

POLS / LSJ 347: The Politics of International Law
Mondays and Wednesdays 11:30-12:50

Teaching Team:

Instructor: Jonathan Beck

Office hours: Mondays 1:00-2:00 p.m. and Wednesdays 10:00-11:00 a.m.

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Teaching Assistants:

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Course Overview

This course introduces students to the ways in which international law interacts with international politics. International law is inherently political, and cannot be understood in isolation from either domestic or international politics. The course examines the negotiation, use, design, and consequences of international law for a wide range of actors in world affairs. Why do states agree to create international agreements that limit their sovereignty? Why do international agreements differ so much in their form and content? How and to what extent has international law facilitated the achievement of common objectives? How much has international law shaped the foreign and domestic policies of state and non-state actors? What is the future of international law in the face of growing nationalist trends?

Throughout the course we will pay special attention to evaluating both the logic and evidence supporting various theories on the causes and consequences of international law. We will examine how international law is formed and operates across a variety of substantive areas, including human rights, armed conflict, economics affairs, and the environment.

Required Reading: All required readings will be posted for free on Canvas. There are no required textbooks. Readings will include excerpts from political science publications, articles from journalistic outlets, fiction and non-fiction excerpts, and we will also watch some documentary films. There will be about 30 pages of reading per class session, and I will always provide reading questions to help guide you through the readings. These questions are not required for credit but should be considered a useful resource.

Assessment:

Engagement/Participation	20%
Online Discussions	15% (5% each)
RUD Assignment	20%
Institutional Design Case Study	20%
Final Essay Thesis Assignment	5%
Final Essay	20%

To receive credit for this course, you must complete all assessment components above. I include a brief description of each component below. The syllabus marks clearly when all assignments are due, enabling all students to schedule their quarter accordingly. If you have conflicting commitments, such as military service or others, please come speak with me as soon as possible so accommodations can be made.

Engagement/Participation: We recognize that every student participates differently. Participation will reflect your active engagement with course material and support of your peers, and can include verbal contributions in class, note-taking in small groups, online discussions, peer review assignments, study groups, conversations with the instructor, among other activities. Your TA will go over their expectations in section.

Reading/Discussion Assignments: Throughout the course, there will be a total of three discussion assignments, which the instructor will make available a week before each is due. These are low-stakes assignments meant to build confidence, help with comprehension, and provide you an opportunity for hands-on human rights analysis. These assignments may sometimes ask you to engage material from outside the syllabus. All students who complete the assignment meaningfully will receive full credit.

RUD Assignment: You will analyze a treaty and what are known as “Reservations, Understandings, and Declarations,” which are signing statements states attach to their ratification of a treaty. I will provide documents and instructions for this assignment.

Institutional Design Case Study: You will consider a major issue facing the international community and develop a “case study” based on provided resources and independent research. The case study will identify core challenges and propose concrete institutional solutions, with consideration given to whether or not these institutions are likely to generate political support.

Final Essay: For the final assignment, you will be asked to develop an original argument that engages course readings and discussions.

Academic Honesty: You are assumed to be familiar with the university’s policies on cheating and plagiarism and the potential penalties involved (a link to those policies is on the section website or you can find it at: <http://depts.washington.edu/grading/issue1/honesty.htm>). In the event that there is a question about your work, you may be asked to produce any notes and outlines you used, to identify your sources, and to provide an electronic copy of your paper. It is my policy to forward any incidents of probable academic misconduct to the College of Arts and Sciences’ Committee on Academic Conduct for investigation and resolution. Remember: When in doubt, cite.

Access and Accommodations: Your experience in this class is important to me, and it is the policy and practice of the University of Washington to create inclusive and accessible learning environments consistent with federal and state law. If you experience barriers based on disability, please seek a meeting with DRS to discuss and address them. If you have already established accommodations with DRS, please communicate your approved accommodations to your instructor at your earliest convenience so we can discuss your needs in this course. Disability Resources for Students (DRS) offers resources and coordinates reasonable accommodations for students with disabilities. Reasonable accommodations are established through an interactive process between you, your instructor(s) and DRS. If you have not yet established services through DRS, but have a temporary or permanent disability that requires

accommodations (this can include but not limited to; mental health, attention-related, learning, vision, hearing, physical or health impacts), you are welcome to contact DRS at 206-543-8924, Mary Gates Hall 011, uwdrs@uw.edu or disability.uw.edu.

Washington state law requires that UW develop a policy for accommodation of student absences or significant hardship due to reasons of faith or conscience, or for organized religious activities. The UW's policy, including more information about how to request an accommodation, is available at [Religious Accommodations Policy](https://registrar.washington.edu/staffandfaculty/religious-accommodations-policy/)

(<https://registrar.washington.edu/staffandfaculty/religious-accommodations-policy/>).

Accommodations must be requested within the first two weeks of this course using the [Religious Accommodations Request form](https://registrar.washington.edu/students/religious-accommodations-request/) (<https://registrar.washington.edu/students/religious-accommodations-request/>)."

Basic Needs Policy: Your safety, health and well-being are far more important than anything going on in class. Please feel free to reach out to me if you need to talk. Any student who faces challenges securing their food, housing, or personal safety should feel welcome to come to the instructor so that we can connect you with any resources available through the university.

