



Module Specification

Foundations of Public International Law

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Part 1: Information

Module title: Foundations of Public International Law

Module code: UPGU9A-30-M

Level: Level 7

For implementation from: 2024-25

UWE credit rating: 30

ECTS credit rating: 15

College: College of Business and Law

School: CBL Bristol Law School

Partner institutions: None

Field: Law Postgraduate (Programmes)

Module type: Module

Pre-requisites: None

Excluded combinations: None

Co-requisites: None

Continuing professional development: No

Professional, statutory or regulatory body requirements: None

Part 2: Description

Overview: Public international law comprises the network of rules that regulate the relationship between states and the operation of other institutions and entities, such as the United Nations (UN), that play a role internationally. This module is designed to provide students with an in-depth understanding of the foundational, overarching elements of public international law and the international legal system. It teaches the key aspects of that system, such as the way in which international law is created (with a particular focus on treaties and customary international law), the subjects of

the international legal system (states, but also international organisations, individuals, and others), international dispute settlement mechanisms, and how states are found responsible for breaches of international law. Throughout the module students will be expected to take a critical, interactive approach and to engage with the practical aspects of the functioning of international law and international law-making, including by undertaking a treaty negotiation exercise.

Features: Not applicable

Educational aims: The module aims to provide students with the core ‘building blocks’ of public international law through a combination of lectorials, small group workshops, and a large-scale treaty negotiation scenario. It aims to provide both a descriptive account of public international law as well as offer scope for high-level analysis and critique of the key features of the international legal system. It focuses on practical and group-based learning. The module will give students the foundational knowledge and tools that are applicable to, and necessary for, the more specialised taught postgraduate modules on the International Law and Security programme, albeit at a level and depth that goes further than being purely introductory.

Outline syllabus: The module will cover topics such as:

- The Nature of Public International Law and the International Legal System

- The Subjects of Public International Law

- Customary International Law

- The Law of Treaties and the Nature of Treaty Negotiation

- State Responsibility

- The Peaceful Settlement of International Disputes

- International Institutions

Part 3: Teaching and learning methods

Teaching and learning methods: The teaching and learning strategy for the LLM programme emphasises a student-centred approach developed within smaller groups in class and focused on practical learning. To make the best use of the taught sessions, students are expected to prepare by engaging with a wide range of primary and secondary sources, to further their knowledge by reading the designated preparatory work in advance.

The module is designed for delivery through a combination of interactive lectures and workshops. The lectures will communicate the relevant key concepts, principles, theories, and approaches, as well as including opportunities for student engagement, such as interactive discussions and real-time quizzes. Workshops will provide a discussion forum in which students are expected to participate: to examine, raise, critically assess, and defend contrasting theoretical and conceptual perspectives in class. The workshops will include group work activities, with a focus on practice through the practical application of the law to real-world situations. Examples of group activities are legal debates, simulations, practical exercises, and peer learning. Workshops will also include specific support to prepare students for the assessments. In addition to the lectures and workshops, students will take part in a 4-hour group treaty negotiation exercise (i.e., practical class, where knowledge is put into practice on an even deeper level). This exercise will form an aspect of the assessment for the module. It will require students to represent an assigned state actor, working in groups, to attempt to negotiate the most favourable treaty that they can based on a supplied list of priorities.

Module Learning outcomes: On successful completion of this module students will achieve the following learning outcomes.

MO1 Ability to interpret, synthesise, evaluate, and analyse a variety of sources of public international law, and apply these sources to legal problems.

MO2 Ability to work in groups and utilise negotiation skills to develop solutions to practical legal problems at the international level.

MO3 Ability to debate and critique the relative merits and demerits of the international legal system and the processes of public international law.

MO4 Ability to engage in reflective learning and use this to demonstrate skill development.

Hours to be allocated: 300

Contact hours:

Independent study/self-guided study = 252 hours

Face-to-face learning = 48 hours

Total = 300

Reading list: The reading list for this module can be accessed at readinglists.uwe.ac.uk via the following link

<https://rl.talis.com/3/uwe/lists/E84DA96C-FE18-9807-A52F-FDDAE43A6303.html?lang=en&login=1#50D03217-4AA4-A66D-ADCC-BB7A758570A7>

Part 4: Assessment

Assessment strategy: The assessment strategy is based on the skills required to work in the field of public international law. This includes developing a detailed knowledge of the foundational aspects of the system (both substantive and operational) but also deploying them in collaborative but also oppositional and politically charged situations. The assessment regime thus mixes more traditional methods focused on knowledge, analysis and application (the coursework element), with a more practice-based assessment, as well as reflective learning to embed skill development. The report assessment therefore will include two parts:

1) a reflective review of the exercise (e.g., the student's own participation, team dynamics, the approach taken to negotiating the treaty and reflecting on outcomes and their desirability).

2) a brief substantive commentary on the legal requirements and processes for treaty creation, and how this was reflected in the exercise.

Formative assessment opportunities will be provided in workshops throughout the module, as will extensive guidance and support on how specifically to approach the assessments for this module.

Assessment tasks:

Report (First Sit)

Description: Reflective report on the in-class treaty negotiation exercise (1500 words max).

Weighting: 40 %

Final assessment: No

Group work: No

Learning outcomes tested: MO1, MO2, MO3, MO4

Written Assignment (First Sit)

Description: A 2,500-word coursework essay on an assigned question.

Weighting: 60 %

Final assessment: Yes

Group work: No

Learning outcomes tested: MO1, MO2, MO3, MO4

Report (Resit)

Description: Reflective report on the in-class treaty negotiation exercise – (1500 words max) resubmitted.

Weighting: 40 %

Final assessment: No

Group work: No

Learning outcomes tested: MO1, MO2, MO3, MO4

Written Assignment (Resit)

Description: A 2,500-word coursework essay on a new assigned question.

Weighting: 60 %

Final assessment: Yes

Group work: No

Learning outcomes tested: MO1, MO2, MO3, MO4

Part 5: Contributes towards

This module contributes towards the following programmes of study:

International Law and Security LLM 2024-25