International environmental law has been a dynamic legal sector over the past 30 years. Starting from a mere handful of agreements 30 years ago, focused primarily on pollution of the marine environment and the conservation of migratory birds and marine mammals, the field consists of over 700 agreements today, addressing diverse issues such as climate change, depletion of the ozone layer, regulation of trade in endangered species, and prevention of transboundary air pollution. Additionally, there has been steadily increasing impetus for expanding the purview of international environmental law, including causes of action for transboundary environmental harm and recognition of the rights of future generations to a healthy environment.

Knowing when to engage an attorney on a project is a critical skill for environmental professionals. We will examine environmental law and policy from several perspectives, including domestic (U.S.) and international.

Having successfully completed this course, the student will be able to:

- Understand the difference between treaties, customary international law, and policy
- Understand jurisdictional responsibilities (e.g., what issues are addressed by international law versus domestic law)
- Research international treaties including the text, history, stakeholders, signatories, and principles
- Understand the role that science and economics play in law and policy


The text is available at various online bookseller sites, including Amazon, which has the book in hard copy, paperback and for rent. Reading assignments will not cover the book in its entirety but there will be readings from the book almost every week.

Other resources will be posted our course page on Canvas and may include articles, videos, and treaty and statutory texts.

REQUIREMENTS

Participation in the Discussions forum ten out of 15 weeks.

An individual Environmental Treaty/International Agreement Research Paper divided into three assignments: topic identification, outline of paper and the final paper.
There are no exams.

**SCHEDULE AT A GLANCE**

**Unit I: Introduction to International Environmental Law and Policy**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Week</th>
<th>Topic</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Class Introductions and Global Environmental Problems</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Science and Technology</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Economics and Environmental Protection</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>International Environmental Lawmaking: International Agreements</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>International Environmental Lawmaking: Agreements (cont) &amp; Customary Law</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Making International Environmental Law Work</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Principles &amp; Concepts in International Environmental Law</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Principles &amp; Concepts in International Environmental Law (cont)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Unit II: Hazardous Chemicals, Wastes and Materials**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Week</th>
<th>Topic</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Chemical Manufacture and Export</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>Transboundary Movement of Hazardous Waste</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>Cross-Cutting Themes Related to Hazardous Wastes &amp; International Trade</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Unit III: Treaties and Individual Assignments**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Week</th>
<th>Topic</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>Treaties and Other International Agreements</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>Treaty Papers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>Discuss Individual Assignments</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>Discuss Individual Assignments (cont)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Weeks 14 and 15 will be combined for discussion and grading purposes.

**EDUCATIONAL PHILOSOPHY**

This course is not independent study. It is interactive and structured to follow the standard semester-based academic calendar. I would like all students to feel comfortable taking this class and feel confident about asking questions. I want to cover the basics of law and policy before diving into some of the specific areas where you are likely to encounter legal issues as an environmental professional. Over time, you will become comfortable with these issues, some even to the point of questioning your attorney’s advice!

It is my expectation that you each bring different interests and experiences to class and that your collective interests will enrich the course. Your interest may be state laws or the law of a particular country or in a particular subject matter. You will be able to dig into an area that interests you as you choose a topic for your paper.

**EVALUATION AND GRADING**

Grades will be based on the following:
• Participation in the Discussions forum (55%) for ten weeks
• An individual Environmental Treaty/International Agreement Research Paper (45%, divided into three parts: topic identification (5%), outline of paper (10%) and the final paper (30%)

You will see in Canvas that each graded assignment is worth a certain number of points. For example, one week’s Discussion forum is worth up to 10 points or 5.5% of your grade.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>90-100%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>80-89%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C</td>
<td>70-79%</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

**Participation in the Discussions forum:**

Over the course of this class, there will be ten weeks when your participation in the Discussions forum will be graded. Each week will have graded Discussions except for the weeks when there is another graded assignment due as well as the last week of class. For those weeks, there will be the option of posting in the Discussions forum but they will not be graded.

