

Course description for Advanced Course in Public International Law (15 hp/ECTS) AUTUMN 2026

General information about the course

Content and objectives

The overall objective of the course is to provide students with the opportunity to gain in-depth knowledge and understanding in the system of public international law.

The course revolves around the study of recent trends within international law. These trends (referred to as “thematic areas” in the course) are considered through general topics relevant to the analysis of all areas within international law and substantive fields of international law. The aim in doing so is to provide the students with a holistic overview of the system of public international law, and the ability to navigate and orientate themselves within that system. This approach aims to highlight the complexities, dynamics and adaptabilities of the system in which actors operate to pursue their own and common interests, as well as the limitations of the system through critical exploration. The language of instruction is English.

Upon completion of the course, students are expected to be able to:

- Demonstrate in-depth knowledge and understanding of international law, in particular with regard to basic concepts and categories, as well as the ideas about society and international relations which these concepts and categories are based on;
- Demonstrate an in-depth ability to apply and interpret legal norms within the different subject areas of the course;
- Demonstrate an in-depth ability to systematically, critically and independently identify, formulate and analyse issues of public international law;
- Demonstrate an in-depth ability to examine, clearly explain and discuss one's conclusions in English, orally and in writing; and
- Evaluate the central legal rules and functions of public international law in a historical, political and general legal context.

Teaching is carried out primarily in the form of lectures, reading, seminars and group discussions. In addition, students also write an individual essay and undertake a written exam.

The examination for the course is divided into an individual essay (12-15 pages), active participation in the seminars, and a written end exam (open-book) (see further section on Examination below).

Pedagogical approach

Different types of instructions are used for the purpose of enhancing different skills. The lectures aim to assist students to understand the different legal norms within the subject areas covered in the course. The seminars aim to assist the students in understanding basic concepts and principles that underpin international law, to problematise and critically reflect on the different topics, and explain and discuss their conclusions in groups. The seminars and individual essay build on this understanding by developing the student's ability to systematically, critically and independently identify, formulate and analyse issues of public international law, and their ability to examine, clearly explain and discuss their conclusions both orally and in writing. The individual essay should further develop the student's ability to connect knowledge of the substance of public international law with critical thinking. The written exam will test and develop the student's knowledge of the substantive and procedural rules, as well as the ability to identify and analyse legal problems, and apply the rules.

Participation in the seminars and submission of the individual essay **is mandatory**. The course coordinator may grant an exemption from the attendance requirement in accordance with rules decided by the Department of Law. In addition to this, exemptions may be granted in the event of legitimate absence. The student must then complete an educationally equivalent assignment to compensate for the absence.

Student activity is important for the success of the course and is an important part of all elements in the course, including the lectures. The written exam will be based on the lectures, as well as on the whole course textbook. As such, whilst not mandatory, **lecture attendance is highly recommended**. Note that attendance of **the introduction to the course lecture is mandatory**.

More about the course structure

The different course elements

The course is divided into three elements. The first element provides an overview of the foundations of international law and basic concepts, and places international law in a theoretical, historical and philosophical perspective. The second element discusses substantive areas of public international law through the lectures. The third element draws the first and second elements together through application and analysis of current issues in international law through the seminars and individual essay. Throughout the course, a broader and more critical perspective is presented, which students return to in their individual essay.

Thematic areas

At the beginning of the course, students will be divided into seminar groups. Within these seminar groups, students will be further divided into thematic areas. The thematic areas focus on recent trends or ongoing issues within the system of public international law and are discussed in the lectures and the seminars. In this way, the thematic areas are used as a tool to analyse the system of international law and provide a link between the different elements of the course. Through group discussions within the seminar, students will gain an understanding of issues covered in other thematic areas than their own and be able to compare and contrast the different themes (see section below on Seminars). The students will write their individual essay on a question of international law related to their thematic area (see section below on Individual essay). The aim in focusing on thematic areas is to promote the student's critical understanding of the actual functioning of various concepts and principles within the field of public international law.

The thematic areas are:

1. Artificial intelligence and new technologies;
2. Energy, climate and natural resources;
3. Terrorism and other trans-border crimes;
4. International peace and security, and changes to the world order; and
5. The world economy - Distribution, equality and poverty.

