

POLS 4760: INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATION

INSTRUCTOR: Dr. N. Uras Demir (Call me Uras)

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CLASS LOCATION/HOUR: STR 357 / MW 3:40 PM – 5:20 PM

OFFICE HOURS: 11:00 AM – 12:00 PM @ [Zoom](#) / UNH4203

COURSE DESCRIPTION (WHAT IS THIS COURSE ABOUT?)

How can international organizations shape cooperation, manage conflict, and address global challenges in an increasingly interconnected world? This course introduces the key concepts, theories, and debates central to understanding international organizations and global governance. We will explore why international organizations emerge, how they function, and their roles in managing international peace, security, economic relations, human rights, and environmental issues. Through foundational texts, contemporary research, and detailed case studies of institutions such as the United Nations, NATO, the World Bank, and the WTO, you will actively engage with critical questions facing scholars, policymakers, and international practitioners today.

COURSE OBJECTIVES (WHAT WILL I GET OUT OF THIS COURSE?)

This course provides you with a solid conceptual foundation in the study of international organizations, emphasizing analytical thinking and effective communication skills. By the end of this course, you will:

- Explain and critically evaluate the major theories and approaches related to international organizations and global governance.
- Recognize, analyze, and assess how international institutions influence state behavior, cooperation, and conflict resolution.
- Apply theoretical frameworks to analyze historical and contemporary cases involving international organizations, treaty-making, global policymaking, and crisis management.

In addition, this course will strengthen your ability to think critically, construct compelling arguments, and communicate effectively. These skills are essential in diverse professional environments, including public administration, diplomatic service, non-governmental organizations, research institutions, international agencies, and private-sector roles with an international focus. Regardless of whether your future plans involve diplomacy, policy advising, global advocacy, or advanced academic work, the analytical proficiency and practical expertise gained in this class will offer lasting professional and academic benefits.

COURSE MATERIALS:

<i>Textbook</i>	Karns, M.P., Mingst, K.A. and Stiles, K.W., 2015. International Organizations: The Politics and Processes. Boulder: Lynne Rienner. You should also check out the library! We will also have readings from different sources that you will be able to access online or through the course space.
<i>Slides</i>	All slides will be posted on the course space. POLS4760
<i>Ed-tech</i>	We will also use third-party applications, like, Kahoot and polleverywhere, in the course.

COURSE COMMUNICATION:

Course materials and updates will be posted on the online course space. Turn on course notifications and check your email account regularly.

EMAIL POLICY

Send emails regarding the course to uras.demir@lmu.edu. Emails should be sent from your lmu.edu email and include the course name (POLS4760) in the subject line. Resend your email if you don't receive a reply within 48 hours.

ASSESSMENTS & GRADES

ASSESSMENT	DESCRIPTION	GRADE PERCENTAGE	DUE
ATTENDANCE & PARTICIPATION	Required. You can miss 3 days out of the twenty-eight days that we are meeting—no questions asked. Beyond that, you lose 2 points off for each day missed, <i>except for an excusable circumstance (requires documentation)</i> .	15%	Each week
WEEKLY REVIEW QUIZZES	You will have 13 weekly review quizzes on the course space starting Week 2. <i>They are due Tuesday 11:59 pm of each week.</i> Lowest 3 will be dropped.	10%	Each week
MIDTERM	No midterm exam	-	-
INFOGRAPHIC + PRESENTATION	One infographic. Individual assignment. We will have a session where you will present your work. See below for more information.	15%	Week 4 Infographic poster presentations on Monday and Wednesday
PODCAST + DISCUSSION POST	One podcast. Group project (3 students). See below for more information.	20%	Week 8
RESEARCH PROJECT + PRESENTATION	One research paper. See below for more information.	40%	Week 6 + Week 12 + Week 15 + Finals week
EXTRA CREDIT	Fill out both the midterm and final instructor evaluations.	TBD%	TBD
FINAL	No final exam	-	-

THE GRADING SCALE

A	100-95%	C	69-65%
A-	94-90%	C-	64-60%
B+	89-85%	D+	59-55%
B	84-80%	D	54-50%
B-	79-75%	D-	49 -45%
C+	74-70%	F	44% and below

LATE POLICY

1 % off from the assignment for each late day. *Except for an excusable circumstance (requires documentation).*

Not happy with your grade? Formal grade appeals must be made via email within two days after the grade was posted. If you request a grade review, I will regrade your entire assignment. Therefore, understand that your grade may go up or down following regrading.

