

International Trade Regulation

The course provides an introduction to the law and policy of the World Trade Organization (WTO) and the increasingly important world of preferential free trade agreements.

As WTO law remains the “floor” of international trade law, the course offers an examination of the multilateral system of the WTO and its agreements covering trade in goods and services, as well as trade-related intellectual property rights. The structure, decision-making processes, negotiating techniques and dispute settlement procedures of the WTO will be treated in detail. In-depth analysis of pertinent case law acquaints students with diverse situations of trade law in action, ranging from the effects of non-tariff measures, technical barriers, standards, sanitary and phytosanitary measures, to trade remedies.

The course goes on to explore the relationship between the multilateral trade regime and the regional sub-regimes in all continents. The course will focus on the fundamental compatibility of preferential trade agreements with the multilateral trade regime and will undertake to explain why states are increasingly turning away from the WTO as a forum for new law-making.

The course draws parallels with the regulation and policy formulation of trade at national and regional levels. Switzerland’s external trade relations, the common commercial policy of the European Union, as well as relevant case law are analysed in light of their relationship and consistency with WTO law. Sovereignty, environmental, labour and human rights protection, globalisation and its impact on the protection of societal values are topics that are discussed with a view to identifying the linkages and gaining a better understanding of the real-life areas interacting with trade liberalisation.