

UNU-IC Course Outline: UN System and Sustainable Development

This course, part of the [UNU Intensive Core \(UNU-IC\) Courses](#), will present students with an overview of the United Nations system — the only truly universal and comprehensive multilateral institutional framework. It consists of the United Nations organizations inclusive of their Funds and Programmes, and specialized and technical agencies established by intergovernmental agreements as well as other entities such as the IAEA and WTO.

The course will review its major institutional and policy-related tasks, and examine the relevance and role of the UN system in the global governance of various challenges faced by the international community. These challenges relate to a broad scope of fundamental issues pertaining to the UN's core mandate ranging not only from peace and security, disarmament and terrorism but also to human rights violations, ethnic cleansing, genocide, and displacement of refugees and forced migration. Such challenges have led to international friction and dispute, endangering peace and security along with open communication, trade and development, and the ability to effectively address climate change, global health, and human rights. The course will demonstrate how the UN system, both in its original architecture and current iteration, has provided global governance in order to respond to the current challenges.

The basic structure of international institutions was established in the 19th century, with the League of Nations as the first general international institution involved in various forms of policy-making. Since 1945, the United Nations system has developed policy based on a body of various universal principles and objectives to ensure the foundation of peace, particularly the non-use of armed force, laid out in its Charter as well as the Sustainable Development Goals. It has advocated a culture of peace and culture of conflict prevention with a view to being a center for harmonizing the actions of nations as envisaged in the Charter.

Recently, the very foundation of peace has been undermined by natural and man-made disaster risks, absolute poverty and hunger, illiteracy, economic and social inequality within and among countries, protectionism and chauvinism, as well as ecosystem disruptions, climate change, and universal health threats. Many of these, attributable to acts of transnational stakeholders, not only state but also non-state, have stemmed from globalization and permeated all levels of society. The challenges are complex, multidimensional, and can only be solved multilaterally through UN public policy, drawing upon a evidence-based science–policy interface as well as partnerships between States

and intergovernmental organizations and major groups of stakeholders representing civil society.

A focal point of the course will be the nexus between peace and sustainable development established by the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. This Agenda seeks to bolster universal peace by fostering peaceful, just, and inclusive societies which are free from fear and violence, asserting that “there can be no sustainable development without peace and no peace without sustainable development.” And it has an unprecedented inclusive scope applicable to all segments of society in all countries, developed and developing alike, to ensure that no one is left behind.

The Agenda is promoted by UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres together with his call for preventive measures to remove not only direct threats to peace, but also “save lives, reduce suffering and give hope to millions” to eradicate root causes of threats to security of persons.

In summary, this course will study how UN public policy has evolved in achieving its core mandate to maintain international peace and security from reducing direct threats to peace towards achieving sustainable development as an indispensable condition for peace through coordinated endeavors by multi-stakeholders under the Sustainable Development Agenda with its economic, social and environmental dimensions.

Coordinator

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Expected Course Structure

- Lecture 1. Origins of the UN System - Historical Development of International Institutions
- Lecture 2. UN System and Emerging Mechanism for Global Governance
- Lecture 3. Effectiveness and Accountability of the UN System
- Lecture 4. Realist and Liberal Approaches to Peace and Security
- Lecture 5. Origins of International Conflicts
- Lecture 6. Nuclear Proliferation and Arms Control
- Lecture 7. Development-related topic (1)
- Lecture 8. Development-related topic (2)
- Lecture 9. Risk Analysis and Securitization
- Lecture 10. Stability and Peace Operation
- Lecture 11. Trade and Investment in Globalized Economy

Lecture 12. International Environmental Governance and Climate Chang

Lecture 13. Global Health and Resilience

Lecture 14. Political Economy of Conflict in Africa

Lecture 15. Global Governance on Space

**Please note that topics and contents are subject to change.*