



COURSE UNIT (MODULE) DESCRIPTION

Course unit (module) title	Code
INTERNATIONAL DISPUTE SETTLEMENT: INTERNATIONAL COURTS AND TRIBUNALS	

Lecturer(s)	Department(s)
Coordinator: assist. prof. dr. Inga Martinkutė Other(s):	Vilnius University, Faculty of Law, Department of Public Law Saulėtekio av. 9, Building 1, LT-10222, Vilnius, 405 room, phone (8 5) 2366175, e-mail: vtkatedra@tf.vu.lt

Study cycle	Type of the course unit (module)
Second	Compulsory (Track – International Law and Human Rights)

Mode of delivery	Course unit delivery period	Language(s) of instruction
Face-to-face	2 (spring) semester	English

Requirements for students	
Pre-requisites: Knowledge of Public International Law; a very good command of English	Co-requisites (if any): none

Number of credits allocated	Total student's workload	Contact hours	Self-study hours
5	133	32	101

Purpose of the course unit (module): programme competences to be developed		
The course aims to equip students with a comprehensive and analytically rigorous understanding of the mechanisms for resolving various disputes in international law, situating them within broader legal, political, and economic contexts. It seeks to develop students' ability to evaluate procedural frameworks, analyse case law and institutional practice, and design effective dispute resolution strategies, as well as to develop practical abilities necessary for effective engagement in international proceedings, including legal reasoning and argumentation, drafting, and collaborative problem-solving.		
Learning outcomes of the course unit (module)	Teaching and learning methods	Assessment methods
Students will demonstrate comprehensive knowledge of international dispute settlement mechanisms and critically situate disputes within their broader legal, economic, and political contexts.	An interactive method of teaching during lectures and seminars (structured lectures, comparative studies, problem-based learning, cooperative learning methods, reflective discussions, the analysis of problematic issues, simulation of cases, case studies and presentations, guest lectures by practitioners), individual studies (reading and analysis of the primary and secondary legal sources).	Participation in class activities and moot court case; drafting procedural document with individual contribution; final examination.
Students will be able to identify, compare and evaluate the full range of international dispute resolution avenues, including diplomatic, judicial, and arbitral mechanisms, as well as the institutions administering them.	An interactive method of teaching during lectures and seminars (structured lectures, comparative studies, problem-based learning, cooperative learning methods, reflective discussions, the analysis of problematic issues, simulation of cases, case studies and presentations, guest lectures by practitioners), individual studies (reading and analysis of the primary and secondary legal sources).	Participation in class activities and moot court case; drafting procedural document with individual contribution; final examination.
Students will be able to explain and critically assess the procedural frameworks governing international dispute settlement, including their advantages, limitations, and strategic implications for parties.	An interactive method of teaching during lectures and seminars (structured lectures, comparative studies, problem-based learning, cooperative learning methods, reflective discussions, the analysis of problematic issues, simulation of cases, case studies and presentations, guest lectures by practitioners), individual studies (reading and analysis of the primary and secondary legal sources).	Participation in class activities and moot court case; drafting procedural document with individual contribution; final examination.

