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Binding Guidelines for Writing a Paper in International Law

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A. General Comments

Seminar papers and final theses in public international law and European law are demanding academic studies that address a specific legal question using legal research methods. This means not only reviewing the relevant literature and summarizing the findings (descriptive work) but also engaging critically with the key primary and secondary sources (analytical). To produce a successful paper/thesis, a well structured and methodical approach is essential.

The following guide provides stylistic and substantive advice, including the formal requirements for structure, organization, footnotes, and the bibliography. It also includes a sample of the cover page, the statement of authorship and guidelines for the oral presentation.

Wishing you success and enjoyment in your academic work!

I. Formalities

The following margins must be observed when setting up the pages for seminar papers:

- top margin: 2 cm;
- bottom margin: 2 cm;
- right margin: 2 cm;
- left margin: 4 cm.

For BA and MA theses, please use the same margins. Since you will need to print your thesis, you may use the book layout if the pages are to be printed double-sided.

The paper should be written in justified text with a font size of 12 pt, 1.5 line spacing and 6 pt for spacing between paragraphs. Footnotes, however, should use a font size of 10 pt with single-line spacing. Times New Roman is to be used as the font for both the text and the footnotes. The text must be justified, including hyphenation. To ensure visual coherence, you must also observe the rules regarding “widows and orphans”.

The pages must be numbered, with pages outside of the actual content, e.g., the abstract, content outline, list of abbreviations, bibliography, or statement of authorship, numbered in Roman numerals (after the main content, the numbering with Roman numerals does not start from the beginning, but continues consecutively!). The cover page is counted but does not have a page number. The main content must be numbered in Arabic numerals.

Names of persons, ships, and cases, as well as Latin expressions, should be written in *italics* in the text, e.g., *lex specialis*, *inter alia*, *Armed Activities on the Territory of the Congo (Democratic Republic of the Congo v. Uganda)*.

En dashes (–) and hyphens (-) must be distinguished from one another – this must be observed.

Formal and linguistic errors will affect the grade.

II. Length of the Paper

The length of your paper may vary. Unless otherwise specified, the following requirements are mandatory:

- seminar papers: exactly 20 pages;
- Bachelor thesis: max. 6500 words;
- Master thesis: 50 – 80 pages.

The length of the papers only refers to the main content (see Chapter A., Section V.) but excluding the cover page, abstract, table of contents, list of abbreviations, bibliography, appendix, and statement of authorship.

III. Components of the Paper

In addition to the cover page, the paper must contain an abstract, an outline, a list of abbreviations (if applicable), the main content, a bibliography, an appendix (if applicable), and the statement of authorship. The cover page must be placed first, followed by the abstract, the outline, the list of abbreviations, the main content, the bibliography, the appendix, and finally, the statement of authorship.

If publicly inaccessible laws or similar sources are used in the paper, these must be attached as an appendix after the paper.

IV. Abstract

An abstract is a concise summary of the paper, usually a paragraph (200-250 words) in length. It typically includes the specific topic of the research, the main questions or issues addressed, the research or analytical methods used, the key findings or arguments, and the significance or implications of those findings or arguments. The abstract should be self-contained, allowing the reader to understand the core points without reading the entire paper. There is no need to cite references here; the abstract should focus on summarizing the research, findings, and arguments.

V. Structuring the Main Content of the Paper

The main content usually consists of an introduction, a main part, and a conclusion.

Introduction

The main content begins with a short introduction in which the topic and specific research interests are presented and defined. The introduction should be about 1 – 2 pages long and address the following aspects:

- present the topic: explain the chosen topic;
- relevance of the topic: why is this important;
- objective and research question: what is the paper intended to answer or investigate;
- methodology: how will the topic be approached (e.g., doctrinal, historical, political, or comparative legal analysis); and,
- overview of the structure/contents: briefly describe how the paper is organized.

Main Part

The main body is the most extensive part of the paper/thesis and deals intensively with the research question. Its structure should consist of several sections and subsections that are coherent, that means, logically connected and inherently consistent.

Skillful paragraph structuring will effectively highlight key points and ideas, making the arguments easier to follow and understand. Typically, the *status quo* should be presented, meaning that relevant laws, regulations, or court decisions important to the topic must be explained. This is usually followed by a critical discussion of existing legal norms, practical examples, and scholarly

positions. If the study builds on existing research, the connection to current scholarship and the paper's stance should be explained – for example, whether it confirms or questions existing opinions.

If specific case examples are used, they should preferably be integrated illustratively into the broader analysis. A strict separation between theoretical considerations and practical case studies is rarely necessary.

It is important to ensure that key terms – both vague legal concepts and non-legal concepts – are clearly defined, if necessary.

Conclusion

At the end of the paper, there should be a well-structured conclusion that both evaluates the main findings and offers a forward-looking perspective. Thus, the conclusion summarizes the findings and provides final answers to the research question formulated at the beginning of the paper. It should concisely highlight the key results. If appropriate, it may also include an outlook on expected developments, further questions, or future research perspectives.

The conclusion should not introduce fundamentally new findings and discussions, as these should have already been discussed in the main body of the paper.

The conclusion should likewise be about 1 – 2 pages in length.

VI. Criteria for Academic Work

- systematic work: a logical, stringent, and topic-oriented structure (“structure, structure, structure”).
- comprehensive presentation: critical reflection on the legal problems associated with the topic, based on a thorough evaluation of the literature.
- objective reasoning: formation of logical and convincing chains of argumentation.
- scientific integrity: properly marking ideas that do not originate from the author.
- development of new insights.

