

Public International Law I

Course code: LEG 247

Term and year: SPRING 2026

Day and time: Thursday, 8.00 - 10.45 CET in classroom (3.12)

Instructor: JUDr. Ing. Mgr. Libor Lukášek, Ph.D.

Instructor contact: libor.lukasek@aauni.edu

Consultation hours: After classes in the classroom and via Microsoft Teams upon individual prior agreement

Credits US/ECTS	3/6	Level	Advanced
Length	15 weeks	Pre-requisite	None
Contact hours	42 hours	Course type	BA obligatory MA Elective

1. Course Description

Public international law includes standards and rules generally recognized as binding among nations, although international organizations and even individuals are becoming important players in this field. International law governs almost all areas of international relations, including diplomacy, war, trade and human rights, and its main purpose is to create a consistent and reliable system of cooperation and coexistence of nations. The course explains the history, distinctive and specifics of public international law, key concepts such as subjects, sources, the relationship between national and international law, state responsibility and enforcement forms. It also introduces the most important topics, including the prohibition of the use of force, humanitarian law, human rights and criminal law. The classes will be interactive and will provide students with the opportunity to apply the acquired concepts and standards to specific current situations.

This course will:

- (a) provide a basic but substantial understanding of the rules and procedures of international law;
- (b) provide an understanding of the history, theory and structure of international law, including its main actors, sources and rules;
- (c) give to understand fundamentals from various areas of international law, including diplomacy, security, criminal law, humanitarian law and human rights;
- (d) provide an understanding of the possibilities and limitations of international law in dispute avoidance and resolution; and
- (e) consider the application of the above to contemporary international problems.

2. Student Learning Outcomes

Public international law primarily concerns legal relations between states, but it is also concerned with the role of the UN and other international organizations and their legal relations and, in the fields of human rights and international criminal law, it is concerned with the rights and duties of individuals.

Upon completion of this course, students will be able to:

- Demonstrate an appreciation of the significant differences and similarities of international law and domestic law;
- Demonstrate an understanding of the methodology and procedures of international law and the possibilities it provides for international dispute resolution;
- Identify relevant legal issues and agencies that create and enforce international law;
- Apply the rules of international law to current international disputes and propose legal and politically acceptable solutions
- Demonstrate an awareness of how and why it is that political realities often constrain the application of international law and marginalize it where it might have been thought to be at its clearest and most significant;
- Apply their knowledge to analyze complex legal questions and problems;
- Critique a range of legal materials and arguments;
- Conduct complex research exercises and use research evidence appropriately to support arguments;
- Develop compelling communication skills based on legal arguments.

3. Reading Materials

Required Materials

- Dixon, M. (2013). Textbook on international law. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Kaczorowska-Ireland, A. (2015). Public international law. Abingdon: Routledge.

Recommended Materials

- Aust, Rachel (2010). Handbook of International Law. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Cali, B. (2010). International law for international relations. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Cassese, A. (2014). International law. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Smith, R. (2014). Textbook on international human rights. 6th ed. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Documents distributed ad hoc during lectures.

Websites:

- Official UN website: <http://www.un.org>
- UN System Overview: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/United_Nations_System
- Directory of UN Systems Organizations website: <https://www.unqgm.org/Public/KnowledgeCentre/UNOrganizations>
- UN Treaties website: <https://treaties.un.org/pages/UNTSOnline.aspx?id=1>
- UN Charter & ICC Statute website: <http://www.un.org/en/charter-united-nations/>
- Intl. Criminal Court (ICC): https://www.icc-cpi.int/en_menus/icc/Pages/default.aspx
- Intl. Court Justice (ICJ): <http://www.icj-cij.org/homepage/index.php>

4. Teaching methodology

The format of this course is primarily lecture – research – reading – presentation – discussion – writing. The course will be taught as a mix of lectures, presenting the main ideas (presentations and essays) and seminars. The seminar part of lessons will feature either a class discussion, where students debate a selected topic and present their opinion or student presentation. Students have a chance to choose their own topic according to their area of interest at the beginning of the semester.

The lectures will be interactive and practically oriented. They will be complemented by case studies and presentations initiated by the students and covered by a class discussion. Presentation of new material will be interactive, and students will be asked to give their opinions based on revised course material.