ASSIGNMENT BREAKDOWN

1) INFOGRAPHIC (INDIVIDUAL ASSIGNMENT) – DUE WEEK 4

Visually communicate a complex global governance issue to a general audience clearly and effectively around 500 words.

Pick Your Topic

Select a specific governance issue with a clear outcome and identifiable actors. Examples:

The impact of a UN peacekeeping mission in Mali on civilian security.

The EU's common market and its effects on energy security after the Ukraine war.

The WHO's role in malaria eradication in sub-Saharan Africa.

Avoid overly broad topics that dilute both theoretical and empirical depth.

Your choice of topic should be guided by what kind of IR theory lens you want to test or illustrate.

Integrate IR Theory

Early in your research, select one IR theory to guide your explanation. Outline the theory's core expectations for the issue. Your infographic must contrast theory expectations with observed reality—this is the heart of the analysis.

Research & Variables

Dependent Variable (DV): The main measurable outcome (e.g., civilian deaths in peacekeeping zones, compliance rate with a treaty, malaria incidence rates, cross-border refugee flows).

Independent Variables (IVs): The governance mechanisms or actor behaviors you think influence the DV.

Actors & Mechanisms: Identify any relevant IGOs, NGOs, states, transnational movements and the governance tools they use (peacekeeping mandates, trade agreements, funding programs, norm-setting).

Collect 2–4 core insights supported by credible evidence from IGO/NGO reports, peer-reviewed studies, and official datasets.

All visuals (charts, maps, timelines) must be your own work—created in Excel, PowerPoint.

Design with Theory in Mind

Single-page, page layout: landscape, visual narrative—clear sections: Problem → Governance Response → Outcome → Theory vs Reality.

Citations

Separate APA-formatted reference list (submitted as Word or PDF).

Discreet in-text cues in the infographic (e.g., “UNDP, 2023”).

Submission

Submit as a PDF before class Week 4.

Presentation (TBD)

In class, poster presentation style during Week 4's Monday and Wednesday sessions.

When presenting, explain:

Topic & Scope: Why this issue matters for global governance.

Theory Link: The IR theory chosen and its predictions for the DV.

Findings via Visuals: Show how your data story unfolds—problem, governance action, outcome—and connect each step to theory expectations.

Takeaway Message: One sentence summarizing whether the observed reality supports, contradicts, or refines the theory

2) **PODCAST (GROUP ASSIGNMENT, 3 STUDENTS) – DUE WEEK 8**

Create an engaging, analytical podcast episode on an international organization topic. The main goal here is to take a concept from our course, apply it to a case, and examine how it shapes an international organization. Begin with listening to one or two [BBC Global News Podcast](#) episodes.

Choose a Focused Topic or Question

Pick a specific security issue, event, or debate that is both interesting and manageable for an 12-15 minute episode.

For example:

“Did NATO’s intervention in Libya strengthen or weaken the norm of Responsibility to Protect (R2P)?” Frame your topic as a question applied to a specific context. Avoid topics that are so broad you can’t cover them in depth.

Structure Your Episode for Storytelling and Analysis

Think of your podcast as a short documentary:

Intro (30–60 sec):

State the topic and why it matters.

Background (1–2 min):

Give listeners the basic context they need.

Who are the key actors? What’s the timeline?

Briefly summarize previous events, relevant history, or ongoing debates.

Analysis/Discussion: Deep Dive (9-10 min)

Unpack the Issue:

Explain the main causes, consequences, and dynamics of your case.