Each week’s reading(s) will be posted and available on Canvas by noon Eastern time on the Friday before the week they will be discussed. This is to give you time to start reading before class the following Monday, should you choose to do so. You could post your initial post to the Discussion questions as early as the Monday of class (or as late as the deadline---but please see the Discussion forum rubric about grading) and you can post responses as soon as others post theirs.

Class participation in the Discussions forum for which you will be graded will include your responses to the questions I post that week. It will also include commentary, questions and debate on your classmates’ responses to the questions. It will include responding to your classmates’ posts on your responses. Reading and commenting on comments made by your peers facilitates peer-to-peer learning. To understand how you will be evaluated on your Discussion contributions, see the Discussions Assessment Rubric under the Files tab on Canvas. Keep in mind that Discussions should be an ongoing conversation throughout the week-- don’t wait until the night before they are due to participate! If you don’t post anything until the last day but you post ten times, your grade won’t be as high as posting five times throughout the week thereby interacting with your classmates.

There doesn’t need to be many threads to have a great conversation. Before posting a new thread, be sure to see what else has been posted. Would your new thread be repeating something that’s already been said? If so, respond to the existing thread rather than starting a new one.

I am not going to provide comments on each post; rather, I will be looking at your posts generally, and evaluating according to the Discussion forum rubric. My goal is to post the first Discussion grades by mid-September and then by the middle of each month after that followed by the remaining grades at the end of the semester.

**Individual Environmental Treaty Research Paper**

Each student will write a short (≤ 10 pages) research paper on a treaty or other international agreement of interest to the student. The paper should discuss the treaty, its impact on environmental protection, trade, and/or the global economy. The paper should be supported by references such as journal articles, books, and reports by prominent domestic and international bodies. You will get three grades related to this paper. The initial grade will be 5% of your grade for identifying the treaty you want to write about
and explaining why you chose it. The second grade will be 10% for the outline of your paper. The remaining 30% will be for the paper itself. Additional details about the paper will be provided later in the semester.

**STRUCTURE AND WORKLOAD**

This semester-long course covers 15 weeks. I have organized each week into Modules on Canvas. Most weeks are discussion-based following the reading(s) for the week. Reference material could be journal articles, news, reports, policy documents, and videos—either assigned reading or those that you find as you research the issues for the week.

The Modules are grouped into three blocks. The first block, *Understanding International Environmental Law and Policy*, runs eight weeks. The second block consists of three weeks focusing on *Hazardous Chemicals, Wastes and Materials*. The remaining block focuses on *Treaties and Individual Assignments* and will consist of learning about and reviewing the different treaties and international agreements addressed in those papers.

**LOGISTICS**

This online course is delivered asynchronously via Canvas ([https://vt.instructure.com](https://vt.instructure.com) -- log in using your VT PID and password). If you are not familiar with Canvas, it is essential to learn how to use its tools as soon as possible. Log into Canvas and look for the training tab for students. There is a Canvas Pointers document in the Files tab in Canvas. If it looks familiar, it’s because another faculty member created it!

On the left hand side of the Canvas site you will see several links that you should familiarize yourself with: Announcements, Module, Pages, Assignments, Discussions. Others are also important but these are the ones you will likely refer to each week. I will post any modifications to deadlines in the Announcements. I also post guidance about the treaty papers, post surveys for the class if needed (e.g., should we change the due date one week to a later date), corrections to something posted previously or in the syllabus. Each week, I post a Page that contains the readings and objectives for the week. The Discussions tab is where you will do most of your work. To make it easier to navigate there is a Module for each week containing links to the Page, Discussion, and Assignment, if any, for that week.

**COMMUNICATION**

I am required to use my VT email and your VT email addresses when communicating with you. Please plan to check your VT email regularly.

I am also available by phone, text, FaceTime, or Skype (jenkwills). Feel free to call me if necessary. It is easier to set up a call via email so that I know when to expect your call.