Lectures

The lectures will focus on different substantive areas within international law. The lectures may also highlight points of interest relating to the thematic areas. In doing so, the lectures will also provide an overview of how substantive norms are applied in different contexts. It is at the discretion of the lecturer whether to share their slides, and if they do, these will be posted on Canvas.

Substantive areas of public international law covered in the lectures include the foundational principles of the UN (including the use of force), international law of the sea, international economic law, international environment law, international human rights law, international humanitarian law, and international criminal law.

Seminars

The seminars cover the core topics relevant in the analysis of all international legal problems. They provide the analytical tools to link the thematic areas and the substantive areas covered in the lectures. This includes sources, interpretation, and theory and method, subjects and jurisdiction, state responsibility, and dispute resolution.

Different instructions are included for each seminar with the aim of enhancing different skills. The instructions are uploaded on Canvas. Students are expected to have read the relevant materials ahead of each seminar and prepared their answers in advance.

Students are required to produce 1-2 pages of writing related to the thematic area they been assigned for each seminar. Details of these requirements are provided in each seminar outline. These tasks provide students with the opportunity to work on their individual essay throughout the course.

Individual essay

Students are required to independently write an individual essay. The essay is formed in part of a portfolio compilation of written work produced by the students during the seminars.

The aim of the individual essay is to test the student's ability to identify a problem, identify the relevant international law applicable, apply and interpret the requirements to the problem at hand, and carry out critical analysis. It further tests their ability to explain and discuss their analysis and conclusions in writing. Instructions on the individual essay are included on Canvas.

Written and oral exercises

During the seminars, students are required to actively participate in group discussions. Seminars will also involve oral presentations of answers and other prepared work. Students are further required to produce 1-2 pages writing for each seminar, and submit an individual essay by the end of the course. See further the section on Examination below.

Mandatory course elements

Students must complete the written exam and submit an individual essay to be able to pass the course. In addition, **participation in the seminars and the introduction to the course lecture is mandatory.**

Note that while attendance at other lectures is not mandatory, attendance is highly recommended, given that the written end exam will be based on the lectures, as well as the whole of the course textbook.

As noted, exemptions from attending mandatory elements may be granted by the course coordinator in accordance with rules decided by the Department of Law or in the event of legitimate absence. In such circumstances, the student must complete an educationally equivalent assignment to compensate for the absence.

International and comparative elements of the course

All of the elements of the course are international. There are also elements of comparative law regarding the implementation of the international legal requirements in State's domestic legal frameworks, and the relation between national law and international law.

Interaction with the surrounding society

In addition to legal problems, political, social, cultural, economic and ethical questions related to the relations between States are dealt with throughout the course, notably through consideration of the thematic areas.

How the course relates to other courses and to the law programme as a whole

This is one of the specialized and advanced courses offered to exchange students and Swedish students towards the end of the law programme. The course connects to previous courses in the law programme, such as constitutional/public law (*statsrätt*), EU law (*Europarätt*) and public international law (*folkrätt*).

The course may be part of the specialized study year (*studieår*) "Public International Law and the Individual" (*Folkrätten och individen*), which includes two specialized courses and a thesis (30 credits). The specialised courses consist of "Human Rights in a Global Perspective" (15 credits) and "International Criminal Law" (15 credits). Note: the specialized study year is only available for students registered and writing their final thesis within the law programme (4.5 years) at Stockholm University.

Requirements regarding participation in the course

Registration

A Swedish student who intends to participate in the course must be registered by the second day of the course at the latest.

Exchange students register on the course through their university account in Ladok at the beginning of their exchange, the week before the semester starts.

Re-registration

Re-registration on the course is done by the course administrator.

De-registration

If for some reason, a student does not intend to take the course, they must de-register within three weeks after the start of the course (known as "early withdrawal period"). This is done through the student's university account in Ladok. This is of great importance to guarantee a place in a group the

next time the student applies for the course. The early withdrawal period is calculated from the Monday of the week the course starts and three weeks ahead. The last day is always a Sunday.