VII. Style

- concise: correct emphasis with no repetitions; be only as abstract as necessary
- simple: avoid nested sentences and use uniform structures.
- clear: ensure logical, stringent and clear formulation.
- precise: use legal terms accurately and adhere to grammar and spelling rules.
- factual: present information in a neutral and objective manner; avoid colloquial terms.
- goal-driven: maintain a throughline (“Roter Faden”) in the thematic structure, provide brief summaries at the end of major sections, and make effective use of topic sentences (see: [Leipzig University – Paragraphing](#))

B. Directories

I. Structure

The outline must bear the heading “Content”, “Outline” or “Table of Content”. It should only include the page numbers where the respective sections begin. Page numbers should not be given in the form “from-to” (e.g., Introduction.....1-2), while pages outside the actual content should be indicated with Roman numerals.

Points at the same outline level must be formatted consistently. The usual outline symbols are:

- A.
- I.
- 1.
- a)
- aa)

Using informative headings will help to organize the content, including interim results. Footnotes should not go beyond the fifth level. Only in rare and absolutely necessary cases may you extend the levels of headings with: (a) and (aa).

The abstract is not part of the content outline and should be placed directly after the cover page. It follows that the outline begins with the list of abbreviations.

The structure should be designed so that the line of reasoning is already apparent from the content. Intermediate results do not need to be presented as separate subsections – but they can still be helpful. What is essential, however, are clear and understandable transitions between the individual sections of the paper.

Furthermore, according to the rule “B follows A”, heading I. must be followed by heading II., or sub-heading 1 must be followed by sub-heading 2.

A paragraph title should never immediately follow the next one in the written text (main content); at least a short sentence should be inserted between them to guide the reader.

II. Use of Abbreviations

Abbreviations may be used to save space and time, to avoid repetition of long words and phrases, or simply to conform to conventional usage. The separate list of abbreviations should be placed after the outline/content.

Spell out the full term at its first mention in the main text (not in the footnotes), indicate its abbreviation in parenthesis immediately after it and use the abbreviation from then on consistently throughout the paper. However, this rule does not apply to acronyms that would be familiar to most readers (e.g., “i.e.”, or “vs.”).

Do not invent any abbreviations, e.g., international organizations or national ministries usually provide their official abbreviation on their websites, and abbreviations of treaties can be found in official databases, etc. Journal abbreviations should not be included here.

C. Bibliography

I. General information

It is recommended to cite your sources continuously during the writing process. This helps prevent having to search for sources again under time pressure at the end of your process and reduces the risk of citation errors.

To better organize your writing process, it is advisable to use appropriate citation software. Keep in mind that it takes time to use these programs properly – so if you plan to use them in your writing process, start familiarizing yourself with them as early as possible. If you use citation software, make sure to proofread the footnotes, or entries in the final paper and adjust them to the Binding Guidelines. The most commonly used software are:

- Citavi
- Zotero (recommended – free access)

Additionally, please note: Even though the information provided for the bibliography and the footnotes below may appear very similar, there are important differences that must be observed.

The following citation rules are binding and must be implemented without exception! Adhering to the citation style makes your sources easily traceable and your work more comprehensible to the reader. Errors and/or deviations will affect your grade.

Content

The bibliography forms the basis for the short citation method. It contains all literature from all authors and their works listed in the text of the paper, but only these. Literature that has been used solely for reading purposes but not included in the content of the paper should not be cited. This includes, *inter alia*, articles from Wikipedia or the Federal Agency for Civic Education.

Also, the following should not be cited in the bibliography:

- court decisions
- collections of decisions
- laws
- parliamentary documents
- other official documents (e.g., UN documents, international treaties)

Design

A separate subdivision into categories such as “Textbooks”, “Commentaries”, “Primary Sources”, “Secondary Sources” etc., is not to be made.

The entries should be listed in alphabetical order according to the author's last name, with the first name placed after it. The suffix “von” belongs to the surname and is placed before it. However, the name is not entered under “v” but under the first letter of the other part of the surname:

von Arnould, Andreas, Völkerrecht, 3rd ed., Heidelberg et al. 2016.

von Bogdandy, Armin, The Emergence of European Society through Public Law: A Hegelian and Anti-Schmittian Approach, Oxford 2024.

If several works by the same author are mentioned, you must decide on a classification system. The entries can either be listed chronologically (recommended) or alphabetically according to the first main word in the title. The same system should be used for each author. The surname and first name need only be mentioned once; for subsequent works, “*idem*” (= the same) should be used. For works by the same team of authors, the abbreviation is also “*idem*” (= same).

General Form of the Entries

The author's name (without academic or other titles) is followed by the full title of the work – use consistent capitalization for titles, the volume, the edition, the place of publication, the year of publication and, in the case of journals and commemorative publications, the page numbers at which the contributions begin and end, and finally a period. For clarity, use a hanging indent of 0.7 – 1 cm for the second and subsequent lines of reference (see below). Use single-line spacing with 6 pt spacing between the individual entries.

If there are two places of publication, both are named and connected with a slash (/) without a space. If there are more than two places of publication, only the first is named, and “*et al.*” is added. Please use the English names consistently, e.g., Köln/Munich – wrong; Cologne/Munich – correct. The publisher is not named, nor is the series in which the work was published.

If a work has several authors, they are listed in the order in which they appear. To distinguish between double names, the names should be separated by a slash (/). If there are more than two authors or publishers, only one name (the first author) may be given, with “*et al.*” added. Example:

Kingreen, Thorsten/Poscher, Ralf, Grundrechte, Staatsrecht II, 32nd ed., Heidelberg 2016.

Taulbee, James Larry/von Glahn, Gerhard, Law Among Nations, An Introduction to Public International Law, 12th ed., New York 2022.

Stein, Thorsten et al., Völkerrecht, 14th ed., Munich 2017.