Students will be encouraged to interact and ask questions during both parts of the class and express their opinion in and out of discussion. The student's opinion formation and critical thinking are further encouraged through thoughts on the set reading/listening. For each reading, students will be expected to prepare a short response, which they will be ready to present upon asking. Each student will be asked to present their response to the reading at least once. On a large scale, students will hone their analytical and research skills to a presentation on their chosen (pre-agreed) topic. There will be a mid-term and final exam at the end of the semester within 45 minutes.

5. Course Schedule

Date	Class Agenda
Session 1 5.2.2026	Topic: Introductory Class. Common discussion concerns public international law Description: Class information, discussion of class expectations. Brainstorm discussion about the issue. Reading: None Assignments/deadlines: Division of power point presentation topics and class presentations topics
Session 2 12.2.2026	Topic: Significance of International law. History of international law. Description: definition, role and specifics of public international law, introduction to the history of international law. Reading: <i>Kacorowska-Ireland_Ch.1.</i> Assignments/deadlines: None
Session 3 19.2.2026	Topic: The distinctive nature of public international law. Public international and municipal (domestic) law Description: the place and effect of international law in domestic legal systems and how these differ between states. Reading: <i>Dixon, Ch. 1 or Kacorowska-Ireland_Ch.1.</i> Assignments/deadlines: PowerPoint presentations, home study to prepare the review presentations

Session 4 26.2.2026	Topic: The sources and methods of public international law I. International treaties, ius cogens Description: International treaties as a main source of international law. Treaty law and ius cogens. The making of treaties; concepts of universality and reservations; application, amendment and termination of treaties; and state compliance. Reading: <i>Dixon, Ch. 2 or Kacorowska-Ireland_Ch.2.</i> Assignments/deadlines: PowerPoint presentations, home study to prepare the review presentations
Session 5 5.3.2026	Topic: The sources and methods of international law II. Description: customary international law, general principles, soft law rules, other sources Reading: <i>Dixon, Ch. 2 or Kacorowska-Ireland_Ch.2.</i> Assignments/deadlines: PowerPoint presentations, home study to prepare the review presentations
Session 6 12.3.2026	Topic: International law subjects (International personality) - states, int. organizations, individuals and other subjects of international law. Description: States and international organizations as the main subjects influencing international law; their responsibilities and influence. Other subjects of public international law Reading: <i>Kacorowska-Ireland_Ch.5.</i> Assignments/deadlines: PowerPoint presentations, home study to prepare the review presentations
Session 7 19.3.2026	Topic: Mid-Term Exam Description: Testing
Session 8 26.3.2026	Topic: The place of the individual in international law Description: the interrelationship between sovereignty, personality and the individual in international law. Human rights. International criminal law. Reading: <i>Dixon, Ch. 5 or Kaczorowska-Ireland_Ch.5.</i> Assignments/deadlines: PowerPoint presentations, home study to prepare the review presentations
2.4.2026	Mid-term break
Session 9 9.4.2026	Topic: The changing nature of international law. The dynamic quality of international law Description: the changing nature of international law by considering concepts of sovereignty and legal personality and the rise of the individual. Current development of international law and its changes. Reading: <i>Dixon, Ch. 6 or Kaczorowska-Ireland_Ch.7.</i>

	Assignments/deadlines: PowerPoint presentations, home study to prepare the review presentations
Session 10 16.4.2026	<p>Topic: Jurisdiction in public international law</p> <p>Description: the powers of a state regime beyond its own borders (including jurisdiction to prescribe and enforce), with emphasis on uncontested jurisdiction. the limitations of jurisdiction and the immunities from jurisdiction that are granted to individuals and states, sometimes in particular circumstances.</p> <p>Reading: <i>Dixon, Ch. 6 or Kaczorowska-Ireland_Ch.9.</i></p> <p>Assignments/deadlines: PowerPoint presentations, home study to prepare the review presentations</p>
Session 11 23.4.2026	<p>Topic: The law of treaties.</p> <p>Description: Vienna Convention on the Law of Treaties (1969), public international law of treaties making process, current situation</p> <p>Reading: <i>Dixon, Ch. 3 or Kaczorowska-Ireland_Ch.3.</i></p> <p>Assignments/deadlines: PowerPoint presentations, home study to prepare the review presentations</p>
Session 12 30.4.2026	<p>Topic: Self-determination and recognition of states; and use of force in international law.</p> <p>Description: Legal regulation of statehood and its recognition; right to self-determination; right to self-defense; humanitarian intervention and collective UN security. Use of force rules and public international law regulation.</p> <p>Reading: <i>Dixon, Ch. 6 or Kaczorowska-Ireland_Ch.13</i></p> <p>Assignments/deadlines: PowerPoint presentations, home study to prepare the review presentations</p>
Session 13 7.5.2026	<p>Topic: International Law Responsibility, Enforcement in public international law, peaceful settlement of disputes</p> <p>Description: Issues of responsibility in international law (rights and duties). Forms of enforcement in international law. Peaceful and diplomatic settlement of disputes.</p> <p>Reading: <i>Dixon, Ch. 10 or Kaczorowska-Ireland_Ch.14</i></p> <p>Assignments/deadlines: Review all and get ready for the final exam.</p>
Session 14 14.5.2026	<p>Topic: Final Exam</p> <p>Description: Testing</p>

