

INTL 4215E: International Humanitarian Law
University of Georgia, Department of International Affairs

Course Instructor Information:

Dr. Erin Little

Little.erin@uga.edu

Office hours through Zoom (link available on eLC), either by appt. or every Tues. and Thurs. 3-4pm

Course Meeting Information:

Short Session I, Summer 2025

Online

STUDENT LEARNING OUTCOMES

In this course, we will delve deeply and exclusively into International Humanitarian Law (IHL), a regime within international law concerning *jus in bello*, or how states and other actors may legitimately conduct war. IHL is closely connected with international law concerning *jus ad bellum* (i.e., when states may legitimately go to war), as well as International Human Rights Law (IHRL). We will discuss these topics in this course insofar as it is useful to understand and establish the scope of IHL.

As international law is also offered in many law schools, it should be noted that this course will focus exclusively on public international humanitarian law and will be presented from an international political, more than a legal, perspective. As such, we will begin the course exploring the historical foundations of humanitarian law, emphasizing ways in which various societies throughout history sought to bind anarchy in pursuit of protecting innocent civilians. We will spend the core of the course examining modern legal debates and cases in IHL, before concluding with a section on post-conflict justice and the role of international judiciaries in legitimizing and enforcing IHL.

Assignments during the semester are designed to engage multiple facets of difficult, often nuanced and sensitive, legal questions within IHL. Students will learn not only seminal laws and concepts in IHL, but also how to interpret IHL and communicate legal decisions through multiple lenses.

ASSIGNMENTS

We will have no exams in this course. Instead, you will be asked to complete case study puzzles throughout the term and a war criminal report at the end of the term. Details are below.

Case Study Puzzles

You will have 3 case studies to evaluate during the semester, and I will take the two highest grades to include in your final grade. For each, you will receive excerpts from relevant sources of IHL and the facts

of the case. The assignment asks you to answer a series of puzzling short questions concerning how to interpret the law in practice. The case studies are pieces from actual international legal cases, and unless otherwise noted in the question, their solutions do have a correct answer and will be graded in part for accuracy. However, I am most concerned with your ability to rely on a sound interpretation of specific legal sources to defend your answers.

War Criminal Report

During the final modules and our discussion of post-conflict justice, you will research an assigned historical figure who has been convicted of war crimes. For this assignment, you will develop a thorough report concerning 1) who the individual is; 2) a detailed description of the facts of the case (i.e., the actions this individual committed); 3) which specific international humanitarian law(s) the actor violated; and 4) a recommendation to the “court” as to any punishments, penalties, etc. you deem most suitable given the crimes. Treat this assignment as if your professional opinion was sought to evaluate the case, and this report would be admissible in court as a supplemental source of IHL. Further details, a template, and guidelines will be made available on eLC.

Discussion Board Posts

Most modules, you will have a discussion board prompt available on eLC related to the subject of the module, totaling 14 prompts. Post a short response (no more than 250 words). Your Introductions module and modules 1-3 are required. Of the remaining, you may select 6 to complete. Each response is worth 2% of your grade, due on the dates listed below. You must also respond to at least 1 other discussion post per module, worth 1% each. All responses to other students are due July 3rd by 11:59pm.

Reading Quizzes

You will have a reading quiz for each module covering all required reading for that module, as listed in the syllabus. I will take the 10 highest quiz grades, worth 2pts each for a total of 20% of your grade.

ATTENDANCE POLICY

Since this course is online, we will have no attendance policy. However, I expect all assignments to be turned in by the deadlines listed in eLC, to include thorough engagement in the discussion board posts. This means that a response to another student should be first respectful and constructive, but second substantive. I will not consider brief responses such as, “I agree!”, to be in fulfillment of the assignment requirements.

