From whales to nuclear weapons to genocide and beyond, much of what people and governments do is defined, regulated, shaped, and otherwise influenced by international law. The legal commitments that governments make to each other and the promises they make about their behaviors create a legal framework for state policy both domestic and international. This seminar examines the key concepts and practices of international law and considers their connection with local and global politics. The class crosses between political science and legal scholarship as it draws cases, readings, and debates around the politics of global legalism.

The seminar also invests in research skills and critical thinking for college and beyond. It develops a research project over several assignments which results in a paper on politics and international law. We also address citation style, avoiding plagiarism, research strategies, and paper structure.

**Assignments**

Prep for class and participation 20%

Paragraph on a dispute and its legal core (Oct 16) 20 %
Memo on resources to answer the question (Oct 23) 20 %

Paper draft (Nov 13) 20%

Final paper: arguments on legality (Dec 10) 20 %

Schedule of Readings and Topics

I

Thurs. Sept. 27

Shirley Scott, Chapter 1 on “The Rules-Based International Order” and Chapter 2 on “States.”

II Treaties

Tues. Oct. 2 - Whale Hunting

International Convention on the Regulation of Whaling

“Australia says it will take Japan to court over whaling,” LATimes Blog, May 27, 2010.


Thurs. Oct. 4 - UN Charter

Charter of the United Nations


III

Tues. Oct. 9 - War

Shirley Scott, Chapter 10 on “The Initiation of Armed Conflict.”
Thurs. Oct. 11 - Drones


IV

Tues. Oct. 16 - Philosophy & Politics of International Law

*** paragraph on dispute and its legal question due ***


Thurs. Oct. 18 - no class meeting

V

Tues. Oct. 23 - Humanitarian Intervention

*** memo on legal resources due ***


Thurs. Oct. 25 - Discussion of research resources

VI

Tues. Oct. 30 - International Institutions
Shirley Scott, Ch. 4 on “International Organizations.”


Thurs. Nov. 1 - Peacekeeping and problems


VII

Tues. Nov. 6 - the International Court of Justice

Shirley Scott, Chapter 5 on “International Courts and Tribunals.”

Iran v. US 2018 case material

Thurs. Nov. 8 - the International Criminal Court

Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court


VIII

Tues. Nov. 13 - Conduct in War

*** draft due ***

Shirley Scott, Chapter 11 on “The Conduct of Armed Conflict.”


Thurs. Nov. 15 - Human Rights

Shirley Scott, Chapter 12 on “Human Rights.”
Rebecca Sanders, “Permissive Constraint: Law, Power, and Legal Culture,” Ch. 2 of Sanders Plausible Legality: Legal Culture and Political Imperative in the Global War on Terror (Oxford University Press, 2018).

IX
Tues. Nov. 20 - Conferences on paper drafts

X
Tues. Nov. 27 - Conferences on paper drafts

Thurs. Nov. 29 - Wrapup

Cases TBD.

Monday December 10

*** final brief due 2pm ***