

Law of Armed Conflict (B001414)

Course size *(nominal values; actual values may depend on programme)*

Credits 4.0 **Study time 120 h**

Course offerings and teaching methods in academic year 2025-2026

A (semester 1)	English	Gent	lecture
			group work

Lecturers in academic year 2025-2026

De Cock, Christian	RE22	lecturer-in-charge
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Offered in the following programmes in 2025-2026	crdts	offering
Master of Science in Teaching in Social Sciences(main subject Laws)	4	A
Master of Laws in Laws	4	A
Master of Laws in International and European Law(main subject International and Human Rights Law)	4	A
Master of Laws in International and European Law(main subject International and National Legal Orders)	4	A
Exchange Programme in Law	4	A

Teaching languages

English

Keywords

law of armed conflict/international humanitarian law/laws of war/jus in bello
law on the use of force/jus ad bellum

Position of the course

This course intends to offer students insight into the international law on the use of force (jus ad/contra bellum) and especially the law of armed conflict (jus in bello).

Contents

The course consists on the one hand of ex cathedra lectures (and possibly guest lectures) and case studies, explaining the law on the use of force (jus ad bellum) and the law of armed conflict (jus in bello). The jus in bello lectures relate i.a. to the scope of application of the laws of war, the targeting principles, the means and methods of warfare, the protection of civilians and prisoners of war, and the implementation and enforcement of the law.

On the other hand, active participation of students is required. In particular, students are expected to bring a presentation defending a legal position in smaller groups (of ca. 2-6 students), to be followed by open discussion. Students will also elaborate their legal positions in the form of a short position paper (ca. 5 pages).

Initial competences

- To have a basic knowledge of international law, in particular the sources of international law (treaties, customary law)
- You are capable of consulting (legal) sources on an autonomous basis.
- You possess the required English language skills to bring an oral presentation and participate in group discussions.
- You are interested in contemporary conflicts and follow news relating to international peace and security

Final competences

- 1 Having insight into the working of, and being familiar with the basic rules and principles of, the law of armed conflict and the law on the use of force.

- 2 To be capable of applying the relevant sources of the law of armed conflict (Geneva Conventions etc.) to specific case studies.
- 3 To be capable of substantiating a legal position and to orally defend such position.
- 4 To have attention for actualities on armed conflicts
- 5 The capacity for critical thinking on actualities in relation to the law of armed conflict.

Conditions for credit contract

Access to this course unit via a credit contract is unrestricted: the student takes into consideration the conditions mentioned in 'Starting Competences'

Conditions for exam contract

This course unit cannot be taken via an exam contract

Teaching methods

Group work, Lecture, Independent work

Extra information on the teaching methods

- **Lecture:** During the lectures the law of armed conflicts and the law on the use of force is explained. There may also be guest lectures on specific themes.
- **Group work:** students prepare an oral presentation defending a specific legal position and write a short position paper.
- **Self-reliant study activities:** students conduct the necessary research to prepare their presentation and position paper.

Study material

None

References

- C. Henderson, *The Use of Force and International Law* (Cambridge: CUP) (2018), 438 p.
- T. Ruyts and O. Corten, *The Use of Force in International Law: a Case-based approach* (Oxford: OUP) (2018), 948 p.
- E. Crawford & A. Perti, *International Humanitarian Law* (Cambridge: CUP) (2015), 301 p.
- Dinstein, Y., *The Conduct of Hostilities under the Law of International Armed Conflict*, 3rd Edition, Cambridge University Press, 2016.
- Dinstein, Y., *War, Aggression and Self-Defence*, 6th Edition, Cambridge University Press, 2017.
- Sandesh Sivakumaran, *The law of non-international armed conflict*, Oxford University Press, 2012.
- Dieter Fleck (ed.), *The Handbook of international humanitarian law*, 3rd ed., Oxford University Press, 2013
- A. Clapham & P. Gaeta (eds.), *The Oxford Handbook of International Law in Armed Conflict* (Oxford: OUP) (2014)
- J. Wouters, P. De Man & N. Verlinden (eds.), *Armed Conflicts and the Law* (Antwerp: Intersentia) (2016)

Course content-related study coaching

- support through minerva
- on appointment

Assessment moments

end-of-term and continuous assessment

Examination methods in case of periodic assessment during the first examination period

Written assessment open-book

Examination methods in case of periodic assessment during the second examination period

Written assessment open-book

Examination methods in case of permanent assessment

Participation, Assignment

Possibilities of retake in case of permanent assessment

examination during the second examination period is possible

Extra information on the examination methods

- **Periodic evaluation:** Written exam with open questions. Use of the sourcebook is permitted during the exam. (60%)
- **Non periodic evaluation:**
 - Evaluation oral presentation (20%)
 - Evaluation written position paper (20%)
 - In case of a retake, students may rework their paper possible in the second examination period. T

Calculation of the examination mark

- Non-periodic evaluation 40%: oral presentation 20%, position paper 20%.
- Periodic evaluation 60% (written exam)
- End score calculation work students: idem.
- **Students who do not participate in all evaluations achieve maximum 7/20 for this course.**

Facilities for Working Students

Work students are not obliged to attend every class.