For example, if discussing AI governance, outline how states and individuals are using AI, the risks, and the regulatory challenges in the international system.

Multiple Perspectives:

Present at least two sides—e.g., official government views and critical voices, or the perspectives of different countries, corporations, or affected groups.

Use Examples and even Audio:

You should use real-world examples, analogies, or short, relevant audio clips/interviews (these could be pre-recorded expert quotes, news snippets, or interviews you conduct yourself).

Example: Play a 15-second news clip of a press conference, then discuss its significance.

Connect to Bigger Themes:

Show how your topic relates to the broader field of international organization.

Conclusion (1 min)

Summarize your main findings or arguments in 2–3 sentences.

Suggest why this topic will remain relevant or what might happen next.

End with a thought-provoking question or a call to further inquiry.

Other Things to Consider

Don’t assume listeners know all the jargon. Briefly explain key concepts (“Deterrence, in international relations, means...”). The goal is to have an informed and engaging conversation based on facts and data. Refer to your main sources during the podcast (“According to the UN’s 2023 report...”). At the end, mention that a full list of references will be included with your submission. Submit as an audio file or a video file. You can record this over zoom. Upload a document listing all sources used (news, reports, interviews, etc.).

SUBMISSION AND PODCAST DISCUSSION POST

Submit your podcast on the discussion board during Week 8.

Reply to at least 3 other podcasts with your reflection following the prompt on Brightspace.

3) THE RESEARCH PROJECT – PARTS DUE WEEKS 6, 12, 15 AND FINALS WEEK

About one third of your final grade is based on this semester-long research project. You will conduct an in-depth, evidence-based analysis on a global issue, applying concepts from our International Organization course. The project involves multiple components, building from topic selection and literature review to data analysis, actor mapping, and policy recommendations. This cannot be completed at the last minute.

Research Project Part 1 – Length: ~4–5 pages, double-spaced, due Week 6 Sunday by 11:59 PM

This phase establishes your research focus and evidence base.

Introduction (~1 page)

Identify your chosen global issue from the UN Global Issues portal ([link](#)) and narrow it to a specific, clearly defined topic. State your research question explicitly in the form: “How can governance at the international or transnational level address [specific issue] in [context]?”

Literature Review & Lessons Learned (~2 pages)

Review ~25-30 scholarly abstracts from Google Scholar; select 5–7 high-quality sources (at least 3 peer-reviewed). Summarize key findings and extract “lessons learned” — what has worked, what hasn’t, and why.

Preliminary Case Selection (~2 page)

Propose one to three countries where your issue varies in intensity or outcome.

Justify your selection using indicators from credible datasets (World Bank, UN Data, WHO, UNESCO, etc.).

Include at least three relevant indicators (with preliminary charts or tables) that shows the variation in your issue.

Research Project Part 2 – Length: ~5-6 pages, double-spaced, due Week 12 Sunday by 11:59 PM

Case Context & Indicators (~1–2 pages)

Present your selected country(ies) with clear indicator trends over time. Highlight variation that makes your case analytically interesting.

Actor Mapping (~2 pages)

Identify at least three types of actors (IGOs, NGOs, transnational movements, or individuals) engaged in the issue for your case. Describe their interventions, outcomes, and alignment with research findings.

Initial Analysis (~2 pages)

Compare observed outcomes with “expected outcomes” from the research you explored and “lessons learned” from the reports that you discussed in your literature review. Identify gaps, mismatches, or reinforcing patterns between research and reality.

Conference – Length: 10 minute in-class presentation, due Week 15

You will present your research to peers in a 10-minute conference presentation covering:

Research question

Issue addressed

Key findings from literature

Case selection rationale

Actor mapping highlights

Data trends and preliminary conclusions

Policy recommendations (draft)

Research Project Part 3 – Final Paper – Length: ~8-10 pages, double-spaced excluding tables, visuals, bibliography, includes Parts I and II combined and final parts added, due End of Finals Week, Sunday by 11:59 PM

Goal: This final stage synthesizes your research into actionable insights.

