POLS 390: Use of Force and International Law
Interim, 2008
[Independent Study]

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COURSE DESCRIPTION
This course explores the relationship between international law and the use of armed force by states. Topics include the various restraints placed on states’ resort to armed force under the UN Charter and the manner and extent to which such restraints are being eroded or strengthened over time.

COURSE OBJECTIVES
The course readings and writing assignments are intended to achieve three objectives. Firstly, they are intended to introduce students to basic concepts and theories of international law as they pertain to the use of armed force. Secondly, they are intended to provide students with a basic understanding of the UN Charter system and the means by which it functions as a restraint on military action. Thirdly, they are intended to assist students in developing analytical skills such that they can provide thoughtful and coherent arguments in oral and written form. The first and second objectives are necessary for careers or continued study in the fields of international relations and international law, while the third is essential to the idea of a liberal arts education. All three help to equip students for work as agents of redemption and renewal within the world. SOLI DEO GLORIA.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS
Students must complete all assigned readings before each class period and be active participants in each class session. In addition to class participation, there will be four short writing assignments and a term paper.

REQUIRED TEXTS
The following are required texts for this course.

Other supplemental journal articles and book sections are on reserve or available online as noted in the syllabus. Access to certain websites is available only via a Calvin College internet connection.
COURSE READINGS

[Please note the page numbers listed below, as only selected pages of certain articles or book sections are assigned.]

January 4 – An Introduction to International Law

January 9 – The Basic Legal Framework Governing the Use of Armed Force

January 16 – The Problem of Compliance

January 23 – International Law and the Iraq War

January 28 – International Law and the Iraq War (cont’d)