

International Legal Research in a Nutshell, 2d

By Marci B. Hoffman & Robert C. Berring, Jr. (2017) 297 pages, ISBN: 978-1-63460-521-2.
\$33.75

Subject: Subject-Specific Legal Research (International Law)

Useful for: Useful for those who want an introduction or quick reference to international and foreign law research.

Format: Chapters with index.

Reviewer's Comments:

Conducting international or foreign legal research often intimidates American law students, lawyers, and librarians. Those researchers often face language barriers, unfamiliar legal systems, paywalls, or other hurdles to access materials.

International Legal Research in a Nutshell introduces readers to international and foreign legal research in an approachable way that helps overcome those challenges. Through their accessible and pragmatic work, Hoffman and Berring provide enough information and direction to get a researcher started on an international or foreign law project, while not overwhelming the researcher. To that end, the authors make no claim that their work is comprehensive. Regarded as an introduction to the covered topic, *International Legal Research in a Nutshell* excels, and I would recommend it as a valuable addition to any lawyer's toolkit.

Deftly anticipating that the readers of such a book might not have a background in this area of law, Hoffman and Berring begin most chapters by providing introductions to the substance and history of the various international and foreign law topics covered. From there they provide legal bibliographic information and search tips for the following areas: foreign & comparative law; treaties and international agreements; customary international law and general principles of law; international case law; European Union; United Nations; and other international organizations. The remaining chapters provide general research tips (e.g., research strategy, source collection) tailored to the international and foreign law context. This updated edition also includes a welcomed appendix on research plans and research management tools (e.g., Mendeley, Zotero). Given its importance, the content of that appendix might warrant inclusion in the main text in later editions.

I first encountered the prior edition of this book as a course text in a foreign and international legal research course I took. I enjoyed and learned so much from that course that I did my best to replicate that experience some years later when I began teaching foreign and international legal research. My attempt at replication included using *International Legal Research in a Nutshell*. I now look forward to using the updated version of the book. Those who enjoyed the prior edition should appreciate the new edition. Much of the format, content, and explanations are the same between the two editions. However, Hoffman and Berring have included new resources (e.g., DipLawMatic Dialogues) and removed defunct ones (e.g. *Modern Legal Systems*

Cyclopedia). They have also forgone including screenshots in the new edition, likely recognizing how quickly online resources change.

American attorneys will likely run into international or foreign legal research projects during their career, whether they mean to or not. *International Legal Research in a Nutshell* makes those potentially daunting projects more manageable in a convenient format.

Reviewed by: Nickholas Harrell, University of Colorado, in 2017