplete not resolved within one calendar year of receiving the Incomplete Grade or by the time of graduation (whichever comes first) automatically becomes an “FI” (which is equivalent to an F). It is the responsibility of the student to make sure they have completed all course requirements within the stipulated time frame. Please be aware that Incompletes on a student’s transcript will impact upon financial aid and academic standing.

## **STYLE**

Research papers should utilize one of the Chicago Manual of Style citation formats: Author-Date or Notes and Bibliography. The guidelines for these formats are on the course Blackboard page.

## **SPECIAL PUBLIC LECTURE**

During the course of the Fall 2019 semester, arrangements will be made by the Faculty member to invite Under-Secretary-General Adama Dieng to deliver a public lecture to the student body and faculty of Seton Hall University, School of Diplomacy and International Relations. Under-Secretary-General Dieng is Special Advisor to the Secretary-General on the Prevention of Genocide, and heads the

United Nations Office on Genocide Prevention and the Responsibility to Protect (UN-OGPR2P). Public announcements advertising the lecture will be made in advance once the arrangement have been finalized. All students attending this Course - **DIPL 6202: Politics at the United Nations: Relevance and Reform** - should avail themselves of this opportunity by attending.

**TIMETABLE - FALL 2019 - DIPL 6202**

<b>Month / Date</b>	<b>Lectures - Monday 5:00-7:00 p.m.</b>
August 26	Session 1 - The United Nations - <i>tour d'horizon</i>
September 02	<i>No Class - Labor Day</i>
September 09	Session 2 - Security Council Reform
September 16	Session 3 - Political geography test + Politics of funding the UN
September 23	Session 4 - Oral presentations + Introduction to The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)
September 30	<i>No Class - Rosh Hashanah</i>
October 07	Session 5 - Guest Lecture on “The UN, SDGs and Religion” - Professor Azza Karam (UN Interagency Task Force on Religion and Development)
October 14	<i>No Class - Columbus Day</i>
October 21	Session 6 - Written examination 1 + UN Peacekeeping Operations
October 28	Session 7 - UN Peacekeeping Operations II
November 04	Session 8 - Human Rights and the UN
November 11	Session 9 - Combating Human Trafficking and Forced Migration
November 18	Session 10 - Written examination 2 + Climate Change and the UN
November 25	Session 11 - What’s Wrong with the UN and How to Fix It
December 02	Session 12 - Relevance and Reform
December 09	Session 13 - Revision in preparation for Final Exam + Final Examination (Take Home - <b>due on December 16</b> )
December 16	Session 14 - <b>Submission of Final Exam answer sheets + submission of Research Papers</b>