Findings

Present main findings with supporting tables/visuals.

Discussion (~2 pages)

Assess how governance mechanisms influenced the outcome.

Address alternative explanations and contextual factors.

Policy Recommendations (~1–2 pages)

Provide 2–3 specific, actionable recommendations for IGOs/NGOs/transnational actors. Discuss feasibility, possible barriers, and alternative strategies.

Conclude by summarizing your research question, findings, and implications. (~½–1 page)

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SCHEDULE	TOPIC
Week 1 M (August 25th)	Introduction
Week 1 W (August 27th)	Theory I: Liberalism Textbook, Chapter 2 (Section on Liberalism) Keohane, R. O., & Martin, L. L. (1995). The promise of institutionalist theory. <i>International security</i> , 20(1), 39-51.
Week 2 M (September 1st)	<i>Labor Day</i>
Week 2 W (September 3rd)	Theory II: Realism Textbook, Chapter 2 (Section on Realism) Mearsheimer, J. J. (2017). The false promise of international institutions. In <i>International organization</i> (pp. 237-282). Routledge.
Week 3 M (September 8th)	Theory III: Constructivism & Others Textbook, Chapter 2 (Rest of the Chapter) Alexander Wendt. 1995. "Constructing International Politics." <i>International Security</i> 20(1): 71-81.
Week 3 W (September 10th)	International Organizations and the Foundations of Global Governance (+ In-class paper brainstorming session) Textbook, Chapter 3 Keohane, R. O. (2005). <i>After hegemony: Cooperation and discord in the world political economy</i> . Princeton university press.
Week 4 M (September 15th)	The United Nations I: Foundations (+ Infographic Presentations) Textbook, Chapter 4 Mingst, Karen A., & Margaret P. Karns. (2012). Maintaining International Peace and Security. <i>The United Nations in the 21st Century</i> . Westview Press.
Week 4 W (September 17th)	The United Nations II: Governing Security (R2P) + UNSC (+ Infographic Presentations) Textbook, Chapter 4 Jackson, R. (2004). International engagement in war-torn countries. <i>Global Governance</i> , 10(1), 21-36.
Week 5 M (September 22nd)	The United Nations III: Non-proliferation and Other Issues Textbook, Chapter 4
Week 5 W (September 24th)	The United Nations IV: Future of UN Mingst, Karen A., & Margaret P. Karns. (2012). Is there a future for the United Nations?. <i>The United Nations in the 21st Century</i> . Westview Press.
Week 6 M (September 29th)	Regional Organizations I: EU & Others Textbook, Chapter 5 Kupchan, C. A., & Kupchan, C. A. (1995). The promise of collective security. <i>International security</i> , 20(1), 52-61.
Week 6 W (October 1st)	Regional Organizations II: NATO & Others Walt, Stephen. Alliance Formation and the balance of World Power. <i>International Security</i> , 36(4), 1985. 3-43. Russett, B. M. (1968). Components of an operational theory of international alliance formation. <i>Journal of Conflict Resolution</i> , 12(3), 285-301.
Week 7 M (October 6th)	Managing International Security (IS Week) Textbook, Chapter 7 Bennett, A. L., & James K. Oliver. (2002). Controlling the Instruments of War. <i>International Organizations, Principles and Issues</i> . Prentice Hall. Doyle, M. W., & Suntharalingam, N. (1994). The UN in Cambodia: Lessons for complex peacekeeping. <i>International Peacekeeping</i> , 1(2), 117-147.
Week 7 W (October 8th)	In-class paper brainstorming session
Week 8 M (October 13th)	Nonstate Actors I Textbook, Chapter 6

