

PS 3316 International Law (I) (國際公法一)

Fall 2025

Instructor: Min-Hua Huang
Class Time & Location: Wed 13:20-15:10, SSB 401
Office Hours: By appointment

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Course Description

This course is divided into International Law (I) and International Law (II), offered in the fall and spring semesters respectively. It is a required course for the English program of the division of International Relations in the NTU Political Science Department. Specifically, International Law (I) examines the core concepts of international law, when it started to exist and function, and the scope and circumstances of its application, through the lens of history, philosophy, and the realities of international politics. International Law (II) focuses on the institutional framework, operational mechanisms, and evolution of international law in the post-World War II era. Overall, International Law (I) approaches the nature of international law from a broad historical and empirical perspective, while International Law (II) proceeds the course content with the traditional perspective that assumes a self-evident proposition that international law is unquestionably existent and morally superior, manifesting its contemporary experience in the global governance.

Course Objective

Students are expected to develop a critical thinking on the nature and evolution of international law, and how it is related to the changing international relations. This course focus on how and why international law is possibly functioning without a world government instead of its format and content of legality. Empirical case studies (historical, contemporary, and on-going) will offered throughout the course to assess how effective of international law in different realms across security, trade, human rights, etc.

Learning Outcome

- Understand how international law was emerging and established.
- Explain the nature and content of international law historically.
- Assess the empirical effectiveness of international law across different eras.
- Evaluate the evolution of international law and how it is impacted by international politics.

Course Requirement

There are three requirements for enrolled students. First, weekly attendance is required, and it accounts for 10% of the final grade. Two unexcused absences are allowed without discounting the grade. Second, a mid-term in-class exam (40%) will be held on Week 10 (Nov 5). Third, the final group project will be due by Week 16 (50%) in both forms of oral presentation (ppt required) and written essay (within 10 pages). The maximum number of group members is five.

Textbook

Fassbender, B. & Peters, A. Eds. (2012). *The Oxford Handbook of the History of International Law*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Course Schedule

Week	Date	Topic
Week 1	09/03/25	Introduction
Week 2	09/10/25	Are There International Laws? What Do They Cover and When Are They Effective?
Week 3	09/17/25	Law of Nature
Week 4	09/24/25	Law of Morality
Week 5	10/01/25	Universal Human Rights (I)
Week 6	10/08/25	Universal Human Rights (II)
Week 7	10/15/25	Just War Theory
Week 8	10/22/25	Religion, Politics, War
Week 9	10/29/25	The Idea of Sovereignty
Week 10	11/05/25	Midterm Exam
Week 11	11/12/25	The Sovereignty State System from the mid-17th to mid-20th Century (AD).
Week 12	11/19/25	International Law as Conventions Prior to World War II (I)
Week 13	11/26/25	International Law as Conventions Prior to World War II (II)
Week 14	12/03/25	Evolution of International Law before Trump (1945-2016)
Week 15	12/10/25	Evolution of International Law since Trump (2017-now)
Week 16	12/17/25	Final Exam