

INTERNATIONAL LAW 558
PROFESSOR CINDY G. BUYS
Spring 2026

Class Meeting Place and Times: Room 204

Tuesdays and Thursdays, 3-4:15 p.m.

Contact Info: Office 258

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Office Hours: TTH 10:30-11:30 a.m. and 1:30-2:30 p.m. or by appointment

Course Description and Objectives:

This course introduces students to the exciting field of international law. While international law is traditionally thought of as governing interactions between sovereign nation-states, increasingly it has come to involve and affect private persons, corporations, and non-governmental organizations as well. By the time you have completed this course, you should:

1. Be able to identify, define, and construct a persuasive legal argument using the primary sources of international law;
2. Be familiar with many of the primary substantive international legal rules (e.g., the prohibition on genocide) and actors;
3. Understand how international law is developed, implemented, and enforced;
4. Be familiar with several international courts and tribunals, their jurisdiction, and work;
5. Understand how international law is incorporated into U.S. law and applied;
6. Analyze how international law's development has impacted and benefitted or disadvantaged diverse groups; and
7. Understand some of the political or policy considerations that drive the development of international law (or lack thereof) and the behavior of nation-states and other international actors.

One of the most interesting and exciting aspects of international law is that it is constantly evolving and expanding. For virtually every field of domestic law, there is a corresponding body of international law. Thus, the breadth of the field is unparalleled. Because the entire scope of international law is beyond this introductory course, we will choose a few specialty areas within international law, such as regional human rights law, refugee law, or the law of war, to study towards the end of the course. I will be seeking your input regarding which specialty areas you would like to study.

While learning international law can be challenging, I hope you will join me in viewing international law as an exciting practice area, which is growing in importance, and which allows for a tremendous amount of creative lawyering.

Required Reading:

Buy & Wojcik, INTERNATIONAL LAW: A CONTEMPORARY APPROACH (Interactive Casebook Series West 2025) [hereinafter "B&W"]. The word "interactive" in the book's title means that the book is much more useful digitally than in print form through use of the numerous weblinks to primary sources such as treaties, United Nations documents, court decisions, etc., that are provided throughout. You will be expected to go

online to read portions of many of these primary sources as we progress through the semester. There also are multiple choice questions to accompany the book that you can access online to assess your learning (see the link at the end of each chapter).

The reading assignment for the first day of class, Tuesday, Jan. 13, is to read this syllabus and B&W Chapter One (pp.1-8). The rest of the reading assignments and other materials will be posted on the class D2L page at appropriate times.

Class Attendance and Preparation:

You are expected to attend classes on a regular basis and to be on time. Being present on time demonstrates respect for the professor and your classmates. If for some unavoidable reason you are late to class, you will be asked to sing a short song, recite a poem, or contribute \$.50 towards an end-of-the-semester snack.

Absences in excess of six (6) classes will be dealt with by the Associate Dean in accordance with the law school rules. I will take attendance each day, but you are responsible for making sure you sign the attendance sheet and keeping track of your own absences. Your presence in class means that you have read the assigned material and are prepared to discuss it in an intelligent fashion. Being prepared also means that you have completed any written assignments on a satisfactory basis. If I call on you and I judge that you are unprepared, I reserve the right to mark you as absent for that class and to deduct participation points.

If you are unprepared for class but would like to attend and receive the benefit of the class discussion, let me know at the start of class that you wish to count the class as one of your permitted absences and I will not call on you that day.

Workload Expectations:

The American Bar Association (ABA) standards for accrediting law schools contain a formula for calculating the amount of work required to earn one hour of law school credit. Pursuant to these standards, each credit hour should reasonably approximate one hour of in-class instruction and at least two hours of out-of-class work per week for fifteen weeks. Accordingly, for this three-credit-hour class, you should spend approximately three hours per week in class and at least six hours per week preparing for class or engaging in other class-related activities.

