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Course Descriptions

HRTS 5000 Introduction to International Human Rights (3)

This course introduces students to the philosophic and political background of the concept of human rights. Key components include discussion of the history, documents, theories, issues, institutions, ethical debates and current problems in human rights.

HRTS 5200 Research Methods and Approaches to International Human Rights (3)

An overview of the methods and analysis used to examine human rights abuses, as well as a resource for sources databases, and other material on human rights. Students will learn to analyze and conduct research, write research proposals and analyze existing research.

HRTS 5300 Advocacy, Fact Finding and Outreach (3)

This course provides the theoretical understanding and practical skills of human rights advocacy, fact-finding and outreach. The class will analyze the process which creates domestic and international awareness regarding human rights issues from fact finding to effective lobbying.

HRTS 5350 Gender and Human Rights (3)

This course examines the gendered nature of victimization and human rights abuses. Students will analyze the effect of women's differential position in the social structure, including their legal status and political representation. Students will study various topics, such as the gendered aspects of public policy and human rights law; the militarization of society; the gendered conduct of war and wartime activities; and the impact of gender on the aftermath of war, conflict prevention, peacemaking and peacebuilding.

HRTS 5400 Human Rights Diplomacy in Practice (3)

At the heart of International Relations, Diplomacy and Human Rights, lie human relations which are based on strong interpersonal skills, inter-cultural prowess and emotional intelligence. Any individuals working in these fields not only posess a strong knowledge base of their field area, but are also well-trained negotiators, leaders and public speakers able to operate in any culture and under any emotional or cultural constraint.

This module provides students with the unique opportunity to build the key skills necessary to succeed in the area of international Human Rights and International relations. The sessions will be taught by recognized UN experts and will blend theory and practice through the use of case studies, real-life examples, group discussions and activities and simulation exercises.

HRTS 5450 History of Human Rights (3)

This course explores the historical development of international human rights as theory and practice, with particular focus on the contributions of the Enlightenment, the French Revolution and the anti-slavery movement to universal ideals of human rights, World Wars and anti-colonial struggles and the United Nations Declaration on Human Rights.

HRTS 5500 Environmental Law and Human Rights (3)

This course aims at offering an overview and areas for discussion on the interlinkage between human rights, environmental law and international law, notably through the review of issues such as the Anthropocene, ecological solidarity, climate change, sustainable development, rights to a healthy environment, to participation and information, responsibility and accountability for human and environmental abuses.

Human beings, all over the world, are facing common and tremendous environmental challenges, Global warming, climate change, water scarcity, pollution, desertification, harm to biodiversity...and the list goes on. At the age of the Anthropocene era, humankind's urgent need to address such challenges requires the use of every legal tool at its disposal. If the machinery of international environmental law is obviously highly relevant, international human rights law also offers a great potential to address the effects of environmental degredation through the empowerment of peoples and individuals to defend the interest of both human rights and ecosystems. The establishment in 2012 of John Knox as the first Independent Expert on Human Rights and Environment by the UN Human Rights Council was an important milestone of this recognition. The course offers to students a unique opportunity to develop expertise on the interlinkage between environmental law and human rights law as tools to be jointly used to alleviate or mitigate unsustainable development and prevent and protect environmental degredation and human rights violations.

HRTS 5540 Business and Human Rights (3)

The business has a tremendous impact on human rights, both positive and negative. Business can be a transformative force for good - make available jobs and wages, build infastructure and promote innovation. However, sometimes, those jobs exploit, infastructure is built through corruption and innovation is damaging the environment leaving the hosting community to pay a bill. Globalization has created enormous opportunities for business; the power of the corporate sector has rapidly grown and the power relationship between States and the corporate world has shifted. The revenues of the world's largest multinational companies exceed the gross domestic product of host countries, multinationals have a global reach that is not enjoyed by many countries and private companies are increasingly delivering services that were traditionally a domain of governments, such as education, security, healthcare or prison service. The examples of the harmful corporate impact on human rights are well known and documented, including issues of protection of privacy, to name just a few. In addition, many governments lack the will or capacity, or both, to protect the basic rights of their own people. This creates an additional challenge for companies to adjust to a much larger role — financially, socially and politically — than they have ever played or are comfortable playing.

How has the international community addressed this complex situation to ensure the protection of human rights from an adverse impact of corporate operations? Is a traditional State-based regime of international law fit to respond to that challenge? What initiatives have been taken at international, regional, and national levels, and how have they been effective? What specific human

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rights concerns are likely to arise due to corporate activities and what are currently the main issues? How can business address the human rights challenges they face in a competitive business environment?

