

**City University of Hong Kong  
Course Syllabus**

**offered by School of Law  
with effect from Semester B 2018/19**

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**Part I Course Overview**

**Course Title:** LW5634

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**Course Code:** Public International Law

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**Course Duration:** One Semester

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**Credit Units:** 3

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**Level:** P5

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**Medium of Instruction:** English

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**Medium of Assessment:** English

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**Prerequisites:** For 2013 Cohort and thereafter: LW5621 Legal Systems of Hong Kong and Mainland China, LW5622 Legal Methods, Research and Writing, and LW5602 Law of Contract  
(*Course Code and Title*)

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**Precursors:** Nil  
(*Course Code and Title*)

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**Equivalent Courses:** LW4634 Public International Law  
(*Course Code and Title*)

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**Exclusive Courses:** Nil  
(*Course Code and Title*)

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## Part II Course Details

### 1. Abstract

This course aims to:

- provide an introduction to general principles of international law;
- explain the relationship between international law and municipal law and the significance of international law in domestic legal order;
- introduce students to various branches of international law.

### 2. Course Intended Learning Outcomes (CILOs)

(CILOs state what the student is expected to be able to do at the end of the course according to a given standard of performance.)

No.	CILOs	Weighting (if applicable)	DEC related learning outcomes		
			A1	A2	A3
1.	<b>Understand and evaluate</b> the economic and political background of public international law.			✓	
2.	<b>Identify and analyze</b> the aspects that need to be taken into account from a legal and practical point of view when advising governments or international organizations on questions of public international law.			✓	
3.	<b>Develop</b> convincing lines of argument in relation to theoretical and practical questions in relation to current problems of public international law.			✓	✓
4	<b>Draft and construe</b> international treaties and other relevant legal documents.		✓	✓	✓
5	<b>Negotiate</b> related issues with other parties.		✓	✓	✓
6	<b>Prepare</b> opinions, tender advice or recommending action (orally or in writing) in respect to legal issues concerning public international law.			✓	✓
7	<b>Explain and communicate</b> , both orally and in writing, the substantive rules of public international law clearly, coherently and in plain language.		✓	✓	✓
		100%			

A1: Attitude

*Develop an attitude of discovery/innovation/creativity, as demonstrated by students possessing a strong sense of curiosity, asking questions actively, challenging assumptions or engaging in inquiry together with teachers.*

A2: Ability

*Develop the ability/skill needed to discover/innovate/create, as demonstrated by students possessing critical thinking skills to assess ideas, acquiring research skills, synthesizing knowledge across disciplines or applying academic knowledge to self-life problems.*

A3: Accomplishments

*Demonstrate accomplishment of discovery/innovation/creativity through producing /constructing creative works/new artefacts, effective solutions to real-life problems or new processes.*

Alignment of CILOs with PILOs:

PILOs		CILOs
1	Explain and assess specified areas of the law and the legal system of Hong Kong, with particular emphasis on the law in action and the dynamic interplay between law and other social phenomena.	1-3
2	Assess the common law system and its values, and its interaction with the law and legal system of mainland China, the East Asian region and the wider world.	1-3
3	Explain, interpret and apply main principles of ethics, civil duty, and social and professional responsibility.	3-7
4	Critically assess the strengths and weaknesses of law as a means of regulating society in the context of competing and conflicting interests.	3-7
5	Demonstrate and apply skills of legal analysis and reasoning, of legal research, or problem solving, and of oral and written communication to a level appropriate to a graduate-entry degree in law.	3-7

**3. Teaching and Learning Activities (TLAs)**

*(TLAs designed to facilitate students' achievement of the CILOs.)*

TLA	Brief Description	CILO No.							Hours/ week
		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	
<b>Lecture</b>	Students will be introduced to and have explained to them in plain language the key concepts, theoretical bases, issues, objectives and practical application in respect of specific topics. Students will also be encouraged to ask questions of matters which they do not understand.	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	2 hours/ week
<b>Tutorials</b>	Students' presentations, discussion of problem questions and case studies will check and reinforce students' understanding and ability to evaluate the key concepts, theoretical basis, issues, objectives and practical application in respect of specific topics.	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	1 hour/ week

#### 4. Assessment Tasks/Activities (ATs)

(ATs are designed to assess how well the students achieve the CILOs.)

Assessment Tasks/Activities	CILO No.							Weigh ting	Remarks
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7		
Continuous Assessment: 50%									
<b>Class Participation</b> Students' general class participation in both lectures and tutorials, in terms of their ability to explain and communicate <i>orally</i> ideas and issues clearly and in plain language, will be assessed.	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓	20%	
<b>Written Assignment</b> this is in the form of an examination style problem question or case analysis, to be completed by each student individually. This will enable each student's ability to explain and communicate substantive rules of public international law <i>in writing</i> clearly, coherently and in plain language to be assessed.		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	30%	
Examination: 50% (duration: 2 or 3 hours)									
<b>Final Examination</b> this is in the form of problem questions and case studies. This will enable each student's ability to explain and communicate substantive rules of public international law <i>in writing</i> clearly, coherently and in plain language to be assessed.	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓	50%	
								100%	

**Grading of Student Achievement:** Standard (A+, A, A-...F). Grading is based on student performance in assessment tasks/activities.