The title of a book should be taken from the title page, not the cover. If a name or title contains letters or characters that are not part of the English alphabet, these must be transcribed exactly as used on the title page: *Milanović* (correct) instead of *Milanovic* (incorrect).

If several volumes of the same work by the same author are cited, only one reference should be made, in which the volumes are listed one after the other and separated by semicolons (;). The year and place of publication should be repeated, as they may differ. Example:

Krey, Volker, Special Criminal Law, Vol. 1: Special Part Excluding Property Offenses, 16th ed., Stuttgart et al. 2015; Vol. 2: Property Offenses, 17th ed., Stuttgart et al. 2015.

If there is only one edition (not volume!) of a given work, the edition number is omitted (not “1st ed.”). The edition must be stated without additions such as “newly revised,” etc., and should be abbreviated as “ed.”.

If a page number, paragraph or marginal number is given, “p.” (page number), “para.” (paragraph number), or “mn.” (marginal number) must always be placed in front of it (see exceptions below for, e.g., journals). In cases where, for example, a commentary or judgment provides both a page number and a paragraph/marginal number, it is recommended to include both, e.g., “p. 556, mn. 17”, or “p. 134, para. 64”.

II. Reference Guide

Monographs

The minimum content of an entry: surname (*italic*), given name (*italic*), title, place year:

Ipsen, Jörn, Staatsrecht I, Staatsorganisationsrecht, 28th ed., Munich 2016.

Hernández, Gleider, International Law, 3rd ed., Oxford 2025.

Dederer, Hans-Georg/Schweizer, Michael, Staatsrecht III, Staatsrecht, Völkerrecht, Europarecht, 11th ed., Heidelberg 2016.

Collected Works

Collected works (yearbooks, edited volumes, commemorative publications, etc.) include contributions by various authors under the editorship of one or more editors.

These are cited under the name of the author of the cited article (both surname and given name in *italic*), followed by the full title of the article. The word “in:” is followed by the name of the editor (*italic*), indicated by the abbreviation “ed.” in parentheses (if multiple editors, use “eds.”) and the title of the collected work. The first name of the editor may be omitted. The first page of the article must be provided and the last page can be included if desired:

Krieger, Heike, Die Zuständigkeit *ratione temporis* internationaler Streitbeilegungsinstanzen, in: *Ipsen, Jörn/Schmidt-Jortzig, Eckhard* (eds.), Recht – Staat – Gemeinwohl: Festschrift für Dietrich Rauschning, Köln et al. 2001, p. 577 – 597.

Friauf, Karl Heinrich, Polizei- und Ordnungsrecht, in: *Schmidt-Abmann* (ed.), Besonderes Verwaltungsrecht, 12th ed., Berlin/New York 2003, p. 105.

Commentaries

Commentaries are treated similarly to other collective works. The main difference is that the individual authors are not listed in the bibliography, but only in the respective footnote citations. The exception is when only one contribution by a single author is cited.

When citing commentaries, if multiple authors of the commentary are referenced, the citation begins with the author of the cited article (both surname and given name in *italic*), followed by the full title of the commentary, the volume (if applicable), the articles or individual commentaries, the edition, place and year:

von der Groeben, Hans et al. (eds.), Commentary on the EU/EC-Treaty, Vol. 2/I, Arts. 85-87 TEC, 5th ed., Baden-Baden 1999.

If only one contribution is cited, the following citation style must be used:

Aust, Helmuth Philipp, Article 51, in: *Simma, Bruno et al.* (eds.), Charter of the United Nations: A Commentary, Volume II, 4th ed., Oxford 2024, p. 1769 – 1820.

Journals

The author's name (surname and given name in *italic*), the title of the article, the volume (and issue – if applicable), the journal (in the usual abbreviated form, or if it is not available, write it out in full; do not invent journal abbreviations), the year, and the opening and closing pages of the article should be listed here. The same system should be applied to both journals and

anthologies. It has become customary to indicate the page number with “p.” only for, e.g., monographs and contributions in commemorative publications, but not for articles in legal journals. Journal articles are not cited with “in:”. Example:

Nolte, Georg, Freedom of Advertising and the European Convention on Human Rights, *RabelsZ* 1999, 507 – 519.

Yip, Ka Lok, Demystifying the Right to Life During the Conduct of Hostilities: Theories, Methods, Practices, 36(1) *EJIL* 2025, 77 – 111.

Articles from Popular Magazines

Only in exceptional cases will it be necessary to cite non-scientific magazines. Articles from magazines such as SPIEGEL and GEO are treated similarly to articles from academic journals. In these cases, it may be necessary to additionally state the issue and/or the number, as each issue usually begins with page 1 again.

If a magazine does not have an abbreviation, the name should be written out in full – do not invent abbreviations.

Fleischner, Frank, Everything Written Off?, *FOCUS* 17/2008, p. 198 – 207.

Newspapers

If the author is known, the article should be included in the bibliography under the author's name. If the author is not known, the article should be sorted under the title, or “N.N.” can be used instead of the author’s name. For better clarity, “N.N.” is recommended.

Abbreviated names do not need to be included. However, it is usually possible to find the author by referring to the publisher's homepage. In contrast to articles in specialist journals, both the number and the date must be provided.

Format: surname (*italic*), given name (*italic*), title of the article, name of the newspaper, number and date of publication, page number(s).

Hermann, Günther, The Media Age: Monopolists on the Rise, *Süddeutsche Zeitung*, No. 237 of 13/14 October 2001, p. 2.

General Internet Sources

Works from the Internet should generally be cited in the same way as their corresponding literary genres. The following information must be included: author (*italic*), title, full address (URL) and date of last retrieval. Additionally, the status of editing may be noted (if applicable).

