

Public International Law I

Course code: LEG 248

Term and year: FALL 2026

Day and time: Thursday, 8.00 - 10.45 CET in classroom (3.10)

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

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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 of Public International Law II follows on the course Public International Law I. While the previous course focused on the so-called general part of public international law (concept, sources, subjects, rules, responsibility, enforcement, dispute resolution), this course aims to give students a basic overview of individual areas forming a so-called special part of public international law. Specifically: regulation of the status of citizens or foreigners, international human rights law, international refugee law, international humanitarian law, international criminal law, the legal regime of state territory and international spaces, the law of the sea, international environmental law and international economic law.

This course will:

- provide a basic but substantial understanding of international law branches of international law that are part of this course;
- give to understand fundamentals from various areas of international law, including criminal law, humanitarian law, human rights protection, environmental law, international economic law etc.;
- provide an understanding of the possibilities and limitations of international law in dispute avoidance and resolution;
- consider the application of the above to contemporary international problems;
- teach students to solve real or fictitious cases.
- how to work with the texts of international treaties and decisions of international courts and other bodies and
- discuss current topics from the perspective of public international law.

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

- Aust, Anthony (2010). Handbook of International Law. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Kaczorowska-Ireland, A. (2015). Public international law. Abingdon: Routledge.
- Cassese, A. (2014). International law. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Recommended Materials

- Cali, B. (2010). International law for international relations. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Dixon, M. (2013). Textbook on international law. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Shaw, M.N. (2021). International Law. Cambridge. Cambridge 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.ungm.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 classroom and the MyLearning website are the main platforms of communication. 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. 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 3.9.2026	Topic: <u>Introduction, revision of the course Public International Law I</u> Description: Class information, discussion of class expectations. Brainstorm discussion about the issue. Reading: None Assignments/deadlines: Division of power point presentation topics and short speeches topics
Session 2 10.9.2026	Topic: <u>Status of the population and individuals</u> Description: definition, role and specifics, instruments, organs, mechanisms Reading: <i>Aust_Ch.1 or Cassese_Ch. 7</i> Assignments/deadlines: PowerPoint presentations, short speeches, home study to prepare the review presentations

Session 3 17.9.2026	Topic: <u>Protection of human rights (instruments, organs, mechanisms)</u> Description: What is the human right? Universal and regional system of human rights protection; outline of the principal political and civil rights; general qualification to rights; enforcement of human rights. Reading: <i>Aust_Ch. 11 or Kaczorowska-Ireland_Ch.12.</i> Assignments/deadlines: PowerPoint presentations, short speeches, home study to prepare the review presentations
Session 4 24.9.2026	Topic: <u>Nationality in International law, refugees, asylum in international law</u> Description: Nationality – introduction, dual nationality, citizenship, statelessness, Legal persons, diplomatic protection; refugee – definition, application for refugees’ status, exceptions, protection of refugees, state obligations; instrument of asylum in international law, diplomatic asylum Reading: <i>Aust_Ch. 8.</i> Assignments/deadlines: PowerPoint presentations, short speeches, home study to prepare the review presentations
Session 5 1.10.2026	Topic: <u>International humanitarian law (armed conflict, protection of victims of armed conflict – Geneva Law, the Hague Law)</u> Description: Use of force rules and public international law regulation Armed conflict, Protection of victim armed conflict (the Hague Law, Geneva Law), humanitarian intervention and collective UN security. Reading: <i>Aust, Ch. 12. or Kaczorowska-Ireland_Ch.17.</i> Assignments/deadlines: PowerPoint presentations, short speeches, home study to prepare the review presentations
Session 6 8.10.2026	Topic: <u>International criminal law</u> Description: Introduction – international criminal law as a part of international legal system; International crimes; International Tribunals; International Criminal Court (ICC); Extradition; Mutual Legal Assistance. Reading: <i>Aust_Ch.13 or Cassese_Ch 21.</i> Assignments/deadlines: PowerPoint presentations, short speeches, home study to prepare the review presentations
Session 7 15.10.2026	Topic: <u>Mid-Term Exam</u> Description: Testing. Exam will be in-class paper tests in written form 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 law. Reading: All materials studied during classes 2- 6 Assignments/Deadlines: None

