GHENT UNIVERSITY

Course Specifications

Valid as from the academic year 2026-2027

Law of the Sea (B001432)

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

Credits 3.0 **Study time 90 h**

Course offerings in academic year 2027-2028

A (semester 1)	English	Gent

Lecturers in academic year 2027-2028

Willaert, Klaas	RE22	lecturer-in-charge

Offered in the following programmes in 2027-2028	**crdts**	**offering**
Master of Science in Maritime Science	3	A

Teaching languages

English

Keywords

International law, law of the sea, maritime zones, shipping activities, natural resources, marine environment

Position of the course

This course provides insight into the law of the sea, broadly governing the rights and duties of states in marine areas. This legal regime regulates various activities at sea through a spatial division in distinct maritime zones (entailing different rules for navigation, exploitation and protection of natural resources) and a number of overarching principles. During this course, students also learn to critically assess new developments in the law of the sea within its broader political and economic context, including sustainable development goal (SDG) 14.

Contents

- Importance of the oceans and seas
- History and development of the law of the sea
- Baselines and maritime features
- Maritime zones (including legal status, delineation and delimitation, rights of states, jurisdiction)
  - Internal waters and ports
  - Territorial sea
  - Contiguous zone
  - Exclusive economic zone
  - Continental shelf
  - High seas
  - The Area
- International straits
- Fisheries
- Marine environmental protection
- Dispute settlement
- Marine spatial planning

Initial competences

Having basic knowledge of general legal rules and principles

Final competences

1 Understanding the legal regime of the law of the sea and how it is implemented
2 Having knowledge of the international legal rules regulating the oceans and seas
3 Applying the rules and principles of the law of the sea to actual cases

4 Critically assessing topical issues and new developments within the law of the sea

Conditions for credit contract

This course unit cannot be taken via a credit contract

Conditions for exam contract

This course unit cannot be taken via an exam contract

Teaching methods

Seminar, Lecture

Extra information on the teaching methods

- Lecture: during the classes, students are stimulated to ask questions and to participate actively.
- Seminar: students apply what they have learned during the lectures (different maritime zones, rights and duties of states, exploitation of natural resources, marine environmental protection, ...) by developing a marine spatial plan within the context of an interactive board game.

No lecture recordings or livestreams are provided within this course.

Study material

Type: Slides

Name: Slides Law of the Sea
Indicative price: Free or paid by faculty
Optional: no
Language : English
Number of Slides : 236
Available on Ufora : Yes
Additional information: Slides contain the study material and serve as syllabus

Type: Reader

Name: UN Convention on the Law of the Sea
Indicative price: Free or paid by faculty
Optional: no
Language : English
Available on Ufora : Yes
Additional information: A printed version of the UN Convention on the Law of the Sea (provided through Ufora) may be used during the exam

References

- Tanaka, Y., *The International Law of the Sea*, Cambridge University Press, 2023, 650 p.
- Rothwell, D.R., Oude Elferink, A.G., Scott, K.N. & Stephens, T. (eds.), *The Oxford Handbook of the Law of the Sea*, Oxford University Press, 2015, 850 p.
- Attard, J.D. (ed.), *The IMLI Manual on International Maritime Law - Vol. I. The Law of the Sea*, Oxford University Press, 2014, 723 p.
- Churchill, R., Lowe, V. & Sander, A. (eds.), *The Law of the Sea*, Manchester University Press, 2022, 968 p.
- Ehler, C. N. & Douvere, F., *Marine Spatial Planning. A Step-by-Step Approach toward Ecosystem-based Management*, UNESCO, 2009, 99 p.
- Ehler, C. N., *A Guide to Evaluating Marine Spatial Plans, UNESCO*, 2014, 84 p.

Course content-related study coaching

- Students can contact the lecturer or assistant through e-mail if they have questions or require additional explanation.
- Information regarding the exam (including an explanation of the types of questions and a number of examples) is provided during class.

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

Possibilities of retake in case of permanent assessment

examination during the second examination period is not possible

Extra information on the examination methods

- Written exam: evaluation on the basis of a variety of open questions to assess knowledge and insight.
- Participation: evaluation of the active participation of the student during the MSP game.

Calculation of the examination mark

- Written exam: 80%
- MSP game: 20%

Facilities for Working Students

In accordance with Education and Examination Code