

Course Outline

Course number	RBB101
Course title	International Human Rights Law
Credit points	3 ECTS (2 LV CP)
Total hours	80
Lecture hours	30
Course level	Bachelor
Prerequisites	None

COURSE RESPONSIBLE

<i>Name</i>	<i>Academic degree</i>	<i>Academic position</i>
Pietro Sullo	Ph.D	Rector

COURSE TEACHERS

<i>Name</i>	<i>Academic degree</i>	<i>Academic position</i>
Pietro Sullo	Ph.D	Rector
Inese Freimane-Deksne	LL.M	Visiting lecturer

COURSE ABSTRACT

This course analyses the philosophical foundations and historical developments of human rights providing students with basic knowledge of and critical insight into key areas of international human rights law, including the main standards and protection mechanisms. The starting point will be the historical evolution of human rights and the assessment of main human rights theories. The debate will address in particular issues surrounding the indivisibility and universality of human rights, cultural relativism, generations of human rights and particular critiques to the concept of human rights. The course analyses the UN human rights system and the two 1966 Covenants, as well as regional mechanisms for the protection of human rights. Case studies focused on case law of international human rights courts and tribunals and relevant monitoring bodies are critically assessed providing room for the analysis of issues of contemporary concern. The latter comprehend torture and degrading treatment, human rights in conflict and post-conflict settings, children's and women's rights.

The course is articulated in lectures and seminars. During the lectures the module convenor will introduce a particular subject of international human rights law. The subsequent seminar will provide students with a focused and interactive discussion on case law and current developments relevant to the chosen topic. Each seminar will start with a 20/30-minute student presentation on the chosen case study or issue of that week. Students are required to provide their classmates with a one- to two-page handout summarizing the content of the

presentation. The use of a Power Point is optional but encouraged. The presentations should be intended to stimulate seminar discussion.

Should a student present a human rights convention or treaty, he/she will be required to do the following:

- 1) Present the background on the convention or treaty. How did it arise? Why was it created? What are its purposes and aims?
- 2) Discuss the most significant articles in the convention or treaty.
- 3) Discuss the current state of the convention/treaty in terms of state parties and practice.
- 4) Discuss any controversies that surround the convention or treaty.
- 5) Raise discussion questions for the seminar audience.

Should a student present a case, he/she will be required to do the following:

- 1) Present the background/context of the case. How did it arise? Why is it significant? Who are the litigants and what did they seek?
- 2) Summarize the legal arguments of the litigants involved.
- 3) Discuss the judgment and analyse significant passages in the decision.
- 4) Discuss any controversies that surround the case.
- 5) Raise discussion questions for your seminar audience.

Students are strongly encouraged to actively participate in lectures and seminars and should come prepared to make informed contributions in each meeting. Students are expected to prepare in advance for classes relying on the detailed list of weekly readings provided (both mandatory and suggested) and to be cold called on the core readings.

LEARNING OUTCOMES

Knowledge

Upon successful completion of the course students will have:

- Basic knowledge of philosophical theories regarding human rights;
- Basic knowledge of global and regional human rights standards and protection mechanisms;
- Understanding of some of the main challenges to human rights today;
Ability to analyse practical situations of possible human rights violations and identify possible redress mechanisms

Competencies

Upon successful completion of the course students:

- will be able to use knowledge, skills and personal, social and/or methodological abilities they have developed in the field of international human rights law, in work or study situations and in personal development.

Skills:

Upon successful completion of the course students will acquire:

- basic legal research skills
- presentation skills to develop a simple argument
- skills necessary to apply the knowledge accrued to case studies
- analytical skills necessary to apply human rights law to a variety of different settings.

GRADING CRITERIA

Criteria	Weighting
Exam	100%

COURSE PLAN – MAIN SUBJECTS

No.	Main subjects	Planned hours
1	UN and regional human rights standards and protection mechanisms	4
2	Philosophical perspectives on human rights; challenges in the implementation of human rights	6
3	Obligation to protect human rights and application in times of emergency	6
4	Comparative perspective on substantive rights	8
5	Compliance and remedies	6