

Course Outline

COURSE:	LAWS 4606.A – International Law of Armed Conflict
TERM:	Fall 2026
PREREQUISITES:	LAWS 2908 or PAPM 3000, LAWS 2601 and fourth-year Honours standing
CLASS:	Day & Time: Mondays, 2:35 to 5:25 pm Room: Please check Carleton Central
INSTRUCTOR:	Professor Christiane Wilke
CONTACT:	Office Hrs / Location: Office hours (on campus or Zoom) by appointment. D 499 Loeb Email: christiane.wilke@carleton.ca [please include the course number LAWS 4606 in the email subject line]
BRIGHTSPACE:	https://brightspace.carleton.ca/d2l/home/450797

CALENDAR COURSE DESCRIPTION

UN Charter prohibition of the use of force. Exceptional, permissible uses of armed force. Role of Security Council in determining legality of armed intervention. Collective security, peacemaking, peacekeeping, neutrality, prohibited means of warfare. Humanitarian International Law. The Geneva Red Cross Conventions, war crimes, the role of International Criminal Court.

COURSE DESCRIPTION

How does international law respond to armed conflict? How do parties to armed conflicts use international law in their practices and in their public statements? What is the role of international law in regulating armed conflict?

In this course we address the entanglement of armed conflict, politics, and different bodies of international law. Readings combine theoretical perspectives on international humanitarian law and the uses of armed force with interdisciplinary explorations of the practical uses of international law in contemporary armed conflicts.

LEARNING OUTCOMES

In this course, students will

- Identify and apply key rules of international humanitarian law
- Learn about and apply theories about how international law matters in practice
- Apply theoretical knowledge about international law and its place in armed conflict to contemporary armed conflicts
- Learn about reflexivity and positionality in research and apply this knowledge to the course topic
- Evaluate different interpretations of legal rules and approaches to international law in contemporary armed conflicts
- Synthesize and present insights on international law and armed conflict

REQUIRED TEXTS

Emily Crawford and Alison Pert, *International Humanitarian Law* (3rd edition) (Cambridge University Press, 2025). Available on reserve at the library (one hard copy). About \$65 in bookstores.

Ian Hurd, *How to do Things with International Law* (Princeton University Press, 2017). About \$37 in bookstores.

EVALUATION

Assessment Overview

What?	When?	Requirements	Value
Positionality Reflection	September 24 th	1-2 pages, double spaced	5%
Presentation on a reading	To be assigned	5-10 minutes	5%
Essay 1	October 13 th	5-6 pages, double spaced	20%
Research Paper Proposal	November 9th	1-2 pages, double-spaced	5%
Peer review of research paper proposal	November 16th	1 paragraph, by email	5%
Essay 2	November 26 th	5-6 pages, double spaced	20%

Research paper presentation	December 7 th or 11 th	5 minutes	5%
Research paper	December 11 th	12-15 pages, double spaced	35%

1. Positionality Reflection (5%, September 24th)

This short assignment asks you to reflect on your relationship to armed conflict and its implication for studying international law and armed conflict. Reflections may include on personal experience, family history, sources of information, and other forms of relationships with armed conflict that might shape your perspectives.

Requirements: 1-2 pages, double spaced, submitted on Brightspace by September 24th. No email submissions accepted. Late penalty: 0.5 points (out of 5) per day, Brightspace submission closes September 27th.

2. Presentation on a Reading (5%, pass/fail)

Present on a class reading. The presentation should be 5-10 minutes, provide context on the text and/or the author(s), and provide a critical analysis/questioning of 1-3 issues raised by the text. No slides.

3. Essay 1 (20%, October 13th)

Essay prompts will be distributed by September 28th. Write an essay responding to your choice of prompt. You will primarily rely on course readings but can use additional sources to support your analysis and argument.

Requirements: 5-6 pages, double spaced, submitted on Brightspace by October 13th. No email submissions accepted. Late penalty: 5% per day, Brightspace submission closes October 15th.

4. Research Paper Proposal (5%, November 9th)

Tell us what you want to write your research paper on, how, and why. Include an explanation of the topic, the relevance, the research question, the methods and sources (primary sources and theory).

Requirements: 1-2 pages, double-spaced, submitted on Brightspace by November 9th at noon. No email submissions accepted. You also need to provide a copy (paper or email) to a classmate who will provide a peer review of your proposal.

Late penalty: 0.5 point out of 5 per day, Brightspace submission closes November 11th.

