

LA394-15 Global Health Law

26/27

Department

School of Law

Level

Undergraduate Level 3

Module leader

Pramiti Parwani

Credit value

15

Module duration

10 weeks

Assessment

100% coursework

Study location

University of Warwick main campus, Coventry

Description

Introductory description

Six years since the COVID-19 pandemic exposed underlying limitations in the existing global health law frameworks, the landscape of global health governance has seen seismic changes: from legislative developments such as amendments to the International Health Regulations and a new Pandemic Agreement, to mounting threats to multilateralism, a deepening funding crisis in global health, and emerging challenges posed by artificial intelligence and digital technologies with far-reaching implications for health outcomes.

In these uncertain times, at a moment when global health has been described by some as facing an existential crisis, there is renewed urgency for the advancement and critical interrogation of global health law and policy. In an interconnected world where health challenges are not limited by national borders, no country can respond effectively alone. This reality necessitates the development and strengthening of global health law.

Module aims

This course provides a comprehensive introduction to the field of global health law. Global health law aims to create governance frameworks that facilitate cooperation across jurisdictions to address shared threats to health.

Tracing the evolution from 'international health' to 'global health' and more recently to 'One Health'

approaches, this course examines the underlying norms, principles and actors shaping the field. Particular attention is given to the role of human rights within global health governance, alongside a critical assessment of their possibilities and limitations through decolonial and Third World lenses.

Building on this foundation, subsequent sessions engage with key case studies, including infectious disease control, non-communicable diseases, environmental health, digital health, and the interface with international trade law. These case studies are intended to equip students with a practical understanding of how global health law operates in practice, grounded in contemporary real-world examples.

Employing interdisciplinary methodologies, the course foregrounds perspectives attentive to decolonization and to the intersections of race, gender, and class, examining both the promises and constraints of global health law across these cross-cutting themes. In doing so, it invites students to critically assess the successes, ongoing challenges, and future trajectories of global health law in a rapidly changing world.

Outline syllabus

This is an indicative module outline only to give an indication of the sort of topics that may be covered. Actual sessions held may differ.

Introductory lecture: What is Global Health Law

Week 2: Actors, institutions, and fragmentation in global health law

Week 3: Global health governance and human rights

Week 4: Infectious Disease control and global health security

Week 5: Non-communicable diseases

Week 6: Health and trade law

Week 7: Environmental health

Week 8: Digital Health

Week 9: Wrap-up discussion and advice on final assessment

Learning outcomes

By the end of the module, students should be able to:

- Develop a critical understanding of the historical, postcolonial and racial context within which global health law is constructed.
- Explain the sources, principles, institutions, and actors of global health law.
- Apply selected norms and legal instruments in global health law to major contemporary health challenges studied during the class, notably communicable diseases, non-communicable diseases, environmental health, digital health, and the interface with international trade law.
- Critically evaluate both the normative strengths and limitations of human rights framings in global health law from decolonial and Third World perspectives.
- Formulate well-reasoned legal and policy arguments on whether and how global health law structures, reproduces, or challenges global inequities.

Indicative reading list

[Reading lists can be found in Talis](#)

Subject specific skills

1. Mapping the sources, institutions, and actors of global health law
2. Critically assessing fragmentation and regime complexity in global health law
3. Applying international human rights frameworks to global health governance challenges
4. Critically engaging with the evolution of legal regimes on control of infectious diseases, including the International Health Regulations and the WHO Pandemic Agreement.
5. Analysing governance challenges relating to non-communicable diseases, and interpreting treaty obligations under the WHO Framework Convention on Tobacco Control
6. Critically evaluating the public health dimensions of the TRIPS Agreement
7. Assessing environmental determinants of health and critically apply the One Health approach.
8. Critically engaging with the health equity implications of prevailing divides in digital health technologies.

Transferable skills

1. Develop advanced critical analytical skills, enabling them to evaluate complex legal and policy frameworks across intersecting regimes (health, trade, human rights, environment, and technology).
2. Construct clear, persuasive, and well-structured legal and policy arguments.
3. Develop a critical understanding of the historical, postcolonial and racial context within which international legal instruments are negotiated.
4. Engage effectively in negotiation and stakeholder-based problem solving, through simulation exercises, collaborative policy design, and structured debates during the seminars.

