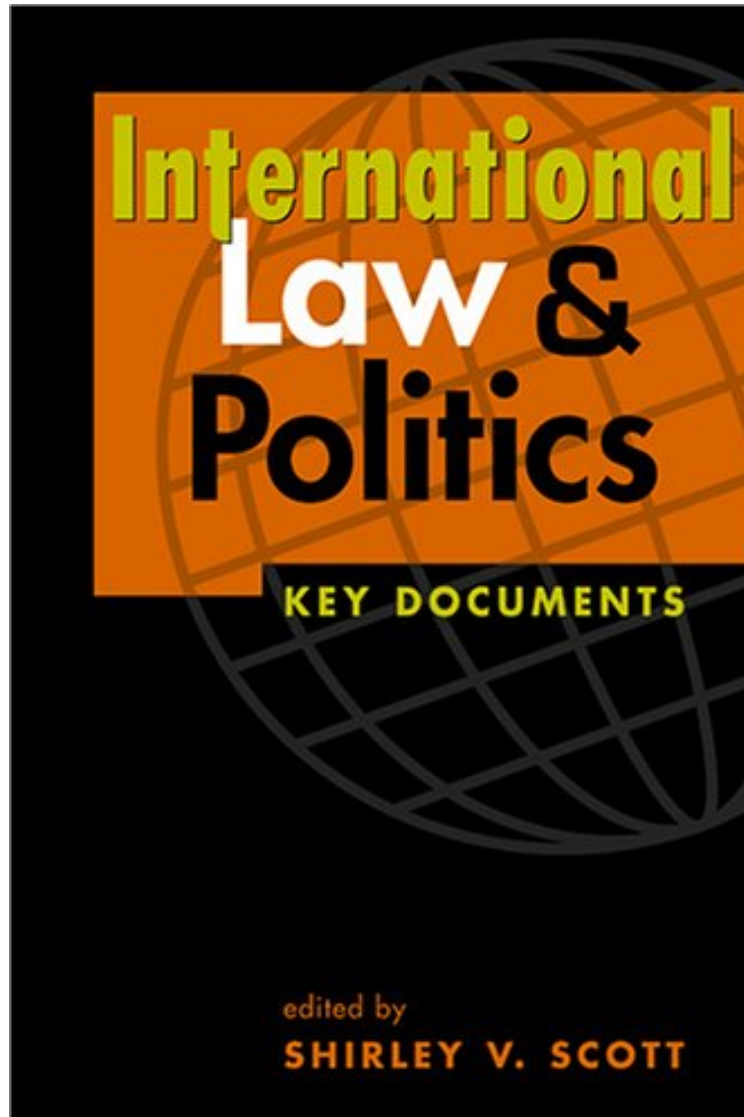


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2 of 2 people found the following review helpful. A very nice samplingBy Matthew SmithUsually when I read books such as this I try to tell those people reading my review that it was at least a labor of love, but with reading international treaties word for word for hundreds and hundreds of pages, I have to admit this was simply labor. With that said this book is a wonderful reference for those people like me who hate reading from a computer screen. This

book is the essential starters guide international law. The reason why I bought and read this book was because many of these treaties and documents within this book I simply had not read or I had only read in bits and pieces. The problem with reading these documents in this piecemeal fashion is that you lose the greater context. In simply reading one paragraph the reader is almost guaranteed to misquote what they read because they have missed the preceding or proceeding text that provides context and clarification. In the end reading these documents in this fashion can actually make the reader less informed rather than more informed. This was an area of my studies that I had sadly neglected, and I hoped to remedy some of that neglect with meaty book. What I of course found by reading these documents is that they are all interconnected, and that international law is a free flowing process. Law is not stasis, and to understand it properly it is necessary and obligatory for readers to go and read those documents on which that law was founded on. This is a nice collection that will provide readers that base of knowledge, but it will also give readers an example of more contemporary treaties as well. When you actually read each treaty like this one gets the idea that every one of these documents are just another building block that is creating a more and more robust international structure. What also caught my attention in reading this book is just how tenuous is the foundation of international law. So much of it is based on nations voluntarily subjecting themselves to its authority. The withdrawal of the US from the ABM treaty is evidence of the fact that so much of international law is just Kabuki Theater for many nations. It also shows the inequity of the international system where the strong nations, like the US, decide which Laws they wish to be subjected to and which they do not. Of course for the smaller nations with less power and influence these treaties can be a double edged sword that can cut them in two ways. They have much less room to maneuver so they are forced to accede to these rules, while their more powerful counterparts have the luxury of deciding whether they will hold to their agreements. So far the success of the international system is a mixed bag. The international system provides the world with the greatest prospect of a stable and just system for weak and the strong. Hopefully this foundation will prove much stronger than I sometimes fear it may be. In the end this is a great reference book that will help guide readers into the world of international law. It has some of the most important documents one needs to be familiar with to understand this law. I will say my one criticism is the lack of documents on trade. This is probably the most stable field for international law, and one that even the stronger nations are submitting themselves too, but this book offered no documents on the WTO or any other treaties on trade. I found this to be strange oversight, but at the same time the author has to limit themselves to a certain number of documents. I recommend this book, and I might also recommend the companion to this book *International Law in World Politics An Introduction* by the same author. For those just getting into international law it is a nice starter edition, and for those a little more versed it has some good information as well.

Unique in its breadth of coverage, this carefully designed collection presents the key documents of international law at the global level. The collection encompasses the full spectrum of central issues, with the documents grouped in eight subject areas: foundations, the use of force, arms control, international crime, human rights, humanitarian law, the environment, and the global commons. A short introduction to each documents provides context and also points to supplementary documents. With only a few exceptions, each document is presented in its entirety. Other useful features include a glossary of terms; a chronological list of the treaties in the book, indicating the date the treaty was signed, the date it entered into force, the number of parties to the treaty, and other data; and a complete index.

About the Author Shirley V. Scott is senior lecturer in international relations at the University of New South Wales.