The Internet address should not be broken to avoid misunderstandings. Word processing programs typically format Internet addresses as clickable links, displaying them in blue and underlined; this formatting must be removed.

Particular care must be taken to ensure that Internet sources meet scientific standards. While Wikipedia and introductory presentations by the Federal Agency for Civic Education can be useful for familiarizing yourself with a topic, they should not be cited.

Nolte, Georg/Krieger, Heike, The International Rule of Law - Rise or Decline? - Points of Departure, KFG Working Paper Series No. 1, <http://www.kfgintlaw.de/PDF-ftp-Ordner/KFG%20Working%20Paper%20No.%201.pdf> (accessed on 31 January 2017).

Note: Journals accessed online, as well as online versions of monographs or commentaries, are not considered online sources and should be cited according to the citation rules outlined above.

Blog Posts

Blog posts are cited similarly to journal articles, but they are still considered online sources. The format for citing blog posts contains: surname (*italic*), given name (*italic*), title, blog/journal abbreviation year, full address (URL), and date of last retrieval:

Fofana, Idriss, Teaching International Law When the Ground is Moving, EJIL:TALK! 2025, <https://www.ejiltalk.org/teaching-international-law-when-the-ground-is-moving/> (accessed on 3 December 2025).

Online Newspapers and Magazines

Nowadays, it is common to read online newspapers or magazines. In such cases, they are treated as online sources. The format is as follows: surname (*italic*), given name (*italic*), title of the article, name of the newspaper, date of publication, full address (URL), and date of last retrieval. Examples:

Kireev, Maxim, Alles für Putins Öl, DIE ZEIT, 26 February 2026, <https://www.zeit.de/politik/ausland/2026-02/viktor-orban-ungarn-russisches-oel-eu-wolodymyr-selenskyj> (accessed on 26 February 2026).

Ireland, Olivia, Why Did US and Israel Attack Iran and How Long Could the War Last?, BBC, 3 March 2026, <https://www.bbc.com/news/articles/cx2dyz6p3weo> (accessed on 3 March 2026).

Grey Literature/University Publications

Grey literature refers to materials that have not (yet) been formally published. This can include lectures by professors, papers, minutes of meetings, scripts, etc. Since these sources are not published, readers cannot easily refer to them and verify the citation. Therefore, grey literature should only be cited if there is no comparable published source available. Only texts that meet academic standards should be cited, and these sources should be attached to the paper as an appendix.

Dissertations and other university theses are treated as monographs. If they are not distributed by a publisher, additional notes should be included. In this case, the note “Ph.D. dissertation” or a similar designation should be provided, along with the location of the university where the degree was awarded:

Bachhiesl, Christian, Minority Protection in Europe Using the Example of the German Minority in Poland, Ph.D. dissertation KF. Univ. Graz, Graz 1995.

D. Footnotes

I. Citing for Reference Purposes

Plagiarism will result in a grade of “5.0 – Insufficient.”

All external assertions or opinions of a factual or legal nature must be substantiated by a citation. Quotations, whether verbatim or analogous, must be indicated by a footnote. Literal quotations must be marked with quotation marks. Longer verbatim quotations (longer than 2 lines) should be emphasized by indenting the text and using *italics* (incl. quotation marks).

Whenever possible, text in footnotes that exceeds the citation of references should be avoided. Legal assessments and statements on the topic, in particular, should only be included in the main body of the text.

Avoid citing direct quotations taken from secondary sources. If, for example, a scholar cites a passage from an ICJ judgment in a journal article, please use the original source – the ICJ judgment itself. It can also help you avoid repeating someone else's mistake (e.g., wrong page numbers in the secondary literature).

The wording of the law must not be quoted. For example, stating, “Theft under Section 242 I StGB requires a taking away” is incorrect, as the requirement for taking away is already specified in Section 242. Similarly, generally known facts, such as “Germany borders France”, do not need to be substantiated.

II. Footnote Placement

Footnotes are usually placed at the end of the sentence, after the period. This indicates that the entire sentence, or paragraph is referenced. If the footnote is placed before the period/comma/phrase, it means that only the last statement, part of the sentence, or subordinate clause is documented by the footnote. A footnote may thus be necessary in the middle of a sentence to avoid an incorrect statement of fact:

Incorrect

Taking away is the breach of another person's possession and the establishment of new, not necessarily the offender's own possession, so T has taken it away.^{fn}

Correct:

Taking away is the breach of another person's possession and the establishment of new, not necessarily the offender's own possession.^{fn} Here, T has broken O's possession and established his own, i.e., taken it away.

or

Taking away is the breach of another person's possession and the establishment of new, not necessarily the offender's own possession^{fn}, so T has broken O's possession and established his own, i.e., taken it away.

In the cited source, there is no mention of T; instead, the topic is treated abstractly.

III. General Form

Each footnote begins with a capital letter (exceptions are possible, e.g., von Arnould) and ends with a period. Individual references are separated by a semicolon (;).

If a reference pertains to more than one page, this should be indicated using the abbreviation “f.” for “following” (i.e., the indicated page and the next one) or “ff.” for “following pages” (i.e., more than 2 pages). If a reference with ff. indicates more than three pages, clarity may be reduced. Therefore, for references covering more than 3 pages, it is recommended to give the exact page range, e.g., p. 210 – 215. The page number(s) must be preceded by “p.” (recommended, see Chapter C, Section I.); however, this is unusual for journal citations (see Chapter C, Section II. and below).

The introduction of a footnote with the word “compare” (abbreviated to “cf.”) or “see” should generally be omitted. Either an assertion is based on the cited source, in which case the word “compare” is superfluous, or the reference is intended to encourage the reader to look up a comparable situation or to explore a question that has only been touched upon. This can be useful in exceptional cases but should not be overused.

