

Donald R Rothwell & Tim Stephens, *The International Law of the Sea*
(London: Bloomsbury, 2016, 2nd ed.)

This second edition of *The International Law of the Sea* by Rothwell and Stephens replaces the original title from 2010. The law of the sea is one of the most ancient fields of international law and the basic principles can be traced to Grotius. Nevertheless, as is evident from this new edition, the law of the sea can also evolve very quickly, hence the need for a revised volume. Rothwell and Stephens update the original text with insights from recent judicial rulings and developments in State practice. These include the International Court of Justice judgment in *Whaling in the Antarctic*, advisory opinions of the International Tribunal of the Law of the Sea (ITLOS) on *Responsibilities and obligations of States sponsoring persons and entities with respect to activities in the Area* and on illegal, unreported and unregistered fishing (*Sub-Regional Fisheries Commission* request), ITLOS decisions on the *Arctic Sunrise* and *Delimitation of the maritime boundary between Bangladesh and Myanmar in the Bay of Bengal*, and the arbitral decision in the *Bay of Bengal Arbitration (Bangladesh/India)* case. Rothwell and Stephens also discuss other recent developments, for example, steps to manage biodiversity in the marine environment, through commitment at the *Rio+20* meeting and the ongoing negotiations for a third implementing agreement under the UN Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS) on the conservation and sustainable use of marine biological diversity beyond national jurisdiction.

The book is structured thematically beginning at the State baseline and moving gradually outwards before addressing, *inter alia*, the rights of landlocked States, rights of passage, resource management, marine scientific research, environmental protection, boundary delimitation, enforcement and dispute settlement. In short, the book covers all the main topics of a standard university law of the sea course. Most chapters take a chronological approach, beginning with the early developments in customary law, codification in the four Geneva Conventions on 1958, evolution of customary law in the period up to the 1980s, the provisions of UNCLOS and later developments.

Rothwell and Stephens are gifted communicators, writing fluently about even the most technical elements of law of the sea. Thus, even the notorious article 76 of UNCLOS on delineation of the limits of the outer continental shelf is presented in an accessible manner (115). The book is eminently readable, one of the clearest expositions of the principles of law of the sea, that one can read from cover to cover and get a holistic sense of the overall principles and structure of this enormous area of law. It is, therefore, an excellent introductory textbook. However, as a textbook, it unsurprisingly lacks the depth and level of critical analysis that one would find in a monograph devoted to specific issues in law of the sea (of which there are hundreds, some of which dealing with a single article of the UNCLOS).

As an instructor, I would recommend this textbook for an undergraduate law of the sea

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course but would expect students to supplement it with close reading of case law and academic analyses in journal articles. Students may balk at the sight of 500 pages (plus cases and journals!) but the quality of writing is so high that it takes a surprisingly short time to read the book. The law of the sea is simply an enormous branch of international law that cannot be condensed any further. I would also recommend this textbook to scholars from other disciplines seeking to get a basic grasp of law of the sea to support related research. This could include political scientists studying international relations pertaining to ocean governance, natural scientists working on fisheries, ocean geomorphology, climate change and other environmental issues, and business scholars examining marine resource management or shipping.

The main competitors to this book are *The International Law of the Sea* (Tanaka, 2012), *Law of the Sea in a Nutshell* (Soh, Juras, Noyes and Franckx, 2010) and the now rather dated *The Law of the Sea* (Churchill and Lowe, 1999) each of which has its own merits. For sheer readability, however, Rothwell and Stephens have the edge.

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