GRADING POLICY

The breakdown of your grades and the scoring rubric for this course are below (P/F indicates a Pass/Fail grade):

30% - Case study puzzles (15% each)

30% - Discussion board posts (2% for each post, plus 1% for each response to other students)

20% - War criminal report

20% - Reading quizzes

94 to 100 – A

80 to 83 – B-

67 to 69 – D+

90 to 93 – A-

77 to 79 – C+

64 to 67 – D

87 to 89 – B+

74 to 77 – C

60 to 63 – D-

84 to 87 – B

70 to 73 – C-

59 and below – F

OUTLINE OF TOPICS

As this is an online course, all course content will be divided into modules. One module is designed to be the equivalent of one day's class hours, so to keep a steady pace, I recommend completing one module per day. For each module, do the following 1) Complete the reading; 2) Do the reading quiz; 3) Listen to the recorded lecture; 4) View or interact with any supplemental material; 5) Respond to the discussion board post; 6) make sure you complete the case study puzzles for the relevant modules by the listed due date (roughly 1 per week).

SECTION I: HISTORICAL FOUNDATIONS OF IHL	
6/5-6/9	Module 1 – Introducing IHL
Reading	Course Companion Guide (CCG), pgs. 1-3
<i>Due by 6/9 at 11:59pm</i>	<i>Discussion board post – Module 1</i>
6/10	Module 2 – The <i>Dhanurveda</i> and the <i>Art of War</i>
Reading	CCG, pgs. 4-9
<i>Due by 6/11 at 11:59pm</i>	<i>Discussion board post – Module 2</i>
6/11	Module 3 – <i>Lex Innocentium</i> and the “Lieber Code”
Reading	CCG, pgs. 10-16
<i>Due by 6/12 at 11:59pm</i>	<i>Discussion board post – Module 3</i>

SECTION II: MODERN FOUNDATIONS OF IHL

6/12	Module 4 –Geneva Conventions and Protocols
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Reading	The First, Second, and Fourth Geneva Conventions, 1949 CCG, pgs. 17-20
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<i>Due by 6/13 at 11:59pm</i>	<i>Discussion board post – Module 4</i>
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6/13	Module 5 – Combatant Status and Prisoners of War
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Reading	The Third Geneva Convention, 1949 Protocol I to the Geneva Conventions, 1977
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<i>Due by 6/14 at 11:59pm</i>	<i>Discussion board post – Module 5</i>
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6/14	Module 6 – Just War Theory and relevant Customary IHL
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Reading	CCG, pgs. 21-24
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<i>Due by 6/16 at 11:59pm</i>	<i>Case Study Puzzle #1</i>
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SECTION III: CIVILIAN VICTIMIZATION DURING WAR

6/17	Module 7 – Genocide and Mass Killing
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Reading	CCG, pgs. 25-28
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<i>Due by 6/18 at 11:59pm</i>	<i>Discussion board post – Module 7</i>
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6/18	Module 8 – Reviewing Combatant Status and Case Puzzle #1
Reading	No reading for this module
<i>Due by 6/19 at 11:59pm</i>	<i>Discussion board post – Module 8</i>
6/20	Module 9 – Case example: Israel and Palestine <i>NO CLASS CONTENT 6/19 FOR JUNETEENTH DAY</i>
Reading	TBD
<i>Due by 6/21 at 11:59pm</i>	<i>Discussion board post – Module 9</i>
6/21	Module 10 – Sexual Violence and Human Trafficking
Reading	TBD
<i>Due by 6/23 at 11:59pm</i>	<i>Case Study Puzzle #2</i>

SECTION IV: IHL AND CIVIL CONFLICT	
6/24	Module 11 –Internal Displacement of Civilians
Reading	CCG, pgs. 29-31
<i>Due by 6/25 at 11:59pm</i>	<i>Discussion board post – Module 11</i>
6/25	Module 12 – Relief Societies and Relief Actions

Reading	CCG, pgs. 29-31
<i>Due by 6/26 at 11:59pm</i>	<i>Discussion board post – Module 12</i>
6/26	Module 13 – Review of Civil Conflict and Case Puzzle #2
Reading	No reading for this module
<i>Due by 6/27 at 11:59pm</i>	<i>Discussion board post – Module 13</i>