5. Research Paper Proposal Peer Review (5% November 16th)

Your classmate has given you a copy of their research paper proposal. Please review the proposal and respond to them (by email, but also in person if feasible) to tell them about: which parts of the proposal were most convincing/developed, where more attention to details might be needed during the research/writing process, and (optional) any recommendations regarding sources/methods you might have. The feedback should be

collegial and thoughtful.

Requirements: Copy the instructor on the email you send to the author of the proposal. One paragraph of text is recommended. This is a pass/fail assignment that is graded for collegiality (how you engage with your peer), thoughtfulness (substance of the comments), and the appropriateness of the comments to the proposal.

Late penalty: Your peer review helps your peer. Late peer reviews will not receive marks.

6. Essay 2 (20%, November 26th)

Essay prompts will be distributed by November 9th. Write an essay responding to your choice of prompt. You will primarily rely on course readings but can use additional sources to support your analysis and argument.

Requirements: 5-6 pages, double spaced, submitted on Brightspace by November 26th. No email submissions accepted. Late penalty: 5% per day, Brightspace submission closes on November 29th.

7. Research Paper Presentation (5%, December 7th or 11th)

Present a brief summary of your research paper to the class. This is a 3-5 minute presentation that is graded pass/fail. No slides, handout optional. The focus is on short presentations on work in progress and feedback from peers and the professor.

8. Research Paper (35%, December 11th)

Building on your research paper proposal and research paper presentation, please submit a research paper that (1) asks and answers a research question related to the themes of this course, (2) uses at least four texts from this course, and (3) draws on at least two primary sources in addition to scholarly literature.

Requirements: 12-15 pages double spaced (including endnotes and bibliography if applicable). Submission on Brightspace by December 11th; no email submissions will be accepted. Late penalty: 5% per day, Brightspace submission closes December 17th.

Standing in a course is determined by the course instructor subject to the approval of the Faculty Dean. This means that grades submitted by the instructor may be subject to revision. No grades are final until they have been approved by the Dean.

POLICY ON REQUESTS FOR EXTENSIONS

Requests for Extensions:

- All requests for extensions have to be submitted before the deadline for the assignment for which an extension is sought. No retroactive extensions will be granted.
- Extensions are only granted for situations that fall under the Carleton University

Academic Consideration Policy: circumstances beyond your control that have a significant impact on your capacity to meet your academic obligations, such as illness or family emergencies. Extensions will not be granted for reasons such as problems with managing workload (both within your studies and with paid work) and competing deadlines.

- If you require an extension, please email me and also complete the appropriate Academic Consideration form: <https://carleton.ca/registrar/academic-consideration-policy/>.

POLICY ON GENERATIVE ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE (AI)

In this course, we address complex issues of armed conflict, civilian harm, violence, and legality. It is very important that we choose our words and tools wisely, and it is extremely important that the words we use are our own.

In LAWS 4606.A, you are not allowed to use Generative AI tools for any part of your assignments. This includes the use of tools/settings in Grammarly that modify your text in order to “improve” it. (You may use features that help you check your spelling and that flag problematic grammar.) In this course, we emphasize the human connection to armed conflict and the human consequences of violence. It is very important that we express what we think and not what an app has decided sounds more “professional.”

The unauthorized use of AI constitutes a violation of the Carleton University Academic Integrity Policy.

Any deviations from this policy require permission in writing.

POLICY ON CLASSROOM RECORDING

Unauthorized student recording of classroom or other academic activities (including advising sessions or office hours) is prohibited. Unauthorized recording is unethical and may also be a violation of University policy. Students requesting the use of assistive technology as an accommodation should contact the [Paul Menton Centre](#). Unauthorized use of classroom recordings – including distributing or posting them – is also prohibited. Under the University’s [Copyright Policy](#), faculty own the copyright to instructional materials – including those resources created specifically for the purposes of instruction, such as lectures slides, lecture notes, and presentations. Students cannot copy, reproduce, display, or distribute these materials or otherwise circulate these materials without the instructor’s written permission. Students who engage in unauthorized recording, unauthorized use of a recording, or unauthorized distribution of instructional materials will be referred to the appropriate University office for follow-up.

SCHEDULE

1. September 14th

Introduction

Ben Francis, "Peace positionalities: exploring the use of reflexive positionality statements in peace research," *Peacebuilding*, vol. 14(3) (2026), 257—272.
<https://doi.org/10.1080/21647259.2025.2565029>.

Christiane Wilke, "Voice, Hierarchies of Credibility, and Civilian Harm in US Military Assessments of Civilian Casualties," *Beyond Compliance Consortium Blog Symposium*, 30 June 2026, <https://beyond-compliance-consortium.org/voice-hierarchies-of-credibility-and-civilian-harm-in-us-military-assessments-of-civilian-casualties/>.