Class Recordings

The class may be recorded using ECHO360. If you wish to view a recording, email a request to me. If you wish to make an audio recording of the class using your own recording device, you may do so as long as you obtain the advance permission of the professor.

Professional Behavior:

While in class, you are expected to keep distractions to a minimum, turn off any noise-making devices, and give the class your full attention. You may use electronic devices in the classroom only for class-related tasks. Other uses of technological devices are likely to be distracting and possibly even offensive to other persons in the classroom and are therefore prohibited. If I believe there is a problem with improper usage of electronic devices in class, I reserve the right to ban the use of such devices. If it is absolutely necessary for you to enter or leave the classroom while class is in session, please do not disrupt the class upon entering or exiting the room.

I consider it part of my responsibility as a professor to address the learning needs of all of the students in this course. I will do my best to present materials in a manner that is respectful of diverse viewpoints and personal characteristics. I also believe that the diversity of student experiences and perspectives is essential to the deepening of knowledge in a course. A good attorney must learn to listen carefully to what others say without interrupting even if they disagree with the viewpoint being expressed. During this class, we may discuss topics on which personal and political views vary greatly. In order to test ideas, I strongly encourage open discussion and the expression of different viewpoints. Keep in mind that successful attorneys make statements and arguments based on facts and law, not based on generalizations, assumptions, or stereotypes. The goal of class discussion is not that everyone agrees, but that everyone in the class gains new insights and experiences. In sum, I expect professional, respectful, and courteous behavior and commentary at all times that would be appropriate in a professional office, courtroom, legislative hearing, or public meeting. Students whose behavior is disruptive to the class or that violates the rules may be asked to leave the classroom or may face other consequences based on the circumstances.

Respectful behavior also includes addressing each person as they prefer to be addressed. I prefer to be called Professor Buys in the classroom setting and I use the pronouns she/her/hers. Please let me know if you prefer to be called by a particular name and the pronouns you prefer to use.

D2L (Desire to Learn):

You should be registered for this course on D2L. I will post the syllabus and reading assignments on D2L, as well as other relevant class readings and information. I also will administer assessments through D2L. Therefore, you are expected to check D2L regularly and are responsible for any materials posted on D2L. I will also communicate with the class via email through D2L so be sure to check that email regularly.

Evaluation:

Your grade will consist of several parts:

- (1) A mid-term assessment that will be worth approximately 30% of your grade.
- (2) A final exam administered during the final exam period worth approximately 45% of your grade.
- (3) A discussion post and oral presentation on a topic of “International Law in the News,” which will count towards 20% of your grade.
- (4) The remaining 5% of your grade will be based on your class participation, including your participation in class discussions, asking thoughtful questions, and your preparation for and participation in simulation exercises for class, such as mock oral arguments or debates. Participation points for above average class participation are awarded in my discretion based both on the quality and quantity of a student’s participation in the class discussion and activities.

More information will be provided regarding these assignments at the appropriate time. I also reserve the right to administer ungraded individual or group assignments throughout the semester.

Statement on Collaboration and Plagiarism:

In this class, there will be some assignments where collaboration is allowed and even encouraged and others where it is not. It is your responsibility to pay strict attention to the professor's instructions regarding whether and what form of collaboration is allowed. Violating classroom rules or plagiarizing another's work, in whole or in part, is a violation of the Honor Code and can lead to serious penalties, including expulsion. While a student at SIU Simmons Law School, you are subject to both the law school's and university's honor codes, codes of conduct, and rules.

Unless otherwise instructed, you are not allowed to obtain help from generative artificial intelligence other than spelling and grammar checking functions (including, but not limited to, ChatGPT) on graded assignments for this course. If collaboration on an assignment is banned, that ban includes obtaining written materials from any other person or generative artificial intelligence and communicating with any other person about an assignment. If you violate the ban on collaboration policy, you will receive a failing grade on that assignment. When in doubt about how to proceed, ask the professor.

The university and School of Law's **Syllabus Attachments for Spring 2026** are incorporated here by reference and are available on the D2L page.