DEPARTMENT OF
POLITICAL SCIENCE

POLS*4020 Global Law and Courts

Credit Weighting: 1.00

Pre-/Co-Requisites: POLS*3020 POLS*3130 or POLS*3350

Restrictions: POLS*4040

INSTRUCTOR INFORMATION

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GENERAL DETAILS

This "capstone" seminar engages the historical, political, legal and ethical dimensions of international criminal law. Following upon the introductory session, the remainder of the course is organized into three main sections. Part I of the course explores the conceptual and historical foundations of international criminal law. Key developments in the immediate post-World War II period to try core international crimes will be examined. The class will also assess different conceptions of justice that have emerged across time and space. Part II shifts to efforts to prosecute war crimes, crimes against humanity, and genocide across different levels. Our analysis will cover criminal proceedings in courts established at the international, regional, national and local levels. Part III investigates cross-cutting issues in international criminal law, such as victim participation and the role of civil society, sexual and gender-based violence, the use of open source information in human rights investigations and prosecuting the crime of aggression. Throughout the course, students will be encouraged to question dominant assumptions in the theory and practice of international criminal law, reflecting critically on both the prospects and limitations of this field. To animate key concepts, theories, and legal proceedings, the course will draw on a plethora of case studies from across the world, zooming in on tribunals that have been established to try core international crimes in Europe, Latin America, Southeast Asia and Africa.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

The main learning objective of this course is to provide an advanced theoretical, conceptual and empirical understanding of global law and courts, focusing on international criminal law. Students will acquire knowledge about the conceptual and historical underpinnings of international criminal law, and how it has been theorized and practiced across time and space in various contexts to prosecute core international crimes. Students taking this course will (1) sharpen their academic writing and research skills, (2) refine their presentation and oral communication skills, (3) develop their critical thinking skills, (4) improve their global understanding by acquiring knowledge about an array of case studies and (5) be able to identify key academic and policy stakes, preparing them to undertake further scholarly research or professional training in this area.

METHOD OF ASSESSMENT

Components of the Final Grade:

20% - Participation
10% - Reading Responses
30% - Presentation
40% - Essay

REQUIRED READING

There is no assigned textbook for this course.

This is a reading-intensive seminar course consisting of 3-4 required readings per week (mostly scholarly articles, but also book chapters and online commentaries), which will be available for download through CourseLink.