

PSC 339 International Law
Syllabus & Schedule for Spring 2017 Semester, January 30th to May 12th

Department of Political Science, University at Buffalo, SUNY

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Office Hours: Upon request via phone or Skype

Course Description

In PSC 339 International Law we will examine the existing body of public international law and the functions that international law performs. Law is just one means of global governance that attempts to secure the coexistence of sovereign states. We will look closely at the ways in which international law interacts with international politics. International law is inherently political, and cannot be understood in isolation from domestic and international politics. The course examines the use, design, and consequences of international law for a wide range of actors in world politics. Why do states agree to create international agreements that limit their sovereignty? 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?

This course assumes a basic understanding of the international political system, but does not require a background in law.

Learning Objectives

The general objective of this course is to develop the student's grasp of the foundations of international law, its evolution, and its role in world affairs today. By the end of the term, students should be able to demonstrate an understanding of:

- the origins of international law;
- the main principles of international law;
- the key historical developments and practices that have shaped the current international legal system;
- to whom and what international law may be applied;
- how international law resolves conflict; and
- how to conduct a basic legal analysis of contemporary events and issues in world politics.

Required Reading and Resources

Required Sources:

David J. Bederman, *International Law Frameworks*, 4th edition (New York: Foundation Press, 2016)
The best prices for the text are eBooks on [Google Play](#) or [Amazon](#).

[The United Nations Audiovisual Library of International Law](#)

Additional sources in the form of readings, video, podcasts, etc. will be assigned throughout the semester and made available in each module folder in UBLearn.

Current Events in the News Media:

Throughout the course you will be expected to follow current world events.

The New York Times Students at Buffalo can get free digital access to the New York Times. Here is a short video with the login instructions http://youtu.be/M32a_XyRMSY.

Farred Zakaria GPS is CNN's flagship world affairs program offering in-depth interviews with world leaders, newsmakers, and analysts who break down the world's toughest problems. New shows are broadcast every Saturday night and Sunday on CNN or on CNN International. Or listen to the Podcast: <https://itunes.apple.com/us/podcast/fareed-zakaria-gps/id377785090?mt=2>

Other News Sources: The Economist magazine, BBC News, Aljazeera News, The Guardian (UK), the Washington Post, Univision, CNN, or National Public Radio (NPR), Vice on HBO. Though they are presented as entertainment, I also find it interesting to supplement my primary news sources with news from The Daily Show, The Nightly Show, Real Time with Bill Maher, This Week Tonight with John Oliver, and documentaries by VICE on HBO and Frontline on PBS.

International Law Sources Online

The Internet contains a wealth of free material on international law.

Start your research in the [UB law library](#) and, in particular, the [Foreign & International Legal Research Sources](#)<http://law.lib.buffalo.edu/legalsources/byjurisdiction.asp?tab=2&panel=1#TabbedPanels1>

- United Nations: <http://www.un.org>
- International Court of Justice: <http://www.icj-cij.org>
- World Trade Organization: <http://www.wto.org>
- International Criminal Court: <http://www.icc-cpi.int>
- International Criminal Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia: <http://www.icty.org>
- International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda: <http://unictr.unmict.org>
- University of Minnesota Human Rights Library: <http://www1.umn.edu/humanrts>
- European Union: <http://europa.eu>
- Organization of American States: <http://www.oas.org>
- U.S. Department of State: <http://www.state.gov>
- American Society of International Law: <http://www.asil.org>
- Electronic Information System for International Law: <http://www.eisil.org>
- Peace Palace Library, <http://www.ppl.nl>

Communications

Communications related to the course should take place within the course on UBLearn. There are several ways to communicate with me and your fellow students:

Discussion Forums are where you will post your responses to discussion questions and read the responses of others. Your contribution to discussions is an important part of the course, and a significant

part of the learning activities you'll be evaluated on. Forums are located within the Learning Modules. Use these spaces for any question or comment on the material that is of interest to the whole class.

Course Email is a private, one-to-one way for you to communicate with me and directly to other classmates. Use course mail to address specific questions or comments to me. Use this resource is only for private communication. If you have a question related to content or course information, use the Discussion Forums or Ask the Prof. so that others may benefit from the information.

Ask the Prof is the general course forum for public contact and communication with your fellow students and me. This is the best place to ask logistical questions that might also be on the minds of your fellow students. Feel free to post a response to your classmates' questions.

Twitter Follow me on @ProfHolley.

