

LA9H5-20 International Law in Crisis

26/27

Department

School of Law

Level

Taught Postgraduate Level

Module leader

Daniel Lowe

Credit value

20

Module duration

10 weeks

Assessment

75% coursework, 25% exam

Study location

University of Warwick main campus, Coventry

Description

Introductory description

This module introduces students to complex emergent challenges within the field of international law. These challenges are represented by topical/contemporary issues, involving overlapping areas of international law, which are present (and increasingly relevant) within the global arena. In assessing the general efficacy of international law, this module examines the capacity of its institutions to effectively respond to (and redress) defining issues of the present day.

Module aims

The course has three principle aims.

(1) To introduce students to the manner in which 'crises' may be operationalised to examine the sufficiency of the capacities of international law. Rather than simply engaging with topical issues in an abstract manner, this module gives students the opportunity to apply the relevant law in specific practical contexts. Crises provide the lens through which the effectiveness of possible applications can be addressed.

(2) To enhance understanding of the complexities of emergent challenges to international law. This module does not analyse relevant areas of international law in a vacuum/isolation, but instead requires students to consider the interconnected/overlapping nature of international law by examining specific challenges (e.g. law on human trafficking) within the context of others (e.g. law

of armed conflict).

(3) To critically analyse the contemporary legitimacy of the institutions of international law. In addition to critically examining the sufficiency of the laws of international law, this module enables students to appraise the efficacy of the institutions responsible for regulating the conduct of member states (and relevant actors) in accordance with these laws.

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.

The first three weeks of the module (weeks 1-3) will introduce students to key institutions and processes of international law. Module content will be structured as follows:

- (Week 1) Histories of International Law
- (Week 2) The Role of the United Nations in Modernity
- (Week 3) Systems of Resolution and Reprisal

These investigations will draw heavily from both Critical Legal and TWAIL scholarship with the aim of providing a more objective (e.g. less Western-centric) account of the foundations of international law and its institutions. This component of the module will provide students with the necessary level of foundational understanding of how international law operates.

The remaining six weeks of study (4-5 and 7-10) will examine specific crises/emergent challenges that test the efficacy of international law in contemporary times. These investigations will incorporate case studies, contextual examinations and interactive exercises (e.g. problem questions).

- (Week 4) Human Rights and Pandemics
- (Week 5) Climate Change and Population Displacement
- (Week 7) Human Trafficking in Armed Conflicts
- (Week 8) Humanitarian Aid in Times of Genocide
- (Week 9) Justice, Law and Gender Apartheid
- (Week 10) Cyberwarfare and Human Security

Learning outcomes

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

- Demonstrate a critical understanding of the operationalisation of crises within international law.
- Demonstrate enhanced understanding of contemporary and emergent challenges to international law

- Demonstrate strong understanding of how relevant institutions regulate the application of international law
- Demonstrate effective skills in critical thinking, evaluation and conceptual analysis
- Articulate their own views (informed by appropriate scholarship) relating to the efficacy of international law

Indicative reading list

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

Interdisciplinary

A central question at the heart of international law is the degree to which it is 'law' in a meaningful sense. This stems from a perceived lack of enforceability, concerns about the legitimacy (and origins) of authorship, as well as the overt influence politics seemingly has on its operation and development. In seeking to address this central question, the International Law in Crisis module teaches students how to effectively adopt an interdisciplinary approach when navigating complex issue at the intersection of politics, philosophy, history and law.

International

The relevance (and importance) of the challenges facing international law addressed on this module are truly global in character. This module will consistently draw from the international institutions as well as case law from multiple jurisdictions (from both the Global North and the Global South).

Subject specific skills

Students will learn how to examine (and respond to) emergent challenges within the field of international law. This will incorporate critically analysing the operations of relevant institutions (such as the United Nations), as well as engaging with contemporary academic scholarship and philosophy.

Transferable skills

Students will develop skills in critical thinking, conceptual analysis, close reading and how to effectively apply relevant law. Students will develop their written and oral presentation skills.

Study

Study time

Type	Required
Seminars	8 sessions of 3 hours (12%)
Online learning (scheduled sessions)	10 sessions of 2 hours (10%)
Private study	121 hours (60%)
Assessment	35 hours (18%)
Total	200 hours

Private study description

Reading primary texts, case studies and news articles. Watching short clips/videos selected from interdisciplinary sources (e.g. documentaries, news coverage, tv shows/movies).

Costs

No further costs have been identified for this module.

Assessment

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

Assessment group D

	Weighting	Study time	Eligible for self-certification
Assessment component			
Policy Brief	75%	25 hours	Yes (extension)
Students will be able to write a policy brief on any topic/issue covered within the module. They will be provided with an indicative list of suggested titles, but will be free to design their own.			

Reassessment component is the same

Assessment component			
Oral Exam/Defence	25%	10 hours	Yes (extension)
This assessment will require students to respond to a specific question provided by the examiner in the feedback to their policy brief. The examiner will provide three questions within this feedback and students will be required to choose one to respond to in the oral exam.			

Weighting**Study time****Eligible for self-
certification****Reassessment component**

Individual Reflection

Yes (extension)

This reassessment will require students to reflect upon the experience of completing their policy brief.

Feedback on assessment

Written feedback will be provided to both assessments components.

[Past exam papers for LA9H5](#)

Availability

There is currently no information about the courses for which this module is core or optional.