

Book Review

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Teaching International Law

Peter Hilpold and Giuseppe Nesi (Editors)

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With international law's broad application and its deep analysis of state-to-state interactions, having a thorough reference that explores the nuances of teaching this field is essential. As beneficial as a qualified teacher can be, they are not enough in the absence of a trustworthy legal textbook. Books and the timeless wisdom they impart are eternal, but teachers are known to be ephemeral.

Many topics related to the field in question are covered in the recently released book "Teaching International Law," co-edited by Peter Hilpold and Giuseppe Nesi.¹ This extensive work explores the complexities of international law in a globalized context where new issues keep coming up, contradicting the common wisdom that nations are the only subjects of international law. In addition, it looks at instructional strategies that can help with the modern "Humboldtian dilemma,"² which aims to strike a careful balance between research and teaching while taking into consideration the

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¹ Peter Hilpold and Giuseppe Nesi, eds. *Teaching International Law*, (Leiden, The Netherlands: Brill | Nijhoff, 18 Dec. 2023).

² Peter Hilpold, "Teaching International Law in the 21st Century Opening the Hidden Room in the Palace of International Law," in *Teaching International Law*, ed. Hilpold and Nesi (Leiden, The Netherlands: Brill | Nijhoff, 2023), 28.

lean management systems or VUCA (vulnerability, unpredictability, complexity, and ambiguity)³ teaching approaches in international law.

Since the world is changing so quickly these days, a lot of the problems that come up when teaching students need to be carefully considered and approached using a glocalized⁴ approach, where the teacher is aware of the problem's local as well as global context. International law affects every element of our daily lives, including travelling, buying, watching television, enjoying holidays, and defending our fundamental right to free speech. The instrumental role of international law is to prepare students for VUCA situations, which increasingly characterise the reality of lawyers, now extending from the national legal system of a state to the local level. International law has become more substantial and more vertically advanced as a result of globalisation, and it now plays a key role in state domestic law.

The book delves deeply into the teaching of international law in the West, with a focus on universities in the Global North, which are mostly located in the USA and the UK. The book examines why international law isn't thought to be a particularly important subject to learn at the college level. It is mainly studied as an elective in undergraduate courses because the majority of students are enrolled in programmes that are career-oriented and pertinent to the legal market. This is due to the fact that there is no international law employment available in the local legal market, for obvious reasons that civil, criminal and corporate law cases are more contested in the local legal market. IL is considered more beneficial in

³ Peter Hilpold, "Teaching International Law in the 21st Century Opening the Hidden Room in the Palace of International Law," in *Teaching International Law*, ed. Hilpold and Nesi (Leiden, The Netherlands: Brill | Nijhoff, 2023), 40.

⁴ Adam Hayes, "Glocalization: What It Means, Advantages, and Examples," Investopedia, August 30, 2022, <https://www.investopedia.com/terms/g/glocalization.asp>.

postgraduate courses if the target demographic is predominantly made up of foreign students with prior experience working as diplomats, migrants, and employees of international organisations.

Barbara Marchetti discusses the rise of Global Administrative Law (GAL). While this method of studying international law is new, it is worthwhile for future research on the subject because, as society becomes more globalised and individual citizens increasingly dominate discussions of human rights law and other spheres of international law, it is critical that international law education emphasise the role that GAL people play in the creation of international law as quoted:

Teaching global administrative law therefore means, first of all, to analyse and distinguish between the different global regulators, to know how to trace their origins and constitutive powers, to examine their public or private traits, to discover their tools and instruments of action, to understand their relationships with States or national regulators, and to know their sources of law and procedural rules.⁵

Teaching international law using a GAL method is an essential undertaking for international law educators since it can have major impacts on international law instruction.

The difficulties of teaching international law are also covered in the book. The book issues a warning, pointing out that since everything is viewed through a materialistic prism in universities these days, it might be challenging to teach international law, particularly from a human standpoint. This is because it's possible that international law isn't typically seen as a highly profitable subject by universities, which could cause

⁵ Barbara Marchetti, "Teaching Global Administrative Law a New Domain for Administrative Law?" in *Teaching International Law*, n.d., 238.

international law teaching to become victimised by society's hyper marketization. Therefore, when teaching international law, it's critical to recognise human complexities.

The book also argues that a good international law teacher should be able to point students in the direction of relevant sources for their studies, help them find solutions to all of the world's problems, and help them understand the nuances of international law. The book also covered how the expertise of diplomats like Manfred Lachs and his understanding of international law may help promote peace and development on a worldwide scale.⁶

Since the EU has special status and may therefore manage concerns related to the single market, teaching international law from a European viewpoint is very informative. The European Union possesses noteworthy authority over the European legal system and has established a fascinating corpus of legal precedent through the European Court of Justice and the European Convention on Human Rights. Because of Brexit (the UK exit from the European Union is called as the Brexit) and the situation in Russia due to the Ukraine war, the European Union is currently at the forefront of international law.

