I. COURSE OVERVIEW

The purpose of this course is to examine the role of international law in international relations and governance by focusing on selected issues and debates in contemporary international law. It reviews and analyzes foundational principles of international law, interrogating the core concepts of sovereignty and territoriality that underlie international law and considering calls for the expansion of the sources and actors in international law. The bulk of the course is devoted to the analysis of several pressing issues in international law, including critiques of international human rights law, recent withdrawals from the International Criminal Court, and calls for greater accountability of transnational corporations under international law.

II. LEARNING GOALS & OBJECTIVES

Students in this course will learn to:

• Analyze the foundational principles of international law
• Understand and evaluate critiques of the traditional histories and approaches to international law
• Analyze current issues in international law and their connection to international relations and governance
• Develop a research proposal concerning international law
• Verbally present their research

III. COURSE REQUIREMENTS & ASSESSMENT

The requirements for the class are set out below. Further information about the requirements and for the final paper will be provided throughout the semester.

• Class Participation: This course is intended to create an active intellectual atmosphere that promotes participatory learning. Students are expected to have engaged with the readings in advance and participate by making comments, asking questions and sharing ideas. Students are always required to interact respectfully with each other.

• Reading Responses: students are required to submit 4 reading responses over the semester that reflect on the readings assigned for class that week. The reading responses should each be a maximum of 2 pages double-spaced. In the reading responses, students should do three things: (1) summarize the main argument or contribution of each piece; (2) engage
critically with the readings (this should form the bulk of the reading response and could include, for instance, putting the readings in conversation with each other or other readings or class discussion; evaluating the arguments presented; or identifying and discussing areas that invite further consideration); (3) present at least one question or issue for class discussion. Reading responses must be posted on Blackboard by at least 10 p.m. on the day before class. Graduate students should be sure to address at least one of the additional readings in their responses.

- **Discussion Leader:** each student will be tasked with leading class discussion once during the course. The assigned student(s) will start class with a short summary of the readings and present questions/issues to lead the class discussion. Discussion leaders are required to submit to the instructor a short outline of their opening remarks and plans for class discussion. Outlines need not be more than a page (can be bullet points) and must be emailed to the instructor 48 hours prior to the class. Discussion leaders should be sure to read and incorporate reading responses from other students into the class discussion. Graduate students should also be sure to draw on the additional readings.

- **Final Paper:** throughout the semester, students are required to develop a research proposal on any topic of their choosing that is broadly related to the themes of the course. For undergraduate students, the final paper should be approximately 3,000 words. For graduate students, the final paper should be at least 4,000 words. As part of the final paper, all students are required to:
  - Complete an outline
  - Meet with the instructor at least once to discuss the paper
  - Present their final paper to the class

**Assessment and Due Dates:**

- Class participation: 20% (ongoing)
- Reading responses: 20% (due by 10 p.m. the day prior to class; see sign-up sheet)
- Discussion leader: 15% (see sign-up sheet)
- Final paper outline: 10% (due Week 5)
- Presentation of final paper: 5% (in-class Week 11 or Week 12)
- Final paper: 30% (due: April 3 at 11:59pm)

**IV. Course Policies**

**Attendance:** I expect you to attend every class on time, prepared and ready to participate. Absences or lateness will negatively affect your participation grade. Absences can be excused for illness, religious holidays, family emergencies and other extenuating circumstances, but must be approved in advance of class by the instructor via email.
**Late Assignments:** I expect all assignments to be submitted on time. Any assignment submitted after it is due is subject to a late penalty of one-third letter grade per day.

**Electronics:** You may use laptops in this class only to consult readings or take notes (but handwriting of notes is strongly encouraged; research has shown that handwriting notes is a more effective learning strategy than typing notes. For more, see this article: https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/national/wp/2014/08/26/ditch-the-laptop-and-pick-up-a-pen-class-researchers-say-its-better-for-note-taking/). Cell phones are completely prohibited during class. Improper use of laptops or use of cell phones interferes with the learning environment and will negatively affect your participation grade. If the use of laptops during class becomes a problem, I will revise this policy and exclude all electronics from class.

