



International Law Programs 2024

PIL Course Descriptions

Law 670 Introduction to International Law and Institutions (3 credits)

This course will provide an introduction to international law and institutions for students in the Public International law stream. In the first week of the course, which may be taken jointly with the students in the International Business Law stream, students will study the core concepts and principles of international law, including the sources of international law, the subjects of international law, and the concept of jurisdiction. In the second week of the course, the students will explore legal rules and institutions that provide important context for the subject matter covered in the remainder of the program, including the law on the use of force, arms control, state responsibility, jurisdictional immunities, and economic sanctions. The work of the United Nations as well as the practice of the Canadian government will receive particular attention.

Law 665 International Protection of Human Rights and Refugees (3 credits)

The course provides an introduction to the international law of human rights and to the more specialized protections applicable to refugees, as well as the interrelationship between these bodies of law. The aim of the course is to provide the students with a coherent framework for understanding the instruments and mechanisms through which international law protects the fundamental rights of every human being as well as those of particularly vulnerable groups, such as refugees. In discussing the various facets of the international human rights and refugee protection regimes, emphasis will be given to their conceptual foundations, their enforcement at the international, regional and domestic level, as well as their practical implications and current challenges. Specific attention will be given to the institutional features of the human rights regime, including the regional level (Organization of American States), the reception of international human rights law into the Canadian legal system, and the relationship of human rights and refugee law to related areas, such as humanitarian law and international criminal law.

Law 664 The Law of Armed Conflict and International Crimes (3 credits)

This course introduces students to the law governing the conduct of armed conflict and to the crimes for which individual incur individual criminal responsibility under international law, including war crimes, crimes against humanity, and genocide. The law of armed conflict, or international humanitarian law, is a set of rules which seeks to limit the effects of armed conflict. It protects persons who are not or are no longer participating in hostilities and restricts the means and methods of warfare that may be employed by parties to a conflict. International humanitarian law faces a number of challenges in contemporary armed conflicts, which differ significantly from the types of conflicts that were prevalent when this body of law was first developed. A recent approach to addressing certain violations of international humanitarian law has been the establishment of international criminal tribunals and mixed international / domestic tribunals tasked with prosecuting individuals allegedly responsible for serious violations of international humanitarian law and other serious international crimes. The first part of the course will examine the history, principles, operation, and application of international humanitarian law. The second part of the course will focus on the development of the law applicable to individual criminal responsibility, immunity, substantive elements of crimes, and certain modes of liability under international criminal law.