Seminar / Séminaire
Law of International Organizations/Droit des Organisations Internationales

Language
English (primary course language)
French (selected readings; at student’s option in class discussion, oral presentations and seminar paper)

ECTS-Credits
5

Class Meetings (Bern)
Feb 16, Mar 2, Mar 16, Mar 30, Apr 13, 2018

One-day Practicum (Geneva)
Visits to International organizations, date to be announced (optional)

Research Workshop (Bern)
May 10/11, 2018 (dates to be confirmed)

CORE ISSUES AND QUESTIONS: Rising nationalism, shifting global patterns of geopolitical power, and socio-economic and environmental crises present challenges to international organizations designed to serve the common good. In this seminar, we will assess whether the law of international organizations is still suitable to guide efforts toward international peace and security, sustainable development, human and workers’ rights, and stable economic relations. Does the law of international organizations effectively govern international organizations’ relations with each other and with States, transnational corporations, and individuals? Are there sufficient safeguards for their proper exercise of law-making and other powers? How does the law of international organizations apply to international organizations in situations where their actions or omissions may cause harm to individuals, countries, or the environment?

THE METHOD: In this seminar we explore the attributes, powers and internal legal order of international organizations, and their relationship to national, transnational and other legal orders, and to non-state actors. We analyse the law-making role of the United Nations system and other international institutions, and their impact in supervision, sanctions and dispute settlement, and their interaction with multilateral arrangements. Participants will gain experiential understanding of the law of international organizations as applied through the use of practical examples in today’s context in such areas as human rights and development, security and the use of force, and labour and economic relations. Participation in a one-day visit to Geneva to meet with officials of several international organizations is offered.

Each participant will research and submit a paper analysing a selected contemporary challenge in the law of international organizations, with ideas for improving its effectiveness in changing global contexts. Before final submission, there is a one to 1.5 day Research Workshop for students to present their research findings for peer review.

The seminar is open to Major and Minor law students at the Bachelor or Master level, Master students from other faculties studying law as a minor, doctoral students and
particularly interested bachelor students. The primary course language is English; French is used for selected readings and, at the student’s option, for in-class discussion, oral presentations and the written seminar paper.

Some background in international law or international affairs is recommended.

This seminar is open for registration from 4/12/2017 to 7/1/2018. Please send your registration with name, first name, address, e-mail, phone number, registration number (Matrikelnummer), present field of study (e.g. law) and level (e.g. master), number of semesters studied, and any relevant background in international law or affairs not later than 7/1/2018 to: alexandra.buechler@oefre.unibe.ch.