Please note that de-registrations may have consequences for the right to receive student grants, including Erasmus grants. Please, contact CSN for more information if you are a Swedish student, or the Office of International Affairs if you are an international master student or an exchange student.

Groups

In order to enroll in a group, students must be registered on the course. Students who have never taken the course previously are given priority when choosing a group. The day/time of registration is indicated on the course website. The possibility for re-registered students to participate in a group is subject to availability and done on a "first come, first served" basis.

Study instructions

Textbooks

- Malcolm Evans (editor), *International Law* (Oxford University Press (6th ed., Oxford University Press, 2024)

Source materials

An updated library of online sources is included on Canvas. The following is a non-exhaustive list of sources.

Instruction: Left-click + ctrl to use the links below

International organisations

[United Nations](#) (UN)
[United Nations Treaty Collection](#)
[Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights](#) (OHCHR)
[UNHCR](#)
[WTO](#)
[Organization of American States](#) (OAS)
[Council of Europe](#) (COE)
[African Union](#) (AU)
[International Committee of the Red Cross](#) (ICRC)

International tribunals and courts

[International Court of Justice](#) (ICJ)
[International Tribunal for the Law of the Sea](#) (ITLOS)
[Administrative Tribunal of the International Labour Organisation](#)

Regional human rights courts and monitoring bodies

[Court of Justice of the European Union](#) (ECJ)
[European Court of Human Rights](#) (ECtHR) [Hudoc database](#)
[Inter-American Court of Human Rights](#) (IACHR)
[Inter-American Commission on Human Rights](#) (IAChR)
[African Court on Human and Peoples' Rights](#) (ACHPR)
[African Commission of Human and Peoples' Rights](#) (ACtHPR)

International criminal tribunals and courts

Trial of the Major War Criminals before the International Military Tribunal (IMT)



[Database at the Library of Congress](#)

[Database Yale University](#)

Trials of War Criminals Before the Nuremberg Military Tribunals Under Control Council Law No. 10 (NMT)

[Database at the Library of Congress International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda](#) (ICTR)

[Cases](#)

[International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia](#) (ICTY) [Cases](#)

[Court records](#)

[Mechanism for International Criminal Tribunals](#) (MICT)

[International Criminal Court](#) (ICC)

[Extraordinary Chambers in the Courts of Cambodia](#) (ECCC)

[Special Court for Sierra Leone](#) (SCSL)

[Special Tribunal for Lebanon](#) (STL)

Library

[Stockholm University Library](#)

[Libris](#)

Journals (access: Stockholm University, first log in through the University library website)

[Hein-on-line](#)

[Westlaw](#)

[Cambridge core](#)

[Oxford academic journals](#)

[Nordic Journal of International Law \(NJIL\)](#)

Online commentaries and database

[Oxford Public International Law](#)

[OSAIL- Oxford Scholarly Authorities on International Law](#)

[Commentary on the Law of the International Criminal Court \(CLICC\)](#)

[Max Planck institutet för folkrätt - Heidelberg](#)

[ICC Legal Tools Database \(LTD\)](#)

[ECHR Knowledge Sharing platform \(ECHR-KS\)](#)

[Oxford Reports on International Law \(ORIL\) \(access: SU\)](#)

[Overview of National Jurisprudence \(Eurojust\)](#)

[RefWorld](#)

[United Nations Treaty Collection](#)

[United Nations Security Council: Meetings and Outcomes](#)

[Westlaw \(access: SU\)](#)

[Stockholms universitetsbibliotek](#)

[Libris](#)

Blogs

[EJIL:Talk!](#)

[Völkerrechtsblog](#)

[OpinioJuris](#)

[Just Security](#)

[ICRC Humanitarian Law & Policy](#)

[Lawfare](#)

[IntLawGrrls](#)

Academic writing

[Linking words and phrases](#) (Otago Polytechnic)

[Linking words](#) (Southern Cross University)

[Transitions signals](#) (University of Technology Sydney)

[Sambandsord](#) (Örebro universitet)

[Studie- och språkverkstaden](#) (SU)

[Oxford English Dictionary \(access: SU\)](#)

[OSCOLA referencing guide](#) (University of Oxford)

[A practical guide to referencing styles](#) (University of York)

[OSCOLA 2006 – Citing international law sources section](#) (University of York)

Other materials

Additional readings will be indicated during the course and can be found on the course website.