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Week 8 W (October 15th)	Nonstate Actors II (+ Build your NGO simulation, shark tank style)
Week 9 M (October 20th)	Governing International Economy I Textbook, Chapter 8 Strange, S. (1999). The Westfailure system. <i>Review of International Studies</i> , 25(3), 345-354.
Week 9 W (October 22nd)	Governing International Economy II Textbook, Chapter 8 In-class Peer Workshop
Week 10 M (October 27th)	Protecting Human Rights Textbook, Chapter 9 Hafner-Burton, Emilie M. “International regimes for human rights.” <i>Annual Review of Political Science</i> 15.1 (2012): 265-286.
Week 10 W (October 29th)	Protecting Human Rights Textbook, Chapter 9 Lebovic, James H., and Erik Voeten. “The politics of shame: the condemnation of country human rights practices in the UNCHR.” <i>International Studies Quarterly</i> 50.4 (2006): 861-888.
Week 11 M (November 3rd)	Governing Human Development (Health, Food, Migration) Textbook, Chapter 11 Hopkins, M. (1991). Human development revisited: A new UNDP report. <i>World Development</i> , 19(10), 1469-1473.
Week 11 W (November 5th)	Governing Human Development (Health, Food, Migration) Textbook, Chapter 11
Week 12 M (November 10th)	Governing the Environment (<i>Guest Lecture Dr. Melisa Perut</i>) Textbook, Chapter 10 Ken Conca, Joe Thwaites, Goueun Lee; Climate Change and the UN Security Council: Bully Pulpit or Bull in a China Shop?. <i>Global Environmental Politics</i> 2017; 17 (2): 1–20. Liliana B. Andonova, Michele M. Betsill, Harriet Bulkeley; Transnational Climate Governance. <i>Global Environmental Politics</i> 2009; 9 (2): 52–73
Week 12 W (November 12th)	Governing the Environment (+ Climate simulation) Textbook, Chapter 10
Week 13 M (November 17th)	In-class paper peer workshop
Week 13 W (November 19th)	Challenges in Global Governance Textbook, Chapter 12 Ikenberry, G.J., 2018. The end of liberal international order?. <i>International Affairs</i> , 94(1), pp.7-23.
Week 14 M (November 24th)	Future of Governance (+ Class debate on future global governance issues) Textbook, Chapter 12 Berten, J. and Kranke, M., 2022. Anticipatory global governance: International organisations and the politics of the future. <i>Global Society</i> , 36(2), pp.155-169.
Week 14 W (November 26th)	<i>Thanksgiving Break</i>
Week 15 M (December 1st)	Presentation Session I
Week 15 W (December 3rd)	Presentation Session II

Note: This syllabus and its contents are subject to revision, students are responsible for being aware of any changes or modifications announced or distributed in class or posted on LMU's course management system.

ACADEMIC HONESTY:

Loyola Marymount University is a community dedicated to academic excellence, student-centered education, and the Jesuit and Marymount traditions. As such, the University expects all members of its community to act with honesty and integrity at all times, especially in their academic work. Academic honesty requires that all members of the LMU community act with integrity, respect their own intellectual and creative work as well as that of others, acknowledge sources consistently and completely, act honestly during exams and on assignments, and report results accurately. As an LMU Lion, by the Lion's Code, you are pledged to join the discourse of the academy with honesty of voice and integrity of scholarship.

Academic dishonesty will be treated as an extremely serious matter, with serious consequences that can range from receiving no credit for assignments/tests to expulsion. It is never permissible to turn in any work that has been copied from another student or copied from a source (including Internet) without properly acknowledging/citing the source. It is never permissible to work on an assignment, exam, quiz or any project with another person unless your instructor has indicated so in the written instructions/guidelines. It is your responsibility to make sure that your work meets the standard of academic honesty set forth in the "Academic Honesty Policy" found at: <https://academics.lmu.edu/honesty/>. For an additional resource, see the "LMU Honor Code and Process" at: https://bulletin.lmu.edu/content.php?catoid=1&navoid=18#LMU_Honor_Code_and_Process

SPECIAL ACCOMMODATIONS:

