

Course on Human Rights and Environment

Introduction:

The following is an advanced seminar in public international law. The seminar is designed to introduce law students to a new way of thinking of public international environmental law and human rights law, focussing on the linkages between these two legal arenas. The target audience is current and future environmental attorneys, trade attorneys, human rights attorneys and public interest attorneys.

In order to provide an understanding of the structure and process of international human rights law and international environmental law, the introductory reading material of the seminar includes a quick overview of the international environmental system and the international human rights system. The introduction of the seminar is designed to provide human rights students with an overview of international environmental law, and environmental law students with an overview of international human rights law.

The seminar will address and analyze how human rights and environment relate to one another, and which are the advantages and disadvantages of linking these two areas of law. The teaching methodology includes class lectures, role playing (moot court) and class discussion. The inclusion of an international moot court exercise was included with the assumption that public international law is no different from other branches of law in requiring superlative lawyering skills. The role playing exercise built around a real case example, helps develop and strengthen legal skills and creativity. Faculty experts will be invited to teach on specific themes.

Considerable emphasis should be placed on the critical analysis of the issues discussed in class and on the various assigned reading materials. Students will be challenged to ponder shortcomings and advantages of both traditional and innovative international approaches and to pursue such critical stocktaking in their individual research projects. The pace of the seminar is accelerated, and therefore consistent attendance is important; as is participation in class discussions.

Evaluations will be based on a research paper of 25-30 pages counting for 85% of the grade. To provide further assistance to the students on their own research, suggested research topics will be given. Students will also be expected to contribute to the seminars by critically assessing the readings and issues presented. If so desired, students will have the opportunity to present the result of their research to the seminar. Oral participation will count for 15% of the grade.

Please refer to the class outline and reading list for further detail. We will be available for consultations between and during the term. Office hours are open door/walk-in. If preferred, you can make an appointment.

- Class 1 Course description and Introduction to International law (this part depends on the background of the class prior to the seminar)
- Class 2 An overview of international environmental law
- Class 3 An overview of international human rights law
- Class 4 Human Rights Approaches to Environmental Protection
- Class 5 Environmental Protection and the U.N. Human Rights System
- Class 6 Environmental Protection and the Inter-American Human Rights System
- Class 7 Environmental Protection and the European Human Rights System and Environmental Protection and the African Human Rights System

From here we can assess (and inquire with the class) which of the following cross cutting-issues are of interest to pursue. The issues selected will determine the # of classes remaining. Two of the remaining classes will be left for role playing. If for whatever reason we do not have enough time to cover all of the materials, we can reduce the introductory portion (i.e. classes 1 to 7)

- Class 8 Environmental Discrimination and the Human Right to Equal Treatment
- Class 9 Environmental Justice
- Class 10 Environmental Protection and The Human Rights to Participate and Access to Information
- Class 11 Human Rights Abuses of Environmental Activists
- Class 12 The Human Right to Life and the development of a right to a clean or healthy environment
- Class 13 Sustainable Development as a Human Right

Links to Reading Materials and Class Information

[Syllabus](#)

[Class Description](#)

[Reading Materials](#)