In this fully updated and revised edition, the authors explore the evolution, nature and function of international law in world politics and situate international law in its historical and political context. They propose three interdisciplinary ‘lenses’ (realist, liberal and constructivist) through which to view the role of international law in world politics, and suggest that the concept of an international society provides the overall context within which international legal developments occur. These theoretical perspectives offer different ways of looking at international law in terms of what it is, how it works and how it changes. Topics covered include the use of force, international crimes, human rights, international trade and the environment. The new edition also contains more material on non-western perspectives, international institutions, non-state actors, and a new bibliography. Each chapter features discussion questions and guides to further reading.

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This new series of textbooks aims to provide students with authoritative surveys of central topics in the study of International Relations. Intended for upper level undergraduates and graduates, the books will be concise, accessible and comprehensive. Each volume will examine the main theoretical and empirical aspects of the subject concerned, and its relation to wider debates in International Relations, and will also include chapter-by-chapter guides to further reading and discussion questions.
International Law and International Relations

Second Edition

David Armstrong, Theo Farrell and Hélène Lambert
To Maggie Armstrong, Eloise Farrell and in memory of Anne-Marie Lambert.
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Preface to the Second Edition

When the publishers approached the authors about the possibility of a second edition of this book, Theo Farrell and Hélène Lambert decided that they had too many other commitments to devote the necessary time to this so David Armstrong is the sole author of all changes from the first edition. My initial proposals were to update all chapters and also add more information about a variety of topics, including the non-state actors, institutions involved in the development and application of international law, such as the International Criminal Court, and to take more account of Chinese, Islamic and developing countries’ positions. I also suggested that our original concluding chapter, ‘International law in a unipolar age’ had somewhat been overtaken by events to the extent that a new title, ‘Law and power in an evolving world order’ might be more appropriate – at least in enabling me to indulge in some speculations about a future where the US might be less dominant than it has been in the last two decades. My final proposal was to devote more time to the concept of an international society. Theo Farrell, as a leading Constructivist, was the principal designer of our original theoretical framework and, as he was less enthusiastic than me about the ‘English School’, it was only allocated a few sentences in the first edition. I have seized the opportunity to rectify that omission. It is also true that in some other cases I have probably expressed views that Theo and Hélène would not necessarily concur with, so responsibility for them is mine alone.

The publishers invited three anonymous scholars to suggest any additional changes they would like to see and, so far as possible, I have tried to incorporate their valuable proposals. The authors were very pleased that all three said they and their students found the book very useful. The scholars’ specific suggestions included expanding the discussion of the law of armed conflict and international humanitarian law, adding a section on ‘responsibility to protect’ plus something on soft law and including a bibliography and I have taken account of all those proposals, so I am the sole author of all changes.

David Armstrong

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Acknowledgements

Ranging across history, theory and an expanse of international law, this book has been a long and ambitious journey for us. It has been, at turns, challenging, arduous, exhilarating and fun. We received help from several quarters along the way – help we wish to acknowledge gratefully here. Mike Addo, Maggie Armstrong, Ilias Bantekas, Caroline Fournet, Iain Hampsher-Monk, Amrita Narlikar, Jason Ralph, and Javaid Rehman all kindly offered pointed and extremely helpful comments on draft chapters for us. John Haslam at Cambridge University Press has been a ‘dream’ commissioning editor throughout the project. We also wish to thank the four anonymous reviewers who helped us make critical improvements to the book and, to one reviewer in particular, who gave us very detailed comments on the whole manuscript. Three anonymous reviewers provided many very helpful suggestions for the second edition and we would like to thank them too.