

CCWS Summer Workshop Lesson Plan

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Title: Critical Analysis of UN Peacekeeping

General Goals:

- For students to gain an understanding of the nature and scope of UN peacekeeping missions.
- Explore varying viewpoints on the utility of peacekeeping missions.
- Develop skills in critical analysis.
- Understand how assumptions and biases contribute to the development of a persuasive argument.
- Articulate varying positions on the effectiveness of UN peacekeeping efforts across the world.

Objectives:

- Be able to explain what is involved in a peacekeeping mission and articulate why different actors would or would not support this arm of the UN.
- Develop argument analysis skills by identifying an author's principle argument *and* the underlying assumptions behind it.
- Hypothesize how an argument would be different if the author had anchored it on alternate assumptions.

College course level:

Political Science upper division, international relations course or an upper division global studies course.

Time Structure:

50 minute discussion section.

Materials:

- "The UN's missions impossible", *The Economist*, (August 3, 2000).
- Chris Hawley, "Security Council debates explosion of complex peacekeeping missions", *Associated Press*, (May 28, 2004).
- "A lack of progress", *The Press* (Christchurch, New Zealand), (April 8, 2004).
- William J. Durch, "Picking up the Peaces: The UN's Evolving Postconflict Roles", *The Washington Quarterly*, (26.4, 2003).
- Edith M. Lederer "From Iraq to Haiti, Annan's "irrelevant" UN has its hands full", *Associated Press*, (April 13, 2004).
- Thomas P. Kilgannon, "Sovereignty gains... and losses", *The Washington Times*, (July 9, 2004).
- Jean-marie Guehenno, "A plan to strengthen UN peacekeeping", *International Herald Tribune*, (April 19, 2004).

- Edith M. Lederer “Nations urged to meet peacekeeping costs”, *Associated Press*, (May 18, 2004)
- “The Mission of the Department of Peacekeeping Operations”, www.un.org.

Pre-class Preparation:

Have students read the material and study questions before coming to class. The study questions will address general themes running through the 6 readings, designed to initiate deeper level thinking, rather than simply taking note of facts. The homework due before class begins will be a quick write-up of each of the articles, which must include date, publication, title, themes (in one or two words each) addressed in the article, the main argument the author is trying to get across, and two or three supporting points.

Talking Points (10-15 minutes):

In light of the readings:

- What is UN peacekeeping? Is it effective?
- How do forces get deployed? Who sends them?
- Who are the main contributors to peacekeeping missions? Why do they volunteer assistance?
- What is the difference between peacekeeping, peacemaking, peacebuilding and peace enforcement?
- Why is support divided for peacekeeping missions?
- Does peacekeeping work? When?
- What are the strengths and weaknesses of the UN’s system of peacekeeping?
- What are some alternative methods for conflict management?

Activity (25-30 minutes):

Hand back their homework, have students refer to the theses in the opinion pieces and spend no more than 5 - 8 minutes going over their responses to refresh their memories to make sure everyone is up to speed. Assign each student to one of the three articles and have them write out what the author is trying to get across. Have them think about the political bias of the publication and what the publication’s greater agenda might be.

Next, and they will need help with this, brainstorm on the board what kind of assumptions the authors may have made when forming their arguments? Break them into groups of 4 and have them continue with this on their own. Based on what the argument suggests, what kind of underlying “givens” must already be in place *prior* to making the argument? Are they assuming peacekeeping is effective? Are they calling for a decrease or a structural change to UN peacekeeping? Why would they suggest this?

After listing the basic assumptions, have the students list *opposing* assumptions and hypothesize how the argument would change. If the author had assumed X instead of Y, would his conclusion be different? Time permitting, have the students actually create new arguments based on the facts from their specific article.

Additional activities for a 90 minute session:

Begin class with a 10 minute quiz reviewing the subject matter from the readings. Questions might include a definition of peacekeeping, the role of peacekeepers; how peacekeepers are deployed; who funds them; name three current peacekeeping operations and what the nature of the conflict is.

Also, pulling information from all of the 9 articles, divide the students in half and have them debate the usefulness and success of UN peacekeeping missions. Help them think about what it is to be a successful mission and ultimately if they worthwhile.

Lastly, brainstorm and discuss when and under what circumstances the UN should intervene, as well as alternative methods for conflict management.

Assessment:

Spend 5 minutes reviewing the points of an argument, and how assumptions play a vital role influencing conclusions. Have a few students share how their arguments have changed with opposing assumptions. This exercise will force the students to look carefully at what the argument is really saying and they will discover how much an argument can fluctuate with different baseline assumptions.