

SEMESTER AT SEA COURSE SYLLBUS

Voyage: Spring 2013

Discipline: Politics

PLIR 2559: International Law

Lower Division

Faculty Name: Armin Rosencranz

Pre-Requisites: None

Objectives:

To introduce students to basic concepts, principles and norms of international law;

To engage in learning about global environmental problems;

To learn about climate science and impacts; climate economics; climate obligations of developed, advanced developing and least developed countries.

To learn about all forms of energy, including fossil fuels, alternative and renewable energy technologies and transport technologies.

To introduce students to the US, European and global human rights regime.

(This outline assumes 24 classes and active student involvement)

Classes:

1. Basic concepts and instruments of international law

Jus cogens and customary international law

Sovereign states must relinquish sovereignty

Few states have done so, although there are instances of cooperative international action: The European Union, the World Trade Organization, the UN Convention on the Law of the Sea, the Acid Rain Convention of 1979, the Montreal Protocol of 1987, the Kyoto Protocol of 1997, the International Court of Justice, the International Criminal Court, various *ad hoc* criminal tribunals and arbitral tribunals.

In the absence of voluntary compliance or cession of sovereignty, no state can be compelled to adhere to international law, norms or regulations. States pursue their own interests and render international law unenforceable.

Read Chasek chapter 1

2. International Environmental Law and Policy

the global environmental facts

Climate change
Ozone depletion
Biodiversity loss
Toxic chemicals and wastes
Forests and ecosystem services
Access to fresh water
Air pollution
Food security and agriculture
Population control
Global poverty

Read Chasek, chapters 2 and 4

3. International institutions and non-state actors

UNEP
UNDP
trusteeship of the global commons
The World Bank
International financial sources
NGOs
Multinational corporations
Developing country concerns

Read Chasek chapters 5, 7 and 9

4. Implementation and compliance

Read Chasek chapters 11 and 12

5. Exam on Chasek readings

6. International environmental law norms
7. Trans-boundary air pollution and ozone depletion
8. Oceans and Seas and Freshwater resources
9. Hazardous chemicals and wastes
10. Biodiversity, wildlife and habitat
11. The global trading regime
12. Climate science and effects
13. Climate economics: taxes, subsidies, cap and trade, renewable portfolio standards
14. The US and the EU
15. China, India, Brazil.

16. Mid term exam

17. The least developed and most vulnerable countries.

18. International climate negotiation (Class divided into several country groups)
19. Conventional energy: coal, oil, gas, hydro, nuclear.
20. Alternative energy: solar, wind, geothermal, biofuels, algae, currents & tides, synthetic bio., energy efficiency.
21. Transportation: fuel cells, batteries, hybrids, electric vehicles.
22. International human rights law; Universal Declaration of Human Rights
23. The Alien Tort Claims Act of 1789 and the US Supreme Court cases of *Sosa* (2004) and *Kiobel* (2013); the US Torture Victims Protection Act
24. Other human rights adjudication, including the European Court of Human Rights and the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights
- 25. Final exam**

COURSE MATERIALS

Chasek, *The Roads from Rio* (2012) will be required

(some portions of each of these materials may be uploaded onto the ship's intranet or put on TV ch. 6.)

Osofsky, Climate change law and policy (2012), library

Yergin, The Quest

Lovins, Re-inventing Fire

A Burning Question (Film)

Food, Inc. (film)

Hunter, International Environmental Law and Policy (2010), library

Bonine/Kravchenko, *Human Rights and Environment* (2010), library

EVALUATION

Chasek, Midterm and Final - 20% each

Field Lab and Report – 20%

Team climate negotiation – 10%

Team energy presentation – 10%

FIELD LAB

This field lab will take place in Cochin, India on Wednesday, 6 March. Attendance is mandatory.

Class members, working in teams, will be among the moderators, presenters and discussants in this workshop. Using the instructor's list of questions to guide their observations, class members will journal their observations and write a 1000 word field report. The lab and report will constitute 20% of the final grade.

The field lab will focus on Kerala, whose largest city is our port, Cochin. Kerala (emphasis on the first syllable) is unique in at least four ways: It has the highest literacy rate, the lowest birth rate and the largest Christian population of any Indian state. It is also one of two Indian states with a long history of Communist government. Our focus will be on Kerala's environment, alternative energy and human rights. Experts in each of these fields will take part in panels throughout the day. We will also hear about India's climate change approaches and vulnerabilities from a member of the Centre for Policy Research in New Delhi. Finally, we will learn from a Keralite expert in international law how law can help to manage these four international issues – environment, energy, climate and human rights.

HONOR CODE

Semester at Sea students enroll in an academic program administered by the University of Virginia, and thus bind themselves to the University's honor code. The code prohibits all acts of lying, cheating, and stealing. Please consult the Voyager's Handbook for further explanation of what constitutes an honor offense.

Each written assignment for this course must be pledged by the student as follows: "On my honor as a student, I pledge that I have neither given nor received aid on this assignment." The pledge must be signed, or, in the case of an electronic file, signed "[signed]."