Session 8 22.10.2026	Topic: <u>State bodies for international relations</u> Description: States as the main subjects influencing international law; their responsibilities and influence; State bodies in the field of international relations and law - description, their roles, functions, rights and responsibilities Reading: <i>Kaczorowska-Ireland_Ch.5.</i> Assignments/deadlines: PowerPoint presentations, short speeches, home study to prepare the review presentations
29.10.2026	Mid-term break
Session 9 5.11.2026	Topic: <u>State territory and international spaces</u> Description: state territory - definition, territorial integrity, means of state territory acquisition, common heritage of mankind; international spaces – description, special regimes - Antarctica, the Arctic, area, Canals, international rivers, outer spaces, etc.; Reading: <i>Aust_Ch. 3, 18 or Kaczorowska-Ireland_Ch.7.</i> Assignments/deadlines: PowerPoint presentations, short speeches, home study to prepare the review presentations
Session 10 12.11.2026	Topic: <u>International environmental law</u> Description: protection of global environment, managing natural resources, addressing transboundary pollution through treaties, customary norms, and state cooperation. Foundational Principles. Global Climate Regime. Biodiversity and Conservation. Marine and Transboundary Harm. Enforcement and Compliance. Reading: <i>Aust_Ch. 16 or Cassese_Ch.23.</i> Assignments/deadlines: PowerPoint presentations, short speeches home study to prepare the review presentations
Session 11 19.11.2026	Topic: <u>International economic law</u> Description: regulation of global financial systems, international trade, cross-border investments, and economic relations between sovereign states; foundational Frameworks, International Trade Law, International Investment Law, Monetary and Financial Regulation, Development and Economic Sanctions: Reading: <i>Aust_Ch. 13</i> Assignments/deadlines: PowerPoint presentations, short speeches home study to prepare the review presentations
Session 12 26.11.2026	Topic: <u>The law of the sea</u> Description: Introduction. International waters. Baselines. Territorial seas. Sea zones. The Area. Dispute settlement. Reading: <i>Aust_Ch. 15 or Kaczorowska-Ireland_Ch.8</i> Assignments/deadlines: PowerPoint presentations, short speeches, home study to prepare the review presentations

Session 13 3.12.2026	Topic: <u>Settlement of disputes in international law</u> Description: Responsibility in international law (rights and duties). Peaceful and diplomatic settlement of disputes. International Arbitration; International Judicial Institutions. Forms of enforcement in international law. Reading: <i>Aust_Ch. 22 or Kaczorowska-Ireland_Ch.14</i> Assignments/deadlines: PowerPoint presentations, short speeches, review all and get ready for the final exam.
Session 14 10.12.2026	Topic: Final exam Description: Testing. Exam will be in-class paper tests in written form 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 law. Reading: All materials studied during this course. Assignments/Deadlines: None

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 speech	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	1,2,3

			present, to defend own opinions and conclusions and debate arguments will be graded. Each student will be graded individually.	
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 one short (5-10 minutes) speech in class. The topics and the schedule of the presentations will be distributed and discussed in the beginning of semester. This assignment is evaluated 15 %.

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 **30.11.2026**

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 individually (and agreed to by the lecture) related to area of public international law covered by course agenda. 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 12 and maximal 15 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%

Assignment 4: Final and Midterm Exam

Midterm exam will assess progress of students in the first part of the course – Sessions 2 to 6. 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 – Sessions 8-13). Both exams will be in-class paper tests in writing form 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 – 10 closed book questions from areas covered Sessions 2-6 (short answers)	40%
2 case studies solution	60%

Assessment breakdown Final Exam

Assessed area	Percentage
Final Exam – 10 closed book questions from areas covered all Sessions (short answers)	40%
2 Case studies solution	60%

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. Please see the AAU intranet for a [summary of key policies](#) regarding coursework.

Course specific requirements

There are no special requirements or deviations from AAU policies for this course.

8. 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: 23.7.2026

Approved by: Doc. JUDr. Magdalena Svobodová, Ph.D.

Date: 19.8.2026