

Research Methods in International Law: A Handbook.

By Rossana Deplano and Nicholas Tsagourias. (2021) 544 pages, ISBN: 9781788972352. \$225.00

Subject: Subject-Specific Legal Research (International Law Research)

Useful for: Useful for those who conduct international law research and do so from an academic perspective.

Format: Chapters with index.

Reviewer's Comments:

International legal research is a specialized field for which researchers have often relied on the expertise of foreign, international, and comparative law librarians. As Rossana Deplano notes in her book chapter, "Is International Law Research International?," current trends in international law research have begun to shift from a specialized field of library research to incorporate broader academic themes that mirror developments in academia.

Research Methods in International Law attempts to frame international legal research in its economic, political, and cultural contexts. Gathering contributions from distinguished authors, the editors divide the book into five major parts: rethinking methods, doctrinal research, empirical and socio-legal research, comparative law research, and interdisciplinary research. Research, as discussed by each of these sections, relates more to how academics shape the field of international law than the strategies by which researchers access it.

Unlike other texts on international law research, *Research Methods in International Law* focuses on research methodologies. One contributor, Jason Beckett, defines a methodology as "the technique by which a researcher proposes to identify, delimit, and collect data." While a reader will not find in-depth discussions of computer-assisted legal research (there is such a discussion in Chapter 13), they will gain a strong understanding of how international legal theories have come to dominate the research of international scholars. Diving into an elaborate, Svenonius-like examination of how to navigate the law, this book helps the reader understand the law as it currently exists. Thorough discussions of positivism, natural law, and Marxism, pave the way for an examination of how social sciences and data science have come to define modern international law.

RIPS-SIS Legal Research Text Review

Overall, *Research Methods in International Law* provides readers with a bold collection of scholarship that studies the lenses through which we comprehend international law. The readings demonstrate how modern methodologies in the field of international law have evolved to take an interdisciplinary approach, changing the theory and altering the way the law is accessed by both practitioners and scholars.

Reviewed by: John Miller, UC Hastings College of Law, in 2022.