If there are several citations in a footnote, a fixed order should be followed consistently across all footnotes. Case law should be cited before the literature. Within these two groups, the references can be arranged either chronologically (recommended) or alphabetically. If there are multiple instances, they should be ordered according to the hierarchy of the courts, with the highest court listed first.

IV. Court Decisions

A distinction must be made regarding whether and how a decision has been published. Only one reference is given in each case. The order presented here reflects the priority.

Publication in an Official Collection

For publications in the official collection, the usual short citation is to be used. The page number in the citation is always the first page of the decision, followed by the page on which the cited statement appears in brackets:

BVerfGE, 15, p. 249 (255).

Publications elsewhere

In the case of publications elsewhere, such as in journals, the relevant source and page number must be included:

BVerfG, NJW 2001, p. 1343 (1344).

Unpublished Decisions

For unpublished decisions, the court is named first. The decision is identified as a judgment (J.) or an order (O.), along with the date of pronouncement. Judgments are to be identified by the file number. The names of the disputing parties are not mentioned in decisions of German courts:

BVerfG, O. of 28 July 1987 - 1 BvR 842/87.

Legal Documents

Legal documents are also indicated by the legal document number:

OVG Münster, J. of 25 November 1992 - 22 A 2595/92, Juris Dok. Nr. 406623.

Decisions of Foreign Courts

Judgments of foreign courts are cited in the manner customary in the country of origin:

Operation Dismantle Inc v. The Queen [1985] 1 S.C.R., 441 (467).

Mariano v. United States, 605 F.2d 721 (4th Cir. 1979), 331.

Decisions of International Courts

The usual citation method should be used. Collections of judgments or the homepage of the courts usually contain a suggested citation:

ICJ, *East Timor Case (Portugal v. Australia)*, Judgment, I.C.J. Reports 1995, 90 (99, para. 20).

ICJ, *Obligations of States in Respect of Climate Change*, Advisory Opinion, 2025, p. 10, para. 8.

ICJ, *Obligations of States in Respect of Climate Change*, Separate Opinion of Vice-President Sebutinde, 2025, p. 2, para. 3.

ICJ, *Case Concerning Armed Activities on the Territory of the Congo (DRC v. Rwanda)*, Judgment, 2005, p. 12, para. 11.

A distinction must be made for ECJ decisions. Decisions handed down up to 2012 must be cited according to the official compilation:

ECJ, Case C-(265/95), *Commission v France* [1997] ECR I-6959, mn. 278 – 280.

In 2012, the ECJ discontinued the official collection; since then, citations have been made using the so-called “ECLI” number (European Case Law Identifier):

ECJ, Case C-(392/15), *Commission v. Hungary* ECLI:EU:C:2017:73.

Judgements of the European Court of Human Rights before 1996:

ECtHR, *McCann and others v. The United Kingdom*, J. of 27 September 1995, 9 Series A Nr. 324, 123 (para. 145).

Judgements of the European Court of Human Rights after 1996:

ECtHR, *Coyne v. The United Kingdom*, J. of 24 September 1997, Rep. 1997-V, 1842 (para. 456).

If judgments of the European Court of Human Rights have not yet been published in the official collection, they should be cited as follows:

ECtHR, *Rozhkov v. Russia*, No. 38898/04, para. 44.

If none of the citation rules for the ECtHR judgements above apply – e.g., because the report number is not available/does not exist – they should be cited as follows:

ECtHR, *Case of Europa Way S.R.L. v. Italy*, J. of 27 November 2025, App. No(s). 64356/19, p. 15, para. 59.

Note: The App. No(s). can be found under “Case Details” on the official court website, under the corresponding case.

WTO-Panel und Appellate Body Reports

The following citation should be used for WTO-Panel und Appellate Body Reports; WTO (abbreviation), name of the case (*italic*), “Report of the Panel/Appellate Body,” date of the decision, case registration number, and relevant page number and paragraphs:

WTO, United States – Import Prohibition of Certain Shrimp and Shrimp Products, Report of the Panel of 15 May 1998, WT/DS58/R, para. 35 ff.

WTO, United States – Import Prohibition of Certain Shrimp Products, Report of the Appellate Body of 12 October 1998, WT/DS58/AB/R, para. 13.

V. Literature

Sources cited in the bibliography should be provided as short citations. The author's last name must be presented in *italics*; however, it should not be emphasized in bold type.

When citing multiple pages of a work that are not consecutive, they should be separated by a comma, e.g.,

J. Ipsen, Constitutional Law I, p. 17, 63f., 75 – 85.

Monographs

In the case of individual publications, the author(s) (*italics*), the (abbreviated) title of the work, and the page or margin number must always be stated. If there are more than two authors, the abbreviation “*et al.*” may be used. The first name, possibly in abbreviated form, should be provided if there is a risk of confusion:

J. Ipsen, Constitutional Law I, mn. 352.

K. Ipsen, Soziale Dienstleistungen, p. 12f.

Verdross/Simma, Universal Public International Law, 468, para. 764.

Dixon et al., Cases & Materials on International Law, p. 56.

Collected Works

In anthologies, such as commemorative publications or conference proceedings, it is possible to identify which sections were written by which author. The individual contributions are edited (by one editor or more editors) and published together in a single book. They are cited as follows: Author of the contribution (*italic*), in: editor/s (ed./eds.) (*italic*), title or keyword from the title of the entire work, and the page from which the quotation was taken:

Friauf, in: *Schmidt-Abmann* (ed.), Besonderes Verwaltungsrecht, p. 110.

Epping, in: *Ipsen* (ed.), *Völkerrecht*, mn. 157.

