

Course Syllabus

International Law for Sustainable Societies

Name of the instructor: Professor Marcel BRUS

Time for the course:

From 18 -27 July 2017: 7 sessions of 4 hours (preferably Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday, Friday, 08:00-12:00)

Exam on 28 July 2017

Course description including objectives:

Law is required to provide a stable environment for creating sustainable societies. Societies can be defined at all levels, from the local to an all-encompassing global society of human beings. The legal frameworks operating at these levels do not exist in isolation, but are in constant interaction with each other. Local problems such as inequality and poverty are linked to the global level through international economic law and human rights, while global challenges such as climate change cannot be solved without effective implementation of international agreements at the local level. Building sustainable societies needs international law to ensure peace and security, individual and collective rights, protection of the natural environment and resources of our planet, inclusive prosperity, and partnerships between the various stakeholders.

This lectured course is intended for students interested in international affairs with no or limited knowledge of international law. It will introduce the basics of public international law and explain how international law assists in addressing societal challenges like poverty, inequality, environmental degradation, migration and conflict. Taking the United Nations 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the Sustainable Development Goals as a starting point, the course will explore what role there is for international law to realize these ambitious objectives. The main objective of the course is to show the students the importance and dynamic development of international law in the 21st century. It will start with a general introduction of the basics of international law and the law of international organizations, followed by thematic sessions on core issues (environmental degradation and climate change; economic development; peace and security, migration, human rights, international criminal law).

Topic or topics for each session:

19 + 20 July: Introduction to Public International Law (history, law making, actors, accountability, dispute settlement) and Introduction to Sustainable Development (Agenda 2030, Sustainable Development Goals, the role of (international) law)

21 July: International law and the global economy (trade, investment, development, addressing poverty)

22 July: International law and the global environment (environmental law, climate change, sustainable management of natural resources)

25 July: International law and globalizing human societies (human rights, self-determination of peoples, refugees, migration)

26 July: International law and global security (use of force in international relations, United Nations peace enforcement and peacekeeping, international terrorism and crime, digital security)

27 July: International law for a sustainable society (shared values and responsibilities, international humanitarian law, international crimes, international institutions, international governance)

28 July: Examination

Teaching methods:

The method of teaching will be interactive lecturing; the core will be formed by lectures, but students will be asked to actively participate in the lectures by responding to questions, to engage in small group discussions to address problem questions or dilemma's, and to share personal opinions on the topics discussed. Students are expected to read a limited amount of materials for each lecture. Suggestions for further reading will be provided.

Assessment:

Part of the exam will consist of multiple choice questions, mainly designed to verify that students have read the materials and attended class. The second part will consist in answering a limited number of essay questions to show that they have acquired an understanding of the relevance and limits of international law in addressing global challenges. Both parts will count for 50% of the final grade.

Required and/or recommended readings

To be discussed with the BFSU Summer School organizers. What is considered as a minimum and maximum amount of required reading and which resources are available to the students?