

POLS 360 SIMULATION – INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS & ZOMBIES

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The purpose of this exercise is for students to gain practical knowledge on 1. How various theories of IR envision international cooperation and the role of international organizations, and 2. How a multilateral negotiation works in practice. They are presented with a fictional scenario (i.e. a Zombie apocalypse) and, as teams, need to develop and vote on resolutions to deal with this common problem. This exercise has been devised for a group of 60 students, and is conducted over approx. 2h. (1 x 1h30 session and a half).

Instructions:

The class is separated into five team of approx. 10 players. One member of the group picks a colour, which is associated with a particular “nation-Theory” (revealed after the fact).

Each country is fictional - it represents a theory: all members of this “nation-Theory” have a “theoretical character” –they all share similar assumptions about world politics. In addition, some nations are considered “dominant” and are part of the “rationalist” hemisphere, while others are more “marginal” and part of the “reflexivist hemisphere”. Students act as representatives of their “nation-Theory” convened to an ad hoc forum to discuss ways to handle a Zombie Apocalypse.

The goal of the game is for students to make the most points by gaining support for their team’s resolutions on how to handle this “wicked” (literally) problem.

Members of the winning team earn extra credit –one partial letter grade bonus on their documentary analysis.

CONTEXT:

The zombie virus was released on Earth when an iceberg melted in the Antarctic. A multinational exploration team, unaware of the virus, was infected accidentally and unknowingly, and its members brought it back to their home nations. The outbreak has spread evenly and is now global.

An ad hoc multilateral forum has been convened with representatives from different nations in the international system to develop a solution to the crisis. The mandate of the forum is to come up with an agreement on how to handle the crisis. No agreement is not an option; the survival of humanity is at stake.

ZOMBIES:

1. Zombies eat human flesh.
2. Zombies are slow, but they tend to cross borders.

3. Zombies do not speak a human language; we do not know if or how they communicate with each other.
4. For zombies to die, their brain needs to be destroyed.
5. Any human bitten by a zombie will become a zombie. There is no cure.

TEAMS: 1. Realist Nation, 2. Liberal Nation, 3. Marxist Nation (includes neogramscianism/Critical Theory), 4. Constructivist Nation (includes post-structuralism), 5. POCOFEM Nation (postcolonialism/feminism).

3 phases:

1. 40 min.: Group work (30 min.) then 2 min. presentation per team on general position on problem/solution & specific resolutions (max. 2 res. per team) – resolutions need to be in line with the theory represented by the team; students designate one spokesperson for their team; students all vote anonymously on the pres. that best reflects their team's theory (students cannot vote for their team). Team with the most votes = 2 points at the end of the SIM.

2. 40 min.: Negotiation with other teams & amendments: students are instructed to seek the collaboration of teams they are most likely to share common ground with, and form coalitions backing specific resolutions. Ex. An alliance between Realist and POCOFEM nations on a resolution is unlikely, but Liberal and Constructivist Nations might be able to find common ground on the promotion of a new norm. As teams get a sense of who is likely to vote what way, they can amend their own resolutions to obtain more support.

3. 30 min.: Vote: 1 resolution per nation. The team introduces the final wording for their resolution, the original res. is edited by the instructor, with the final res. projected on the screen. Res. 1 for all teams are voted on during Round 1, Res. 2 for all teams during Round 2, in reverse order. Teams vote as a team: for, against, or abstain. They also vote on their own res. Teams can back as many resolutions as they wish as long as their voting patterns are consistent (including with the theory of their nation).

POINTS:

- Each team has one vote for resolutions (1 voter to be designated for the team)
- 2 points per vote FOR your resolution.
- 1 point per vote ABSTAIN /your resolution.
- 0 point per vote AGAINST your resolution.
- VOTING PATTERNS: +1 if voting patterns are highly consistent with the theory; - 1 if they are inconsistent.
- +1 bonus for Team Congeniality (team work);
- + No. of votes for your team's presentation (individual).
- Members of the winning team, announced after the end of the class, get a bonus of one partial letter grade on their weakest ID answer on the final.

DEBRIEF QUESTIONS: 10 min.

- What kind of arguments did your team make in convincing other teams to back their resolutions? What coalitions did you seek to develop, and why?
- What kind of compromises were you willing to make and why?
- Did your perspective on IOs and/or theories of IOs change as a result of SIM?