Wood, in: *Ruiz-Fabri et al.*, *Select Proceedings of the European Society of International Law*, p. 162.

Commentaries

In the case of quotations from commentaries, the author (*italics*), the article, in: the publisher, the title of the commentary (abbreviated), the relevant page and the marginal number from which the quotation originates must be stated. A comma must be placed between the page and the marginal number:

Aust, Article 51, in: *Simma et al.* (eds.), *Charter of the United Nations*, p. 1774, mn. 3.

Journal Articles

The name of the author (*italics*), the volume (including issue), the journal in its usual citation style, the year or period of publication, the opening page and the page from which the citation originates must be stated. The page from which the citation is taken can be separated by a comma, but a round bracket is more commonly used.

Journal articles should always be cited in the same way:

Canaris, JuS 1989, 161 (162).

Canaris, JuS 1989, 161, 162.

Yip, 36(1) EJIL 2025, 77 (100).

Articles from Popular Magazines

In the case of articles from popular magazines, the author (*italics*), the name of the newspaper (in the usual abbreviation, if applicable), the date of publication and the page of the article must be stated. If the article spans several pages, the first page and the page from which the quotation was taken must be listed:

Fleischner, FOCUS 17/2008, p. 198f.

Newspapers

In the case of articles from daily and weekly newspapers, the author (*italics*), the name of the newspaper (in the usual abbreviation, if applicable), the date of publication and the page of the article must be stated. If the article spans several pages, the first page and the page from which the quotation was taken must be listed:

Hanfeld, FAZ from 25 June 2004, p. 46.

General Internet Sources

In the case of internet sources, the author(s) (*italics*), the (abbreviated) title of the work, and the page or margin number must always be stated. If the work is listed in the bibliography, a short citation can be used. In this case, the Internet address and the last access date must only be cited in the bibliography:

Nolte/Krieger, *The International Rule of Law*, p 4.

Source not mentioned in the bibliography:

Government Office for Hungarian Minorities Abroad, The Situation of Hungarians in Romania 2006, <http://www.hhrf.org/htmh/en/?menuid=0404> (last accessed on 18 January 2007).

Blog Posts

The name of the author (*italics*), the (possibly abbreviated) title of the work, the blog/journal in its usual citation style, the year of publication.

Fofana, Teaching International Law, EJIL:TALK! 2025.

Online Newspapers and Magazines

The name of the author (*italics*), the (possibly abbreviated) title of the work, the newspaper/magazine in its usual citation style, the year of publication.

Kireev, Alles für Putins Öl, DIE ZEIT, 2026.

Ireland, Why Did US and Israel Attack Iran, BBC, 2026.

Grey Literature/University Publications

In the case of grey literature, the author(s) (*italics*), the (abbreviated) title of the work, the type of literature, and the page or margin number must always be stated.:

Bachhiesl, Minority Protection in Europe, Ph.D. dissertation, 1995, p. 34.

VI. Official Documents

Official documents are cited with their full official title and document number or signature. In some cases, the place of publication/announcement (e.g., official gazette or similar) is also stated. Depending on the source, the author/creator (*italics*) and possibly the date are also included:

European Commission for Democracy Through Law (Venice Commission), Opinion on the International Legal Obligations of Council of Europe Member States in Respect of Secret Detention Facilities and Interstate Transport of Prisoners, CDL-AD(2006)009, C.f. 17 March 2006, mn. 154-160.

Foreign Policy Speech by the Minister for Foreign Affairs, Mr. A. S. Peacock in Parliament, 4 March 1976, in: 47 Australian Foreign Affairs Record 1976, 145-148.

Advisory Committee on the Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities, Second Opinion on Romania, ACFC/OP/II(2005)007, 5f.

International treaties are cited with the name of the treaty, the signatory states (if there are fewer than three), the place of signature (if applicable), the date of signature, the source (usually the UNTS number), the first page, and, if applicable, the page cited in brackets:

Agreement establishing certain seabed boundaries (with charts), Between Australia and Indonesia, Signed at Canberra, 18 May 1971, 974 UNTS 307 (309), Art. 5f.

UN documents are cited using the official name of the organ/institution that issued the document, followed by the document number/reference, the date, and the page and/or paragraph number. If the document has a specific or distinctive title, this should appear before the document number. The official title may also be abbreviated:

ECOSOC, E/CN.4/1992/30, 31 January 1992, p. 73, para. 277.

Extensive: *Commission on Human Rights*, Report by the Special Rapporteur, Mr. Amos Wako, Pursuant to Commission on Human Rights Resolution 1991/71, UN Doc E/CN.4/1992/30, 31 January 1992, p. 73, para. 277.

UNGA, A/RES/ES-11/1, 18 March 2022, p. 2, para. 2 – 5.

UNGA, Declaration on the Principles of International Law Concerning Friendly Relations and Co-operation Among States in Accordance with Charter of the United Nations (A/8082), Res. 2625 (XXV), 24 October 1970, para. 1.

Short Form: UNGA, Friendly Relations Declaration, Res. 2625 (XXV), 24 October 1970, para. 1.

If a treaty is cited to which the Federal Republic of Germany is a party and the treaty has already been incorporated into domestic law, it is sufficient to refer in the footnote to its publication in the “Bundesgesetzblatt” in the usual form, if necessary:

BGBL. 1975 II, 933.

VII. National Law

Generally known laws are cited using their usual abbreviations, e.g., BGB, StGB, GG, BVerfGG. Less well-known laws are cited with their full official title. An abbreviated version of the title is then placed in brackets after it:

Act on the Transfer of Shares in Volkswagenwerk-Gesellschaft mit beschränkter Haftung to Private Ownership (VW Privatization Act).

