UNIVERSITÀ
DEGLI STUDI DI MILANO-BICOCCA

COURSE SYLLABUS

Human Rights

2122-5-A5810213

Learning objectives

Knowledge and understanding

The course aims at providing the students with the knowledge and critical understanding of the mandate and functioning of the main international human rights mechanisms and the contents and, where applicable, controversial aspects emerging from landmark international judgments/rulings/views or the principles spelled out in reports, especially with regard to the right to life and the prohibition of torture and other cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment.

Applying knowledge and understanding

In general, getting to know the mandate and functioning of the main international human rights mechanisms in order to be able to submit reports or to lodge individual communications or complaints.

Contents

This course provides an introduction to international human rights mechanisms, illustrating their composition, mandate and functioning, as well as their jurisprudence, through the study and analysis of the relevant judgments/decisions/views/reports mostly concerning the right to life and the prohibition of torture and other cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment.

Detailed program

The first part of the course deals with the general aspects of human rights, their historical development and their inclusion in international law, beginning with the United Nations Charter and in the light of the main subsequent

human rights treaties (both universal and regional), taking also into account the procedural means for their protection. The mandate and composition of the main international human rights mechanisms are then analysed, as well as international jurisprudence on the right to life and the prohibition of torture, highlighting – where applicable – the existence of controversial issues (e.g. the extra-territorial application of international human rights treaties).

Prerequisites

Basic knowledge of Public International Law. Bearing in mind that the course is imparted in English, basic knowledge of the language, which allows students to understand the documents distributed, actively participate and interact with their colleagues and the professor(s).

Teaching methods

Frontal lectures, in English. The first lectures are of a more general nature, aimed at learning the basics of the subject and at ensuring homogeneity of knowledge among the participants.

At the beginning of the course, landmark judgments / decisions / observations rendered by the main international human rights mechanisms are distributed. Students who volunteer for this purpose are requested to analyse a document and give a short presentation during one of the lectures. The presentation is followed by interactive dialogue and debate.

Assessment methods

Oral exam. Students are asked two main questions, aimed at assessing their understanding of the theoretical contents of the course, as well as their ability to apply the acquired knowledge to concrete cases; coherence and completeness of the exposition; correct use of legal terminology; capacity to express oneself in an understandable and synthetic way.

Textbooks and Reading Materials

Relevant documents will be distributed during the course.

For students who do not attend the course:

Smith, Textbook on International Human Rights, seventh edition, Oxford University Press, 2016 (Chapters 1-10, 13 and 14); and

Carcano, Notable Cases of the European Court of Human Rights on the Right to Life, Giappichelli, 2020.