

Aristotle University of Thessaloniki

Faculty of Law

Bachelor of Laws (LL.B.)

Course Syllabus

1. Course Information

- **Title:** Environmental Law
- **Code:** LLB34
- **ECTS:** 5
- **Hours per week:** 3
- **Academic Year:** 4th
- **Teaching Period:** Spring Semester
- **Mode of Delivery:** Face-to-Face
- **Language of Instruction/Assessment:** English
- **Course Type:** Mandatory

2. Course Description

This course offers a comprehensive introduction to international, European, and domestic environmental law, with a focus on the legal principles, regulatory frameworks, and governance mechanisms developed to address environmental degradation and promote sustainability. It begins by examining the evolution and sources of international environmental law, before turning to the general principles that guide environmental policy and adjudication, including the polluter pays principle, the precautionary principle, prevention, and rectification at source. Students will explore the concept of sustainable development as both a normative and operational tool for balancing environmental protection with socio-economic objectives, as reflected in treaty law, case law, and soft law instruments. The course further addresses the institutional framework for combatting climate change at international and European level, analysing the roles of

the UNFCCC, the Paris Agreement, and the EU Climate Law. It then turns to environmental licensing, Environmental Impact Studies (EIS), and the regulation of greenhouse gas emissions and energy transition policies, including emissions trading, carbon pricing, and renewable energy obligations. Issues of biodiversity protection, water, waste, and air quality regulation are examined within the EU context, alongside legal tools for environmental liability, compliance, and access to justice. The course also explores the geopolitical dimensions of sustainable development, including climate security, and considers the legal framework surrounding the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), financing for development, and green or sustainable finance. Finally, emerging responses such as circular economy models and rights of nature are analysed as potential paradigms for future environmental governance.

3. Keywords

Environmental Principles, Sustainable Development, Climate Change Law, Climate Security, Environmental Impact Study, Renewable Energy Transition, Biodiversity Protection, Green Financing

4. Learning Outcomes

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

1. **Identify and explain** the fundamental principles, sources, and historical development of international, European, and domestic environmental law. (*Remembering / Understanding*)
2. **Interpret** the concept of sustainable development and assess its normative and legal role in environmental governance frameworks. (*Understanding / Evaluating*)
3. **Analyse** the institutional architecture governing environmental protection, including bodies and instruments at international, EU, and national levels. (*Analysing*)
4. **Apply** environmental law principles and procedural rules to real-world scenarios, particularly in the context of environmental licencing and impact assessment. (*Applying*)
5. **Evaluate** the effectiveness of regulatory responses to environmental challenges, with particular reference to climate change mitigation, biodiversity conservation, and pollution control. (*Evaluating*)

6. **Critically assess** the relationship between environmental sustainability, climate security, and global justice. (*Evaluating*)
7. **Examine** the legal and policy framework for achieving the SDGs and promoting sustainable or green finance, including ESG obligations. (*Analysing / Evaluating*)
8. **Formulate** coherent legal arguments and policy recommendations that integrate environmental considerations across sectors. (*Creating*)

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 Environmental Law: Evolution, Sources, and General Principles.** From national to transnational regulation; key principles including the polluter pays principle, the precautionary principle, prevention, and sustainability.
2. **Introduction to Sustainable Development – The Concept of Sustainability.** Historical emergence and evolution of the sustainability concept; legal significance in international and EU law; judicial and policy integration.
3. **Environmental Governance: Public Authorities, Regulatory Instruments, and Stakeholders.** The role of state agencies, EU institutions, international bodies, and private actors; instruments of environmental rulemaking and enforcement.