The date of issue of the law and the reference in the “Bundesgesetzblatt” are stated in a footnote. For further references to this lesser-known law, only the abbreviated version is used.

For older or non-German legal sources, other citation methods may be more common. It is advisable to follow the usual citation style in the country of origin. Relevant textbooks provide information on how to cite historical legal sources.

Documents published in the official journal of the EC should be cited in the footnotes as follows: Name of the document, “OJ EC No.”, reference letter and document number, date and page number (if applicable):

Directive No. 822/87, OJ EC No. L 84/1 f. 27 March 1987.

E. General Tips for Research and Writing

International law is, by definition, an international discipline. Therefore, it is problematic when only German-language sources are used in a work on international law. It is necessary to incorporate English-language literature. Typically, there will also be more English-language literature than German-language literature on most issues of international law.

It is beneficial if you can refer to other foreign-language literature in addition to English-language sources.

You should develop an understanding of the importance of different academic sources in international law. An international law textbook is not the most reliable source for a footnote in a seminar paper. Instead, the focus should be on important monographs, commentaries, Blog posts, and international journals. Of course, you can use textbooks to answer certain standard questions, or to clarify concepts of international law. However, you should not rely solely on one or two textbooks to address a specific question or aspect of your work.

Work as much as possible with primary sources in international law. If you can support your argument with a decision from the ICJ or another international court, this is preferable to citing literature. However, you should work directly with the primary sources; do not refer to the ICJ case law in the text and then provide a literature citation in the footnote.

Understandably, you will only be able to offer an independent examination of the customary international law character of a norm in very few cases within the framework of a seminar paper, even only rarely in bachelor's or master's theses. In these instances, you may often have to rely on the positions of the ICJ, other courts, or the literature. However, it will be positively evaluated if you work with primary sources of state practice and statements from which the *opinio juris* of the states can be inferred. For example, when discussing the legality of the use of force, it makes sense to evaluate the statements made by states before the UN Security Council.

Use examples, cases, stories and quotes to draw the reader in, but make sure you are also citing studies or theories to support your points. Additionally, acknowledge possible counter-points, and respond to them if you can.

There should be guiding text between the headings and subheadings to provide clarity and context for the reader. This text serves as a bridge, helping to connect the main ideas presented in the headings with the more detailed information in the subheadings. By offering a concise overview or summary, it enhances the reader's understanding of how the various sections relate to one another.

Including interim results is crucial for supporting the overall structure and flow of the content. These interim findings can help illustrate the progression of your argument or research, demonstrating how each section contributes to the final conclusion. They also allow the reader to track developments and understand the significance of the information being presented, making the content more engaging and easier to follow.

Demonstrate your critical analysis skills! Your writing should reflect your interpretation of the evidence and source material, showcasing how you have utilized that information to deepen your understanding and articulate your stance on the topic. To write critically, you must go beyond mere description; you should also highlight the significance of the events or findings you discuss.

Stay receptive to unexpected answers. Effective research centers on discovering answers to your questions – not merely confirming what you think you already know. Focusing solely on validation is a restrictive research approach, as it leads to selective information gathering and hinders your

ability to gain a comprehensive understanding of the subject. Approach your research with an open mind to maximize your learning experience.

For inspiration on what an excellent academic paper can look like, you can view the best-practice examples at the following links for:

- [Bachelor thesis](#),
- [Master thesis](#).

Best-practice examples for seminar papers can be found in the respective OPAL course for your seminar. Please keep in mind that these examples were created by university students and therefore may still contain errors. They also may conform to presently outdated guidelines.

Make sure that before the submission deadline you allow sufficient time to carefully proofread your paper – or have it proofread – to check for logical consistency and to correct any remaining grammatical, spelling, or stylistic errors. Also, be sure to review your footnotes once more and verify that all citation requirements have been met. “Empty” footnotes must be strictly avoided. Ensure that your paper meets all other formal requirements, includes a statement of authorship, and is submitted on time. If you are uncertain about any aspect, please seek clarification in good time with your supervisor.

I. Relevant Academic Journals and Yearbooks

There is an almost unmanageable number of specialized journals and yearbooks in international law. The list below represents only the “tip of the iceberg”, but it provides an indication of which journals are considered particularly influential in academic discourse.

AFDI	Annuaire français de droit international
AJIL	American Journal of International Law
AVR	Archiv des Völkerrechts
BYIL	British Yearbook of International Law
CJIL	Chinese Journal of International Law
Columbia JTL	Columbia Journal of Transnational Law
EJIL	European Journal of International Law
GlobCon	Global Constitutionalism
GoJIL	Goettingen Journal of International Law
GYIL	German Yearbook of International Law
Harvard JIL	Harvard Journal of International Law
ICLQ	International and Comparative Law Quarterly
ICON	International Journal of Constitutional Law
JCSL	Journal of Conflict and Security Law
LJIL	Leiden Journal of International Law
LRIL	London Review of International Law

Michigan JIL	Michigan Journal of International Law
NJIL	Nordic Journal of International Law
NRIL	Netherlands Review of International Law
NYIL	Netherlands Yearbook of International Law
NYU JILP	New York University Journal of International Law & Politics
RBDI	Revue belge de droit international
RDI	Revista de diritto internazionale
RGDIP	Revue générale de droit international public
Virginia JIL	Virginia Journal of International Law
Yale ILJ	Yale International Law Journal
ZaöRV	Zeitschrift für ausländisches öffentliches Recht und Völkerrecht

II. Blogs

Blogs are becoming increasingly widespread in international law. They serve as an important tool for staying up to date with current developments and can be cited for ongoing issues, *inter alia*:

- EJIL:Talk!: (www.ejiltalk.org)
- International Law Reporter: (<http://ilreports.blogspot.de/>)
- Just Security: (www.justsecurity.org)
- Opinio Juris: (www.opiniojuris.org)
- Völkerrechtsblog: (www.voelkerrechtsblog.org)
- Articles of War: (<https://lieber.westpoint.edu/articles-of-war/>)

However, for a question that you can back up with a literature citation, you must not resort to a blog!

