

CUTLER FELLOWS PROGRAM

Disruption and Renewal:

*Charting the Future of International Rule of Law,
Democracy, and Pluralism*



February 5-7, 2026

Washington, D.C.



Overview

At the heart of the Salzburg Cutler Fellows Program is a rare opportunity: each year, 60 outstanding students from the top 15 U.S. law schools join a community devoted to international, transnational, and comparative law. Each Fellow brings a draft paper, presents it in the equivalent of a faculty workshop, and receives publication-focused critique from leading professors of international law. The program’s hallmark is this rigorous feedback, which extends past what any single law school can offer, sharpening legal arguments and helping Fellows identify publication pathways. In this setting, Fellows also build lasting ties with peers and faculty, entering a professional network of international lawyers that goes far beyond law school.

Equally distinctive is the community and career support the program fosters. The Cutler Fellows Program connects students who might otherwise find limited peers in international law, creating bonds that carry forward into professional life. Fellows also receive mentorship on both traditional and non-traditional career paths, gaining insight from alumni and practitioners working across government, academia, law firms, NGOs, and international organizations. With hundreds of alumni worldwide, the program provides Fellows with an enduring community and a career-oriented network that remains engaged long after the program ends.

Launched in 2012, the Cutler Fellows Program honors Lloyd N. Cutler’s commitment to strengthening the international rules-based order through leadership development. The program empowers Fellows to tackle cutting-edge issues in international law, foster leadership skills, and build lasting collaborative networks within the legal and public service sectors.

This Year's Focus

Each year’s programming is organized around a shared theme, bringing together faculty-led roundtables, student panels, and practitioner conversations that situate Fellows’ work within global debates. This year’s theme, *Disruption and Renewal: Charting the Future of the International Rule of Law, Democracy, and Pluralism*, responds to the trends of democratic backsliding and the rise of autocratic rule, as well as the retreat from the presiding world order in which international law is sometimes seen as a barrier rather than a framework for governance. From technology and trade to human rights and climate change, core areas of international law face challenges to both the resilience of institutions and the stability of the global system. By convening diverse voices to examine how international lawyers can protect the rule of law in pluralist, democratic societies, the program aims to prepare future leaders to sustain and renew international legal practice in a changing world.

Program Format

Ahead of the program, Fellows present pre-prepared legal abstracts to their peers and top law faculty representatives from participating schools. Within the session itself, the Cutler Center combines plenary discussion and small, thematic working groups. Each Fellow receives feedback and guidance on how to strengthen the legal arguments in their papers and find publishing opportunities. Fellows also learn about and discuss both traditional and non-traditional career paths in international law with experts and practitioners. Finally, Fellows have the opportunity to hear from distinguished



- • • speakers in collaborative panels that engage with our yearly theme. To allow for candid and open exchange of ideas, the meeting will adhere to the Chatham House Rule.
- • • The Cutler Fellows Program encompasses the Lloyd N. Cutler Lecture featuring a distinguished speaker on international legal issues and the rule of law. Former Cutler lecturers included Eric Schmidt (former CEO and chairman of Google), Justice Richard J. Goldstone (Former Chief Prosecutor of the United Nations International Criminal Tribunals for the former Yugoslavia and Rwanda), Supreme Court Justice Stephen Breyer, the eminent Russia-expert Dr. Fiona Hill, and Hugh Verrier (Former Chair of



- • • White and Case LLP).

Program Goals

- Facilitate and advise top law students as they prepare and refine academic papers on contemporary issues in international law for publication and policy impact.
- Build a network of rising leaders working on issues central to international law and associated institutions.
- Convene top voices to mentor the next generation of lawyers in public and private international law.
- Deepen knowledge and shift future legal and policy conversations around key international legal challenges, ranging from the use of force to the protection of individual liberties, the coherence of the international economic order to the future of the global environment.

Participant Profile

The program accepts up to 60 law student Fellows at the 2L, 3L, and LLM levels. Four students are selected by each of the 15 participating law schools: Berkeley, Chicago, Columbia, Cornell, Duke, Georgetown, Harvard, Michigan, New York University, Northwestern, Penn, Stanford, UCLA, Virginia, and Yale. Students' areas of interest and the topics of their papers may include any topic in international, transnational, or comparative law, including international human rights and humanitarian law; national security law; international environmental and climate law and policy; international courts and tribunals; international finance, investment, monetary and trade law; international technology and artificial intelligence (AI) law, or the comparative law of other legal systems.

Application

Application processes for this program are conducted through our 15 partner law schools and may vary from school to school.



About the Cutler Center

The Lloyd N. Cutler Center for the Rule of Law was established in 2010 to honor the legacy of long-serving Chairman of the Salzburg Global Board and Legal Advisor to President Carter and President Clinton, Lloyd N. Cutler. Today the Cutler Center hosts the annual Cutler Lecture and the Salzburg Cutler Fellows Program in Washington, DC, and the International Law Fellows Network in Salzburg.

About Salzburg Global

Salzburg Global Seminar Inc. is an independent non-profit organization founded in 1947 with a mission to challenge current and future leaders to shape a better world. For 78 years we have gathered open-minded leaders for breakthrough conversations, seeking to overcome barriers and open up a world of better possibilities.

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Partner Schools



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