6. Course Requirements and Assessment (with estimated workload)

Assignment	Workload (hours)	Weight in Final Grade	Evaluated Course Specific Learning Outcomes	Evaluated Institutional Learning Outcomes*
Class participation, short speeches	42	15 %	Participating in class discussion, answering questions, asking questions – to the lecture and during student presentations Students will participate in short speeches and discuss meaningfully the topics of the course that have been already covered in accordance with the learning outcomes (see above).	1,2,3
Essay	28	20 %	Students will be asked to research and on elected topics. Depth of own research and own conclusions and results will be graded.	1
Presentation	20	15 %	Students will be asked to research and prepare for a discussion on elected topic. Presentation during class time. Students will then argue their case against other class students. Depth of own research, ability to present, to defend own opinions and conclusions and debate arguments will be graded. Each student will be graded individually.	1,2,3
Mid-term exam	20	20%	45 min exam - demonstration of the capacity to analyze critical challenges and issues related to the issue	1,2
Final Exam	40	30%	45 min exam testing analytical skills and knowledge of topic covered in essay, presentations, reading and class	1,2
TOTAL	150	100%		

*1 = Critical Thinking; 2 = Effective Communication; 3 = Effective and Responsible Action

7. Detailed description of the assignments

Assignment 1: Class participation and short speeches:

Each student will prepare and present two short (5-10 minutes) speeches in class, first speech before the midterm break (February 3 - March 23, 2025), second speech after the midterm break. The topics and the schedule of the presentations will be distributed and discussed in the first and the following classes. Each speech is 5%.

Assessment breakdown

Assessed area	Percentage
Content	40%
Presentation	40%
Discussion	20%

Assignment 2: Essay

Students will write an essay on the topic related to public international law covered by class agenda. The topic of the essay, which is entirely up to the student (although suggestion will be approved by lecturer) should be analytical and demonstrate the student's ability to apply the studied concepts related to public international law. The length of the essay should be 1500 words (10% +/-) for bachelor study program and 2500 words (10 % +/-) for master program. Only the content will be graded, grammatical mistakes will not result in any point deductions. The essays must be submitted via Turnitin on NEO till 8.5.2026.

Assessment breakdown

Assessed area	Percentage
Research and knowledge of the relevant topic	50%
Ability to summarize relevant conclusions and results	30%
Quality of sources, bibliography/citations and compliance with the rules in the field of IA using	20%

Assignment 3: PowerPoint presentation (Research presentation)

Students will deliver an in-depth research presentation on a topic chosen within the group (and agreed to by the lecture) related to area of public international law covered by course agenda. They will cooperate to put together a power point presentation (or any other similar software); however, they will be graded individually (depending on the group presentation results). The topic of the presentation should be analytical and demonstrate the student's ability to apply the studied concepts related to public international law. The length of the presentation must be minimal 8 and maximal 12 slides. The content of the presentation must be carefully sourced (students will have submitted a bibliography with academic references)

Assessment breakdown

Assessed area	Percentage
Demonstration of knowledge on the subject	40%
Quality of analysis, valid argumentation, and use of critical thinking	20%
Quality of presentation, ability to counter opposing side's argumentation	20%
Organization and structure of the presentation, teamwork	10%

Delivery of the presentation (ability to hold attention, usage of technologies – power point, tec...)	10%
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Assignment 4: Final and Midterm Exam

Midterm exam will assess progress of students in the first part of the course – Sessions 2 to 8. Final exam will be comprehensive, and students will be responsible for all topics covered in classes including student presentations as well as assigned readings (with emphasis on the 2nd half of semester). Both exams will be in-class paper tests combining multiply choice and false and true questions (closed book - question, 4 possibilities, only 1 correct answer).

