

SASJ02, Introduction to International Law, 7.5 credits

Introduction to International Law, 7,5 högskolepoäng

First Cycle / Grundnivå

Details of approval

The syllabus was approved by Faculty of Law Board of education at undergraduate and postgraduate levels on 2015-05-12 (U 2015/201) and was last revised on 2019-04-03 (Dnr U 2019/162). The revised syllabus comes into effect 2019-09-01 and is valid from the autumn semester 2019.

General information

The course Introduction to International Law is open to incoming exchange students who are not enrolled in a law degree programme.

The course can not be included in a Swedish professional law degree or a degree of Master of Law from the Faculty of Law at Lund University. The course duration is 10 weeks of half-time studies.

Language of instruction: English
Lectures and course material are in English.

Learning outcomes

The goal of this course to provide non-lawyers with basic knowledge about the different forms that international standards can take, about how those standards are made and enforced, and about how and why they have impacts on what countries actually do at home and abroad. No background in law or international relations is expected.

Knowledge and understanding

To pass the examination, the student shall:

- Be familiar with the principal theories about the nature of international law: is it really "law" or is it something else? Why do states obey it (if they do)?
- Have an understanding of how international legal standards develop and the different forms (e.g. treaties, customary international law, etc.) that they take

- Be familiar with the concept of “soft” (non-binding) international law, the different forms it can take, and its role in shaping governmental and non-governmental behavior
- Have a broad idea of the role and structure of the United Nations
- Have a general understanding of the international systems for resolving legal disputes among nations, including the role of the International Court of Justice
- Have had a glimpse into the substantive context of several areas of international law, e.g. international human rights law

Competence and skills

To pass the examination, the student shall:

- Be able to identify international legal standards that they encounter and be aware of their nature and legal force (e.g., binding or not binding)
- Be able to read international legal cases and understand the nature of the arguments being made
- Be better able to identify and understand the potential role of public international law in ongoing international processes, e.g. a conflict between two countries or an international negotiation concerning cooperation on environmental topics

Judgement and approach

To pass the examination, the student shall:

- Have gained experience in debating and discussing legal arguments
- Have gained experience in thinking critically about the application of legal rules in a variety of contexts

Course content

How nations act domestically and internationally is regularly influenced, and sometimes dramatically influenced, by international standards. International rules affect the day-to-day lives of people all over the world.

Topics to be covered include:

- Introduction to the concept of law, both domestic and international
- Introduction to the different forms of “hard” international law
- Introduction to “soft” international law
- Introduction to the international law-making process
- Introduction to the UN system
- Introduction to the role of international institutions in resolving disputes among nations
- Glimpses into some areas of substantive international law, e.g. international human rights law, international environmental law, international economic law, the use of force under international law.

- A slightly more extended introduction to one or more selected areas of international law, which may vary from year to year. Possible topics include e.g. international human rights law, international environmental law, international economic law, or the use of force under international law.

Course design

This course is taught using a case method, meaning that much of the teaching will focus on real-life international legal disputes or negotiations and on how they were resolved. Class time consists of a combination of lectures, student presentations and class discussion, including debates over the cases themselves. Regular attendance and preparation of the assigned readings in advance of the class sessions, as well as participation in the class discussions, are essential components of the course.

Assessment

The assessment is based on the aggregated results of an individual paper and an oral presentation at the end of the course. If for some reason a student is unable to make the oral presentation, they shall instead be given a new opportunity to carry out the presentation, in accordance with the examiner's instructions.

The examiner, in consultation with Disability Support Services, may deviate from the regular form of examination in order to provide a permanently disabled student with a form of examination equivalent to that of a student without a disability.

Grades

Grading scale includes the grades: Fail, Pass, Pass with distinction

Pass

In order to pass the student must demonstrate basic knowledge of the principal facts, concepts and cases read or discussed during the course, along with the ability to apply this knowledge reasonably accurately in practical contexts.

Pass with distinction

In order to pass with distinction the student must demonstrate a thorough knowledge of the facts, concepts and cases read or discussed during the course, along with the ability to apply this knowledge creatively in practical contexts and to discuss it clearly and creatively in theoretical contexts.

Entry requirements

General requirements for university studies in Sweden