The DSS Office offers resources to enable students with physical, learning, ADD/ADHD, psychiatric disabilities and those on the autism spectrum to achieve maximum independence while pursuing their educational goals. Staff specialists interact with all areas of the University to eliminate physical and attitudinal barriers. Students must provide documentation for their disability from an appropriate licensed professional. Services are offered to students who have established disabilities under state and federal laws. We also advise students, faculty and staff regarding disability issues. Students who need reasonable modifications, special assistance, academic accommodations or housing accommodations should direct their request to the DSS Office as soon as possible. All discussions will remain confidential. The DSS Office is located on the 2nd floor of Daum Hall and may be reached by email at dsslmu@lmu.edu or phone at (310) 338-4216. Please visit <http://www.lmu.edu/dss> for additional information.

LIBRARY:

The library offers many services to students: <https://library.lmu.edu/student-services/>

You can get help with and "Ask a Librarian" questions here: <https://library.lmu.edu/gethelp/#d.en.174024>

ACADEMIC RESOURCE CENTER:

This center provides student support in the form of writing support, tutoring services, and first-to-go support: <https://academics.lmu.edu/arc/>

ARC Writing & Course Tutoring: The Academic Resource Center provides writing support and peer tutoring in a variety of subjects. Be sure to make tutoring a part of your academic experience when you want feedback on a writing project or help understanding course concepts and preparing for exams. To make an appointment with a tutor, follow the "Writing & Course Tutoring" link in myLMU. Here's how to reach them: academics.lmu.edu/arc or tutoring@lmu.edu.

First-Generation Student Resources: The Academic Resource Center (ARC) offers academic advising, writing center and tutoring support, and first-generation student resources. For information about these services visit <https://academics.lmu.edu/arc/>

REPORTING REQUIREMENTS OF SEXUAL OR INTERPERSONAL MISCONDUCT:

As "responsible employees," faculty are required to report any case of suspected sexual or interpersonal misconduct and cannot protect student confidentiality. For information about confidential counseling on campus and for general information about consensual relationships, sexual harassment, and sexual assault, please see the LMU Cares website: <http://studentaffairs.lmu.edu/lmucares/>.

EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS INFORMATION:

To report an emergency or suspicious activity, contact the LMU Department of Public Safety by phone (x222 or 310-338-2893) or at the nearest emergency call box. In the event of an evacuation, follow the evacuation signage throughout the building to the designated safe refuge area where you will receive further instruction from Public Safety or a Building Captain. For more safety information and preparedness tips, visit <http://www.lmu.edu/emergency> Public Safety can be reached 24 hours a day/7 days a week/365 days a year at 310.338.2893 (or x222 from a campus phone). In a life-threatening emergency, call 9-1-1 first and then call Public Safety if possible. To report an incident, call Public Safety, submit an e-report on the Public Safety website or via the Rave Guardian mobile app, or visit Public Safety in Foley Annex. Review evacuation information and other safety tips posted in each learning space. Make sure you are registered to receive emergency alerts – confirm your contact info at lmu.edu/alert, and download Rave Guardian in the Apple or Google Play store. For more information and emergency preparedness tips, visit <https://publicsafety.lmu.edu>.

COMMUNITY OF CARE:

LMU provides a collaborative case-management program to enhance community safety and support student well-being. This program provides support for prevention, assessment, and intervention as needed to assist students with navigating personal and academic challenges. Faculty can make a community of care referral for students. To learn more about their services, visit: <https://studentaffairs.lmu.edu/wellness/coc/learnmoreaboutus/>

WELLNESS:

I care about your health and well-being. Caring for your whole person means balancing your mental, physical, emotional, spiritual and social needs, in addition to your academic commitments. Check out all of these health and wellness resources, from a cookbook to outdoor activities, at www.lmu.edu/lionwellness.

MENTAL HEALTH:

Mental health is a key part of one's overall health. LMU offers confidential Student Psychological Services. Click here to learn more: <https://studentaffairs.lmu.edu/wellness/studentpsychologicalservices/>