

## International Legal Research in a Global Community

By Heidi Frostestad Kuehl & Megan A. O'Brien. (2018) 219 pages, ISBN: 9781611631999.  
\$32.00

**Subject:** Subject-Area Legal Research

**Useful for:** Useful for those who teach courses covering international legal research, particularly research in public international law.

**Format:** Chapters with index, with selected examples at the end of some chapters.

### Reviewer's Comments:

Suitable for both foreign and international law librarians and librarians with no foreign, comparative, or international law (FCIL) experience, Kuehl and O'Brien contextualize common international legal research problems and tasks by providing readers a basic overview of public international law as a discipline, offering discussion of major actors and sources. The authors use plain language suitable for both students and professionals, such that a teaching librarian could reasonably assign the book as their course text in a for-credit course. Librarians using the book in course development should note the book's focus on public international law; librarians wishing to provide instruction regarding private international law topics or regarding foreign law would wish to supplement their materials.

Chapters 2 through 7 discuss, in moderate depth, the sources of law identified by the International Court of Justice statute including treaties, international judicial opinions, and customary international law. In certain instances, the authors provide narrative examples of research processes for particular primary sources (ex., for treaty implementation research, research regarding implementation of the Chemical Weapons Convention). Readers approaching the text to further their understanding of FCIL research may wish to duplicate the authors' efforts, while librarians teaching FCIL research may utilize these examples for in-class demonstrations or assignments.

Chapters 8 through 10 cover research strategies and source types familiar to all librarians—secondary sources, finding aids, search techniques, planning and documenting the research process—but with a focus on tools and sources offering specific coverage of international law. Chapter 11, "Cultural Competencies," discusses common types of legal systems, providing sample processes for conducting research regarding human rights law in four particular jurisdictions. Though this chapter introduces the concept of legal systems and discusses several foreign jurisdictions, it does not provide significant discussion of conducting foreign legal research, and the authors' choice of human rights law as topic is consistent with the text's orientation towards public international law.

The text publishes footnotes on each page, allowing the reader to easily identify source material, rather than continually cross-reference endnotes. A teacher's manual is also available, and the

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manual follows the same chapter structure as the text itself. For each chapter, the authors identify potential teaching objectives, resources the teacher may wish to highlight, and recommendations regarding how a teacher may best approach the topics in shorter classes vs. 2-credit courses. The bulk of the manual consists of the authors' own syllabi and course materials for various iterations of their courses.

**Reviewed by:** Meredith Capps, Vanderbilt University Law School, in 2019.