SECTION V: POST-CONFLICT JUSTICE

6/27	Module 14 – International Courts: the ICJ and ICC
Reading	CCG, pgs. 32-33
<i>Due by 6/28 at 11:59pm</i>	<i>Discussion board post – Module 14</i>
6/28	Module 15 – International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda (ICTR)
Reading	CCG, pgs. 34-38
<i>Due by 6/30 at 11:59pm</i>	<i>Case Study Puzzle #3</i>
7/1	Module 16 – International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia (ICTY)
Reading	CCG, pgs. 39-43

<i>Due by 7/2 at 11:59pm</i>	<i>Discussion board post – Module 14</i>
7/2	Workshop Day (Work on your War Criminal Report)
Reading	No readings or other work for this module. I will have a dedicated office hours from 2-4pm to discuss any questions you may have or work you'd like me to review
<i>Due by 7/3 at 11:59pm</i>	<i>War Criminal Report</i>

ACADEMIC DISHONESTY

UGA Student Honor Code: “I will be academically honest in all of my academic work and will not tolerate academic dishonesty of others.” A Culture of Honesty, the University’s policy and procedures for handling cases of suspected dishonesty, can be found the website of Office of Instruction. We expect that the Student Honor Code will guide your efforts in this course. A lack of knowledge of the academic honesty policy does not explain a violation. Please direct any questions to the instructor.

COURSE POLICIES

The following is taken verbatim from the University Council: “The course syllabus is a general plan for the course; deviations announced to the class by the instructor may be necessary.”

The following is taken verbatim from LINK: “In the absence of written authorization from the UGA Disability Resource Center, students may not make a visual or audio recording of any aspect of this course. Students who have a recording accommodation agree in writing that they:

- Will use the records only for personal academic use during the specific course.
- Understand that faculty members have copyright interest in their class lectures and that they agree not to infringe on this right in any way.
- Understand that the faculty member and students in the class have privacy rights and agree not to violate those rights by using recordings for any reason other than their own personal study.
- Will not release, digitally upload, broadcast, transcribe, or otherwise share all or any part of the recordings. They also agree that they not profit financially and will not allow others to benefit personally or financially from lecture recordings or other course materials.
- Will erase/delete all recordings at the end of the semester.
- Understand that violation of these terms may subject them to discipline under the Student Code of Conduct or subject them to liability under copyright laws.”

FERPA STATEMENT

The following is taken verbatim from the Syllabus Checklist:

“The Federal Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) grants students certain information privacy rights. See the registrar’s explanation. FERPA allows disclosure of directory information (name, address, telephone, email, date of birth, place of birth, major, activities, degrees, awards, prior schools), unless requested in a written letter to the registrar.”

DISABILITY SERVICES

The following is taken verbatim from the Disability Resource Center:

“If you plan to request accommodations for a disability, please register with the Disability Resource Center. They can be reached by visiting Clark Howell Hall, calling 706-542-8719 (voice) or 706-542-8778 (TTY), or by visiting the Disability Resource Center”

The following is taken verbatim from the document of Syllabus Creation:

“Students with disabilities who require reasonable accommodations in order to participate in course activities or meet course requirements should contact the instructor or designate during regular office hours or by appointment.”

MENTAL HEALTH AND WELLNESS RESOURCES

The following is taken verbatim from the University Council:

“If you or someone you know needs assistance, you are encouraged to contact Student Care and Outreach in the Division of Student Affairs at 706-542-7774 or visit the website of Student Care and Outreach. They will help you navigate any difficult circumstances you may be facing by connecting you with the appropriate resources or services.

UGA has several resources for a student seeking mental health services or crisis support. If you need help managing stress anxiety, relationships, etc., please visit BeWellUGA for a list of FREE workshops, classes, mentoring, and health coaching led by licensed clinicians and health educators in the University Health Center. Additional resources can be accessed through the UGA App.”