Office Hours Since the course is online I do not keep face-to-face office hours, but you can contact me directly via e-mail and we can schedule a phone or Skype conversation.

Overview of Course Schedule

This course is divided into five modules that are about 3 weeks in length. Each module starts on a Monday and ends on a Sunday at 11:59 p.m. All due date and times are listed in local time for Buffalo, NY. The following schedule gives an overview of the semester. Specific assignment due dates are available in the Learning Modules folders in UBLEarns. The instructor reserves the right to make adjustments to this schedule, as needed.

Week	Topic	Start Date	End Date	Learning Activities
Course Opens January 23rd				
Module One: The International Legal System				
Week 1	Introduction, Icebreaker & The Nature and History of International Law	Jan 30	Feb 5	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Read the Syllabus 2. Familiarize yourself with the course Schedule 3. Read all sections of Course Information in Blackboard 4. Update your User Profile and Preferences 5. Complete the Icebreaker Activity 6. Read Chapter 1 in Bederman
Week 2	General Principles and Customary International Law & Treaties	Feb 6	Feb 12	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Read Chapters 2 and 3 in Bederman 2. Listen to Dean Monica Pinto's lecture on the UN Library <i>The Evolution of International Society and International Law</i> 3. Complete all activities in Module Overview*
Week 3	Other Sources and Evidence & International Dispute Resolution	Feb 13	Feb 19	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Read Chapters 4 and 5 in Bederman 2. Complete all activities in Module Overview* 3. Submit your team's research paper topic.
Module Two: Subjects of International Law				

Week 4	States	Feb 20	Feb 26	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Read Chapter 6 and 7 in Bederman 2. Complete all activities in Module Overview*
Week 5	International Organizations	Feb 27	March 5	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Read Chapter 8 2. Review relevant documents and lectures in the UN Library 3. Complete all activities in Module Overview*
Week 6	Individuals and International Law	March 6	March 12	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Read Chapter 9 2. Complete all activities in Module Overview*
Module Three: Objects of International Law – Land, Sea, and the Natural Environment				
Week 7	Human Rights and Global Migration	March 13	March 18	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Read Chapter 10 2. Review relevant documents and lectures in the UN Library 3. Complete all activities in Module Overview*
Spring Break, March 20 to 25				
Week 8	State Territory and Common Areas & Law of the Sea	March 27	April 2	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Read Chapters 11 and 12 2. Review relevant documents and lectures in the UN Library and listen to Mr. Trullio Treves first lecture on the 30th Anniversary of the LOS Convention 3. Complete all activities in Module Overview*
Week 9	International Environmental Law	April 3	April 9	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Read Chapter 13 2. Read Jana von Stein article 3. Review relevant documents and lectures in the UN Library 4. Complete all activities in Module Overview* 5. Submit your team's research paper
Module Four: Objects of International Law – Economic Law, Armed Conflict, and War				
Week 10	International Economic Law	April 10	April 16	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Read Chapter 14 2. Review relevant documents and lectures in the UN Library 3. Complete all activities in Module Overview*
Week 11	Counter Measures and Control of Armed Conflict	April 17	April 23	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Read Chapter 15 2. Review relevant documents and lectures in the UN Library 3. Complete all activities in Module Overview* 4. Submit your feedback on another team's first draft of the research paper
Week 12	Laws of War	April 24	April 30	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Read Chapter 16 2. Review relevant documents and lectures in the UN Library 3. Complete all activities in Module Overview*
Module Five: Contemporary Challenges in International Law				
Week 13	Contemporary Challenges	May 1	May 7	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Read Chapter 21 2. Complete any activities in Module Overview*
Week 14		May 8	May 12	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 3. Submit final version of your team's research paper.

* See *Module Overview and Due Dates* in UBLearn at the start of each module for the specifics on each assignment and their corresponding deadlines.

Course Assignments and Grading Policy

Assignments

Discussions: 40% of your grade

Each course module will have an associated discussion. In each discussion you are expected to create a new post with your own ideas and respond in a thoughtful manner to two other posts by your classmates. You are expected to read all posts. Please post early in the time frame of the discussion so that your fellow students have the opportunity to respond.

International law and politics often dominate the headlines. Keeping informed of current events will help you appreciate the use, effect, and limits of international law in the real world. All participants should consult a major international newspaper on a daily basis.

Some of the material covered in this course may be controversial. While debate is encouraged, students should conduct themselves in a professional and respectful manner. Be sure to cite your sources and rely only on valid sources.

