



International Law (Credit)

School & College	College of Humanities & Social Science Centre for Open Learning
Subject Area	Social Science/Law
SCF Credit Level	SCQF Level 8 (Year 1 Undergraduate)
Credits	20 SCQF/10 ECTS/4 US
Course pre-requisite	1 year of undergraduate study
Language Requirements	IELTS 6.5 (with a minimum of 5.5 in each component)

Course Summary

This course provides an introduction to the field of international law. Students will learn about the legal principles and institutions that regulate the conduct of international actors, and explore contemporary issues such as war, terrorism, migration and human rights from a legal perspective.

Course Description

This course provides students with an introductory overview of international law as an academic discipline. The course explores public international law, which regulates relations between various actors including states and international organisations.

Students will learn about essential concepts such as the nature of international law, its sources, the law of treaties, its relationship with national laws, and its subjects. In addition, the course will critically assess the effectiveness of international law and offer legal reflections on issues such as the role of international institutions (particularly the United Nations) and the use of force in international relations.

The first part of the course will provide students with foundational knowledge of the main concepts of public international law, including its definition, its nature, the relevant sources, who is subject to it, and its relationship with domestic laws.

The second part will focus on the role of international institutions, including the UN system and its effectiveness in countering challenges of public international law. Students will reflect on the involvement of the UN in particular case studies.

In the third part, students will learn about the general legal framework of the use of force. The use of force will be taught in the context of *jus ad bellum* and *jus in bello*. Students will be encouraged to offer independent thought on recent select examples of the use of force.

The fourth part will provide students with an overview of other areas of international law, such as the law of the sea, technology, international environmental law, and international criminal law.

By the end of the course, students should have developed a good understanding of the fundamentals of public international law and be familiar with basic international legal concepts.

Syllabus

Week one: **An introductory overview of Public International Law**

- Introduction to the course
- The nature and sources of PIL: The law of treaties
- The sources of PIL: Customary international law; general principles of law; judicial decisions; writings of publicists
- The sources of PIL: Resolutions and decisions of international organisations; international law and its relationship to national law
- Personality, statehood and recognition

Week two: **Challenges to the institutions of International Law: The role of the United Nations**

- UN: History, structure and membership
- UN: General Assembly and Security Council
- Peaceful settlement
- Human rights and the UN: Progress and challenges
- Migration and the UN: A complex and emerging issue

Week three: **Use of force: Jus ad bellum and jus in bello**

- Use of force: The legal regime governing the use of force
- Use of force: Peace enforcement and peacekeeping
- Law of armed conflicts: Scope of application
- War on terror: A question of jus ad bellum and jus in bello

Week four: **Selected developed areas of International Law**

- Law of the sea: An example of perfection?
- Technology and international law: New challenges
- International environmental law: Is the environment sufficiently protected?
- Complexity and efficiency of international criminal law
- Summary and conclusion

Course Format and Teaching Method

The course will be offered using a hybrid teaching model, using a combination of on-campus teaching and digital elements that allow students to take the course either based physically in Edinburgh, or remotely from home.

The course will be taught through a combination of lectures, class discussions, group work and practical exercises. Lectures will introduce key concepts and theories, and the tutorials will provide an opportunity for students to deepen their understanding through discussion and questions. Students will also be guided to use their reasoning skills to apply international legal rules to facts provided in practical scenarios. In addition, the course will include student-led, group-based presentations on contemporary issues in international law.

Learning Outcomes

On completion of this course, students will be able to:

- identify and define the main concepts of international law including its nature, sources and subjects, statehood, as well as its relationship with national law;
- demonstrate knowledge of the international legal regime governing the use of force;
- analyse current issues, such as examples of the use of force, from a legal perspective;
- critically assess the effectiveness of international rules and institutions, including the United Nations;
- show awareness of selected areas of international law, such as the law of the sea, environmental law, and international criminal law.

Assessment Method

- 2500-word essay (100%)

Reading

Essential Reading:

Dixon, M., 2013. Textbook on International Law. 7th ed. Oxford: University Press.

Recommended Reading:

Evans, M.D. ed., 2018. International Law. 5th ed. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Von Glahn, G., and Taulbee, J.L., 2017. Law Among Nations: An Introduction to Public International Law. 11th ed. Abingdon: Routledge.

Gray, C., 2018. International Law and the Use of Force. 4th ed. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Shaw, M., 2017. International Law. 8th ed. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.