In case studies, students solve real-life situations in the field of public international law. The goal is to gain information about the ability to apply the acquired information and knowledge in a real-life situation.

There will be 12 questions (10 questions as a close book question a 2 case studies) per maximum 45 minutes which is a standard format used in the EU competition tests. Students should demonstrate that they have a good understanding of the most relevant issues and concepts and that they are able to provide swift and correct answers.

Assessment breakdown Mid-term Exam

Assessed area	Percentage
Mid-term Exam – from areas covered Sessions 2-8 (short answers)	60%
Case study solution	40%

Assessment breakdown Final Exam

Assessed area	Percentage
Final Exam – from areas covered all Sessions (short answers)	60%
Case study solution	40%

8. General Requirements and School Policies

General requirements

All coursework is governed by AAU’s academic rules. Students are expected to be familiar with the academic rules in the Academic Codex and Student Handbook and to maintain the highest standards of honesty and academic integrity in their work.

Electronic communication and submission

The university and instructors shall only use students’ university email address for communication, with additional communication via NEO LMS or Microsoft Teams.

Students sending e-mail to an instructor shall clearly state the course code and the topic in the subject heading, for example, “COM101-1 Mid-term Exam. Question”.

All electronic submissions are through NEO LMS. No substantial pieces of writing (especially take-home exams and essays) can be submitted outside of NEO LMS.

Attendance

Attendance, i.e., presence in class in real-time, at AAU courses is default mandatory; however, it is not graded as such. (Grades may be impacted by missed assignments or lack of participation.) Still, students must attend at least two thirds of classes to complete the course. If they do not meet this condition and most of their absences are excused, they will be administratively withdrawn from the course. If they do not meet this condition and most of their absences are not excused, they will receive a grade of "FW" (Failure to Withdraw). Students may also be marked absent if they miss a significant part of a class (for example by arriving late or leaving early).

Absence excuse and make-up options

Should a student be absent from classes for relevant reasons (illness, serious family matters), and the student wishes to request that the absence be excused, the student should submit an Absence Excuse Request Form supplemented with documents providing reasons for the absence to the Dean of Students within one week of the absence. Each student may excuse up to two sick days per term without any supporting documentation; however, an Absence Excuse Request Form must still be submitted for these instances. If possible, it is recommended the instructor be informed of the absence in advance. Should a student be absent during the add/drop period due to a change in registration this will be an excused absence if s/he submits an Absence Excuse Request Form along with the finalized add/drop form.

Students whose absence has been excused by the Dean of Students are entitled to make up assignments and exams provided their nature allows. Assignments missed due to unexcused absences which cannot be made up may result in a decreased or failing grade as specified in the syllabus.

Students are responsible for contacting their instructor within one week of the date the absence was excused to arrange for make-up options.

Late work: No late submissions will be accepted – please follow the deadlines.

Electronic devices

Electronic devices (e.g. phones, tablets, laptops) may be used only for class-related activities (taking notes, looking up related information, etc.). Any other use will result in the student being marked absent and/or being expelled from the class. No electronic devices may be used during tests or exams unless required by the exam format and the instructor.

Eating is not allowed during classes.

Cheating and disruptive behavior

If a student engages in disruptive conduct unsuitable for a classroom environment, the instructor may require the student to withdraw from the room for the duration of the class and report the behavior to the student's Dean.

Students engaging in behavior, which is suggestive of cheating, will, at a minimum, be warned. In the case of continued misconduct, the student will fail the exam or assignment and be expelled from the exam or class.

