

Political Science 225: The United Nations System
Dr. Kille - Final Exam Study Guide (Spring 2008)

The in-class portion of the final exam will be based on the following questions. On the exam you will be provided with 3 questions from which you will have to choose 2 questions to answer in a well-constructed essay. The in-class portion of the final exam counts 20% of your final grade, with each question worth 10%.

1. Out of the issues addressed in Part II of this course, in which problem area has the UN System achieved the most? What has been achieved? Why has the UN been most successful in this problem area? What is left to achieve and how could the UN be reformed so as to enhance its role in this problem area? Be sure to carefully discuss the historical development of the UN's efforts in this area and support your discussion with specific actions and organizational developments that the UN has undertaken.

2. Out of the issues addressed in Part II of this course, in which problem area has the UN system achieved the least? What, if anything, has been achieved? Why is the UN's record in this area so poor? Identify the main tasks facing the UN in this problem area and speculate on how the UN might be reformed so as to enhance its role in this area. Be sure to carefully discuss the historical development of the UN's efforts in this area, or lack of development, and support your discussion with specific actions and organizational developments that the UN has undertaken or failed to undertake.

3. Some have argued that since the Trusteeship Council is no longer meeting this primary organ should be given a new mission. Explain what the Trusteeship Council's purpose is and why it is no longer meeting. If the Trusteeship Council was given a new mission, what should it be? Be sure to explain in-depth what the UN is currently doing to solve this problem and defend why the purpose you chose deserves the status of a principal organ of the United Nations. In addition, explain how you envision the new "Trusteeship Council" carrying out its mission in an effective manner, including how this organ would work with or replace the existing programs and organizations devoted to the problem area. Making such changes would require reform of the UN structure. As Luck observes, "If gauged by the sheer quantity of deliberations, debates, studies, and resolutions devoted to it, reform has become one of the enduring pastimes and primary products of the UN system" (p. 361). What lessons do you draw from Luck's chapter on reforming the UN and what do you believe are the chances of your reform plan being implemented?

4. In the realm of peace and security, the UN has been engaged in a range of activities. Carefully explain and differentiate between peaceful settlement, collective security, peacekeeping, peace enforcement, peacebuilding, and human security. Be sure to explain how each approach developed from a historical perspective, including the Charter basis – if there is one – to these approaches.

Which of these activities do you believe is most vital for the UN to pursue to promote peace and security? Which of these activities do you believe contributes to the UN's peace efforts the least? Back your argument with a detailed discussion of what these activities entail, including providing specific real world examples of the UN in action and analysis from the readings covered in these sections. Overall, is peace and security an area of success or failure for the UN? Whether you see it as a success or failure, how would you reform the UN to improve its performance in this area?

5. Terrorism is one threat to international peace and security. Carefully describe the historical development the UN's efforts against terrorism and detail the key documents and organizational approaches that have been created. While the UN has been involved over the years in efforts to discourage terrorism, the organization's efforts have many times not been at the core of its focus on international security, why is this? Is the United Nations the best forum for addressing terrorism? How would you recommend that the UN proceed in the future in regards to terrorism? In relation to the last two questions, be sure to present the positions and recommendations offered in the Stanley Foundation, Luck, and Heupel readings, discuss your reaction to their ideas, and provide your specific position on what the UN should do.

MacFarlane and Khong ask: "Have 9/11 and subsequent events reinforced the insights and policy proposals of the human security approach or have they been a setback to human security by bringing back national security as the number one security imperative?" (p. 254). What is a "human security" approach? How was such an approach developed at the UN? What are the three main critiques of human security provided by MacFarlane and Khong and what is their proposed understanding of human security that addresses these critiques? Do you believe that "human security" is the proper approach to security to be taken by the UN? How do MacFarlane and Khong answer their question about the impact of 9/11 in relation to human security and how does this shape your answer to how to UN should consider "security"?

6. Ziring et al. present a "Blueprint for Economic Development" while the United Nations itself has recently promoted Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). Provide Ziring's "blueprint", the idea behind the MDGs and how these were developed (support your discussion with four of the specific MDGs to illustrate). Detail how these two plans compare - including where there is overlap and where there are differences - and explain what points you would draw upon to construct your own development plan for the UN. What measures did your simulated General Assembly sessions seek in relation to achieving MDG#1? Do you believe that these represent an important step forward for economic development that the real Assembly should pursue?

Beyond the MDGs, economic development has been a major area of focus for the UN, with a wide number of actors, programs, and resolutions devoted to economic development. Carefully detail the full range of economic development efforts by the UN. Based on this review, do you consider economic development an area of success or failure for the UN? Whether you see it as a success or failure, how would you reform the UN to improve its performance in this area?

An alternative approach for development is sustainable development. Define sustainable development, explain how this topic developed as part of the UN's agenda, and discuss the UN's efforts to address sustainable development. What are arguments against focusing on sustainable development? Do you believe that sustainable development is the approach that the UN should be focused on? In comparison, what recommendations do Mische and Ribeiro offer for the future of ecological security? Be sure to discuss their three paths and discuss whether you agree with their vision.

7. Explain in detail the steps involved in a functionalist approach to building international cooperation. In what ways does the UN System promote functional cooperation? In what activity categories can functional organizations engage? Provide details from at least four functional issue areas to illustrate the activities of functional organizations within the UN. One of the areas covered must be refugees. As part of this discussion, trace the historical development of the UN's handling of refugees and explain whether you agree that Ziring et al.'s inclusion of refugees as a functional area is correct. What measures did your simulated General Assembly sessions seek in relation to refugees? Do you believe that these represent an important step forward for assisting refugees that the real Assembly should pursue?

Explain at least three critiques of functionalist assumptions set out by Ziring et al. (be sure to include "politicization" as one of the critiques). How do you react to these critiques? In what manner do you think the functionalist process will proceed in the future within the UN system? Be sure to provide concrete examples from UN activities to back up your argument.

8. Self-determination efforts have been underway since the time of the League of Nations. Detail the historical development of self-determination from the League of Nations up to the modern day UN, including efforts on behalf of Indigenous Peoples. What do you think about the UN's accomplishments in the area of self-determination? As part of your answer, consider whether the UN acted too quickly in pressing for decolonization, not quickly enough, or was the timing of process by the UN about right? Would this decolonization process have occurred without the UN anyway?

Self-determination is often viewed as a key human right. Describe the place of human rights in the UN Charter and detail the wide range of ways that the organization has continued to promote and codify human rights. Based on all of these efforts, what is your overall evaluation of the UN's ability to improve human rights conditions? How would you reform the UN to improve its performance in this area? As part of answering these questions, be sure to explain the recent creation of the Human Rights Council and whether this is a positive step forward for addressing human rights in the UN.