

## INTL 4210: International Law

University of Georgia, Department of International Affairs

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### Course Instructor Information:

Dr. Erin Little

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Office hours by appointment, in-person (217 Candler Hall) or Zoom (link available on eLC)

### Course Meeting Information:

Fall 2025

Sanford Hall 209

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## STUDENT LEARNING OUTCOMES

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This course aims to explore some of the more prevalent questions challenging practitioners and scholars of international law in a world veering toward renewed nationalist sentiment and State-centric politics. What is international law, and what value does it add compared with domestic law? Do the bones of international law - treaties, customs, general principles, international court rulings, the declarations and resolutions of international organizations, scholarly writing, and international norms - really restrict the behavior of rational, self-interested states and individuals? In the absence of an overarching governing authority, can international law limit State jurisdiction over its traditional monopoly on violence and justice within its borders? Why do States nonetheless most often comply with international law? The course content is divided into two parts:

- The first part of this course will explore the foundations of international law. By providing students with a comprehensive understanding of the theories, history, sources, actors, and processes of creating international law, they will be able to begin to answer these questions above.
- The second part of the course will apply these foundations to key issue areas (e.g., humanitarian and human rights regimes). As we move into this second part of the course, students will have the opportunity to simulate court cases and legal arguments to pressure-test the validity of our assertions.

In doing so, students will begin to understand and apply legal precedent in international law to significant international events, constructing, debating, and interpreting original legal arguments. As international law is also offered in many law schools, it should be noted that this course will focus exclusively on public international law and will be presented from an international political, more than a legal, perspective. In other words, we will critically question the competition between State interests and international law as a mode of addressing modern global challenges.

## **EXAMS AND ASSIGNMENTS**

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### **Module Quizzes**

You will have 5 quizzes throughout the semester based on the readings and lectures for each module, scheduled for specific weeks in the course outline below. These are worth 10% of your final grade (2% per quiz). All quizzes can be found on eLC.

There will be no exams in the course. Instead, we will have three moot courts throughout the semester and an ongoing crisis simulation activity as the major assignments for this course.

### **Moot Courts and Memorials**

You will have 3 moot courts during the semester. In the week of a moot court, you will have time in class to meet with small groups to develop a Memorial for the case. A template for the memorial will be available on eLC, and we will review the requirements and format in the weeks prior to the first moot court and memorial due date. Detailed structure guidelines for moot courts will also be available on eLC. Memorials will be due the same day as the corresponding Moot Court.

### **Simulation: Treaty development and implementation**

During two stages scheduled in the course outline, you will engage in designing your own treaty and developing a plan to implement your commitments. In the first stage, you will be divided into groups and assigned a State. You will be given a dossier with general information about issues facing the global community, as well as specific information for your State as to its current foreign policy interests and domestic capabilities. With this information in-hand, you will design an international treaty that you think will be consistent with your domestic and foreign policy interests and/or address a global concern. Each State will then review all proposals and decide whether to ignore the treaty, become a signatory, or ratify the treaty. Each decision must come with a 250-300-word statement explaining why you have chosen that action. In the second stage, you will have to work alongside international treaty partners to implement your new international legal obligations, while still operating within domestic constraints. Specific requirements will be made available on eLC prior to each stage.

## **ATTENDANCE POLICY**

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Attendance will be taken randomly throughout the semester. Absences will only be excused for the following, discussed with me in advance: observance of a religious practice, documented (by a doctor or health clinic/hospital) sickness, or death of a relative or close friend. More than three cumulative absences without an above listed excuse will affect students' attendance and participation grades. Three unexcused absences are permitted without penalty. However, the fast-paced nature of this course and the use of supplemental materials in class, which will also appear on exams, will make it more difficult for students to do well in this course without being present.

## GENERATIVE AI POLICY

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Generative AI tools, such as Chat GPT and Grammarly, are permitted for all assignments in this course to assist in spelling, grammar, and diction. For any final research papers or projects, students may be required to submit a generative AI version of the assignment populated from their research question and a prompt of their choice, noted on the submission. This version will be submitted separately alongside the final document. Only the final document will be graded.

## GRADING POLICY

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

10% - Module Quizzes (2% each)

30% - Memorials (P/F) (10% each)

30% - Moot Court (P/F) (10% each)

30% - Simulation

- 10% - Treaty proposal
- 10% - Statement of signing or ratification of each selected treaty agreement
- 10% - Implementation plan

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

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<b>MODULE I: INTRODUCING INTERNATIONAL LAW</b>	
<b>8/13-15</b>	<b>Week 1 – Context of International Law</b>
Topics	Putting international law in the context of international affairs Actors of international law
	<i>Nothing due this week</i>
<b>8/18-22</b>	<b>Week 2 – AROC and Sources of Law</b> <i>1/15 – NO CLASS; MLK, JR. DAY</i>
Topics	Sources in international law Introducing AROC using the 2 <sup>nd</sup> Amendment to the US Constitution
	<i>Nothing due this week</i>
<b>8/25-29</b>	<b>Week 3 – Memorials &amp; The <i>Caroline</i> Incident</b>
Topics	The <i>Caroline</i> Incident (1837) We will go through a Memorial together using the Carolina Affair
	<i>Nothing due this week</i>
<b>9/3-9/5</b>	<b>Week 4 – Public International Law and Review</b> <i>9/1 - NO CLASS; Labor Day</i>
Topics	Public international law in context Jeopardy to review basic concepts and scope of IL
<i>Due by 9/5 at 11:59pm</i>	<i>Module I Quiz</i>