Plagiarism

Plagiarism obscures the authorship of a work or the degree of its originality. Students are expected to create and submit works of which they are the author. Plagiarism can apply to all works of authorship – verbal, audiovisual, visual, computer programs, etc. Examples are:

- **Verbatim plagiarism:** verbatim use of another's work or part of it without proper acknowledgement of the source and designation as a verbatim quotation,
- **Paraphrasing plagiarism:** paraphrasing someone else's work or part of it without proper acknowledgement of the source,
- **Data plagiarism:** use of other people's data without proper acknowledgement of the source,
- **False quotation:** publishing a text that is not a verbatim quotation as a verbatim quotation,
- **Fictitious citation:** quoting, paraphrasing, or referring to an incorrect or a non-existent work,
- **Inaccurate citation:** citing sources in such a way that they cannot be found and verified,
- **Ghostwriting:** commissioning work from others and passing it off as one's own,
- **Patchwriting:** using someone else's work or works (albeit with proper acknowledgement of sources and proper attribution) to such an extent that the output contains almost no original contribution,
- **Self-plagiarism:** unacknowledged reuse of one's own work (or part of it) that has been produced or submitted as part of another course of study or that has been published in the past,
- **Collaborative plagiarism:** delivering the result of collective collaboration as one's own individual output.

At minimum, plagiarism will result in a failing grade for the assignment and shall be reported to the student's Dean. A mitigating circumstance may be the case of novice students, and the benefit of the doubt may be given if it is reasonable to assume that the small-scale plagiarism was the result of ignorance rather than intent. An aggravating circumstance in plagiarism is an act intended to make plagiarism more difficult to detect. Such conduct includes, for example, the additional modification of individual words or phrases, the creation of typos, the use of machine translation tools or the creation of synonymous text, etc. The Dean may initiate a disciplinary procedure pursuant to the Academic Codex. Intentional or repeated plagiarism always entails disciplinary hearing and may result in expulsion from AAU.

Use of Artificial Intelligence and Academic Tutoring Center

The use of artificial intelligence tools to search sources, to process, analyze and summarize data, and to provide suggestions or feedback to improve content, structure, or style, defined here as AI-assisted writing, is not in itself plagiarism. However, it is plagiarism if, as a result, it obscures the authorship of the work produced or the degree of its originality (see the examples above).

AAU acknowledges prudent and honest use of AI-assisted writing, that is, the use of AI for orientation, consultation, and practice is allowed. For some courses and assignments, however, the use of AI is counterproductive to learning outcomes; therefore, the course syllabus may prohibit AI assistance.

A work (text, image, video, sound, code, etc.) generated by artificial intelligence based on a mass of existing data, defined here as AI-generated work, is not considered a work of authorship. Therefore, if an AI-generated work (e.g. text) is part of the author's work, it must be marked as AI-generated. Otherwise, it obscures the authorship and/or the degree of originality and thus constitutes plagiarism. Unless explicitly permitted by the instructor, submission of AI-generated work is prohibited.

If unsure about technical aspects of writing, and to improve their academic writing, students are encouraged to consult with the tutors of the AAU Academic Tutoring Center. For more information and/or to book a tutor, please contact the ATC at: <http://atc.simplybook.me/sheduler/manage/event/1/>.

Course accessibility and inclusion

Students with disabilities should contact the Dean of Students to discuss reasonable accommodation. Academic accommodation is not retroactive.

Students who will be absent from course activities due to religious holidays may seek reasonable accommodation by contacting the Dean of Students in writing within the first two weeks of the term. All requests must include specific dates for which the student requests accommodation.

9. Grading Scale

Letter Grade	Percentage*	Description
A	95-100	Excellent performance. The student has shown originality and displayed an exceptional grasp of the material and a deep analytical understanding of the subject.
A-	90-94	
B+	87-89	Good performance. The student has mastered the material, understands the subject well and has shown some originality of thought and/or considerable effort.
B	83-86	
B-	80-82	
C+	77-79	Fair performance. The student has acquired an acceptable understanding of the material and essential subject matter of the course but has not succeeded in translating this understanding into consistently creative or original work.
C	73-76	
C-	70-72	
D+	65-69	Poor. The student has shown some understanding of the material and subject matter covered during the course. The student's work, however, has not shown enough effort or understanding to allow for a passing grade in School Required Courses. It does qualify as a passing mark for the General College Courses and Electives.
D	60-64	
F	0-59	Fail. The student has not succeeded in mastering the subject matter covered in the course.

* Decimals should be rounded to the nearest whole number.

Prepared by: JUDr. Ing. Mgr. Libor Lukášek, Ph.D.

Date: 6.1.2026

Approved by: Dr. Libor Lukášek, Ph.D.

Date: 15.1.2026