Diversity Statement: Diversity creates opportunities for people to engage, understand and respect others whose perspectives, values, beliefs, traditions, and world views have been shaped by experiences and backgrounds that may be different from their own, particularly those from historically marginalized and underrepresented groups. This account of diversity includes, but is not limited to differences in gender, race, age, national origin, ethnicity, gender identity and expression, immigration status, intellectual and physical ability, sexual orientation, income, faith, socio-economic class, family status, primary language, military experience, political identification, cognitive style, and communication style. If any student has concerns, they should feel welcome and encouraged to express their concerns to me in person or via e-mail. Please see a breakdown of some campus resources at the end of this syllabus.

Course Schedule

Week	Date	Topic	Reading	Assignment
Week 1	March 27	Introduction to Course	John Bolton, " Is International Law Really Law? "; Robert Turner, " International Law Really is Law "	
	March 29	Is International law really "real" law?	Thucydides, "The Melian Dialogue"; Krause, " Understanding the Melian Dialogue in Thucydides "; Savage, " Pentagon Blocks Sharing of Evidence of Potential Russian War Crimes "	
Week 2	April 3	International Anarchy	Goldsmith and Posner, "Introduction" from <i>The Limits of International Law</i> ; Zvobgo, "Why Race Matters in International Relations"	
	April 5	Compliance and Enforcement Case Study: Arresting Pinochet	Lagos, Muñoz and Slaughter, "The Pinochet Dilemma"; Eldabh, Dakwar and Aksoz, "The UN's George Floyd Resolution is a	

			Vital Step Toward International Accountability"	
Week 3	April 10	<p>Two online mini-lectures (no in-person lecture):</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Sources of international law (~15 mins) 2. Reservations, Understandings, and Declarations (~15 mins) <p>Document: treaty reservations by United States & treaty itself</p> <p>How would different theoretical perspectives analyze these reservations? What are the practical impacts likely to be?</p>	See assignment readings	<p>Treaty reservations assignment due Sunday, April 12</p> <p>Sections on April 14 will be in the form of "open office hours." TAs will share more details.</p>
	April 12	<p>Guest Lecture (in-person): Bree Bang-Jensen</p> <p>Why do states enter and exit treaties?</p>	<p>Patryck I. Labuda, "The African Union's Collective Withdrawal from the ICC: Does Bad Law Make for Good Politics?"</p>	
Week 4	April 17	<p>Constituting Actors in International Law I: States and their Creations</p>	<p>Atul Bharadwaj, "The International Criminal Court and the Question of Sovereignty"</p>	<p>Online Discussion 1 – First Post Due Wednesday April 19, Total 3 Posts Due Sunday, April 23</p>
	April 19	<p>Constituting Actors in International Law II: States and their Creations</p>	<p>Marlies Glasius, "What is Global Justice and Who</p>	

			Decides?"; David Bosco, "The ICC's Impact in Ukraine"	
Week 5	April 24	International Organizations and Institutional Design I Case Study: The United Nations	pp. 181-88 of Deepak Mawar, ch. 5 from <i>States Undermining International Law</i> ; " The UN at Seventy- Five: How to Make it Relevant Again "	
	April 26	International Organizations and Institutional Design II Case Study: The United Nations Security Council	pp. 188-225 of Deepak Mawar, ch. 5 from <i>States Undermining International Law</i> ; Uri Friedman, " How the UN Security Council Can Reinvent Itself "	
Week 6	May 1	International Organizations and Institutional Design III Case Study: The European Union	Ch. 1 and 3 of John Pinder, <i>The European Union: A Very Short Introduction</i>	Online Discussion 2 – First Post Due Before Section Friday, May 5, Total 3 Posts Due Sunday, May 7
	May 3	Interactions Between International and Domestic Law Case Study: Preventing war and conflict in Northern Ireland	Connolly and Doyle, "Brexit and the Northern Ireland Peace Process" in <i>The Law & Politics of Brexit</i> ; Castle, Specia and Robins, " What's at	

			Stake in Northern Ireland Trade Deal	
Week 7	May 8	International Organizations and Institutional Design IV Case Study: Trade Agreements and Soft Power	McBride, Chatzky, and Siripurapu, “What’s Next for the Trans-Pacific Partnership?” ; Yagci, “Rethinking Soft Power in Light of China’s Belt & Road Initiative”	Institutional Design Case Study due Friday, May 12
	May 10	Soft Power, Free Trade, and Human Rights Case Study: CAFTA	Godoy, “Market Myths and Assumptions: Examining the Transnational Politics of Access to Medicines Campaigning in Central America”	
Week 8	May 15	International Humanitarian Law and the Laws of War I We will watch the film <i>Eye in the Sky</i> during lecture.	ICRC, “What is International Humanitarian Law?”	Final Essay thesis statement assignment due before section Friday, May 26
	May 17	International Humanitarian Law and the Laws of War II	Rosa Brooks, “Drones and the International Rule of Law”	
Week 9	May 22	International Humanitarian Law and the Laws of War III	Aidan Lewis, “What is Happening in Sudan?”	Online Discussion 3 – First Post Due Wednesday May 24,

			Fighting in Khartoum Explained "; Human Rights Watch, "Question and Answers on Sudan and the Laws of War"	Total 3 Posts Due Sunday, May 28
	May 24	International Humanitarian Law and the Laws of War IV	Lindsay Maisland, "Why China-Taiwan Relations are So Tense" ; David J. Scheffer, "Does Taiwan Have the Right to Self Defense?"	
Week 10	No class: Memorial Day Holiday			
	May 31	Concluding lecture	TBD	
Final Exam Week				Final Essay due Wednesday, June 7