**MODULE II: MARITIME LAW**

<b>9/8-12</b>	<b>Week 5 – UNCLOS and Maritime Law</b>
Topics	the “Straits Question” and Montreux Convention (1936) UN Convention on the Law of the Sea (1982)
	<i>We will begin group work for Moot Court #1 on 9/12</i>
<b>9/15-19</b>	<b>Week 6 – Moot Court #1 (Corfu Channel Case, 1947): <i>The United Kingdom v. The People’s Republic of Albania</i></b>
Topics	Group work on memorials for Moot Court #1 <i>Moot Court #1 on 9/19</i>
<i>Due by 9/18 at 11:59pm</i>	<i>Memorials for Moot Court #1</i>

**MODULE III: STATES AND STATEHOOD**

<b>9/22-24</b>	<b>Week 7 – States and Statehood</b> <i>9/26 - NO CLASS; Develop a treaty draft</i>
Topics	Montevideo Convention on the Rights and Duties of States (1933) Debating Taiwan’s statehood
<i>Due by 9/26 at 11:59pm</i>	<i>Module II &amp; III Quiz (one quiz covering both modules)</i>
<b>9/29-10/3</b>	<b>Week 8 – Simulation, Pt. 1: Treaty development</b>
Topics	Work on the treaties each group’s State will propose
<i>Due by 10/3 at 11:59pm</i>	<i>Treaty submission for each group</i>

**MODULE IV: THE LAWS OF WAR (INTERNATIONAL HUMANITARIAN LAW)**

<b>10/6-10</b>	<b>Week 9 – The Laws of War</b>
Topics	Geneva Conventions and Protocols Principles of International Humanitarian Law
<i>Due by 10/6 at 11:59pm</i>	<i>Meet in groups on 10/6 in class and submit which treaties you will sign and ratify</i>
<b>10/13-17</b>	<b>Week 10 – Moot Court #2</b> <b><i>The Republic of Nicaragua v. The United States (1986)</i></b>
Topics	Group work on memorials for Moot Court #2
<i>Due by 10/20 at 11:59pm</i>	<i>Memorials for Moot Court #2</i>
<b>10/20-24</b>	<b>Week 11 – War criminals and Prisoners of War</b>
Topics	The ICC, Prisoners of War and Unlawful Combatants <i>Moot Court #2 on 10/20</i>
	<i>Nothing due this week</i>
<b>10/27-29</b>	<b>Week 12 – Genocide in times of war and peace</b> <i>10/31 - NO CLASS; Fall Break</i>
Topics	Genocide vs. Ethnic cleansing and other related crimes <i>Case Study: The Gambia v. Myanmar (2019)</i>
<i>Due by 10/29 at 11:59pm</i>	<i>Module IV Quiz</i>

**MODULE V: INTERNATIONAL HUMAN RIGHTS LAW**

<b>11/3-7</b>	<b>Week 13 – Refugee Status, Asylum, and Human Rights Law</b>
Topics	Determining refugee status and jurisdiction to grant asylum
<i>Due by 11/7 at 11:59pm</i>	<i>Module V Quiz</i>
<b>11/10-14</b>	<b>Week 14 – Moot Court #3 (Asylum Case, 1950) <i>Colombia v. Peru</i></b>
Topics	Group work on memorials for Moot Court #3
<i>Due by 11/14 at 11:59pm</i>	<i>Memorials for Moot Court #3</i>

**MODULE VI: DISPUTE RESOLUTION MECHANISM (DRMs)**

<b>11/17-21</b>	<b>Week 15 – Dispute Resolution Mechanisms (DRMs)</b>
Topics	Arbitration, Mediation, and Negotiation <i>Moot Court #3 on 11/17</i>
<i>Due by 11/21 at 11:59pm</i>	<i>Module VI Quiz</i>
<b>11/24</b>	<b>Optional Q&amp;A Session</b> <i>NO CLASS NOV. 26-28<sup>th</sup> (Thanksgiving Break)</i>
Topics	Q&A with Dr. Little Explore options and role of international law in the modern world
<b>12/1-2</b>	<b>Simulation Pt. 2: Implementing Treaty agreements</b>

Topics	Each State will have to develop a domestic plan alongside international partners to implement their treaty agreements from Pt. 1, given a set of constraints and goals
<i>Due by 12/5 at 11:59pm</i>	<i>Final treaty implementation plans</i>

## **ACADEMIC DISHONESTY**

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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**

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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 my subject them to discipline under the Student Code of Conduct or subject them to liability under copyright laws.”



## **FERPA STATEMENT**

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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**

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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**

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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.”