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Woody Hayes Speaker Series

IAN HURD

"The Politics of the International Rule of Law"

Wednesday, January 28, 2015, 3:30PM - 5:00PM
 Mershon Center for International Security Studies
 1501 Neil Ave. Columbus, OH 43201

[Register for this event here.](#)

Ian Hurd is a scholar of international politics and law at Northwestern University. His current work examines the history, politics, and practice of the international rule of law and its contribution to the contemporary international order.

A leading theorist of international relations, Hurd is head of the International Organizations section of the International Studies Association and interim director of the International Studies Program at Northwestern University. He serves on the editorial boards of several journals of international relations and is active in public debates on foreign policy and global affairs.

His academic work appears in leading journals, edited collections, and several single-authored books. He is a co-editor of the new *Oxford Handbook of International Organizations*, which will appear in 2015.

Abstract

The international rule of law is often seen as a centerpiece of the contemporary international order. It is routinely reaffirmed by governments, scholars, and activists as the modern alternative to brute force. It is said to reduce violence, generate stability, and provide accountability, and that these benefits follow naturally when governments comply with rather than violate their legal obligations.

Despite this popularity, however, the concept itself is rarely defined and its politics rarely explored. In this project Hurd considers the political implications of the turn to law in global politics. He examines the international rule of law as a political system, one which distributes power, authority, and obligation among actors. It defines the authority that constitutes states; it endows a language of political legitimation in the categories of lawful and unlawful state behavior; and it defines the parameters of responsibility and irresponsibility for the harms that arise from international acts.

Hurd explores these effects across a series of recent disputes that show the distinction between legality and illegality is being constructed through judicial processes, legal interpretation, or power politics.



Ian Hurd
Northwestern University

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