III. Other Useful Links for Research

SLUB Dresden: Sächsische Staats- und Universitätsbibliothek, the starting point for research in the collections of TU Dresden.

HeinOnline: Database primarily containing US journals, accessible via the SLUB.

LexisNexis: Database primarily containing US journals, accessible via the SLUB.

www.mpil.de: OPAC of the library of the Max Planck Institute for Comparative Public Law and International Law in Heidelberg.

F. Example of a Cover Page

Seminar Paper/Master/Bachelor Thesis

on the topic:

**Sexual Violence and the Problem of Definition:
A Critical Analysis of Rape Legislation and Policy**

Seminar “Gender and War: Sexual Violence and
the Shifting Landscape of International Law”

Name: Maria Mustermann
Email: tu-dresden e-mail address
Student ID: XXXXXX
Study Program: B.A/M.A. Internationale Beziehungen (Specialization)
Year of enrolment: XXXX

First Supervisor: Prof. Dr. xxxx xxxx
Second Supervisor: xxxx xxxx (if applicable, e.g., BA/MA theses)
Date of submission: xxxx

G. Statement of Authorship

The statement of authorship ([accessible via the ZIS website](#)) must be attached not only to bachelor's and master's theses but also as the final page of your seminar paper.

Eidesstattliche Erklärung zur selbstständigen Verfassung der Abschlussarbeit

Bitte mit der Arbeit einreichen (*als letzte Seite in die Arbeit einbinden!*)

Hiermit erkläre ich, _____,
geboren am _____ in _____, dass ich die eingereichte
Abschlussarbeit mit dem Titel:

eigenständig erbracht habe, keine anderen als die angegebenen Quellen und Hilfsmittel benutzt und die aus fremden Quellen direkt oder indirekt übernommenen Gedanken (Texte, Textbausteine und/oder -fragmente) als solche kenntlich gemacht habe. Das gilt auch für die Verwendung künstlicher Intelligenz, sei es in Form eines textbasierten Dialogsystems (wie ChatGPT) oder auf andere Weise. Im Falle der Nutzung von generativer künstlicher Intelligenz habe ich die Prompts und deren jeweiligen Ergebnisse als Quelle im Anhang aufgeführt und entsprechend zitiert.

Die Arbeit habe ich in gleicher oder ähnlicher Form oder auszugsweise noch keiner Prüfungsbehörde zu Prüfungszwecken vorgelegt. Des Weiteren bestätige ich, dass die schriftliche und die elektronische Version der Arbeit identisch sind. Mir ist bekannt, dass Zuwiderhandlungen gegen den Inhalt dieser Erklärung einen Täuschungsversuch darstellen, der grundsätzlich das Nichtbestehen der Prüfung zur Folge hat.

Ort, Datum

Unterschrift

Einverständniserklärung zur Einsichtnahme Dritter

Ich bin damit einverstanden, dass meine Abschlussarbeit im Forschungsinformationssystem (FIS) der TU Dresden gelistet, sowie im Zentrum für Internationale Studien (ZIS) zur Einsichtnahme für IB-Studierende zugänglich ist.

Ja

Nein

Ort, Datum

Unterschrift

H. General Tips for Presenting

At the end of your work process – after you have submitted your paper – you will be asked to present it to an audience. For seminar papers, this audience consists of the seminar instructor, your supervisor, and your fellow students; for final theses, it usually includes your two supervisors and any interested audience members. This presentation should summarize your paper and inform the audience about your research and findings.

Length of Presentation:

- seminar papers: 20-minute presentation + 20 – 30-minute open discussion,
- Master’s theses (if applicable): 20 – 25-minute presentation + 30-minute open discussion.

A good oral presentation is focused, concise, and engaging to encourage discussion. It should emphasize the key ideas of the paper. It is unnecessary to cover all the details; instead, summarize the main issues and arguments.

Your presentation should include the following elements:

- title slide + introduction,
- a shortened outline (not the full table of content),
- your research question and its motivation,
- your methodology,
- your results and their implications.

Be sure to follow the allotted time limit and plan your presentation accordingly. Preparing your own discussion questions is uncommon and should be avoided. The questions following your presentation will be directed to you, so prepare yourself for them. Make sure you can answer potential questions, even those that may go beyond the scope of your paper as thoroughly as possible. Your research results, as well as the direction of research or the aspects you chose to focus on, may be questioned or examined in detail – do not take this as personal criticism but as an opportunity to defend your position with well-founded arguments. Responding to critical questions in front of an audience is a valuable skill and an essential experience for your future professional life. Have confidence in your knowledge and do not let yourself be unsettled!

For your presentation, you are required to prepare a PowerPoint presentation. Please use the [corporate design of TU Dresden](#) when creating your visual materials and adjust your slides stylistically to the university’s guidelines.

Also, avoid unnecessary mistakes such as forgetting to update the PowerPoint footer (this can be changed under “Slide Master”). Ensure proper citation of all sources, including pictures, and follow general recommendations for presentations with visual materials (minimal text, complementarity between spoken presentation and slides, etc.).

Note: The following rules apply for citations in presentations. Sources that have already been cited in your paper do not need to be referenced again in your PowerPoint presentation. Only new sources, e.g., for images or quotes, must be cited directly in the presentation at the relevant slide with a link/reference. A separate reference list/bibliography is not necessary and should be avoided.