	individual studies (reading and analysis of the primary and secondary legal sources).	
Students will be able to analyse and interpret international case law and institutional practice, demonstrating the ability to engage with complex legal reasoning and doctrinal developments.	An interactive method of teaching during lectures and seminars (structured lectures, comparative studies, problem-based learning, cooperative learning methods, reflective discussions, the analysis of problematic issues, simulation of cases, case studies and presentations, guest lectures by practitioners), individual studies (reading and analysis of the primary and secondary legal sources).	Participation in class activities and moot court case; drafting procedural document with individual contribution; final examination.
Students will be able to design and evaluate dispute resolution strategies tailored to different factual and legal scenarios, taking into account procedural, institutional, and policy considerations	An interactive method of teaching during lectures and seminars (structured lectures, comparative studies, problem-based learning, cooperative learning methods, reflective discussions, the analysis of problematic issues, simulation of cases, case studies and presentations, guest lectures by practitioners), individual studies (reading and analysis of the primary and secondary legal sources).	Participation in class activities and moot court case; drafting procedural document with individual contribution; final examination.
Students will be able to assess trends and developments in international dispute settlement doctrine and practice, and critically reflect on their implications for the international legal system.	An interactive method of teaching during lectures and seminars (structured lectures, comparative studies, problem-based learning, cooperative learning methods, reflective discussions, the analysis of problematic issues, simulation of cases, case studies and presentations, guest lectures by practitioners), individual studies (reading and analysis of the primary and secondary legal sources).	Participation in class activities; final examination.
Students will be able to apply legal knowledge to practice by analysing hypothetical cases, formulating legal advice, and proposing solutions to complex international disputes.	An interactive method of teaching during lectures and seminars (structured lectures, comparative studies, problem-based and team-based learning, reflective and moderated discussions, the analysis of problematic issues, simulation of cases, case studies and presentations, guest lectures by practitioners, peer assessment and feedback), individual studies (reading and analysis of the primary and secondary legal sources, writing tasks, oral pleadings and presentations).	Participation in class activities and moot court case; drafting procedural document with individual contribution; final examination.
Students will be able to collaborate effectively in a professional environment, demonstrating teamwork skills, ethical awareness, and sensitivity to cultural and social diversity.	An interactive method of teaching during lectures and seminars (structured lectures, comparative studies, problem-based and team-based learning, reflective and moderated discussions, the analysis of problematic issues, simulation of cases, case studies and presentations, guest lectures by practitioners, peer assessment and feedback), individual studies (reading and analysis of the primary and secondary legal sources, writing tasks, oral pleadings and presentations).	Participation in class activities and a moot court case.
Students will communicate complex legal arguments clearly and persuasively, both orally and in writing, contributing to specialised academic and professional discussions.	An interactive method of teaching during lectures and seminars (structured lectures, comparative studies, problem-based and team-based learning, reflective and moderated discussions, the analysis of problematic issues, simulation of cases, case studies and presentations, guest lectures by practitioners, peer assessment and feedback), individual studies (reading and analysis of the primary and secondary legal sources, writing tasks, oral pleadings and presentations).	Participation in class activities and moot court case; drafting of procedural document with individual contribution; final examination.
Students will be able to draft procedural documents and participate effectively in international proceedings, demonstrating practical readiness for international legal practice.	An interactive method of teaching during lectures and seminars (structured lectures, comparative studies, problem-based and team-based learning, reflective and moderated discussions, the analysis of problematic issues, simulation of cases, case studies and presentations, guest lectures by practitioners, peer	Participation in class activities and moot court case; drafting a procedural document with individual contribution.

	assessment and feedback), individual studies (reading and analysis of the primary and secondary legal sources, writing tasks, oral pleadings and presentations).	
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Content: breakdown of the topics	Contact hours						Self-study: hours and assignments		
	Lectures	Consultations	Seminars	Practical sessions	Laboratory activities	Internship/work placement	Contact hours	Self-study hours	Assignments
1. Introduction and overview of different international dispute settlement forms. Historical evolution of dispute settlement and contemporary trends.	2		1				3	10	Self-study of primary and secondary legal sources, preparation for presentations, creation of a quiz and mind-map.
2. Negotiations, Consultations, Fact-finding, Inquiry, Mediation, Conciliation, the UN	2		1				3	10	Self-study of primary and secondary legal sources, comparative studies, preparation for reflective discussions, group presentations, and the simulation of negotiations.
3. The International Court of Justice: institutional aspects.	2		1				3	10	Self-study of primary and secondary legal sources, preparation for individual and group presentations, drafting policy brief.
4. The International Court of Justice: access, admissibility, jurisdiction and other procedural aspects.	2		1				3	10	Self-study of primary and secondary legal sources, preparation for individual and group presentations, drafting procedural documents.
5. The Permanent Court of Arbitration.	2		1				3	10	Self-study of primary and secondary legal sources, preparation for individual and group presentations, and drafting a legal opinion.
6. International Criminal Court and other criminal tribunals.	2		1				3	10	Self-study of primary and secondary legal sources, preparation for individual and group presentations, and discussions.
7. International environmental disputes.	2		1				3	10	Self-study of primary and secondary legal sources, preparation for individual and group presentations, and discussions.
8. Investment arbitration and other economic disputes. Problems and reforms.	2		1				3	10	Self-study of primary and secondary legal sources, preparation for individual and group presentations, and discussions.
9. Enforcement and immunity.	2		1				3	10	Self-study of primary and secondary legal sources, preparation for individual and group presentations, and discussions.
10. International moot court case			5				5	11	Self-study of primary and secondary legal sources, preparation for individual and group presentations and oral pleadings, drafting procedural documents.
Total	18		14				32	101	

Assessment strategy	Weight, percentage	Assessment period	Assessment criteria
Participation in class	50%	During the semester	Individual and group presentations, written works and discussions are evaluated during seminars. In addition, each student prepares an