Preparations for teaching

For the lectures and seminars, students are expected to have studied the relevant materials of the course ahead of each session. Lecturers may choose to share their slides after the lecture on Canvas. Further detailed references to the literature and source material for each session will be included on Canvas.

The table below indicates the corresponding chapters in the course textbook. **Note, the written examination is based on the whole book.**

Lectures and seminars	Chapter in the textbook
PART 1 –	
Lecture: Introduction to the course	-
Lecture: History, philosophy, method and relation to national law	1-3, 12-14
Lecture: The foundational principles of the UN, including use of force	20
Seminar: Sources, interpretation, and theory and method	4-6
PART 2 –	
Lecture: Law of the sea	21
Lecture: International environment law	23
Lecture: International economic law	24-25
Seminar: Subjects, jurisdiction and sovereignty	7-11
PART 3 –	
Lecture: International human rights law	27
Lecture: Refugee and migration law	28

Lecture: International humanitarian law	29
Lecture: International criminal law	26
Seminar: Dispute resolution and State responsibility	15-19

Examination

Examined moments

The course is examined through active participation in the seminars, an individual essay (12-15 pages), and an open-book written exam.

The individual essay and seminars will test the student's knowledge of and ability to connect knowledge of the foundations and substance of public international law with critical thinking. The seminars will also test the student's ability to present their arguments and conclusions orally and the individual essay their ability to present their arguments and conclusions in writing. The written exam will test the student's knowledge of the foundations and substantive rules, as well as the ability to identify and critically analyze legal problems and apply the relevant rules.

The **maximum score** for each examination component is as follows:

Seminars	Pass/Fail
Individual essay	60 pts
Written exam	40 pts
TOTAL	100 pts

Swedish grade:	ECTS grade:
AB= 74-100	A= 80-100
	B= 74-79,5
Ba= 58-73,5	C= 67-73,5
	D= 58-66,5
B= 50-57,5	E= 50-57,5

FX=Fail; F= Fail

These limits may be revised, but only downwards.

Students must obtain a minimum of 50 points and have completed all the mandatory elements of the course to pass. There is no minimum number of points to pass the written exam or individual essay. The points received in each of these moments are added together to give a total score out of 100. Students who obtain 49 points or less are able to take a re-exam of the examination moment for which they received the least points.

Students receive either a pass (G) or fail (U) grade for participation in the seminars. This is graded based on active participation. Active participation means that students must have prepared the assignments and be ready to participate in discussions about them. No points are awarded for participation in the seminar. Only participation in the group in which the student is registered counts as attendance, unless a change of group has been approved in advance.

Attendance at all compulsory parts of the course is also required in order to pass the course.

Exam registration

Students must register for the exam no later than 10 calendar days before the date of the exam. Registration for the exam requires registration on the course. **Students who have not registered for the exam are not allowed to write the exam.**

Swedish students receive a grade on the learning outcome-based four-grade grading scale AB-U. International master students and exchange students receive a grade on the learning outcome-based seven-grade grading scale A-F(x).

All students have the right to receive grades according to the grading scale A-F(x). Swedish students who wish to do so must report this to the course coordinator/teaching assistant at least five working days before the written exam.

Students with a documented disability who have been issued a certificate of extra pedagogical support from Stockholm University must report this to the course administrator/teaching assistant as soon as possible (see below, "[studying with a disability](#)").

Documents allowed at the exam

All students are required to show a valid ID on the day of exam. Driving licenses, passports and ID cards that are still in date are approved as identification. In case of stolen or lost ID, students may also prove their identity by providing a police report of no more than three months. Foreign ID documents are also accepted, preferably passports and ID cards.

Permitted aids and other exam regulations

Students must be in the examination room at least 15 minutes before the exam is set to start.

