

The Search For Atlantis

Background Guide

GWCIA XXXI

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Conference Policies

Misconduct Policy

GWCIA acknowledges that collegiate Model UN spaces often echo or perpetuate real-world discrimination towards various historically marginalized communities. As such, GWCIA enforces a zero tolerance policy for harassment or discrimination based on race, color, sex, gender, gender identity, sexual identity, national origin, religion, age, disability, or any other identity-based designation. Additionally, GWCIA practices a zero tolerance policy for sexual misconduct of any kind, including sexual harassment and sexual assault. This includes, but is not limited to, inappropriate 1) content in notes passed or documents created during committee sessions, 2) conversations throughout GWCIA, and 3) conduct at The George Washington University campus or at any GWCIA-sponsored programming. If a delegate experiences any kind of discrimination, social discomfort, or sexual misconduct, they are urged to bring it to the attention of any GWCIA Secretariat member or report the instance via our anonymous misconduct form, which can be found on our Conduct Policies website page and in each committee room. Any potential cases of discrimination or sexual misconduct will warrant immediate investigation and may result in disqualification from awards and/or dismissal from the conference at the sole discretion of the Secretary-General.

Technology Policy

Using technology is prohibited in GWCIA historical/specialized and crisis committees, unless a delegate has an approved accommodation. GWCIA will provide delegates with one white legal pad and a pen that they may use to write notes if they wish. Delegates are free to bring their own additional notepads, staplers, Post-Its, or other supplies, as these will not be provided.

Plagiarism, Pre-Writing & AI Policy

All pre-written, plagiarized, or AI-generated content, which can include working papers, draft resolutions, directives, or crisis notes, is strictly prohibited at GWCIA. Pre-writing constitutes any language or content that was written outside of unmoderated caucuses in General Assemblies and outside of when debate is formally opened in crisis committees. This means that creating content before or after committee sessions or during moderated caucuses in Assemblies & Specialized committees is pre-writing. Writing during USG feedback, announcements, or during guest speakers equally constitutes pre-writing. All dais members and undersecretaries general are specifically instructed to monitor for pre-writing by checking typed and written materials that delegates may have prepared before the conference if potential pre-writing is suspected. By participating in GWCIA, your delegation acknowledges that they understand this policy and the consequences if it is broken. Plagiarism includes, but is not limited to, verbatim or near-verbatim copying and pasting from academic sources or other websites. Any delegate found guilty of pre-writing, plagiarism, or flagrant AI usage will be immediately disqualified from any award in their committee. The GWCIA Secretariat reserves the right to search computers and laptops, notebooks and binders, USBs, and any form of electronics for Model UN specific documents in response to allegations. They additionally reserve the discretion to run any content through an AI detector. In order to report a case of substantive misconduct, please see the anonymous misconduct form on our Conduct Policies page or contact a member of the Secretariat.

Awards Policy

While GWCIA recognizes that the core value of participating in any Model UN committee is education in international affairs and the development of related skills such as productive collaboration, public speaking, and critical thinking, we also recognize the value of rewarding delegates who are exceptionally prepared and proficient in these skills.

At GWCIA, we value delegates who can leverage creativity, diplomacy, substantive knowledge, and critical thinking skills to debate effectively, lead negotiations and blocs, and write comprehensive clauses. We especially look favorably towards delegates who individually develop meaningful solutions to the committee's main issues while keeping in mind the realistic diplomatic dynamics of our world, as well as those delegates who are able to advocate for their solutions and ideas to be adopted. The dais encourages delegates to lead in a manner that uplifts and respects their competitors while also introducing strong, unique solutions that consistently anchor their group's directive or working paper. On the other hand, attempts to undermine the goals of the committee without reason or acting without detailed thought of consequences is discouraged. Any rude, disrespectful, or demeaning conduct towards other delegates' ideas will not be tolerated.

Letter from the Chair & Crisis Director

Greetings Delegates!

Welcome to GWCIA XXXI! My name is Ysabel De Guzman, and I'm so excited to be your Chair for this committee. I'm a freshman at GWU, part of the MUN team here, and have participated in numerous MUN conferences over the years. This is my first time chairing a crisis committee, and I can't wait to see the chaos and possibly questionable decisions you will all bring to the table. The Search for Atlantis is a chance to dive into one of history's most enduring mysteries. In this committee, I want to see how far you are all willing to go as you navigate ancient civilizations, diplomacy, and the question of whether Atlantis is a discovery worth celebrating or a mystery best left unsolved. I hope you are all ready to think outside the box and take some risks. After all, who knows what awaits us all in the search for Atlantis?

Your chair,

Ysabel De Guzman
The Search for Atlantis
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Reminder: Delegates must CC their advisor on any email sent to the Chair or Crisis Director.

Overview of Committee Procedure

Crisis Procedure

GWCIA XXXI utilizes a Loose Note crisis system, where students freely submit notes that will serve as a statement of intent and a brief justification for that action. Delegates will have the option to submit a page from their pad to take backroom actions. Rather than utilizing the extensive full page note, with fanciful language and a recipient of the note, students will submit notes at will. This can be done at any time during the course of the committee. The backroom will receive these notes as they come, approve or deny them, and take note of the arcs and actions of each respective delegate. Their actions will be noted in the following crisis update.