2. September 21st

International Humanitarian Law: Contexts and Foundations

Emily Crawford and Alison Pert, *International Humanitarian Law* (3rd ed) (Cambridge University Press, 2025), ch. 1 (pages 4-28).

Boyd van Dijk, "Norm Making from the Margins: Armed Groups, the Algerian War, and South–South Legal Politics," *International Organization*, online first (2026).

Joakim Brattvoll, "How formal equality reproduces hierarchy: the role of international law in Russian imperialism," *Post-Soviet Affairs*, 42:2 (2026): 168-194, DOI: 10.1080/1060586X.2025.2577489.

3. September 28th

Law, War, and Global Order

Ian Hurd, *How to Do Things with International Law* (Princeton University Press, 2017), 1-18, 58-81.

Eliav Lieblich, "The Death and Life of the Prohibition on Forcible Reprisals," *Yale Journal of International Law* 51:1 (2026): 1—42.

Marina Velickovic, "International Law and Failure in the Context of Gaza," 2 April 2024: <https://criticallegalthinking.com/2024/04/02/international-law-and-failure-in-the-context-of-gaza/>

Reed D. Rubinstein, "Operation Epic Fury and International Law," 21 April 2026, <https://www.state.gov/releases/office-of-the-legal-adviser/2026/04/operation-epic-fury-and-international-law>

Tom Dannenbaum et al, "Over 100 International Law Experts Warn: U.S. Strikes on Iran Violate UN Charter and May be War Crimes," *Just Security*, 13 April 2026, <https://www.justsecurity.org/135423/professors-letter-international-law-iran-war/>.

4. October 5th**Law at War**

Emily Crawford and Alison Pert, *International Humanitarian Law* (3rd ed) (Cambridge University Press, 2025), ch. 2 (pages 29-52).

Craig Jones, *The War Lawyers* (Oxford University Press, 2021), 1-49.

Shahd Hammouri, “Desensitizing Modern Warfare through International Law,” *Third World Approaches to International Law Review* (TWAILR) 6 (2025): 166—187.

5. October 19th**Civilians and Civilian Harm**

Emily Crawford and Alison Pert, *International Humanitarian Law* (3rd ed) (Cambridge University Press, 2024), ch. 4 (pages 97—135).

Lauren Gould, Jolle Demmers, Erin Bijl, and Saba Azeem, “Investigating Remote Warfare as the Radical Undoing of Life: The Compounding Civilian Harm Effects of US-Led Coalition Bombings in Iraq,” *Antipode* 58:2 (2026): 1—22.

Mohammed El-Kurd, *Perfect Victims and the Politics of Appeal* (Haymarket Books, 2025), 7—31.

Matthew Aiesi, “Combating Enemy Lawfare on the Battlefield,” *Army Lawyer* (2020): 25—28.

6. November 2nd**Targeting**

Emily Crawford and Alison Pert, *International Humanitarian Law* (3rd ed) (Cambridge University Press, 2025), ch. 7 (pages 191—229).

Maja Zehfuss, “Targeting: Precision and the production of ethics,” *European Journal of International Relations* 17:3 (2011): 543–566.

Nicola Perugini and Neve Gordon, “Medical Lawfare: The Nakba and Israel’s Attacks on Palestinian Healthcare,” *Journal of Palestine Studies* 53:1 (2024): 68-91.

Airwars, *The human cost of the 40-day war on Iran*, <https://airwars.org/the-human-cost-of-the-40-day-iran-war/>.

7. November 9th**Investigating Civilian Harm**

Heather Ford and Michael Richardson, “Framing data witnessing: Airwars and the production of authority in conflict monitoring,” *Media Culture & Society* 45:4 (2023): 805—821.

Amnesty International, “At Any Cost: The Civilian Catastrophe in West Mosul, Iraq” (July 2017), <https://www.amnesty.org/en/documents/mde14/6610/2017/en/>.

Michael Levenson, “What to Know About the Civilian Casualty Files,” *New York Times*, 18 December 2021, <https://www.nytimes.com/2021/12/18/us/airstrikes-civilian-casualty-files-pentagon.html>.

CJTF-OIR, *Civilian Casualty Initial Assessment* (21 March 2017, Mosul NC 736).

CJTF-OIR, *Civilian Casualty Initial Assessment* (17 April 2017, NC 809).

CJTF-OIR, *Civilian Casualty Credibility Assessment Report* (19 February 2017, Mosul, C 135).

CJTF-OIR, *Civilian Casualty Credibility Assessment Report* (9 March 2017, Mosul, C 150).

