YOUR OBLIGATIONS: You are required to complete the assignments in a timely manner. A research course cannot be crammed into a short amount of time because it requires a certain degree of process and practice. As such, I expect you to complete each week’s assignment during that week. This statistic will be monitored for grading purposes. Unless we discuss an alternative arrangement due to excused time off from school, I will deduct a half grade for each week that you fail to complete the assignment. Assignments consist of CALI lessons, watching video lectures and screencasts, and posting comments to the course discussion board on your course web page. If you have trouble with the technology, please let me know immediately. I am happy to try and troubleshoot or arrange for you to meet with a technologist to sort out any difficulties; however, the technology used in this course is standard and I do not foresee any difficulties if you already know how to watch a video on You Tube, or are able to take an online survey.

If you have difficulty mastering the content of this course, you are obliged to let me know immediately so that you do not fall behind in your studies. As mentioned above, research is a process that takes time and practice.

There are a few classes that require you to be on campus during the official assigned meeting time. These are noted in your syllabus. Please mark your calendar accordingly. Let me know immediately if you need to conference into the class. I will only allow this option upon request. Dispensation is granted on a case-by-case basis. If you do not attend the mandatory classes, I reserve the right to drop your final grade by one-half grade.

TEXT: There is no required textbook for this course. All materials will be made available on your course page. Should you wish to purchase a comprehensive text on researching foreign and international law, I would recommend Marci Hoffman and Mary Rumsey, International and Foreign Legal Research: A Coursebook (2012). I have placed a copy of it on course reserve for your review. Other titles on course reserve are:

- Wade Mansell and Karen Openshaw, International Law: A critical introduction (2013). This slim volume provides you with a basic understanding of the key elements in internal law. I have assigned a reading on customary law from this book.

- Mark Westin Janis, International Law (6th ed. 2012). This is a popular and standard treatise for students who need a firm understanding of international law. Highly recommended if you have not taken the international law course, or need a good refresher.

CLASS ATTENDANCE POLICY: This course is taught primarily through online technology. You are required to attend four classes as described in your syllabus. See Your Obligations above.
COURSE WEB SITE: The course will be hosted on the Laulilma system.

GRADING:

30% Class participation and homeworks
35% Oral presentation and annotated bibliography on a non-US legal system
35% Web-based research guide on an international law topic

I. 30% Class participation and homeworks. Participation includes demonstrating that you are reading and watching the assigned materials in a timely manner as demonstrated by performing well on CALI lessons and quizzes, making substantive comments on the course discussion board, and attending the mandatory physical classes. I reserve the right to increase a student’s final course grade by a "+" (example: B increases to B+) if the student has an excellent record of class attendance and participation. I will downgrade a student’s grade if he or she does not attend classes and/or does not participate in class discussions.

NOTE: Please complete the CALI lessons assigned and send me your scores via email. This is an option when you complete the lesson.

II. In-Class Presentation on an approved foreign legal system and submission of an annotated bibliography created in connection with the oral presentation. (Time: 15 to 20 minutes per presentation--DO NOT PLAN TO SPEAK BEYOND 20 MINUTES!) (35%)

You are required to do an oral presentation on a foreign jurisdiction's legal system. The countries will be selected or assigned to you by Class 2. Depending on the chosen jurisdiction, students may be asked to focus on how to research ONE ASPECT of a foreign jurisdiction's legal system, or provide a generous overview of the entire legal system. Examples: how to research copyright law in Canada or researching the legal system of Bahrain. If a country’s legal system is too poorly developed to support a 15 to 20 minute oral presentation, it will not be approved. For example, Sudan will not be an accepted jurisdiction to research because the legal system is unstable, highly undeveloped, and still a political football. It will be impossible for one to demonstrate an intimate understanding with a legal system that has yet to be developed.

The worksheet provided on your course web page outlines the basic information you should gather about the country you are researching and the recommendations you should make; you should use that as a base to explore more avenues of research and include them in your oral presentation.

