

Aristotle University of Thessaloniki

Faculty of Law

Bachelor of Laws (LL.B.)

Course Syllabus

1. Course Information

- **Title:** International Migration, Refugee, and Asylum Law
- **Code:** LLB25
- **ECTS:** 4
- **Hours per week:** 2
- **Academic Year:** 3rd
- **Teaching Period:** Winter Semester
- **Mode of Delivery:** Face-to-Face
- **Language of Instruction/Assessment:** English
- **Course Type:** Mandatory

2. Course Description

International Migration, Refugee, and Asylum Law is a cornerstone of modern international legal discourse, addressing the complex interplay between state sovereignty, human rights, and the urgent need to protect those displaced by persecution, conflict, and calamity. Rooted in the 1951 Refugee Convention and its 1967 Protocol, this field defines the obligations of states and the rights of individuals who are forced to seek sanctuary beyond their borders. It encapsulates a legal framework that is both principled and pragmatic, reflecting the enduring tension between the ideals of international solidarity and the realities of national interest. At the heart of this discipline lies the fundamental question: who is entitled to protection under the law? The field offers a rich tapestry of legal principles, most notably the non-refoulement doctrine, which forbids the

return of individuals to territories where they risk persecution or harm. Complementing this core tenet are principles derived from human rights and humanitarian law, which extend the reach of protection to those who may fall outside the strict definition of a refugee but nonetheless face profound vulnerabilities. Together, these principles form the bedrock of a system designed to safeguard dignity and justice in the face of displacement. This legal framework is animated by the work of global and regional institutions, foremost among them the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR). The UNHCR's dual role as a custodian of international refugee law and a provider of humanitarian assistance exemplifies the operational realities of protection. At the regional level, instruments such as the European Union's Common European Asylum System (CEAS), EU's Pact on Migration and Asylum, and the African Union's Kampala Convention demonstrate the adaptability of international principles to varied political and cultural contexts, highlighting both innovation and the challenges of harmonisation. However, the field is not without its controversies and complexities. From the externalisation of asylum processes to the detention of asylum seekers and the concept of 'safe third countries', the legal and ethical questions it raises are as pressing as they are nuanced. In an era marked by mass displacement, climate-induced migration, and ever-tightening border controls, International Migration, Refugee, and Asylum Law must continually evolve to remain fit for purpose. It invites a critical appraisal of current legal frameworks, challenging practitioners and policymakers alike to reconcile competing imperatives of compassion, control, and coherence. For students, this course offers an unparalleled opportunity to engage with the dynamic and deeply human concerns at the heart of migration, forced movement, and international protection. Through an exploration of its principles, practices, and jurisprudence, participants will gain not only an understanding of the letter of the law but also the spirit that drives its application—a spirit that seeks, above all, to preserve the humanity of those for whom the law exists.

3. Keywords

refugee protection, non-refoulement, asylum law, 1951 Refugee Convention, 1967 Refugee Protocol, complementary protection, forced displacement, migration governance, UNHCR, regional asylum systems

4. Learning Outcomes

Upon successful completion of this course, students will be able to:

1. **Recall** the principal legal instruments and institutional frameworks governing international refugee, asylum, and migration law, including the 1951 Refugee Convention, its 1967 Protocol, and key regional instruments. (*Remembering*)
2. **Explain** the core concepts and doctrines underpinning international protection, including *refugee status*, *complementary protection*, *non-refoulement*, and the legal responsibilities of states. (*Understanding*)
3. **Apply** international and regional legal standards to hypothetical scenarios involving forced displacement, asylum claims, and border procedures, with attention to individual rights and state obligations. (*Applying*)
4. **Analyse** complex legal and ethical issues such as the externalisation of asylum, detention of asylum seekers, and the designation of safe third countries, identifying tensions between humanitarian protection and migration control. (*Analysing*)
5. **Critically evaluate** the strengths, limitations, and future directions of the current international protection regime in light of contemporary challenges including climate-induced displacement, mass migration, and the evolving role of supranational institutions such as the UNHCR and the EU. (*Evaluating*)

5. General Skills to Be Acquired

- Apply knowledge in practice
- Retrieve, analyse, and synthesise data and information
- Adapt to new situations
- Make decisions
- Work in an international context
- Work in an interdisciplinary team
- Generate new research ideas
- Appreciate diversity and multiculturalism
- Respect the natural environment
- Be critical and self-critical
- Advance free, creative, and causative thinking

6. Course Content (Topics)

1: Foundations of International Refugee and Migration Law

Historical evolution, conceptual origins, and the development of modern international protection frameworks, including the role of the UNHCR.

2: Defining Refugee Status under the 1951 Refugee Convention

Legal definition of a refugee under Article 1A(2), including the required nexus to persecution on specified grounds and critical analysis of its scope and limitations.

3: Interpreting “Well-Founded Fear of Persecution”

Subjective and objective elements of the fear of persecution standard and the evidentiary, procedural, and legal standards applied in status determination.

