GHENT UNIVERSITY

Course Specifications

Valid in the academic year 2025-2026

International and European Biodiversity Law (BOO1579)

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 2)	English	Gent	independent work
			excursion
			lecture

Lecturers in academic year 2025-2026

Cliquet, An	RE22	lecturer-in-charge

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 European Union Law)	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

Biodiversity, nature conservation, ecological restoration, international biodiversity law, European biodiversity law

Position of the course

Nature and biodiversity (variation of life on Earth) are of fundamental importance for humans. Biodiversity loss is, next to climate change, the most serious environmental problem humans are facing. This course aims at giving students knowledge and insight in international and European biodiversity law. Attention is given to the importance of biodiversity, the problem of biodiversity loss, the causes and consequences of biodiversity loss for humans and possible solutions in international and European policy and law. Next to more conventional approaches (protection of threatened species and protected areas), new evolutions in policy and law will be introduced (e.g. protection of 'ecosystem services'; ecological restoration). Biodiversity policy and law is set in a broader context (economic valuation of ecosystems, ethical aspects, sustainable development). Biodiversity law has an impact on various other aspects of law and policy and is crucial for building a more sustainable society, both local and global.

Contents

This course consists of four parts. A first part is an introduction about biodiversity, covering the ecological background (the role and loss of biodiversity, consequences of biodiversity loss); economic aspects (economic valuation of biodiversity), and ethical and social aspects. A second part includes a general introduction to biodiversity law (main international and regional actors and sources of biodiversity law; the legal regime of natural resources; measures in biodiversity law). A third part describes and evaluates the main international (global) instruments on biodiversity (including the Biodiversity convention, World Heritage Convention, conventions on the protection of specific ecosystems and specific species). A fourth

part deals with EU policy and law on biodiversity (EU nature directives; Nature restoration regulation; relation with other policy domains). Specific attention is given to case law of the European Court of Justice relating to biodiversity. Specific topics can be dealt with by guest speakers (e.g. regulation of genetic modified organisms).
Students are asked to submit a short written contribution on a national court case on biodiversity law.
Throughout the classes there will be several discussion moments. One specific theme (chosen by students) will be discussed thoroughly in class.
A field visit will be made to a Flemish nature area, in order to look at the application of European biodiversity law in practice.

Initial competences

- A general and basic knowledge on international law (sources of international law, treaty law, etc.) is recommended. No previous knowledge of international and European biodiversity law is required.
- The capacity to consult literature on international and European biodiversity law.
- To be willing to develop a critical, scientific and interdisciplinary attitude.

Final competences

1 To know general aspects of international and European biodiversity law (principles, main global and regional conventions, EU-Directives, international and European case law).
2 To have an insight in international and European biodiversity law.
3 The capacity to analyse legal and other sources of international and European biodiversity law.
4 To have attention for actualities relating to international and European biodiversity law.
5 The capacity for critical thinking on international and European biodiversity law.
6 To write a note about a legal case on biodiversity law.
7 To be open minded for concepts of other legal systems and other disciplines (ecology, environmental ethics and social sciences).
8 To be aware of the role of biodiversity law in achieving sustainablility goals.

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

Excursion, Lecture, Independent work

Extra information on the teaching methods

Lectures: during the lectures an overview is given of international and European biodiversity law. Throughout the course questions are asked to the students in order to let students think along and increase their participation. One theme, chosen by students, is thoroughly discussed in class.
Independent work: each student writes a short note on a national court case about biodiversity law.The national cases are briefly discussed during class.
Excursion: visit to a protected area, guided by an expert.

Study material

Type: Handbook

Name: An Cliquet, An introduction to international and European biodiversity law, Academia Press, 2026.
Indicative price: € 20
Optional: no
Language : English
Author : An Cliquet
Online Available : No
Available in the Library : Yes
Available through Student Association : Yes

Type: Handouts

Name: An Cliquet, International and European Biodiversity Law. Handouts of the presentations, 2026.
Indicative price: Free or paid by faculty
Optional: no
Language : English
Available on Ufora : Yes
Online Available : No
Available in the Library : No
Available through Student Association : No

References

- Bowman M, Davies P & Redgwell C, Lyster's International Wildlife Law, 2nd edition, Cambridge University Press, 2010.
- Morgera, E & Razzaque, J, Biodiversity and Nature Protection Law, Elgar Encyclopedia of Environmental Law series, 2017.
- Born, C.-H., Cliquet, A., Schoukens, H., Misonne, D. & Van Hoorick, G. (eds.), The Habitats Directive in its EU Environmental Law Context: European Nature's Best Hope?, Routledge, 2015, 510 p.

Course content-related study coaching

- Ufora
- Individual guidance (by email or on appointment)

Assessment moments

end-of-term and continuous assessment

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

Written assessment with open-ended questions

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

Written assessment with open-ended questions

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

- Exam: general knowledge-focused questions, application-focused questions.
- Evaluation of the note on case law.
- Participation (during classes, workshop and excursion).

Calculation of the examination mark

- Periodic exam 60%
- Written paper 25%
- Participation 15%

Retake assignment: reworking the case-note (or submit an assignment if this had not been done)
Students who do not participate in all evaluations will be declared as unsuccessful for this course. In concrete terms, this means that if the final score is nevertheless a figure of ten or more out of twenty, the final score will be reduced to a figure of 7/20.

Facilities for Working Students

Work students are not obliged to attend the group discussion and excursion.
Evaluation is: exam 60%; paper 40%.