

Mastering International Criminal & Human Rights Law: History to ICC

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Course Overview:

This course connects historical developments with contemporary practices in international criminal justice and human rights. Guided by the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court and relevant academic works, it offers a framework for understanding and applying international legal principles.

Participants will explore individual criminal responsibility, core international crimes, ICC jurisdiction, crimes against humanity, and customary international law. The human rights component covers UN treaties, complexity theory, pro homine interpretation, and global governance. By integrating historical analysis with legal scholarship and case law, attendees will gain a practical understanding of the tools for promoting accountability and justice.

Target Audience:

- Human rights lawyers and legal advisors
- International criminal justice professionals
- UN field officers and investigators
- Transitional justice experts
- Government legal department staff
- NGO legal advocates and coordinators

Targeted Organizational Departments:

- Legal and Compliance Departments
- Human Rights and Ethics Divisions
- International Affairs and Diplomacy Units
- Transitional Justice and Rule of Law Programs
- Criminal Justice and Investigations Teams

Targeted Industries:

- International Organizations UN, ICC, ICRC
- Government and Diplomatic Services
- NGOs and Human Rights Institutions
- Legal Research and Academia
- Military and Security Services

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Course Offerings:

By the end of this course, participants will be able to:

- Apply the Rome Statute and ICC procedural frameworks to real cases
- Distinguish between core international crimes: genocide, war crimes, crimes against humanity, and aggression
- Evaluate ICC jurisdiction and admissibility using complementarity and legal doctrines
- Interpret and apply customary international criminal and human rights law
- Analyze the evolution of individual criminal responsibility and state obligations
- Navigate the structure of UN human rights systems and treaties
- Integrate complexity theory into legal interpretation and institutional change
- Use the pro homine interpretation to protect human rights within international legal norms

Training Methodology:

The course combines theoretical insights with experiential learning through an interactive approach. Participants will attend expert-led lectures based on primary sources, including the Rome Statute Commentary. Each session features real-world case studies e.g., ICTY, ICC, group activities simulating trial proceedings, and guided treaty interpretation exercises.

Course Toolbox:

- Course eBook based on Rome Statute Commentary, UN treaties, and Wheatley's Human Rights Law
- Legal framework reference charts for ICC and UN bodies
- ICC case law compendium
- Treaty interpretation workbook
- Customary law checklist
- Roleplay and trial simulation kits
- Academic reading list articles, book chapters
- Online access to case archives and UN materials

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Course Agenda:

Day 1: Foundations and Historical Evolution of International Criminal Law

- **Topic 1:** Early Antecedents of International Criminal Law and the Trial of Peter von Hagenbach
- **Topic 2:** The Legacy of Nuremberg and Tokyo Tribunals
- **Topic 3:** Development of Core International Crimes War Crimes, Genocide, Crimes Against Humanity
- **Topic 4:** The Role of the UN and Geneva Conventions Post-WWII
- **Topic 5:** National vs. International Jurisdiction in Early War Crimes Prosecutions
- **Topic 6:** Conceptualizing Universal Jurisdiction and Individual Criminal Responsibility
- **Reflection & Review:** How Historical Milestones Shaped Modern International Criminal Law

Day 2: Structure and Function of the International Criminal Court

- **Topic 1:** The Rome Statute: Structure, Jurisdiction, and Principles
- **Topic 2:** Complementarity and Admissibility under the Rome Statute
- **Topic 3:** Legal Definitions of Genocide, War Crimes, Crimes Against Humanity, and Aggression
- **Topic 4:** Procedural Innovations and Victim Participation in ICC Trials
- **Topic 5:** Interpol Cooperation, Fact-Finding Commissions, and International Investigations
- **Topic 6:** ICC Challenges: Political Will, Non-Member States, and Global Compliance
- **Reflection & Review:** ICC as a Justice Mechanism—Promise, Performance, and Perception

Day 3: Legal Doctrines, Jurisprudence, and Global Practice

- **Topic 1:** Command Responsibility, Joint Criminal Enterprise, and Modes of Liability
- **Topic 2:** Case Studies: ICTY, ICTR, and National Trials e.g., Eichmann, Argentina
- **Topic 3:** State Cooperation and Non-Compliance Cases
- **Topic 4:** Customary International Criminal Law and its Role in ICC Prosecution
- **Topic 5:** Contemporary Jurisprudence on Aggression and Sovereignty
- **Topic 6:** Bridging ICL and Transitional Justice Frameworks
- **Reflection & Review:** Assessing the Legal Effectiveness of International Criminal Prosecutions

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Day 4: Foundations and Challenges in International Human Rights Law

- **Topic 1:** Evolution of the UN Human Rights System and Charter-Based Bodies
- **Topic 2:** Core UN Human Rights Treaties and Customary Human Rights Norms
- **Topic 3:** Pro Homine Interpretation and Emerging Legal Human Rights Systems
- **Topic 4:** Complexity Theory and the Fragmentation of International Legal Systems
- **Topic 5:** Communication Acts and the Role of Civil Society in Human Rights Enforcement
- **Topic 6:** State Obligations, Accountability, and Political Foundations of Human Rights
- **Reflection & Review:** Human Rights Law in Practice—Global Trends and Theoretical Debates

Day 5: Integration, Accountability, and Future Trends

- **Topic 1:** Human Rights and International Criminal Law: Synergies and Gaps
- **Topic 2:** Treaty Interpretation in Evolving Human Rights and Criminal Norms
- **Topic 3:** Global Governance, Legal Norms, and Enforcement Challenges
- **Topic 4:** Legal Responses to Apartheid, Torture, and Mass Atrocities
- **Topic 5:** Emerging Interdisciplinary Approaches to International Legal Accountability
- **Topic 6:** The Future of International Law: From ICC Reforms to Universal Justice
- **Reflection & Review:** Designing a Rights-Based, Victim-Centered International Legal Order

FAQ:

What specific qualifications or prerequisites are needed for participants before enrolling in the course?

There are no formal prerequisites. However, participants with legal backgrounds, international relations, political science, or human rights experience will benefit most from the course.

How long is each day's session, and is there a total number of hours required for the entire course?

Each day's session is generally structured to last around 4-5 hours, with breaks and interactive activities included. The total course duration spans one week, approximately 20-25 hours of instruction.

What is the difference between "moral" and "legal" human rights in international law?

Wheatley's framework distinguishes between two types of human rights: moral and legal. Moral human rights are viewed as ethical claims that may not have formal legal backing, while legal human rights are rights that are enforceable and are established through treaties and international practices, arising from systemic emergence and communication.

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How This Course is Different from Other Mastering International Criminal & Human Rights Law Courses:

This course is distinctive for its multidisciplinary approach and commitment to source fidelity. It integrates historical analysis such as Nuremberg and apartheid, systemic theories, and foundational texts like the Rome Statute Commentary and Wheatley's human rights scholarship.

Participants will learn that international law is not just a set of static rules but a complex, adaptive system shaped by states, civil society, and global institutions. The course focuses on pro homine interpretation, trial simulations, treaty evolution, and customary law practices, preparing learners to apply justice mechanisms in real-world conflict and post-conflict situations. By the end, participants will be equipped to understand, utilize, and evolve the law in support of global accountability and human dignity.

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