Example:
“Using my powers as Commander of the 506th Regime of the 101st Airborne Division, deploy troops in Indiana.” Col. Strayer

Introduction to the Committee

This Committee is a journey and a quest to find the lost city of Atlantis. There is no one right way to find the ancient city and each character may find a different approach that suits their needs over that of their crewmates. Most of the events of this committee will be happening on board or surrounding your ship, so be prepared to work in close quarters with everyone else.

Background

The City of Atlantis was first revealed to the world around the year 360 BCE by the famous Greek philosopher Plato. He published two dialogues, titled Timaeus and Critias, which first mentioned the lost civilization of Atlantis. The myth travelled across the seas from Egypt, where a priest had described an ancient kingdom that had existed eons before. From that starting point, Plato immortalized it and it was passed down through written and oral history as one of the most famous lost civilizations.

The kingdom of Atlantis had been a civilized island nation which conquered vast lands around Northern Africa and Southern Europe. It was known to be especially rich with precious metals and stones inlaid in its infrastructure and funding its overseas expansion. It has a strong economy that traded with surrounding empires and extended Atlantean influence. Atlantis's most notable achievement was its technological advancement. It is said that it possessed technologies inconceivable at the time, some of which are more advanced to those we have today. They developed ways to farm the island land soil with intricate water management, agricultural technologies and navigation systems; most of which were a secret to the rest of the world.

The island of Atlantis was created in the Bronze age, when the Greek Gods were not yet worshipped by the ancient Greeks. The God of the sea, Poseidon, had created this powerful island to house and protect his mortal wife and their family for generations to come. The island itself had fertile soil and was laden with riches. A mountain lay in the center and twin streams with hot and cold water cutting across the land surrounded it and flowed into the ocean. On the top of the mountain was an ornate temple dedicated to Poseidon.[1] Its walls were made of silver with gold pinnacles that crested the top. The inside was made of ivory and the rare metal orichalcum, a bright red precious metal mined exclusively in Atlantis which covered the floor of the citadel. Atlantis mined the precious metal, worth only less than gold, and used it as a currency, to ornate buildings, and in their technology. It can be identified by its fiery red colour and a consistency similar to bronze or copper coins. The island was surrounded by protective barriers: Poseidon created two circles of land and three of water that alternated around the perimeter of the mainland. On each circle stood a large wall that coated the land and provided extra protection from invading armies. The outer wall was brass, the middle one tin and the wall of the mainland was made of orichalcum that gleamed in the light and could be seen from leagues away. The island itself was divided up into ten parts for 10 kings whose descendants would continue to rule Atlantis. Over time the empire grew vaster and vaster, expanding into more of the ancient world and using its strong navy and advanced technology to expand Atlantean power. Eventually they threatened the capital of the ancient Greek empire, Athens, and

[1]Plato, review of *The Internet Classics Archive | Timaeus* by Plato, Classics.mit.edu, accessed July 18, 2026, https://classics.mit.edu/Plato/timaeus.html.

Atlantis's luck turned around. The rulers of Atlantis were punished by the gods for their powerlust and pride. They had used up the resources of their island and mined all the orichalcum, depleting Atlantis of its riches. For this, the island was rocked with earthquakes and flooded by constant rains for days. As a result of their hubris and intense pride, the island of Atlantis along with its empire, technologies and riches was sunk to the bottom of the sea and erased from history.[2]

The location of Atlantis is described in Plato's dialogues as being between the Pillars of Hercules, which was considered the mouth of the Atlantic. Nowadays, these pillars would be described as north of the strait of Gibraltar.[3] Other sources claim Atlantis can only be found by reading the night sky and correlating the stars to earthly monuments in the century they were built.[4] However, its exact location has never been determined and many speculations surround the creation of the island. It may be at large in the Atlantic, or in the Mediterranean, the original sea of Greek myths. No one document pins down its exact location and those that do cannot be trusted. Finding Atlantis will mean following the traces of the civilization and anything they may have left behind that would indicate its whereabouts. Leaving the port of Washington DC and navigating across the Atlantic will be the easiest part of the journey, but hopefully the talent aboard the ship will allow for a clearer pathway once we near the ancient waters where Atlantis was sunk.

[2]review of *The Internet Classics Archive | Critias* by Plato, Classics.mit.edu, accessed July 18, 2026, https://classics.mit.edu/Plato/critias.html.
[3]Adam Augustyn, "Atlantis | Description & Legend | Britannica," in *Encyclopædia Britannica*, 2019, https://www.britannica.com/topic/Atlantis-legendary-island.
[4]British Broadcasting Corporation, "BBC - Science & Nature - Horizon - Atlantis Reborn Again," Bbc.co.uk, 2025, https://www.bbc.co.uk/science/horizon/2000/atlantisrebornagain_transcript.shtml.

Current Situation

It's 1980 and the C&O canal has been freshly opened for trade in Washington DC.[5] Using the few private funds that each member on board possessed and a small donation from the Smithsonian in return for rights to any found artefacts, you purchased a ship strong enough to cross the ocean with enough resources for the month-long trip. To start this journey, you must first leave the United States and determine the path going forwards as you near Europe and the seas where Atlantis is rumored to have sunk.

