Advanced Study in International Law and Human Rights

Module leader: Assistant Professor Kalliopi Chainoglou

Description

What are human rights? Who can claim human rights violations? Which are the available human rights mechanisms and courts to examine such claims? Are states accountable for human rights abuses? Why do social movements, like Black Lives Matter, emerge? Is human rights abuses a matter of national or international security? What is the role of international organizations, such as the UN, Council of Europe, OSCE, etc, in advancing international law and human rights? Who are the non-state actors involved in the international protection of human rights? Can politics meddle with the enforcement of international law and human rights? Can pandemics, such as COVID 19 suspend human rights?

The module considers certain basic international law concepts, such as the formation of states, elements of the law of treaties and the law of international organizations, and human rights concepts and issues. The module offers an advanced study in the UN and regional human rights systems (European, African, Interamerican) and **examines international law and human rights issues that are currently the subject of interest and debate.** Some of the topics covered are: counterterrorism and human rights, torture, extreme police violence, violence against women and femicides, rights of indigenous peoples, (harmful) cultural practices, right to sexual orientation, etc.

Upon successful completion of the course, the students will be able to demonstrate:

1. knowledge and understanding of the international legal system for the protection of human rights and its connection to regional human rights systems.
2. an ability to analyse and critically examine issues pertaining to international law and human rights from an international peace and security perspective
3. an ability to identify, formulate, and solve questions based on applying the UN and regional human rights systems;
4. writing skills by producing a critical legal account of such problems and solutions

Week 1: Introduction to international law, international politics and human rights

Week 2: Law of International Organisations: UN organs and monitoring mechanisms

Week 3: International Bill of Human Rights: from the Universal Declaration of Human Rights to a draft convention on the rights of older persons

Week 4: International Bill of Human Rights: the voices of the non-state actors in the field of human rights and social movements

Week 5: Human rights violations under the International Peace and Security mandate of the UN Security Council

Week 6: Regional Human Rights systems (InterAmerican)

Week 7: Regional Human Rights systems (European)

Week 8: Regional Human Rights systems (African)

Week 9: Vulnerable groups’ rights – case study violence against women and femicides

Week 10: Vulnerable groups’ rights - case study on indigenous rights

Week 11: Vulnerable groups’ rights- case study on LGBT rights

Week 12: Right to Life and Freedom from torture vs national security – case study on counterrorism and human rights

Week 13: Right to Life – case study on extreme police violence

Language of instruction: English

Bibliography: electronic sources and electronic chapters of books

Assessment: Coursework (50%) and written exam (50%) (multiple choice questions or question problems)