HRTS 5550 Advanced Protection of Human Rights (3)

Through the examination of concrete human rights cases and situations, the course will offer an overview of the main international, regional and domestic form that aim at protecting and promoting human rights.

With the nine core human rights treaties and the different regional human rights treaties, the normative enunciation stage of human rights is quite complete. This course aims at examining the other stage for human rights: once universally or regionally enunciated, how are human rights protected? How are massive human rights prevented? How are human rights promoted? Through the review of human rights protection mechanisms (UN Charter-based bodies, treaty bodies, regional bodies, international criminal courts, domestic courts) and selected human rights concrete cases, this course offers a unique opportunity to develop an expertise on the wide variety of human rights protection mechanism and to acquire basic competency in legal writing and research.

HRTS 5600 International Human Rights Law and Organizations (3)

This course reviews core legal documents and the work of the most important governmental and nongovernmental institutions currently involved in human rights protection and promotion. Students will examine important issues in current political and ethical debates about human rights and current problems in human rights protection.

HRTS 5610 International Humanitarian Law (3)

This course covers the history, development, scope and purpose of international humanitarian law and its basic principles, including protection of the defenseless in war, restrictions on the conduct of hostilities, the law of non-international armed conflicts, the problem of supervision and repression and collective responsibility for the implementation of humanitarian law.

HRTS 5620 International Criminal Law (3)

This course explores international criminal law as applied by national and international courts. There is a particular focus on the critical discussion of the substantive and institutional impacts of the system, its history, principles and the relationship between major actors.

HRTS 5660 Social Movement and Human Rights (3)

The course explains the intrinsic connection between human rights and social movements by focusing on the historical developments of human rights activism in the 20th and 21st-century world. Topics include a broad range of NGO activism and different types of movements against political and social injustice, racial discrimination, modern-day slavery, discrimination of women, environmental injustice, etc. Students conduct original field studies of past and contemporary human rights activism, acquiring critical skills and analytical tools for the comparative interpretation of social movements and human rights in the international arena.

HRTS 5680 Islamic Law, Culture, and Human Rights (3)

The course will offer an overview of the interplay between Islamic cultures and legal standards and the main current human rights principles, standards and practices on a selection of topics. The question of whether Islam and universal human rights are compatible has been more and more raised both by academics and the media. Current media covering topics in Islamic societies tend to focus on conflictual aspects, notably through the coverage of awful abuses committed by ISIS or Boko Haram (massive killings, be-headings, polygamy, slavery...) Far from the common fantasies and prejudices, the purpose of this course is to offer a unique opportunity for students to discover the fascinating legal order settled Islam. Through the selection of relevant and crucial topics, such as freedom of religion, gender, sexual orientation, freedom of expression, the course also offers an opportunity to develop an expertise on the interactions and sometimes tensions or conflicts between Islamic standards and culture and universal human rights standards.

HRTS 5800 Issues in International Human Rights (3)

The students will examine important issues in current political and ethical debates about human rights in the domestic and international sphere. Topics may vary. May be repeated for credit if content differs.

HRTS 5900 Discrimination and Human Rights (3)

The course will offer an overview of the main human rights frameworks related to discrimination but also the large variety of challenges discrimination and intersectional discrimination raise in societies.

The recent deaths of black men at the hands of white police officers in the United States but also in Europe revived reflection on discrimination and its tragic consequences in societies. Far from the human rights basics, most societies would allocate human worth based not on the integrity and inherent dignity of a person but rather on an individual's color, religion, gender, or social status. This course aims at providing students with an in depth knowledge of the human rights legal standards regarding discrimination and will review all potential grounds for discrimination (such as race, gender, sexual orientation, political opinion, social origins, health, casts...). The course also highlights the importance of acknowledging intersectional discrimination in order to truly tackle all contemporary forms of discrimination.

HRTS 6000 Capstone in international Human Rights (3)

This course acts as the capstone for student who are completing a master of arts in international human rights. Students will produce and defend their final research project for their degree program.

HRTS 6250 Thesis (3-6)

The student completes a thesis project under the supervision of two faculty members. The thesis option is recommended for those considering graduate study at doctoral level. All

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theses must follow university guidelines and be deposited in the Webster University library. Students must secure approval of their proposal from the academic director or coordinator of the program at the site where the thesis is to be done. General policy expects proposals to be submitted before the 24th credit hour is completed.

HRTS 6500 Internship in International Human Rights (3-6)

The internship is an intensive experience that provides the student with the opportunity to work within an existing human rights organization and learn first-hand about its mission, goals and operations. Within the experience, students will apply their understanding of the theories and actors of human rights to the practice of their specific role and organization.