At the exam, different examination options can be applied. Information about the different examination options and the rules that apply can be found on [the Department of Law's website](#). The presence of unauthorized exam aids, notes and the like, as well as violations of exam regulations may lead to a notification to the university Disciplinary Committee. The Disciplinary Committee, led by the university president, can decide on a warning or a suspension.

In the course Advanced Course in Public International Law, the examination option 4 is applied.

Grading criteria

The **individual essay** will be based on:

- Subject and problem formulation
- Factual knowledge and insight into the subject
- Presentation
- Material
- Method
- Analysis and argumentation including independence of thought
- Conclusions
- Sources and formal requirements
- Language

These criteria are broken down against the following grades (which have been adopted from the assessment criteria of the course ‘Law and Information Communication Technology’):

AB (A) *	An excellently structured reasoning with a clear focus on the central aspects and with a high relevance in light of the questions posed; extensive reference to legal sources and the correct use of relevant facts; great ability to engage in abstract reasoning and to make an independent assessment of the problems, including critical reflection.
AB (B)*	A very well-structured reasoning with a clear focus on the central aspects and with a high relevance in the light of the questions posed; reference to legal sources and the correct use of relevant facts; great ability to engage in abstract reasoning and to make an independent assessment of the problems, including critical reflection.
BA (C)*	A well-structured reasoning with a focus on the central aspects and with relevance in the light of the questions posed; reference to legal sources and the correct use of relevant facts; ability to engage in abstract reasoning and to make independent and balanced assessment of the problems.
BA (D)*	A structured and relevant reasoning which covers some of the central aspects in light of the questions posed; reference to legal sources and the correct use of relevant facts; signs of an ability to engage in abstract reasoning and to make an independent assessment of the problems.
B (E)*	A transparent reasoning which observes some aspects that are central to the questions posed; some reference to legal sources and relevant facts; signs of an ability to make an independent assessment of the problems.
Fx	A reasoning which observes aspects that are central to the questions posed but insufficient reference to legal sources and the relevant facts and/or no signs of an ability to make an independent assessment of the problems.
F	A reproduction of disjointed facts with insufficient reasoning.

*The symbols in parenthesis represent the equivalent of the stated grade on the A – F scale.

The weight given to the different criteria will vary depending on the assignment.

If a written assignment is submitted late, points will be deducted.

Students receive either a pass (G) or fail (U) grade for the seminars. This is graded based on active participation. Active participation means that students must have prepared the assignments and be ready to participate in discussions about them. No points are awarded for participation in the seminars. Only participation in the group in which the student is registered counts as attendance, unless a change of group has been approved in advance.

Attendance at all compulsory parts of the course is also required in order to pass the course.

Request for grade review:

Requests for grade reviews are submitted on a special form to the course administrator/teaching assistant. The request must be carefully supported and a copy of the exam must be attached.

Citation

Oxford or OSCOLA

Oxford referencing: references are in footnotes. The first time a source is used, use the full reference. In subsequent references use *ibid.* if it is the immediately subsequent footnote, otherwise use short form. In addition to footnotes, you should also indicate the full reference in bibliography at the end of the text.

Further guidance and sources are provided on Canvas.

Plagiarism

You may never use any source or copy from the internet without referencing in the main text, footnotes and/or in endnotes. We check all writing, including the individual essays, with anti-plagiarism software, and any form of plagiarism immediately turns into a formal complaint with Stockholm University. If you are unsure about what is ok and not, check with the teacher.

To plagiarize is to present content from some others work as your own. It is to omit information on who is the author or where the material originates. Plagiarism includes to copy text in verbatim (in its entirety) as well as presenting results, ideas and conclusions as it is your own. Plagiarism can include text as well as other material such as a picture, figure or a diagram.

Scholarly work to a large extent builds on the work of others, and there is nothing wrong in that. Ways to thus avoid plagiarism include;

- Be careful to always indicate correct references to your sources. It is often time consuming to do that afterwards and there is also a risk that you will omit a source that you have used. Thus, write down your references continuously as you are drafting your text or making notes.
- It is allowed to build on the conclusions and analysis of others, in such cases you must indicate who has made these conclusions/analysis, either by a reference in a footnote or in the main text if it is a principal conclusion/analysis.
- If it is a longer and principal argument/sentences(s) of an author, it is suitable to quote the argument/sentence(s) with a reference in a footnote.

