VESALIUS COLLEGE

LAW 301G

CURRENT CHALLENGES IN INTERNATIONAL LAW

Number of ECTS credits: 6

Contact Details for Professors

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Office hours and location:
After classes on Friday or by appointment.

Course Prerequisites (if any)

One other upper-level course in international relations, history or politics

Learning Objectives

This course intends to familiarize the student with the fundamental concepts and principles of modern international law. While referring to the historical and theoretical content within which international law has developed, it will introduce the student to its basic methodology. The students will acquire the skills to read and understand legal texts, to analyse complex problems between subjects of international law, and to apply the contemporary legal framework to it. By the end of the semester students will be able to apply the knowledge acquired during the course by providing a coherent legal advice to a fictitious international legal problem.

Course Description

Students have to prepare for class by reading about 50 pages a week. At the beginning of each class students have the opportunity to ask for clarifications on difficulties relating to terms or concepts, encountered while preparing for class. Afterwards the most important elements are highlighted and the structure clarified by means of an interactive question/answer teaching method steered by the course instructor and in which the
students participate on a voluntary basis. A fifteen minute personal presentation will have to be made by each student at the end of the term conveying the essence of the paper they prepared for this class. The latter will require library work and in many cases research on the internet as well. The course makes use of the PointCarré system.

Reading assignments will require students to prepare for class. Three quizzes will be held during the semester without prior notice to test class preparation. One 10 to 15 page research paper has to be written, which will oblige the student to consult a law library. This paper will be graded on substance, form, as well as on the manner of oral presentation. A midterm and final exam will be held. Active class participation will be taken into account for the final grade.

**Course Materials**


**Grading Scale of Vesalius College**

Vesalius College grading policy, in line with the Flemish Educational norms, is now as stated follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>Scale of 20</th>
<th>Scale of 100</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>17.0-20.0</td>
<td>85-100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A-</td>
<td>16.1-16.9</td>
<td>81-84</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B+</td>
<td>15.3-16.0</td>
<td>77-80</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>14.5-15.2</td>
<td>73-76</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B-</td>
<td>13.7-14.4</td>
<td>69-72</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C+</td>
<td>13.1-13.6</td>
<td>66-68</td>
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<tr>
<td>C</td>
<td>12.3-13.0</td>
<td>62-65</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C-</td>
<td>11.5-12.2</td>
<td>58-61</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D+</td>
<td>10.7-11.4</td>
<td>54-57</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D</td>
<td>10.0-10.6</td>
<td>50-53</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F</td>
<td>Below 50</td>
<td>0-49</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Course Assessment**

The students will be evaluated on the basis of their performance as follows:

- Class participation: 5%
- Quizzes: 15%
- Research paper: 20%
- Midterm examination: 20%
Further description of assessment activities:

All papers and exams will be given a letter grade. The final examination is worth double of the midterm because, besides the materials covered during the second part of the course (20%), students are also required to give a legal advice on a case study for which they need to apply the materials covered by the course as a whole (20%). The final course grade is calculated by weighing the grade points of each letter grade given according to the above table.

The letter grade for the paper is given based on how far students meet the qualitative goals as outlined in this syllabus as well as in class explanations.

Grading Criteria

The following criteria will be applied in assessing your written work:

- Evidence of understanding of the concepts, theories and ideas developed in the course.
- The papers will be tested on the understanding of the problem, the legal rules applicable to it, the depth of the research and the presentation of the research.

Additional Course Policies

Class attendance is mandatory, but two unexcused classes may be missed before points are being deducted from the class participation grade. Documented illness and religious holidays of the student’s faith (if not official Belgian holidays) constitute acceptable reasons for excused absences. One missed quiz may be made up, based on the normal reading assignment for that particular day. It will be held during the break and, like the other quizzes, be unannounced.

Late papers will be marked down 0.5 grade points per work day late. Only documented illness or severe family or personal problems will be accepted as excuses for late papers. Computer problems will not be accepted as legitimate excuses.

Academic Honesty Statement

Academic dishonesty is NOT tolerated in this course.

Academic honesty is not only an ethical issue but also the foundation of scholarship. Cheating and plagiarism are therefore serious breaches of academic integrity.
Following the College policy, cheating and plagiarism cases will be communicated in writing to the Associate Dean for Students and submitted to the Student Conduct Committee for disciplinary action.

If you refer to someone else’s work, appropriate references and citations must be provided. Grammar, spelling and punctuation count, so use the tools necessary to correct before handing in assignments.

**Course Schedule**

Week 1: Introduction to the course and the research paper
Week 2: Sources
Week 3: International law and municipal law
Week 4: The subjects of international law
Week 5: The international protection of human rights
Week 6: The regional protection of human rights
Week 7: Midterm exam
Week 8: Territory
Week 9: Jurisdiction
Week 10: State responsibility
Week 11: The law of treaties
Week 12: The settlement of disputes and inter-state courts and tribunals
Week 13-14: Law of the sea (I & II)
Week 15: Final exam

[Foreign guest lecturers, when around and available, will have to be fitted in according to their schedule and period of stay in Brussels].