

**Code**

LGL3001

ECTS-credits

7.5

Organisational unit

Center for European Studies

Coordinator

Marjan Peeters

Iris Hofman

Eveline Persoon

Description

LGL3001 – International Environmental Law

The environment knows no boundaries, while national legal systems do. It is therefore of the utmost importance to develop international law approaches in order to deal with transboundary and global environmental problems. While environmental law originally focused on local problems like smoke and noise, today we are confronted with transboundary and global environmental problems such as the continuing loss of biodiversity, long-distance air-pollution, and the threat of climate change. The protection of important nature, a healthy condition of air, water and soil, and the environmental safety of products and economic activities are core concerns.

Law serves as an important instrument to improve and protect the environment. The course International Environmental Law (IEL) discusses the role of international law – and the emerging body of global environmental law - in order to protect the environment. It takes a fundamental approach which means that we will examine environmental law from the perspective of principles, environmental rights, and the choice and design of regulatory instruments to steer economic behaviour in a sustainable direction. Both strengths and, unfortunately, weaknesses of international environmental law will be discussed. In this respect, also the importance of national approaches and private initiatives will be addressed. Some specific attention will go to the European Union as a regional international organisation addressing, inter alia, environmental problems. The world-wide problem of climate change serves as the leading case of this course.

The course will be structured around the following themes: • international environmental rule-making, including compliance and enforcement • the concept of sustainable development • global environmental law • environmental principles • human rights and environmental protection • environmental procedural rights • international and EU climate law, including the choice and application of regulatory instruments to steer citizen & business behaviour.

This intensive 3 week, 36 hour course includes:

- Weekend excursion to Brussels (visits to the European Parliament & Parliamentarium, and the European Commission to be confirmed)
- Weekend excursion to The Hague and Amsterdam (visits to the International Court of Justice, Greenpeace headquarters, International Union for the Conservation of Nature to be confirmed)

Disclaimer trips: trips and visits related to the course are conditional. E.g. Dutch travel advice should be positive regarding the region that will be visited and institutions should be able to accept visitors. In case a proposed trip or visit cannot continue due to circumstances, alternatives may be organized.

Disclaimer ECTS: the number of ECTS credits earned after successfully concluding this course is the equivalent of 7,5 ECTS credits respectively according to Maastricht University's guidelines. Please consult with your home university if these credits will be accepted as part of your programme and, if necessary, converted to the credit system acknowledged by your home university.

Goals

The overall objective of this course is to provide basic knowledge of the main characteristics and developments of environmental law from an international perspective. A related goal is to provide an in-depth understanding of the interrelationship between international and European greenhouse gas emissions reduction regulations.

By the end of the course, students should have basic **knowledge** of:

- The (limited) role of the International Court of Justice with regard to environmental problems
- The (important) role of International rule-making through multilateral environmental agreements, including compliance and enforcement
- The legal conditions for adopting unilateral protective measures by states
- The opportunities of and complexities surrounding environmental legal principles and the concept of sustainable development
- The value and shortcomings of current human rights arrangements for environmental protection, with a focus on procedural rights with regard to governmental decision-making in environmental matters
- The regulation of greenhouse gas emission reduction on the international and EU level

Instruction language

EN

Prerequisites

Students should have a background in law. The program is designed for students with an interest in becoming future policy and decision makers in government and businesses, working in NGOs in the field of environmental law and sustainable development, consultants, researchers and academics, corporate lawyers, barristers and practitioners.

Recommend literature

Students will study a collection of book chapters, articles, treaty texts, court decisions and relevant websites. These materials are comprehensively provided electronically (an electronic reference list),

Teaching methods

Lectures • Work in subgroups • Simulation of international negotiations • Student Presentations • Working Visits

Assessment methods

Final paper • Presentation • Multiple choice exam