- It is approved to use conclusions/analysis from student essays, in such cases you must make references and work independently in relation to such sources in the same way as you do with other sources.

The use of AI tools

During this course we permit you to use AI tools, such as CHAT GPT, Grammarly, and similar, provided that you are transparent and cite this use in accordance with the instructions below.

Be aware of the fact that AI tools are not search engines and may not return accurate results. They can be useful to get started or move forward, but if you are just looking for information it may be better to use a search engine or other research method. In any case, you have to conduct your own research and add your own analysis. The grading will consider to what extent you have done that. Remember to verify generated information against sources. Anything you submit to the AI tool, be that written text or a prompt, will be used in the training of the AI by the company, so do not submit anything confidential or private.

Do not use AI tools to generate text that you submit in your individual essay or seminars or present as your own in the seminars. In all circumstances, you must remain the main author of the work. Submitting AI generated text as part of your work constitutes plagiarism (see section above).

If you use AI tools, you must provide an explanation on how you have used the AI tool in accordance with the following:

1. If you use an AI tool to check your grammar, to assist with the structure of the text or similar, you should reference this in the introductory chapter of your individual essay. Do not use generative AI for generating or modifying academic text.
2. If you use AI-based tools otherwise in researching your individual essay or written text for the seminars, list all those you have used in your bibliography to the individual or as an annex to your seminar text with a short explanation to what extent you used the listed tools.
 - a. Which question(s) did you use? You need to motivate your choice and course of action.
 - i. It is also allowed to **modify** text generated from AI tools in your text if you find and add sources into footnotes with the same standard as normally used. You should write in the footnote: "text generated by [INSERT NAME OF AI TOOL] by use of the question, subsequently modified."
 - ii. If you find that the answer from the AI tool is of poor quality and you have not used it at all, please state that and explain how you came to the conclusion. This could be, for example, that based on your research you found that the generated answer to be wrong and/or inaccurate.

The use of text generated by AI tools without subsequent modification and/or without mentioning it in your text or the explanation that you have used this tool (section 2 above) is considered to be plagiarism and will immediately result in a formal complaint with Stockholm University.

The use of text from AI tools where you mention in your text or the explanation that you have used this tool, but without adding other sources is considered to be bad quality which may lead to a lower grade, including a fail.

Studying with a disability

General

Stockholm University offers various forms of educational support for people with permanent disabilities. The support offered depends on the individual's situation and is intended to facilitate their studies. The goal is that all students should have the opportunity to study on equal terms.

To take advantage of the support, you must make an application. You do this by logging into the Nais system via a link on the Student Services website and filling out the web form. To complete the application, you must attach medical documentation confirming a permanent disability. You can find the website via Stockholm University > Education > Studying with a disability > Apply for support.

When the application is received, you will be contacted by the Student Services. When you have received your certificate, share it with the contact person at your department to learn more about how the support will work in practice. The contact person at the Department of Law is Director of Studies Viktoria Pettersson, tel.: 08-16 13 04 or e-mail: viktoria.pettersson@juridicum.su.se.

Examination

Please note that **you must notify the course** in question well in advance of each examination so that any additional measures can be taken. For information on when and how to notify the course for support, see the course's learning platform (Athena). If the report is received later than stated in Athena, the Department cannot guarantee that the examination can be carried out as desired. **Please also note that examination registration must be made in the usual way, as a general rule no later than 10 calendar days before the exam** (exceptions may need to be made, for example, on public holidays). Please also note that for support measures that run throughout the entire course (e.g. note-taking assistance) or more intrusive measures (e.g. splitting the exam), you must contact the course you are taking well in advance, but **no later than the start of the course**.

Student influence and course development

All students are asked to complete an anonymous electronic course evaluation at the end of the course. The course evaluation is of great importance for the quality assurance of the course content and its pedagogical structure. The course is constantly changing and evolving, and the views and ideas expressed in the course evaluation are always carefully considered. We are very grateful for your views and feedback.