**Communication, Email, and Office Hours:** Email is the best way to contact me and I will generally respond within 24 hours. I can often respond within a few hours if you send your message during the business day. While you are welcome to drop by during office hours, I encourage you to reserve a timeslot in advance. If you cannot make office hours and would like to meet, please send me an email and include several proposed meeting times.

**V. Academic Integrity**

The work that you submit in this course must be your own. All source material that you use must be appropriately acknowledged and documented. Plagiarism is taken very seriously in this course and at the University of Toronto (see the University of Toronto’s Code of Behaviour on Academic Matters: http://www.governingcouncil.utoronto.ca/policies/behaveac.htm). If you have questions on how or what to cite, don't hesitate to ask.

Normally, students will be required to submit their course essays to Turnitin.com for a review of textual similarity and detection of possible plagiarism. In doing so, students will allow their essays to be included as source documents in the Turnitin.com reference database, where they will be used solely for the purpose of detecting plagiarism. The terms that apply to the University's use of the Turnitin.com service are described on the Turnitin.com web site.

**VI. Student Well-Being & Accommodations**

An inclusive learning environment is critical to the goals and objectives of this course and it is of great importance to me that students from all backgrounds and experiences feel welcome, participate actively, and have the opportunity to excel in this course. Your reflections or suggestions on how to ensure an inclusive learning environment for you individually or for other students are always welcome.

There are many resources available on campus to support you during the semester. The University’s **Writing Center** (http://www.writing.utoronto.ca/) and **Academic Support** services (http://www.future.utoronto.ca/current-students/student-services-campus-life) can help with writing and more general academic strategies. The skills (and habits) you form now will follow
you through graduate and professional school and your careers—take advantage of these resources to develop learning styles and strategies that work for you!

If you have an established accommodation, please let me know as soon as possible so that we can work together in planning for a successful semester. For further information, please contact Accessibility Services (http://www.studentlife.utoronto.ca/as).

Being a college student can be a stressful and challenging time. Take care of yourself and reach out if you could use more support. The University’s Health & Wellness site (https://www.studentlife.utoronto.ca/hwc) provides information on various well-being workshops and counseling services and can direct you to further resources.

VII. Readings and Schedule

All students are expected to have completed the required readings for the course in advance of class. The readings will all be made available on Blackboard.

Additional readings: the first additional reading for each week provides important background on the topic and is marked with an asterisk. Students without a prior course in international law or who are unfamiliar with the particular area should complete this additional reading. All students are encouraged to complete the additional readings. Graduate students must, at a minimum, complete the additional readings on the weeks in which they serve as discussion leader and complete reading responses.

PART I: RE-EXAMINING INTERNATIONAL LAW’S FOUNDATIONS

Week 1: Introduction to the Course

Week 2: Revisiting Basic Principles: Sovereignty and Territoriality


Additional:

**Week 3: Who and What Counts in International Law: Expanding Sources and Actors**


**Additional:**


**Week 4: International Law? Contested Histories and Alternative Perspectives**


**Additional:**


PART II: CURRENT ISSUES IN INTERNATIONAL LAW

Week 5: An Old Question Reconsidered: Does International Law Circumscribe War?

- Stephen Walt, “There’s Still No Reason to Think the Kellogg-Briand Pact Accomplished Anything,” Foreign Policy (September 29, 2017).

Additional:

Week 6: The Problem with Rights in International Human Rights Law


Additional:
**Week 7: Crisis at the International Criminal Court**

- Cronin-Furman, Kate, and Stephanie Schwartz, “Is This the End of the International Criminal Court?” Washington Post, Monkey Cage (October 21, 2016).
- Gabor Rona, “More on What’s Wrong with the ICC’s Decision on Afghanistan,” Opinio Juris (April 15, 2019).

Additional:

**Week 8: International Trade Law: The WTO at a Standstill**


Additional:
Week 9: Backlash in International Investment Law: An Opportunity for Reform?

Additional:

Week 10: Can International Law fill the Governance Gap for Transnational Business?

Additional:
Week 11: Class Presentations

Week 12: Class Presentations