There will be approximately 5 discussions throughout the semester.

Team Research Paper: 60% of your grade

In teams of two you will write a 10-12 page original research paper examining an aspect of international law of your choice. The process of creating the paper is broken down into four assignments: a topic proposal, a first draft, and peer review, final paper submission. Additional details will be provided in a separate attachment.

All deliverables will be submitted in the assignment section of Learning Modules in UBLearn. Deliverables are always due on the last Sunday at 11:59pm of the module in which they are assigned.

Please contact me if you would like help deciding on a topic.

Grading Policy

Thoughtful, informed and timely participation is critical to your successful completion of this course. This means reading/viewing assigned material, completing assignments on time, and engaging in class discussions in a timely and substantive manner by posting your own ideas and responding thoughtfully to other's posts.

Students are required to complete all assignments on time. Late submissions will result in a lower grade or a zero depending on timing and student's communications.

Any assignment with more than 20% of plagiarized material (i.e. not properly cited sources) will receive a zero.

Students who participate in *every* course assignment and receive a cumulative average grade of 85 or higher for discussions, quizzes, and written assignments do not have to take the final exam. They will receive their cumulative grade as their final exam grade. So if a student does all of the assignments on time and has a total of 87 at the end of the course, then he/she does not have to take the final exam and will receive an 87 as the grade for the final.

If you are concerned about your standing in the class do not wait until the end of the course when it is too late, communicate with me about this early in the semester.

Grade Scale: 93 - 100 = A; 90 - 92 = A-; 87 - 89 = B+; 83 - 86 = B; 80 - 82 = B-; 77 - 79 = C+; 73 - 76 = C; 70 - 72 = C-; 67 - 69 = D+; 60 - 66 = D; 59 and under = F

Academic Integrity

Academic dishonesty is unacceptable and will not be tolerated. Cheating, forgery, plagiarism and collusion in dishonest acts undermine the college's educational mission and your personal and intellectual growth. Farmingdale students are expected to bear individual responsibility for their work and to uphold the ideal of academic integrity. Any student who attempts to compromise or devalue the academic process will be sanctioned.

All your written work should be checked for plagiarism. This is an excellent resource that walks you through plagiarism and how to avoid it: <http://www.lib.usm.edu/legacy/plag/whatisplag.php>. Cutting and pasting information from other sources without proper citation can be viewed as plagiarism. It is a violation of school policy, but, more importantly, it hurts you as a student as it involves little thinking or reflection. This will not be tolerated in this course.

Suspected academic dishonesty will be reported to the Dean of Students office.

Writing Support and Required Formatting

Depending on your perspective, you have the blessing or the curse of having a professor who takes writing very seriously. No matter what you do in your life after college, strong writing skills will set you apart from the rest and will develop your thinking and communications skills in general. When I read an assignment rife with grammatical errors, typos, and information that was clearly cut and pasted from another source it is like walking down a stony path without shoes. You don't want your reader to have an unpleasant experience while reading your work.

Of course, when I am grading your work, my main focus is the content - I want to see that you understand the material and are able to develop your own reactions to what we are learning. However, decent writing has to be a part of a political science course.

One simple step you can take is, after you are finished writing, read your writing out loud (ideally to a friend, but that is not necessary). When you hear your writing I think you will identify some of the errors or missing pieces of information.

We will use the Chicago Manual of Style for this course. You can refer to the manual itself or on Purdue's very handy [Citation Chart](#) for the three major styles.

[Take this quick online tutorial](#) to learn what is and is not plagiarism.

[The Center for Excellence in Writing](#) offers a number of free services for all UB students seeking to develop their writing ability. [Learn about their services](#). Visit them in 209 Baldy Hall. I encourage you to take advantage of this valuable and free resource.

Purdue has an excellent resource for writing, the Online Writing Lab:
<https://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/>

If you would like additional feedback from me please send me an email and I will be happy to offer more in-depth guidance.

About the Instructor

Professor Holley received a Masters in International Relations from Columbia University and is currently pursuing a doctorate in online education with the University at Buffalo. She teaches for the Political Science departments in SUNY Buffalo and Farmingdale and for Baruch College's Zicklin School of Business. She is also a consultant for the Open Society Foundation's Global Drug Policy Program and the owner of a green business in New York City. Professor Holley has worked for the United Nations Development Program, AFS Intercultural Programs, and other for and nonprofit organizations. She has worked in and traveled to over 25 countries in Latin America, Africa, Europe, and Asia.