4. **Environmental Licensing and Permitting Procedures.** Administrative procedures for authorising environmentally significant activities; legal standards for transparency, participation, and oversight.
5. **Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA): Legal Basis and Practice.** EU Directive on EIA, procedural requirements, case law, and domestic implementation, including examples from Greek legal practice.
6. **Institutional Framework for Combatting Climate Change.** Architecture of climate institutions including the UNFCCC, IPCC, Paris Agreement, and EU-level frameworks; roles, mandates, and coordination.
7. **Climate Change Law: Global Context and European Climate Regulation.** Substantive legal obligations under international and EU climate instruments; the European Climate Law and the “Fit for 55” legislative package.
8. **Regulation of Greenhouse Gas Emissions and Energy Transition.** Emissions Trading System (ETS), carbon pricing, renewable energy targets, and energy efficiency measures under EU and national law.
9. **Protection of Biodiversity and Natural Habitats under EU and Domestic Law.** The Habitats and Birds Directives, Natura 2000, species protection, habitat conservation, and biodiversity mainstreaming strategies.
10. **Water, Waste, and Air Quality Regulation in the EU.** Overview of EU directives on environmental media; compliance mechanisms, enforcement, and integration into national environmental law.
11. **Geopolitics and Sustainable Development – Climate Security.** Environmental degradation and its implications for security and international stability; legal and policy responses at the intersection of climate and conflict.
12. **SDGs, Financing for Development & Green or Sustainable Financing.** The legal framework for implementing the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs); green bonds, climate finance, ESG obligations, and sustainable investment.
13. **Circular Economy and ESG Reporting in Environmental Law.** Legal instruments and EU strategies for sustainable production and consumption; corporate due diligence and environmental sustainability reporting.

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

Birnie, P. W., & Boyle, A. (1995). Basic documents on international law and the environment. Clarendon Press.

Boisson de Chazournes, L. (2005). Protection internationale de l'environnement (New ed., updated and expanded). Editions A. Pedone.

Calster, G. van, & Reins, L. (Eds.). (2021). The Paris Agreement on climate change: A commentary. Edward Elgar Publishing.

Case-Law Collections

Misonne, D., & De Clippele, M.-S. (Eds.). (2024). Les grands arrêts inspirants du droit de l'environnement. Larcier Intersentia.

Cullet, P., & Gowlland-Gualtieri, A. (2004). Key materials in international environmental law. Ashgate.

Dam-de Jong, D., & Sjöstedt, B. (Eds.). (2023). Research handbook on international law and environmental peacebuilding. Edward Elgar Publishing.

Dessler, A. E. (2022). Introduction to modern climate change (3rd ed.). Cambridge University Press.

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Krämer, L., & Badger, C. (2024). Krämer's EU environmental law (9th ed.). Hart Publishing.

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Nagtzaam, G., Van Hook, E., & Guilfoyle, D. (2020). International environmental law: A case study analysis. Routledge.

Onyeabor, E. (2024). Environmental law: International and regional African perspectives on law and management. Springer.

Olmos Giupponi, M. B. (2021). International environmental law compliance in context: Mechanisms and case studies. Routledge.

Prieur, M., Prieur, M., Martin, P., & Dejeant-Pons, M. (1998). Recueil francophone des textes internationaux en droit de l'environnement. Bruylant.

Protection de la nature. (1990). Protection de la nature. Direction des Journaux Officiels.

Rayfuse, R. (Ed.). (2023). Research handbook on international marine environmental law (2nd ed.). Edward Elgar Publishing.

Robb, C. A. R., & Bethlehem, D. (1999-2007). International environmental law reports: Vol. 1-5. ~~Early decisions~~. Cambridge University Press.

~~Robb, C. A. R., & Bethlehem, D. (2001). International environmental law reports: Vol. 2. Trade and environment. Cambridge University Press.~~

~~Robb, C. A. R., & Bethlehem, D. (2001). International environmental law reports: Vol. 3. Human rights and environment. Cambridge University Press.~~

~~Robb, C. A. R., & Palmer, A. (Eds.). (2004). International environmental law reports: Vol. 4. International environmental law in national courts. Cambridge University Press.~~

~~Robb, C. A. R., & Lee, K. (Eds.). (2007). International environmental law reports: Vol. 5. International environmental law in international tribunals. Cambridge University Press.~~

Sand, P. H. (Ed.). (2019). International environmental agreements (An Elgar Research Collection). Edward Elgar Publishing.

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Treaties and Documentary Collections

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Verschuuren, J. (Ed.). (2022). Research handbook on climate change adaptation law. Edward Elgar Publishing.

Weiss, E. B., Magraw, D. B., & Szasz, P. C. (1992). International environmental law: Basic instruments and references. Transnational Publishers.

- 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
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=SC LW
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