8. November 16th

At loss for words: Naming an Understanding Violence

Rabeah Eghbariah, “Toward Nakba as a Legal Concept,” *Columbia Law Review* 124 (2024): 888—991.

9. November 23rd

Slow Violence

Tamar Luster, “Litigating Slow Violence: Deprivation in Gaza, Humanitarian Aid, and the Limits of International Humanitarian Law,” *Harvard International Law Journal* 67 (2026): 433—512.

Eliana Cusato, *The Ecology of War and Peace: Marginalising Slow and Structural Violence in International Law* (Cambridge University Press, 2021) 1—27.

10. November 30th

Technologies in Law and War

Rain Liivoja, “Technological change and the evolution of the law of war,” *International Review of the Red Cross* 97 (2015), 1157–1177.

Tobias Vestner, “The Law of Targeting’s Mechanization and Objectivization through the Use of Artificial Intelligence,” Forthcoming in Irene Couzigou (ed), *Technological Change and International Law: Testing the Adaptability of International Law*, Edward Elgar Publishing, available on SSRN: https://papers.ssrn.com/sol3/papers.cfm?abstract_id=4793067.

Kevin T. Baker, “AI got the blame for the Iran school bombing. The truth is far more worrying,” *The Guardian*, 26 March 2026 (<https://www.theguardian.com/news/2026/mar/26/ai-got-the-blame-for-the-iran-school-bombing-the-truth-is-far-more-worrying>).

11. December 7th**Accountability?**

Natasa Mavronicola and Mattia Pinto, “Challenging punishment as the justice norm in the face of ongoing atrocities,” *Leiden Journal of International Law* 38 (2025): 905–932.

[Student research paper presentations]

12. Friday, December 11th**Research Paper Presentations**

STATEMENTS ON ACADEMIC INTEGRITY

Collaboration and Group Work: With two exceptions (see next paragraph), all assignments in this course are to be prepared and submitted individually. This means that the assignment needs to be the work of the student submitting it and not contain collaboration and contributions from others.

- **The Research Paper Proposal Peer Review** requires a specific form of collaboration: one student shares their research paper proposal, and the other student provides feedback.
- **Presentations on readings** may be assigned to a team of two students. It is expected that students equitably share the work. This is a pass/fail assignment.

Submitting Substantially the Same Piece of Work: In this course, you are not allowed to submit any works that you have submitted in this class for other classes without the written permission of the instructor.

STATEMENT ON PLAGIARISM

The University Academic Integrity Policy defines plagiarism as ‘*presenting, whether intentionally or not, the ideas, expression of ideas or work of others as one’s own.*’ This includes reproducing or paraphrasing portions of someone else’s

published or unpublished material, regardless of the source, and presenting these as one's own without proper citation or reference to the original source. Examples of sources from which the ideas, expressions of ideas or works of others may be drawn from include but are not limited to books, articles, papers, literary compositions and phrases, performance compositions, chemical compounds, artworks, laboratory reports, research results, calculations and the results of calculations, diagrams, constructions, computer reports, computer code/software, material on the internet and/or conversations.

Examples of plagiarism include, but are not limited to:

- any submission prepared in whole or in part, by someone else, including the unauthorized use of generative AI tools (e.g., ChatGPT)
- using ideas or direct, verbatim quotations, paraphrased material, algorithms, formulae, scientific or mathematical concepts, or ideas without appropriate acknowledgment in any academic assignment
- using another's data or research findings without appropriate acknowledgement
- submitting a computer program developed in whole or in part by someone else, with or without modifications, as one's own
- failing to acknowledge sources with proper citations when using another's work and/or failing to use quotations marks.

Plagiarism is a serious offence that cannot be resolved directly by the course's instructor.

The Associate Dean of the Faculty follows a rigorous [process for academic integrity allegations](#), including reviewing documents and interviewing the student, when an instructor suspects a violation has been committed. Penalties for violations may include a final grade of "F" for the course.

STATEMENT ON STUDENT MENTAL HEALTH

As a student you may experience a range of mental health challenges that significantly impact your academic success and overall well-being. If you need help, please speak to someone. There are numerous resources available both on- and off-campus to support you. For more information, please consult <https://wellness.carleton.ca/>

Emergency Resources ([on and off campus](#))

- Crisis/Urgent Counselling Support: 613-520-6674 (Mon-Fri, 8:30-4:30)

- Suicide Crisis Helpline: call or text 9-8-8, 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.
- For immediate danger or urgent medical support: call 9-1-1