[5]review of *Explorethehistory*, Historic Port of Washington Project, 2025, https://www.historicportofwashington.org/explorethehistory.

Questions to Consider

1. The most pressing matter is how you will determine where Atlantis may be located. While we know it is somewhere off continental Europe, various sources describe different locations or places that no longer exist. What source will you trust and who will you trust to correctly navigate by it?
2. With all the talent and ambition on board, it may become unclear who is in charge during this journey. The captain may man the ship; however, the historian knows the myth better, while the astronomer can lead the way if it proves the right approach. Who is the true leader of the quest and therefore what is the final goal of the voyage?
3. Every ship must have a name – what is your mighty vessel called?
4. While not necessarily the most pressing issue at the start of the voyage, if evidence of Atlantis is found with all its riches and technology, who gets to claim what to bring back to the public?

Character List

Name	Captain
Description	The Captain is the leader of the ship and responsible for the whole crew. The Captain has undertaken many voyages in treacherous waters and can navigate even the roughest seas; they have the most experience on the ship. The captain wants to complete one final voyage to be remembered as the greatest sailor in history.

Name	First Mate
Description	The First Mate is the captain's closest friend and advisor. They need to know where everyone on the ship is at all times and delegate tasks to keep everything running smoothly. If the Captain is unable to do so, the first mate is in charge of the ship.

Name	Crew Member
Description	The crew member is the strength of the ship. They man the sails, often steer the ship, and help the captain and first mate. They are knowledgeable of the seas but often overlooked and made to do the grunt work. The crew member wants to prove themselves and have a shot at being captain one day.

Name	Historian
Description	The historian is committed to documenting the journey and finding the hidden land. They will do anything to succeed in finding the lost city and being the first to write a book about it. They possess the ancient transcripts of Plato’s texts that provide the clues to the location of the island.

Name	Linguist
Description	The Linguist possesses the power of deciphering all sorts of languages. A scholar of the ancient texts, they too want to be the first to announce the finding of Atlantis. The Linguist has explored vast lands and is a knowledgeable sailor.

Name	Cook
Description	The cook is a forgotten yet crucial member of the ship. They take care of the inner workings of the ship and more than just providing food, they provide wise counsel to the captain. The cook has been on many voyages and seen more of the sea than anyone else on board except the captain.

Name	Mechanic
Description	The mechanic's role in this journey is to ensure the smooth running of the ship and tend to any repairs necessary. The mechanic is a skilled engineer but often doesn't have as many tools and resources as they would like. The mechanic wants to discover the technologies of Atlantis and share them with the world.

Name	Scientist
Description	The scientist is a driven inventor and desperate to find a technological breakthrough. With the industrial revolution well underway and new technologies appearing daily, they wish to present something so novel that nobody can dispute their contribution to the world. Atlantis may hold the secrets to their invention.

Name	Medic
Description	The medic is knowledgeable and always on standby in case of emergency during the trip. Not every member has their sea legs (medic included) and accidents may happen where a doctor is necessary.

Name	Seer
Description	While Atlantis may well be a city simply lost to time, its initial creation and ruin was done by the gods and they might still have a hand to play in its future. With the use of medicinal plants and long stretches of silence, which don't come often on board a busy ship, the seer can gain insight of the future.

Name	Ancient Priest
Description	The best way to avoid the wrath of the gods is to appease them. The priest is familiar with the rituals surrounding the God Poseidon and the markings that may signify his presence in a civilization.

Name	Diplomat
Description	Tasked with ensuring there is no trouble with crossing into foreign territory, the diplomat mitigates conflicts both on board your ship and if any trouble arises when crossing into foreign seas or if you need to dock at a foreign port.

Name	Astronomer
Description	The astronomer is able to decipher the stars and strongly believes that by linking the night sky to the location of the Earth, Atlantis will be discovered. While the Orion Correlation Theory is not the most believed in, it shouldn't be shut down too quickly.

Name	Archaeologist
Description	A close friend of the historian, the archaeologist has a similar passion for discovery and proving that Atlantis is real. They have long studied ancient ruins and possess the ability to rapidly date and characterize where structures originated from.

Name	Soldier
Description	No dangerous journey would be complete without some semblance of protection. The soldier is the brawn of the journey and is exceptionally good at sniffing out danger and rigging traps for any unwanted visitors. Their creativity will be put to the test with creatures they've never encountered before.

Name	The Guide
Description	With most of the crew coming from the US, a local fisherman was enlisted from the Spanish coast. While not necessarily knowing where Atlantis is located, they have crucial insight into the waters surrounding the Mediterranean and any possible land mass in the region. While not particularly interested in Atlantis itself, the fisherman enjoys the opportunity of sailing a boat so close to their home, especially with an inexperienced crew.

Name	Writer
Description	The writer wishes to document the heroic story of a treacherous sea voyage. While they believe Atlantis is just a myth, the voyage and search will be a compelling enough novel as long as there is enough happening on board.

Works Cited

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