4: The Principle of Non-Refoulement in International Law

Origins, content, scope, and contemporary applications of the non-refoulement obligation under refugee and human rights law.

5: The Legal Framework of Asylum and its Regional Applications

Asylum as a legal and humanitarian institution, with attention to EU asylum law and other regional systems including CEAS and the Temporary Protection Directive.

6: Refugee Protection and International Human Rights Law

Interaction between refugee law and general human rights norms, with emphasis on complementary protection and the rights of persons outside the Convention definition.

7: General Principles and Durable Solutions in International Refugee Law

Core protection principles, the role of the UNHCR, and the legal framework for voluntary repatriation, resettlement, and local integration.

8: Regional Systems of Refugee Protection

Comparative study of regional frameworks with special focus on EU asylum law.

9: International Law on Migrants and Other Displaced Persons

Distinction between refugees and other categories of migrants, including economic migrants, migrant workers, and beneficiaries of temporary or humanitarian protection.

10: Detention and Procedural Guarantees for Asylum Seekers and Migrants

International and regional legal standards governing administrative detention, safeguards, alternatives to detention, and prohibition of arbitrary deprivation of liberty.

11: Climate Change, Environmental Displacement, and Protection Gaps

Emerging legal challenges posed by climate-induced displacement, regulatory fragmentation, and evolving doctrinal and policy responses.

12: Internally Displaced Persons and the Expansion of Protection Frameworks

Legal status of IDPs under international law, with focus on the UN Guiding Principles and the Kampala Convention, and broader debates over state responsibility and humanitarian governance.

7. Teaching Methods

- Lectures.
- Case law workshops.
- Student presentations and structured debate.
- Guided reading and legal reasoning exercises.

8. Assessment Methods

Method	Weight	Description
Final Written Exam	70%	Essay-type and case-based questions
Mid-Term Assignment/Presentation	20%	Individual or group-based
Participation and Engagement	10%	Constructive attendance, preparedness, contribution

Note: A minimum final exam score of 50% is required to pass.

9. A. Ethics

Students are reminded that all submitted work must comply with the University's academic [integrity policy](#). Plagiarism or unauthorised collaboration will result in disciplinary measures.

B. Course Policies

- Attendance is strongly encouraged.
- All assignments must be submitted on time via the designated platform.
- Special accommodations will be made for students with documented learning or health needs in accordance with university policy.

10. Use of Information and Communication Technologies (ICT)

- **Use in Teaching:** (e.g. digital slides, audiovisual aids, interactive tools like Mentimeter)
- **Use in Communication:** (e.g. E-learning platform, Zoom/Google Meet for office hours)
- **Digital Resources:** (e.g. online legal databases, podcasts, video lectures)

11. Bibliography

- Books/E-Books

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Faist, T., and Schade, J. (eds), *Disentangling Migration and Climate Change: Methodologies, Political Discourses and Human Rights* (Dordrecht: Springer, 2013)

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Finotelli, Claudia & Ponzo, I. (2023). *Migration Control Logics and Strategies in Europe* (e-book) (C. Finotelli & I. Ponzo, Eds.). Springer International Publishing.
<https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-031-26002-5>

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- Databases

Westlaw UK Academic	https://law.auth.gr/en/subscription-to-electronic-databases-2/
HeinOnline Academic Core and Kluwer Law International Journal Library	https://law.auth.gr/en/subscription-to-electronic-databases-2/
Beck-online PREMIUM	https://law.auth.gr/en/subscription-to-electronic-databases-2/
O.U.P Oxford Public International Law	https://law.auth.gr/en/subscription-to-electronic-databases-2/
O.U.P Max Planck Encyclopedia of Comparative Constitutional Law	https://law.auth.gr/en/subscription-to-electronic-databases-2/
Dalloz.fr	https://law.auth.gr/en/subscription-to-electronic-databases-2/
JURIS Zusatzmodul Hochschulen, BGB Staudinger Online	https://law.auth.gr/en/subscription-to-electronic-databases-2/
Kluwer Law Online (30 journals)	https://law.auth.gr/en/subscription-to-electronic-databases-2/

IAReporter. Investment Arbitration Report	https://law.auth.gr/en/subscription-to-electronic-databases-2/
Cambridge Core (Law)	https://www.cambridge.org/core/browse-subjects/law
EBSCO	https://research.ebsco.com/c/quc7ji/search/advanced/filters?autoCorrect=y&isDashboardExpanded=true
EP Library	European Parliament Library EU Policies on Migration and Asylum
ProQuest Central	https://www.proquest.com/central/topicpaths/AbiGlobal_business/0?accountid=8359#0
Springer link	https://link.springer.com/
Taylor & Francis e-books	https://www.taylorfrancis.com/search?subject=SCLW
Taylor & Francis e-journals	https://www.tandfonline.com/subjects/law
The Making of Modern Law: Legal Treatises 1800-1926 (Gale)	https://go.gale.com/ps/start.do?p=MOML&u=arist&cookieConsent=true&analyticsOptout=false&aty=ip
Wiley online Library	https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/action/showPublications?startPage=&ConceptID=85