Carleton Resources

- Mental Health and Wellbeing: <https://carleton.ca/wellness/>
- Health & Counselling Services: <https://carleton.ca/health/>
- Paul Menton Centre: <https://carleton.ca/pmc/>
- Academic Advising Centre (AAC): <https://carleton.ca/academicadvising/>
- Centre for Student Academic Support (CSAS): <https://carleton.ca/csas/>
- Equity & Inclusivity Communities: <https://carleton.ca/equity/>

Off Campus Resources

- Distress Centre of Ottawa and Region: call 613-238-3311, text 343-306-5550, or connect online at <https://www.dcottawa.on.ca/>
- Mental Health Crisis Service: call 613-722-6914 or toll-free 1-866-996-0991, or connect online at <http://www.crisisline.ca/>
- Good2Talk: call 1-866-925-5454 or connect online at <https://good2talk.ca/>
- The Walk-In Counselling Clinic: for online or on-site service <https://walkincounselling.com>

REQUESTS FOR ACADEMIC ACCOMMODATIONS

Carleton is committed to providing academic accessibility for all individuals. You may need special arrangements to meet your academic obligations during the term. The accommodation request processes, including information about the *Academic Consideration Policy for Students in Medical and Other Extenuating Circumstances*, are outlined on the Academic Accommodations website (students.carleton.ca/course-outline).

You may need special arrangements to meet your academic obligations during the term. For an accommodation request the processes are as follows:

Pregnancy and Family-Status Related Accommodations

Write to me with any requests for academic accommodation during the first two weeks of class, or as soon as possible after the need for accommodation is known to exist. For more details about the accommodation policy, visit the [Equity and Inclusive Communities \(EIC\)](#) website.

Religious Obligation

Write to me with any requests for academic accommodation during the first two weeks of class, or as soon as possible after the need for accommodation is known to exist. For more details, please go to: <https://carleton.ca/equity/focus/discrimination-harassment/religious-spiritual-observances/>.

Academic Accommodations for Students with Disabilities

The Paul Menton Centre for Students with Disabilities (PMC) provides services to students with Learning Disabilities (LD), psychiatric/mental health disabilities, Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD), Autism Spectrum Disorders (ASD), chronic medical conditions, and impairments in mobility, hearing, and vision. If you have a disability requiring academic accommodations in this course, please contact PMC at 613-520-6608 or pmc@carleton.ca for a formal evaluation. You can find the Paul Menton Centre online at: <https://carleton.ca/pmc/>

If you are already registered with the PMC, contact your PMC coordinator to send me your Letter of Accommodation at the beginning of the term, and no later than two weeks before the first in-class scheduled test or exam requiring accommodation (if applicable). After requesting accommodation from PMC, meet with me to ensure accommodation arrangements are made. Please consult the PMC website for the deadline to request accommodations for the formally-scheduled exam (if applicable).

Survivors of Sexual Violence

As a community, Carleton University is committed to maintaining a positive learning, working and living environment where sexual violence will not be tolerated, and where survivors are supported through academic accommodations as per Carleton's Sexual Violence Policy. For more information about the services available at the university and to obtain information about sexual violence and/or support, visit: <https://carleton.ca/equity/sexual-assault-support-services>

Accommodation for Student Activities

Carleton University recognizes the substantial benefits, both to the individual student and for the university, that result from a student participating in activities beyond the classroom experience. Reasonable accommodation must be provided to students who compete or perform at the national or international level. Please contact your instructor with any requests for academic accommodation during the first two weeks of class, or as soon as possible after the need for accommodation is known to exist. Read more here: <https://carleton.ca/senate/wp-content/uploads/Accommodation-for-Student-Activities-1.pdf>.

For more information on academic accommodation, please visit: <https://students.carleton.ca/services/accommodation/>.

Academic Consideration for Medical and Other Extenuating Circumstances

Due to medical and other extenuating circumstances, students may occasionally be unable to fulfill the academic requirements of their course(s) in a timely manner. The University supports the academic development of students and aims to provide a fair environment for students to succeed academically. Medical and/or other extenuating circumstances are circumstances that are beyond a student's control, have a significant impact on the student's capacity to meet their academic obligations, and could not have reasonably been prevented.

Students must contact the instructor(s) as soon as possible, and normally no later than 24 hours after the submission deadline for course deliverables. If not satisfied with the instructor's decision, students can conduct an "informal appeal" to the Chair of the department within three (3) working days of an instructor's decision. We have created a webform specifically for appeals to the Chair, which can be found here:

<https://carleton.ca/law/application-for-review-of-refusal-to-provide-academic-consideration/>. *Note: This form only applies to LAWS courses and is not the same as a formal appeal of grade.* More information about the academic consideration can be found [here](#).