Study

Study time

Type	Required
Lectures	9 sessions of 2 hours (12%)
Seminars	8 sessions of 1 hour (5%)
Private study	89 hours (59%)
Assessment	35 hours (23%)
Total	150 hours

Private study description

No private study requirements defined for this module.

Costs

No further costs have been identified for this module.

Assessment

You do not need to pass all assessment components to pass the module.

Students can register for this module without taking any assessment.

Assessment group A2

	Weighting	Study time	Eligible for self-certification
Assessment component			
Legal analysis of a policy issue	20%	10 hours	No

The assessment for this course is structured as a two-stage exercise centred on a policy issue assigned to each group. In Stage 1 (group component), students work collaboratively to develop a legal analysis of the assigned policy issue. This involves identifying and briefly examining the relevant legal frameworks and rules that shape the issue. As part of this stage, each group will also design a stakeholder map, systematically identifying the key stakeholders whose interests are affected by the given policy issue.

In Stage 2 (individual component, described below), students will build on the collective work developed in Stage 1, working on the same policy issue assigned to them in Stage 1. Each student will be assigned a different stakeholder, and will be required to write a targeted policy brief providing legal advice and recommendations on their assigned policy issue tailored to their assigned stakeholder. Students will be provided written feedback on their submissions for Stage 1.

Reassessment component is the same

Assessment component

Stakeholder - targeted policy brief	80%	25 hours	Yes (extension)
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Weighting

Study time

Eligible for self-certification

In Stage 2 (individual component), students will continue working on the same policy issue examined in Stage 1. However, each student will be assigned a different stakeholder involved in that policy issue. Students will be required to prepare a targeted policy brief that provides legal analysis, advice, and recommendations tailored to the interests and institutional role of their assigned stakeholder. This stage encourages students to engage more deeply with the legal and strategic considerations that shape how different actors approach the same policy problem. Students are also expected to engage with and reflect on the feedback received in Stage 1. In their policy brief, they should clearly explain how this feedback, along with insights from class discussions, has informed and strengthened their analysis and recommendations. Requiring students to explicitly incorporate feedback and course discussions also helps ensure that the assessment reflects their own engagement with the learning process, thereby making the exercise more robust and less susceptible to overreliance on generative AI tools.

Reassessment component is the same

Feedback on assessment

Individual written feedback on group component and individual component.

Feedback on Moodle summarising the strengths and weaknesses of policy briefs across the cohort.

Availability

Courses

This module is Optional for:

- ULAA-M130 Undergraduate Law
 - Year 2 of M130 Law
 - Year 2 of M130 Law
 - Year 3 of M130 Law
 - Year 3 of M130 Law
- ULAA-M131 Undergraduate Law (4 Year)
 - Year 2 of M131 Law (4 year)
 - Year 3 of M131 Law (4 year)
 - Year 4 of M131 Law (4 year)
- ULAA-M132 Undergraduate Law (Year Abroad)
 - Year 2 of M132 Law (Year Abroad)
 - Year 4 of M132 Law (Year Abroad)
- ULAA-M135 Undergraduate Law and Sociology
 - Year 3 of M135 Law and Sociology

- Year 4 of M135 Law and Sociology
- ULAA-MR00 Undergraduate Law with French
 - Year 2 of MR00 Law with French
 - Year 4 of MR00 Law with French
- ULAA-MR01 Undergraduate Law with German
 - Year 2 of MR01 Law with German
 - Year 4 of MR01 Law with German
- ULAA-M136 Undergraduate Law with Humanities (3 Year)
 - Year 2 of M136 Law with Humanities (3 year)
 - Year 3 of M136 Law with Humanities (3 year)
- UPHA-V7MW Undergraduate Politics, Philosophy and Law
 - Year 2 of V7MW Politics, Philosophy and Law
 - Year 2 of V7MW Politics, Philosophy and Law
 - Year 3 of V7MW Politics, Philosophy and Law
 - Year 3 of V7MW Politics, Philosophy and Law