Bernie opposes it. Trump opposes it. Obama supports it. Hillary first supported it, then opposed it, but now might be willing to support it with some modifications. “It” is the Trans-Pacific Partnership Trade Agreement [TPP]. Suddenly, proposed international trade agreements like the TPP and its European counterpart, the Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership [TTIP], have become the hot issues in the current political environment. If you are interested in understanding what these agreements are, what the competing arguments are on each side, and more generally the role and operation of global and regional trade agreements in our political and economic system, you should consider taking this course.

The course on International Trade Regulation law has three large aims: First, it is to provide students with a clear understanding of the role regional trade agreements like the TPP and TTIP play in the larger system of rules and regulations governing the international regulation of trade established by the World Trade Organization. Second, it is to provide students with a working
grasp of the generally applicable rules and regulations established under the auspices of the World Trade Organization to govern international trade in goods and services (under GATT and GATS and related agreements) among and between 164 member states. And third, it is to introduce students to key research resources available to practitioners in this exiting and increasingly relevant field of law.

We begin by examining classical economic and political justifications for free trade and some of the traditional arguments in opposition.

For class on Tuesday, August 30th, please read:

(1) Text, Ch. 1, pp. 1-18(bottom), 25-28(top), 31(mid)-33

Our primary effort in this first session will be (1) to develop appreciation of the idea of “comparative advantage” which serves as the primary economic argument supporting trade liberalization generally; (2) to ask why, if liberalized trade supposedly offers such benefits, there is such widespread opposition to regional trade agreements like the TPP and TTIP; and (3) to understand how these proposed regional trade agreements fit into the generally applicable rules established under the auspices of the World Trade Organization.

Please register on the TWEN site for the class. The class syllabus and other notes and questions will be posted there. Thanks.

[Note: In Thursday’s class, we will be watching a video, Bill Moyers’ Democracy Now, which raises disturbing questions about the arbitration process established by NAFTA (and incorporated into many other regional trade agreements, including the TPP and TTIP) for resolving so-called “investor-state trade disputes.”]