



## MODEL UNITED NATIONS: THE CLASS

Mr. Chisnell, Room 105

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**Please read this contract carefully. It describes how grades are determined for this course and how the course differs from other classes. One copy of this contract must be signed by a parent and returned to me, one copy is to be kept by a parent, and one copy is to be kept by the student.**

**DESCRIPTION OF COURSE:** The Model UN class exists as a separate project from the extra-curricular team. The course content will cover an array of topics as vast as the UN agenda (which will vary from semester to semester), from human rights to environmental issues, and from peace and security to development. Most importantly, examinations of these topics are intended as the basis from which students will argue and advocate for change.

Skills which will be taught through the semester include basic parliamentary procedure, advanced research and source analysis, and argumentative and diplomatic strategy in presentation.

The course proceeds on a few assumptions:

1. Citizens of the United States are privileged in terms of resources such as education, technology, health care, freedoms, etc.;
2. With privilege comes responsibility in considering how resources are used. In other words, it is inappropriate for citizens to consume thoughtlessly or live passively: democracies work when we participate;
3. Civic participation in a democracy means more than merely voting, but active participation in the dialogue of decision-making at all levels;
4. The most constructive democratic action comes from a strong factual foundation.

As a result, this course will not spend time with pen and paper exams and other traditional modes of assessment. Instead, along with a few practice exercises, students will engage the spheres of politics genuinely and record and learn from these engagements.

### **ASSIGNMENTS:**

Assignments will be defined three ways: Research, Oral Presentations, and Community Work. Each of these categories will have assessments of varying weight.

**Substituting Assignments:** Because of the course goals, strict adherence to these assignments is not necessary so long as the overall goal is achieved. For this reason, students may with instructor approval replace any or several assignments with projects of their own design. These may be Model UN team conference preparation, SEA or SADD projects, or other ideas which demonstrate thoughtful growth in their civic participation.

Creating these assignment substitutions will be initiated by the student in advance of any due dates and their nature left to student and instructor design.

| <b>Assignment</b>               | <b>Description</b>                             | <b>Weight &amp; Frequency</b>                     |
|---------------------------------|--|---|
| <b>RESEARCH</b>                 |  |   |
| <b>Individual searches</b>      | specifically assigned through class discussion | Exercise weight                                   |
| <b>Group/topic searches</b>     | paired and small group investigations          | Exercise weight                                   |
| <b>Bibliographies</b>           | formal sets of evaluated sources on topics     | Minor Project weight, one due each marking period |
| <b>ORAL PRESENTATIONS</b>       |  |   |
| <b>Mini-defenses</b>            | classroom discussion focus                     | Exercise weight                                   |
| <b>Point-Counterpoints</b>      | paired and small groups                        | Minor Project weight, one due each marking period |
| <b>Oral Defense Projects</b>    | individual or group public presentations       | Major Project weight, one due for each unit       |
| <b>COMMUNITY WORK</b>           |  |   |
| <b>Anticipatory reflections</b> | individual pre-project thinking                | Exercise weight                                   |
| <b>Attendance/Participation</b> | individual reports from community meetings     | Minor Project weight, one per marking period      |
| <b>Advocacy Project</b>         | Direct individual involvement in one topic     | Major Project weight, one due per semester        |

**COURSE MATERIALS:**

Ball point pens with blue or black ink  
 Plenty of paper  
 Appropriate readings, handouts, and supplemental research  
 A three-ring binder for our materials  
 Access to a public or private computer with internet

**GRADING POLICY:**

While some exercises in class are straightforward assessments with conventional grading systems, larger projects are more complex. Prior to most minor and all major projects, students will determine which skills, aspects of the given topic, and research they wish to employ; post-project, they will evaluate the impact of their work. Success or failure at persuasion is less relevant than the lessons learned from the experience. Therefore, report card grades will be weighed both on academic scores and student participation in his/her own growth in civics literacy.

Students may not “revise” projects, per se, but they may do additional projects to better demonstrate their growth. In the end, when a student succeeds at a skill, the number of efforts required to attain it is irrelevant.

**CONFERENCES:**

You should always schedule a time outside of class to meet with me about your revisions or research. I may ask for a conference to talk about your work in general. IF YOU EVER HAVE QUESTIONS ABOUT YOUR WORK, COME TO ME! I am impressed by your honest concern.

**BEHAVIOR:** Very simple:

- 1) Always be prepared for class
- 2) Take notes and ask questions; be involved
- 3) Respect others
- 4) Work on classwork only; stay focused on the class!
- 5) Act with maturity

**HOW TO AVOID SOME PET PEEVES:**

- Don't lie to me . . . ever.
- Communicate to me about your work often, in person and in writing.
- Find solutions, not excuses.
- Never whine.
- Never quit.

**SYLLABUS OF TOPICS FOR FALL 2009 (four to be selected from):**

Global Food Production and Distribution  
Intellectual Property Rights  
Religious Intolerance  
The Situation in Kashmir  
Politics of Gasoline Prices  
Overpopulation  
International Terrorism & Global Security  
Postmodern Nation State

I have read and understand the structure of the Model UN course.

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*(Student Signature)*

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*(Parent Signature)*