



*Call for papers*

**Interdisciplinarity and the (re)construction of international law**

Agora and pre-conference workshop to 2025 ESIL Annual Conference in Berlin  
10-13 September 2025

Moments of renewal in international law have often gone hand-in-hand with moments of renewal in other fields, such as political science, economics, sociology, anthropology, linguistics, and geography. The rules on the use of force enshrined in the UN Charter reflected new politics of peace and security. The development of international human rights law after World War II drew heavily on evolving philosophies of dignity and ethical responsibility. The rise and decline of institutions like the WTO embodied competing geoeconomic visions of globalization and world governance. Technology-driven developments in linguistics are affecting the legal interpretations offered by international courts. The emergence of international environmental law has been deeply influenced by advances in climate science and ecology, as well as shifting global narratives around sustainability. Hence, consciously or not, international lawyers—be they negotiators, judges, attorneys, advisors, activists, or scholars—regularly borrow from disciplines beyond law narrowly defined to couch their arguments and pursue their diverse agendas.

Now, as international law is going through another period of turbulence and transformation, the nature and stakes of interdisciplinarity are once again in sharp relief. How do practitioners' (lack of) engagements with extra-legal disciplines influence the international legal system? How does cross-disciplinary scholarly engagement structure our perceptions and understandings of the system? And, more generally, what role can or should interdisciplinarity have in the renewal of international law?

Aimed at opening avenues for young and senior researchers engaged in interdisciplinary exchanges at the intersection of “law and...”, the ESIL Interest Group on Social Sciences and International Law will address different dimensions of the role of interdisciplinarity in our understanding and (re)construction of international law. Potential contributors are invited to submit proposals that engage with the following aspects:

- (a) **Interdisciplinarity in legal studies:** what does interdisciplinary engagement contribute to our analysis and understanding of international law? What are the limits of legal scholarship, and

how can engagement across disciplines advance our understandings of international law itself? Does interdisciplinarity pose an existential threat to the autonomy and normativity of international law discourse?

- (b) **Interdisciplinarity in judicial settlement:** participants may apply social science methods to study how disciplines beyond law influence international adjudication. How do international courts or arbitration panels draw on and integrate insights from anthropology, international relations, history, cartography, economics, linguistics, medicine or geography when deciding on legal disputes? How does such engagement influence the content of judicial decisions? How does such interdisciplinary engagement—or lack thereof—affect the persuasive value, effectiveness or legitimacy of judgments?
- (c) **Interdisciplinarity in lawmaking practice and compliance:** participants may want to discuss how international lawmakers draw cues from social sciences to pursue their regulatory projects and ensure adherence to international legal obligations. How, for instance, do treaty negotiators rely on cognitive and behavioral psychology to advance their positions and secure persuasiveness? How are economic or sociological concepts invoked in international lawmaking fora? Under what conditions does interdisciplinarity add to or detract from the quality of lawmaking? Additionally, how do insights from disciplines such as psychology, sociology, and political science help explain the conditions under which states and non-state actors comply with international law? What role do norms, cognitive biases, or social constructs play in the enforcement of international legal obligations?
- (d) **Interdisciplinarity and the Global South perspective:** Contributors might examine how interdisciplinary methods help—or hinder—highlighting diverse perspectives, particularly those from the Global South. How do non-Western traditions in anthropology, ethnography, or history enrich our understanding of international legal principles? What challenges and opportunities arise when engaging with these perspectives in interdisciplinary research and practice?

Participants are encouraged to pursue these lines of inquiry through either theoretical reflection on the limitations, promise and pitfalls of interdisciplinarity in the (re)construction of international law, or through empirical, interdisciplinary inquiries into the effects of interdisciplinarity in specific subfields of international law, e.g. human rights, trade law, international humanitarian law, international criminal law.

### Details

The ESIL Social Sciences and International Law Interest Group will organize a pre-conference workshop to the ESIL Annual Conference to be held in Berlin and, depending on the number and quality of the abstracts, submit an agora proposal to the Annual Conference. The pre-conference workshop is scheduled to take place before the Annual Conference, on 10 September 2025 (time slot TBC). The agora, if accepted by conference organizers, will take place during the Annual Conference 10-13 September 2025. Both the pre-conference workshop and the agora (if successful) will take place as in-person events.

We are looking for participants who are willing to present ‘think pieces’ of approximately 2-3,000 words<sup>1</sup> or draft articles of max. 8,000 words that will structure the discussion and debate.

If you wish to contribute, please send us an abstract which includes a title, an abstract of maximum 300 words (covering the core question, sources of data and methods, if applicable, and key argument/findings) and short bio (in the same file) to [esilsocsci@gmail.com](mailto:esilsocsci@gmail.com). Please CC the IG

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<sup>1</sup> Please note that, due to their short length, the think pieces will not be eligible for the ESIL Young Scholar Prize 2025.

convenors, Zuzanna Godzimirska ([zuzanna.godzimirska@jur.ku.dk](mailto:zuzanna.godzimirska@jur.ku.dk)), Tommaso Soave ([soavet@ceu.edu](mailto:soavet@ceu.edu)), Ezgi Yildiz ([ezgi.yildiz@csulb.edu](mailto:ezgi.yildiz@csulb.edu)), and Wim Zimmermann ([wim.zimmermann@plus.ac.at](mailto:wim.zimmermann@plus.ac.at)) and write 'ESIL SSIL Abstract – Interdisciplinarity and the (Re)Construction of International Law' in the e-mail's subject field. Please note in your email whether you would prefer to present in the agora or the pre-conference workshop.

Abstracts should be received by **15 January 2025**. Submitters will be advised of the outcome of selection procedure by the end of January.

Depending on the number and quality of the submissions, the IG convenors may consider turning workshop contributions into a series of blog posts on EJIL:Talk! and/or a Special Issue in an internationally renowned journal.

The Interest Group is unable to provide funding for travel and accommodation. Selected speakers will be expected to bear the costs of their own travel and accommodation. Some ESIL [travel grants](#) and ESIL [carers' grants](#) will be available to offer partial financial support to speakers who have exhausted other potential sources of funding.

Please see the ESIL website for all relevant information about the conference.

All participants at ESIL Interest Group workshops are required to register for the Annual Conference. There will be an option to register just to attend the IG workshops; however, all participants are warmly invited to attend the entire event.

Selected speakers should indicate their interest in being considered for the ESIL Early-Career Scholar Prize, if they meet the eligibility conditions as stated on the ESIL website. The ESIL Secretariat must be informed of all selected speakers who wish to be considered for the Prize before 30 April.