INTERNATIONAL LAW IN A CHANGING WORLD **2026/2027**

CONTENT, PROGRESS AND PEDAGOGY OF THE MODULE

Drones over Copenhagen, flares fired from a Russian naval vessel against a Danish helicopter, and 'Shadow fleet' vessels travelling unhindered through the Danish straits. What are the international legal frameworks at play? The interaction of the relevant legal frameworks with the events of the day is in focus in this course, which takes its starting point in current issues and challenges – known and emerging. The list of issues can include legal responses to current threats to maritime security, such as piracy or hybrid attacks on ships, internet cables and pipelines, or the use of autonomous vessels and drones on, under and over the sea. Such issues may need to be addressed in public international law as well as private international law, maritime law, human rights law and/or international safety laws, including in both international law and transnational laws (national/municipal laws occurring transnationally). Modern threats to international security at sea frequently test the boundaries between peace and war, and thus law enforcement and the *jus ad bellum*.

The nature of armed conflict is changing, and modern conflicts are challenging legal classifications of, for example, aggression, occupation, self-determination, genocide, torture and other new forms of international crime, such as 'ecocide'. In addition, the issues of AI-warfare and international law, and questions such as necessity and proportionality are relevant. Conditions of detention across the globe can also challenge international law and the human rights of criminals, undocumented minors and even prisoners of war. Climate change and rising sea levels can also challenge traditional understandings of state sovereignty, jurisdiction and states' powers and duties at sea.

To explore these issues, the course begins by establishing an understanding of the building blocks of international law, including states and other legal actors, principles and the sources of international law, the international law regimes, such as the law of the sea, and the institutions, such as international courts and tribunals, and the relationship of international law to national law. This foundation is then explored and expanded on, directly in relation to current situations that draw on and challenge international law in today's world. The students' course preparation is supported by tools such as 'talking power-points' and quizzes, and students' legal problem solving is facilitated by combining lectures with workshops and simulations, where students apply their knowledge to current legal problems.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

KNOWLEDGE

- The development of international law, and the involvement of states and other legal actors
- The main legal principles and legal functions of international law
- International legal concepts, such as sovereignty, jurisdiction, responsibility, nationality
- The interrelationship between public and private international law, transnational law and national law
- The sources of international law and transnational law

SKILLS

- Use the terminology and concepts of the relevant legal sources
- Independently identify international law problems
- Identify relevant sources of international and transnational law
- Interpret and apply principles and provisions of international and transnational law

- Present and explain orally and in writing relevant legal analysis and findings
- Understand and challenge the deficiencies of the international law system

COMPETENCES

- Identifying, analysing and discussing legal solutions to problems within the field
- Analysing the connections between various areas of public and private international law and national law
- Advising on the rights and obligations of governments, state authorities, other organizations or private companies on past, present and potential legal issues under international law
- Advising on how to access judicial remedies in different fields of international law
- Analyzing, researching and presenting an academic study of a legal problem within the course's ambit.

PRE-REQUISITES

- Students are expected to have completed several years of legal studies or legal-economic studies (HA (jur) at the bachelor level. A prior knowledge of international law is not a pre-requisite but is an advantage.

TYPE OF INSTRUCTION

- Lectures, with interactive and problem-oriented discussion, combined with problem-based workshops and facilitation of short project writing.

EXTENT AND EXPECTED WORKLOAD

- 270 hours

EXAMINATION

Name of exam	Current Issues of International Law in a Changing World
Type of Exam	Oral exam based on a supplementary, workshop-based, mini-project, which can be prepared individually or in groups of 2-3 20 minutes per student (including evaluation and feedback)
ECTS	10
Permitted aids	With certain aids: A clean copy of the mini-project can be brought into the exam and a single page per student for the presentation only, with keywords in point-form. It is forbidden to use AI to generate text in the mini project.
Assessment	7-point grading scale
Type of grading	External examination
Criteria of assessment	The criteria of assessment are stated in the Examination Policies and Procedures

FACTS ABOUT THE MODULE

Danish title	Aktuelle spørgsmål inden for folkeretten i en verden i forandring
Module code	JUR-SM-xxx
Module type	Course
Duration	4 weeks, including 1 week of own preparation, two weeks of tuition and one examination week, including preparation-time for the examination
Semester	Summer School
ECTS	10
Language of instruction	English
Empty-place Scheme	Yes
Location of the lecture	Campus Aalborg
Responsible for the module	**Fenella Billing** **(in cooperation with Birgit Feldtmann, Kristina Siig & Jesper Lindholm)**
Used in Curriculum for the Master's programme in LL.M. (Master of Laws), 2025. Curriculum for the Master's programme in Business Administration and Commercial Law, 2024	

ORGANISATION

Study Board	Study Board of Law
Department	Department of Law
Faculty	Faculty of Social Sciences and Humanities

LITERATURE

- Klabbers, J., International Law (4th edn., CUP, 2024) (TBC)
- A selection of book chapters, articles and other publications announced in advance of the beginning of the course
- Relevant treaties and other legal instruments