activities and moot court case			individual procedural document and presents it as a part of the moot court case hearing. The assessment of participation in class activities and moot court case may amount to five points and should demonstrate: 1. Accurate and complete knowledge of the subject and a comprehensive understanding of institutional frameworks and procedures; 2. Analytical and critical thinking skills, including the ability to identify legal issues, engage with competing perspectives, and read case law and doctrine critically; 3. Ability to apply law to international disputes, including giving strategic and tactical advice in international disputes; 4. Ability to do independent legal research, including search and selection of appropriate legal sources, proper referencing and citation; 5. Legal drafting skills, including clear, concise, structured and persuasive writing; 6. Oral communication and fluent, confident, structured, as well as persuasive advocacy skills; 7. Teamwork and collaboration skills, including proactive and constructive contribution to the team goals. Attendance of seminars is mandatory. Insufficient participation in class activities and moot court case will indicate: 1. Significant gaps or misunderstandings in the subject matter; 2. Superficial or unsupported assertions; 3. Incorrect application of the law to the facts; 4. Poor or inappropriate legal sourcing; 5. Poorly structured or unclear legal writing; 6. Limited or ineffective contribution to the team project.
Final examination	50%	At the end of the course	The final examination consists of both written and oral components (one question in written and one question orally; each of equal weight), designed to assess students' comprehensive understanding of international dispute settlement and their analytical and advocacy skills. Open-ended examination questions will be based on the topics covered in lectures and seminars and may include both theoretical questions and practical problem scenarios requiring the application of legal knowledge. Assessment will focus on the student's ability to: 1. Present legal issues in a clear, structured, and logical manner; 2. Accurately identify and apply relevant legal rules, principles, and case law; 3. Critically engage with different perspectives in legal doctrine and practice; 4. Develop and substantiate independent and well-reasoned arguments; 5. Demonstrate analytical depth and coherence in addressing complex legal issues. Grading Criteria: <u>5 points – Excellent</u> Demonstrates outstanding knowledge and analytical ability. The question is fully and precisely answered. Arguments are comprehensive, well-structured, coherent, and persuasive, supported by accurate and relevant references to legal sources (treaties, case law, doctrine). The response shows critical engagement and independent insight. <u>3–4 points – Good to Satisfactory</u> Demonstrates solid knowledge and understanding. The answer addresses the question but may lack completeness, clarity, or structure. Arguments are generally correct but may be insufficiently developed, partially imprecise, or contain minor errors. Some relevant aspects may be underexplored. <u>2 points – Sufficient</u>

			Demonstrates basic knowledge meeting minimum requirements. The answer identifies some relevant issues but remains superficial. Arguments are underdeveloped and may contain significant inaccuracies or omissions. Legal analysis is limited. <u>0–1 points – Fail</u> Fails to meet minimum requirements. The answer does not adequately address the question, is substantially incomplete, or contains fundamental misunderstandings of the relevant legal framework.
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Author	Year of publication	Title	Issue of a periodical or volume of a publication	Publishing place and house or web link
Compulsory reading				
Klein, N. (ed.)	2014	Litigating International Law Disputes: Weighing the Options		Cambridge University Press
Merrills, J.G.	2022	International Dispute Settlement (7 th ed.)		Cambridge University Press
Tanaka, Yoshifumi	2018	The Peaceful Settlement of International Disputes		Cambridge University Press
Crawford, James	2012	Brownlie's Principles of Public International Law		Oxford University Press
The International Court of Justice		The International Court of Justice, the Statute, the Rules of Court, Cases		https://www.icj-cij.org/
The International Court of Justice	2019	The International Court of Justice. Handbook		https://www.icj-cij.org/public/files/publications/handbook-of-the-court-en.pdf
The UN	1992	The UN Handbook on Peaceful Settlement of Disputes		http://legal.un.org/cod/books/HandbookOnPSD.pdf
The UN International Law Commission	2001	Draft articles on Responsibility of States for Internationally Wrongful Acts, with commentaries		https://legal.un.org/ilc/texts/instruments/english/commentaries/9_6_2001.pdf
Sands, P. et al.	2012	Principles of International Environmental Law		Cambridge University Press
Recommended reading				
Christian J Tams, Antonios Tzanakopoulos (ed.)	2022	The Settlement of International Disputes: Basic Documents.		Hart Publishing
Shaw, Malcolm	2017	International Law		Cambridge University Press
d'Aspremont, Jean	2016	The International Court of Justice and the Irony of System-Design		Journal of International Dispute Settlement, https://ssrn.com/abstract=2930661
Reisman, W. Michael	2012	The Diversity of Contemporary International Dispute Resolution: Functions and Policies	3.1	Journal of International Dispute Settlement
Lew, Julian DM, Mistelis, Loukas A, Kröll, Stefan M	2003	Comparative International Commercial Arbitration		Kluwer Law International
Gleider Hernández	2025	International Law		Oxford University Press
The UN	2014	UNCTAD, Investor-State Dispute Settlement		https://unctad.org/system/files/official-document/diaeia2013d2_en.pdf

IBA Council	2013	The IBA Guidelines on Party Representation in International Arbitration		https://www.ibanet.org/MediaHandler?id=6F0C57D7-E7A0-43AF-B76E-714D9FE74D7F
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