Ernst- Ulrich Petersmann emphasises how crucial it is to teach international economic law (IEL) from a global viewpoint, contending that teaching IEL in the current world would be unfeasible without an understanding of its relationship to international human rights law and the Sustainable Development Goals framework. Since the WTO has not been able to address global trade problems, it is important and suggested that

⁶ Bartłomiej Krzan, "Manfred Lachs and His 'Teacher in International Law': The Lessons He Gave Us". In *Teaching International Law* ed. Hilpold and Nesi (Leiden, The Netherlands: Brill | Nijhoff, n.d.)

international economic law be combined with human rights and sustainable development goals.⁷

The book examines interdisciplinarity, international law, and controversial ideas in international law, including fragmentation and indeterminacy, as well as the well-known criticism of International Law from Martti Koskenniemi viewpoint.⁸ But the book also makes the case that these challenges can be solved by comprehending the complexities of international law. After all, nobody ever talks about how there can be no criminal law if it is broken, so it is also too idealistic to talk about how there can be no international law if international law is broken. To solve the interdisciplinary problem in International Law, it is imperative that the academic community in international law teaching in academia should be diversified.

Understanding the complexity of how domestic legal standards are impacted by international law is crucial. Although international law has always followed a set process, it is currently quickly identifying and changing domestic law in order to keep up with the expansion of players in international law.

The book goes into considerable detail regarding the scope of teaching international law in Germany because it was origin in that region. Since Germany is a member of the EU, International law is recognised as a public law approach there; yet, the book also expresses worries on the risk that too aggressive managerialism could jeopardise international law education in Germany.

⁷ Ernst- Ulrich Petersmann, "Teaching International Economic Law in the 21st Century," in *Teaching International Law*, ed. Hilpold and Nesi (Leiden, The Netherlands: Brill | Nijhoff, n.d.)

⁸ Jean-François Thibault. "Martti Koskenniemi: Indeterminacy." *Critical Legal Thinking*, October 21, 2022. <https://criticallegalthinking.com/2017/12/08/martti-koskenniemi-indeterminacy/>.

The contradictory standards inside international law makes it impossible to teach them in isolation, according to the book, which implies that international law education calls for a holistic approach.

Additionally, the book highlights the importance of mass media in the teaching of international law, noting that shows like Homeland Security and House of Cards have a wider viewership and explore the repercussions of international law, which can be very beneficial in assisting students in comprehending the intricacies of international law and the significance of nations upholding its norms.⁹ In UN meetings and other international law venues, students can also learn how to lobby and promote international law while watching shows that are relevant to international law.

Composing an international law textbook is an extremely challenging task as well because it needs to be comprehensible and transparent for readers all around the world. The majority of materials used in international law classrooms have a repeated theme that covers the basic topics in international law but how make them understand to students so that they can make sense of international law is a challenging task in writing a good international law text book. Authors find it very challenging to write a good book, especially when they are also heavily involved in their teaching duties. Because universities today adopt a more management approach, not all of them will let their writers spend their writing time for writing. This makes it challenging to create a good book in international law. Writing a book on international law requires a great deal of precision and difficulty in the highly digitalized and complex world of today.

⁹ Beham, Fink, and Janik, “Visualising International Law Movies and Image References in Teaching International Law,” in *Teaching International Law*, ed. Hilpold and Giuseppe Nesi (Leiden, The Netherlands: Brill | Nijhoff, n.d.).

Social media and networking allow for large-scale instruction of international law. Since the book lists a number of effective international law courses that have been introduced at different European universities, international law ought to be taught extensively via Artificial Intelligence as well.

Ultimately, the book argues that it is never appropriate to ignore international law and that teaching it is crucial. The book has emphasised that because international law is the product of historical contestation and has been developing quickly, ignorance of it is not an excuse in today's increasingly globalised and complicated society. Ignorance of international law can also lead to poor domestic and international state jurisprudence.

All things considered, the book is a highly enjoyable read that should inspire all international law experts and educators to broaden their viewpoints, even though it lacks the perspective of the Global South. The book only offers instances from the perspective of the global north; it makes no mention of how educators in the global south may discuss the hegemony of international law and its inability to solve international issues and how to teach students about the failure of international law that is not able to solve due to hegemony of Global North mainly the USA exceptionalism in international law.

The book includes a brief discussion on social media's influence, but given the recent live broadcast of the International Court of Justice and the increased public focus on the Middle East conflict in Gaza, international law educators would be well advised to give this topic further thought. Information about international law has also been widely distributed by blogs on international law, although these topics are not thoroughly discussed in the book. Additionally, a significant portion of the growing

impact of Third World Approaches to International Law (TWAIL) is omitted from the book.

In today's globalised world, when no nation can survive in isolation, teaching international law is crucial. Law is a technique created by mankind to handle disputes in a civilised manner. Consequently, it is imperative that scholars embrace the difficulties posed by international law and impart it with honesty, rather than treating it as an afterthought within the broader context of legal studies. Since international law is a part of this complexity, this book aims to expand the scope of international law teaching and learning by promoting greater collaboration and capacity building among academics worldwide.

A section on teaching international law jurisprudence—developed by the International Court of Justice (ICJ), the International Criminal Court (ICC), and other international tribunals like the International Criminal Tribunal of Rwanda (ICTR), the World Trade Organization (WTO) was also missing from the book. In considering the criticism of Anthea Roberts,¹⁰ who addressed the question of whether international law is truly international, what is the best approach to include these case laws into the course outline? In the general discussion of international law teaching, examples are primarily cited from the perspective of the global north, while the global south is ignored.

The pandemic and global climate change have made international law a part of every individual's life. An individual's actions, regardless of where they live in the world, have an impact on the entire planet, so teaching international law is essential in today's society. Everyone with a smartphone

¹⁰ Anthea Roberts, *Is International Law International?* (Oxford University Press, 2017).

and internet connectivity has a relationship with international law therefore, to fully comprehend its pervasiveness, international law should be taught correctly, as recommended in the book. Government officials and diplomats are no longer the only groups eligible to use international law.