To pass this course students must obtain an aggregate mark of 40% and a minimum of 40% in each of the continuous assessment (including coursework and class participation) and the final examination. Continuous assessment for this purpose means those ways in which students are assessed otherwise than by the final examination.

The duration of the final examination may be 2 or 3 hours at the discretion of the course leader. The course leader will announce the duration of the examination in the first week of the course. Similarly the course leader will announce whether the examination will be closed book or open book.

The portion of the overall mark allocated to performance/participation in inter-active in class activities will be assessed on the quality of the participation.

To enable the full benefit to be obtained from this course, students should attend all of the classes and activities.

Assessment will be formative to enable students to demonstrate their capacity to understand, analyse and apply rules and principles and summative to assess ability to synthesise primary and secondary material to solve novel problems.

## 5. Assessment Rubrics

(Grading of student achievements is based on student performance in assessment tasks/activities with the following rubrics.)

Assessment Task	Criterion	Excellent (A+, A, A-)	Good (B+, B, B-)	Fair (C+, C, C-)	Marginal (D)	Failure (F)
1. Class Participation	Demonstration of concentration on lectures and class discussions. Demonstration of ability and willingness to answer questions in class and to participate in class/group discussion. Demonstration of oral presentation skills and willingness. Demonstration of attention and patience to other students' speech or presentation. Demonstration of full respect for different opinions from others in the class.	Strong evidence of original thinking; good organization, capacity to analyse and synthesize; superior grasp of subject matter; evidence of extensive knowledge base.	Evidence of grasp of subject, some evidence of critical capacity and analytic ability; reasonable understanding of issues; evidence of familiarity with literature.	Student who is profiting from the university experience; understanding of the subject; ability to develop solutions to simple problems in the material.	Sufficient familiarity with the subject matter to enable the student to progress without repeating the course.	Little evidence of familiarity with the subject matter; weakness in critical and analytic skills; limited, or irrelevant use of literature.
2. Coursework	Demonstration of understanding of concepts, principles, and theories. Demonstration of ability to identify legal issues. Application of knowledge to specific legal problems, to discuss questions, and to comment on legal phenomenon. Application of legal writing and research skills. Demonstration of ability to engage in argument-based analysis based on critical thinking. Demonstration of aptitude for formulating innovative solutions to designated fact-based questions.	Strong evidence of original thinking; good organization, capacity to analyse and synthesize; superior grasp of subject matter; evidence of extensive knowledge base.	Evidence of grasp of subject, some evidence of critical capacity and analytic ability; reasonable understanding of issues; evidence of familiarity with literature.	Student who is profiting from the university experience; understanding of the subject; ability to develop solutions to simple problems in the material.	Sufficient familiarity with the subject matter to enable the student to progress without repeating the course.	Little evidence of familiarity with the subject matter; weakness in critical and analytic skills; limited, or irrelevant use of literature.
3. Examination	Demonstration of understanding of concepts, principles, and theories. Demonstration of ability to identify legal issues. Application of knowledge to specific legal problems, to discuss questions, and to comment on legal phenomenon. Application of legal writing and research skills. Demonstration of ability to engage in argument-based analysis based on critical thinking. Demonstration of aptitude for formulating innovative solutions to designated fact-based questions.	Strong evidence of original thinking; good organization, capacity to analyse and synthesize; superior grasp of subject matter; evidence of extensive knowledge base.	Evidence of grasp of subject, some evidence of critical capacity and analytic ability; reasonable understanding of issues; evidence of familiarity with literature.	Student who is profiting from the university experience; understanding of the subject; ability to develop solutions to simple problems in the material.	Sufficient familiarity with the subject matter to enable the student to progress without repeating the course.	Little evidence of familiarity with the subject matter; weakness in critical and analytic skills; limited, or irrelevant use of literature.

**Part III Other Information** (more details can be provided separately in the teaching plan)

**1. Keyword Syllabus**

*(An indication of the key topics of the course.)*

**Keywords:** Introduction to international law; history of international law; sources of international law; subjects of international law; law of treaties; international organizations; settlement of international disputes; use of force; international human rights and humanitarian law; law of the sea; international economic and financial law; the future of international law.

**2. Reading List**

A detailed list of texts and other reference material will be circulated later.

**Monographs**

JOHN H. CURRIE, PUBLIC INTERNATIONAL LAW (2008).

**Journals**

*American Journal of International Law*  
*Harvard International Law Journal*  
*International and Comparative Law Quarterly*  
*British Yearbook of International Law*  
*European Journal of International Law*  
*Chinese Journal of International Law*  
*Journal of East Asia and International Law*  
*Netherlands International Law Review*  
*Yale Journal of International Law*

**Online Resources**

“United Nations” <http://www.un.org/en/index.html>  
“Journal of the United Nations” <http://www.un.org/en/documents/journal.asp>  
“United Nations Treaty Collection” <https://treaties.un.org/>

**Other reading materials**

Other reading materials will be recommended by the course leader in the lectures, where appropriate.