Suggested outline of oral presentation

The oral presentation should be an ORGANIZED, 15 to 20-MINUTE discussion of this country’s legal system. Include whether your jurisdiction has a common law, civil law, or "mixed" legal system; suggested research strategies; key legal sources in print and electronic formats. If English is not an official language of your foreign jurisdiction, discuss whether a researcher could obtain English translations of the foreign jurisdiction's legislation and cases.
"Research strategies" include: best starting points for research; suggested search terms in periodical indexes and in library catalogs; effective online queries in recommended databases; tips for researchers; and suggestions for overcoming problems.

"Key legal sources" include, as applicable to your topic, print and electronic sources of the foreign jurisdiction's: constitution or charter; legislation; cases; administrative regulations; and international agreements. "Key legal sources" also encompass secondary sources: dictionaries; research guides; materials analyzing the law of the jurisdiction (treatises, databases, other websites, etc.); yearbooks; periodical indexes, periodicals, and periodical articles; blogs; organizations; and helpful PEOPLE. Class materials will help you to identify key legal sources for your foreign jurisdiction.

I encourage, but do not require, use of visual aids (PowerPoint software, classroom whiteboard, etc.). I encourage and require you to submit an annotated bibliography that details the resources used to prepare your oral presentation. Please provide your instructor with a copy of your bibliography on the date of your presentation. Citations should conform to requirement for law reviews in the current edition of The Bluebook: A uniform system of citation.

III. Web-based Legal Research Guide on an approved international law topic (NOTE: YOU SHOULD NOT WAIT UNTIL THE END OF APRIL TO BEGIN THIS PROJECT.) (35%)

In your web-based legal research guide, EXPLAIN HOW TO FIND AND HOW TO USE the most helpful, current materials on an international law topic. Your web guide is NOT an answer to a specific legal question!

Students will create web-based research guides through the LibGuides platform. You will receive instructions on how to use the platform in class. This is one of your required on campus classes.

The web guide is your final submission in this course and you must employ proper elements of style and grammar. Also, if you quote or paraphrase the works of others in your web guide, you must create corresponding footnotes or endnotes (using format for law review footnotes as described in the current edition of The Bluebook).

Guidelines for the web-based legal research guide on an approved international law topic

In your web guide, provide an introduction in which you describe your guide's scope and your intended legal audience. Also, the introduction should describe and, if possible, link to key legal instruments, such as the most important treaties, resolutions and/or cases regarding your topic. (When possible, link to key legal instruments that you describe in the introduction.)

In some part of your web guide, also identify the best search terms to use in "finding tools" such as library catalogs and indexes to periodicals.
In your web guide, you should discuss:

- Useful Analysis/Commentary
- Helpful Current Awareness (or News) Sources
- Relevant Organizations, Associations, and Experts
- Key Treaties and Other International Agreements

You may also be able to discuss:

- Customary International Law
- Case Law
- Resolutions of Key Bodies

In your web guide, highlight research strategies that will aid legal researchers who are unfamiliar with your international law topic. You might recommend that researchers review secondary sources prior to analyzing primary sources. Note difficulties involved in researching your international law topic. Difficulties might include: publication of materials in only selected languages; limited availability of materials; cost of information; lack of an index in a print source; or lack of a good search feature in a website. In your web guide, explain how a researcher might address such problems.

In your web guide, identify the most helpful, current PRINT AND ELECTRONIC sources to research your international law topic. For EVERY ONE OF YOUR MOST IMPORTANT SOURCES, describe: the source's organization and content; and the time frame of information provided. Discuss how the source is kept up-to-date. Evaluate the source's reliability--is the author an expert in this field? If relevant, note whether the source is easy to use or whether there is a learning curve before one can use the source effectively. If relevant, discuss how manual use of the source compares to computerized use.

For all of the most helpful, current ELECTRONIC SOURCES that you choose to discuss in your web guide, recommend search queries in the electronic sources.

Good organization, clear presentation and adherence to basic grammar and style rules are important. When applicable, create complete and consistent cites, following Bluebook format for law review footnotes.

PLEASE PROOFREAD YOUR FINAL WEB GUIDE! Your instructor will lower grades for poor presentation, improper grammar and poor style.
If you are having trouble locating legal sources, make an appointment to meet with me immediately.

GOOD LUCK!