Course questions that might be of interest to the rest of the class should be posted to the IELP Fall 2017 Discussion forum, which is meant for general course questions. If you think there’s the possibility that others might benefit from the answer to your question, please post it! Likewise, if you have a question, please check the forum before emailing me, as I might have already posted the answer.
We are all colleagues; we have had different life experiences and we have different opinions. Respect and civil discourse are essential so feel free to disagree with your colleagues, and me, but do it respectfully.

ACCOMMODATIONS

If you need adaptations or accommodations because of a disability please contact me as soon as possible. You will also need to contact Services for Students with Disabilities.

In the case of a personal or medical emergency that impacts your ability to participate in the class and/or keep up with coursework, the sooner I’m aware the more assistance I can provide so please contact me directly at jenwills@vt.edu or (404) 408-3878 or have someone close to you do so.

ABOUT ME

I am an environmental lawyer with the United States Environmental Protection Agency. I started with EPA in the regional office in Atlanta where I worked on recovering funds for the cleanup of hazardous waste sites. I have worked in EPA’s Washington, D.C. office for more than ten years focusing on the regulation of chemicals, including those found in consumer products (e.g., lead in paint, flame retardants in furniture, phthalates in plastics). I’ve worked on international issues during my time at the EPA as well, including a trip to the United Nations in New York for the Commission on Sustainable Development and providing assistance to State Department on the US position on international treaties. I’ve also written about hazardous materials in the international context. In 2011, I was a Brookings Fellow in the office of Senator Frank R. Lautenberg where I worked on a wide variety of environmental issues. Prior to working at EPA, I was a judicial law clerk with the Kentucky Supreme Court and the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Sixth Circuit. I graduated from the University of Kentucky College of Law in 2001. I have a Masters in Natural Resources with a focus on sustainability from Virginia Tech. I’m from Kentucky, now living in Virginia with my family. I love downhill mountain biking, trail running, and hiking.
SYLLABUS – Fall 2017

The syllabus is subject to change as new topics and case studies are available or current events create important learning opportunities. NOTE: Each week is listed as Monday through the following Tuesday because the Discussion for each week will be open until the following Tuesday. Since the weeks start on Monday, there is overlap each week on Monday and Tuesday.

Unit I: Introduction to International Environmental Law and Policy

Week One (8/28-9/5): Class Introductions and Global Environmental Problems

Week Two (9/5-9/13 (extra day due to Labor Day falling in this week)): Science and Technology

Week Three (9/11-9/19): Economics and Environmental Protection

Week Four (9/18-9/26): International Environmental Lawmaking: International Agreements

Week Five (9/25-10/3): International Environmental Lawmaking: Agreements (cont) & Customary Law

SELECT TREATY/AGREEMENT FOR PAPERS: Submit by Sunday, October 1 at 11:59pm Eastern

Week Six (10/2-10/10): Making International Environmental Law Work

Week Seven (10/9-10/19) (two extra days due to fall break this week): Principles & Concepts in International Environmental Law

FALL BREAK: October 13-15

Week Eight (10/16-10/24): Principles & Concepts in International Environmental Law (cont)

Unit II: Hazardous Chemicals, Wastes and Materials

Week Nine (10/23-10/31): Chemical Manufacture and Export

OUTLINES OF PAPERS: Submit by Sunday, October 29, at 11:59pm Eastern

Week Ten (10/30-11/7): Transboundary Movement of Hazardous Waste

Week Eleven (11/6-11/14): Cross-Cutting Themes Related to Hazardous Wastes & International Trade

Unit III: Treaties and Individual Assignments

Week Twelve (11/13-11/17): Treaties and Other International Agreements

THANKSGIVING HOLIDAY: November 18-26

INDIVIDUAL TREATY PAPERS: Post to Discussion forum by Monday, November 27 at 11:59pm Eastern
Week Thirteen (11/27-12/6): Treaty Papers

Week Fourteen (12/5-12/12): Discuss Individual Assignments

Week Fifteen (12/11-12/16): Discuss Individual Assignments (cont)*

*Weeks 14 and 15 will be combined for discussion and grading purposes.