HUMR4504 - Human Rights in Practice

Course description

Course content

Human rights ideas and norms have been increasingly operationalized through the actions of diverse actors such as states, multi-lateral organisations, social movements, NGOs and community groups. Operationalisation takes place therefore across different kinds of activist, professional and institutional spaces. How and when these abstract norms encounter messy ‘real world’ practicalities of organisational, social, economic, political and cultural contexts, though posing many dilemmas, has in general received limited reflection. Obvious cases in point are how and why certain human rights issues and approaches are prioritized over others, by whom, and to what end and, in particular, what effect. Better critical multi-disciplinary assessment of human rights practice and practitioners can enhance awareness of these challenges especially in addressing the problematic issue of therefore what creates change and the diversity of impact in human rights interventions.

With many graduates from the programme Theory and Practice of Human Rights (master's two years) seeking to work in the human rights field, and some also looking to an academic career, exposure both to the theory and the daily mechanics of ‘human rights practice’ is beneficial in a double sense:

- to develop critical thinking, insight and understanding of human rights practice;
- to develop practical employment-related skills and hands-on experience of practice.

Assessment

Assessment will be done though:

- An end of term quiz
- Undertaking a 6-8 week internship within an organisation. A limited number of internships will be offered by the NCHR and its partners. Students can also arrange an internship but first have it approved by the Course Coordinator.
- An internship report, maximum 4000 words. The aim is to use course readings when describing and reflecting upon and contextualizing the internship experience.
- Both the course and internship should also be used by students to develop a research question and material for their thesis.

Learning outcomes

This course enables students to link their theoretical studies to deepening understanding of human rights practice, which, then, by doing the internship, creates a feedback loop to enhancing theory and critical reflection. e.g.
Knowledge

Upon completion of this course, students will have acquired:

- Good knowledge of key issues in human rights practice.
- Good knowledge of how and why selected human rights are implemented and applied in practice.
- Good knowledge of the ethical issues and challenges that arise in human rights practice.
- Knowledge about human rights actors work, exemplified by good knowledge of one particular human rights actor’s practice (the internship).
- Knowledge of the tools and tactics at the disposal of human rights practitioners.

Skills

- Ability to identify and analyse key issues in the practice of human rights.
- Analyse and identify ethical issues that arise in the work of human rights practitioners.
- Know the main actors and how they each contribute to human rights in practice.
- Be able to critically evaluate the policy, practice and literature produced by the various actors within human rights practice.

General competence

- Be able to perform relevant human rights work in government institutions, academia, law firms, companies, and organisations relating to human rights.
- Have an understanding of the main interests and concerns relating to the practice of human rights; and an understanding of the evolution of the practice of human rights.
- Developing specific skills attractive to employers.

Admission

Admission is limited to students undergoing the study programme Theory and Practice of Human Rights (master's two years).

Teaching

Lectures address themes including the what, why, and how of different types of human rights ‘practice’ (such as, what is practice? Examples of practices: e.g litigation, monitoring, dialogue, participation etc.); looking critically at actors and organisations like states and NGOs; and developing understanding of ‘impact’ in human rights work. Students will apply for an internship from a list of available positions, within a prescribed deadline. Each student application will indicate, in order of priority, three positions. The NCHR, in cooperation with internship partners, will make the final selection. Any students to which a position cannot be offered, or should they choose not to do an internship, will write only an extended essay.
Students can also independently attain their own internship position, but which is subject to approval by the course leader and NCHR. The internship runs mainly during the summer period, but can also be organised earlier or later depending on circumstances.

**Access to teaching**

A student who has completed compulsory instruction and coursework and has had these approved, is not entitled to repeat that instruction and coursework. A student who has been admitted to a course, but who has not completed compulsory instruction and coursework or had these approved, is entitled to repeat that instruction and coursework, depending on available capacity.

**Examination**

The internship report, as stated above. For those not undertaking the internship, the student must formulate in writing the topic of the essay and a brief statement of methodology. The essay must be approved in writing by the course leader in advance. Further instructions about both the extended internship report, and essay for those not doing an internship, will be given during the course.

**Examination support material**

All support material is allowed

**Language of examination**

English

**Grading scale**

Grades are awarded a pass/fail. Read more about [the grading system](#).

**Explanations and appeals**

- Explanation of grades and appeals

**Resit an examination**

- [Illness at exams / postponed exams](#)
- [Resitting an examination](#)

**Withdrawal from an examination**

If you wish to withdraw from the exam you must do so in Studentweb at least two weeks prior to the deadline. Failure to do so will be counted as one of the three opportunities to sit the exam.

**Special examination arrangements**
Application form, deadline and requirements for special examination arrangements.

Evaluation

The course is subject to continuous evaluation. At regular intervals we also ask students to participate in a more comprehensive evaluation.

Syllabus Achievements/Requirements

The course is based on the compendium and some additional literature which will be distributed during the course.

Required reading materials

pp. 434.


  http://jhrp.oxfordjournals.org/content/2/2/208.full.pdf+html


  http://jhrp.oxfordjournals.org/content/2/1/1.full.pdf+html


http://journals.cambridge.org/download.php?file=%2FEIA%2FEIA28_02%2FS0892679414000227a.pdf&code=70b5d8e78fb69a08417e3dfa463249ff


**Additional materials (especially for internship report)**

pp. 205

Gotzmann, N. (2014) Human rights and Impact Assessment—conceptual and practical considerations in the private sector context: Danish Institute for Human Rights. (pp. 41)

http://www.icnl.org/research/journal/vol10iss2/art_2.htm


Cravens, J. *Basic Tips for Fund-raising for Small NGOs in Developing Countries* (15 pp)
http://www.coeworld.org/sites/default/files/attachments/Basic_NGO_funding_final-JCravens_1.pdf


  http://ebooks.cambridge.org/ebook.jsf?bid=CBO9781139019408


  http://muse.jhu.edu/journals/human_rights_quarterly/v026/26.1roth.pdf

  http://muse.jhu.edu/journals/human_rights_quarterly/toc/hrq26.4.html

• New Tactics in Human Rights, Resource for Practitioners pp.10-23 (pp. 13)

• OHCHR, Human Rights Training, pp. 1-14 (14 pp)

• Statement of Ethical Commitments of Human Rights Professionals (2 pp)
  (see pp. 22-23 in the document).

Lecture Schedule
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<td>Working Examples: alternative practices e.g. ‘fact finding’</td>
<td>room 251</td>
<td>Asbjørn Eide</td>
<td>Sharp (2016)</td>
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<td>Jones and Kimari (forthcoming)</td>
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<td>Gotzmann (2016) et al</td>
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<td>Risse, T. and Ropp, S. (2013: Introd.)</td>
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<td>Extra: Mosse (2005)</td>
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<td>Feb. 28</td>
<td>10:15-12:00</td>
<td>Lecture 5: Human rights</td>
<td>CA Seminar</td>
<td>Save the Children</td>
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<td>Monitoring and Advocacy</td>
<td>room 251</td>
<td>Asbjørn Eide</td>
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<td>Mar. 14</td>
<td>10:15-12:00</td>
<td>Lecture 7: Dialogue as Practice</td>
<td>CA Seminar room 251</td>
<td>C. F. Bakke And P. Jones</td>
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<td>Mar. 21</td>
<td>10:15-12:00</td>
<td>Lecture 8: Wrapping Up: towards Internships and quiz</td>
<td>CA Seminar room 251</td>
<td>P. Jones</td>
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