



**SANT'ANNA**  
INSTITUTE  
SORRENTO

## **POL 375 - Special Topics: Human Rights** **(45 contact hours, 3 credits)**

### **Course Overview**

The purpose of this course is to examine the history, development, structure and efficacy of international human rights law. In this course, students will investigate the legal framework of the United Nations and regional systems relating to the protection and promotion of, inter alia, the rights of minorities and indigenous peoples, women's rights, the rights of migrants and refugees, cultural rights, and the emerging field of environmental rights.

Students will assess the remedies that exist for violations of human rights law in the various systems and examine practical case studies where relevant.

### **Learning Outcomes**

On completion of the course the students will be able to:

- ✓ Compare the international human rights law system and regional human rights law systems
- ✓ Evaluate the various mechanisms and procedures for human rights law enforcement
- ✓ Critically assess specific areas of international human rights law with reference to relevant legal instruments and contemporary cases
- ✓ Acquire basic competency in legal writing and research

### **Teaching Methodology**

Class time will be used for a combination of lectures, discussions, and group exercises. Participation is very important in this module. Students will be asked to explain readings and concepts, to offer analysis of cases and to express their opinion.

### **Assignments and Grading**

Further details on the assignments will be distributed during lectures and discussed. Opportunities for questions about the assignments will be given during the course. The grade for the course will be based on student's work as follows:

- ✓ Attendance & Participation (including assignments if any): 15%
- ✓ Mid-term exam: 20%
- ✓ Oral presentation: 15%
- ✓ Final exam: 25%
- ✓ Final essay: 25%

The oral presentation should last 15 minutes (date to be agreed).

The essay should be approximately 3,000 words long. Essay requirements will be distributed with the essay titles. Due date: to be confirmed.



**SANT'ANNA**  
INSTITUTE  
SORRENTO

For the exams students are required to answer 8-10 multiple choice questions and comprehensively answer one open question – excluding the specific topic addressed in the final essay.

## **Grading Scale**

A 95%-100%  
A- 90%-94%  
B+ 87%-89%  
B 83%-86%  
B- 80%-82%  
C+ 77%-79%  
C 73%-76%  
C- 70%-72%  
D+ 67%-69%  
D 63%-66%  
D- 60%-62%  
F under 60

## **Topics**

### **Module 1**

- ✓ Concept and history of Human Rights
- ✓ Human Rights standards at the universal Level: the UDHR and the UN System
- ✓ Regional Systems of protection and promotion of Human Rights
- ✓ Universal Jurisdiction and the problem of impunity: the International Criminal Jurisdictions

### **Module 2**

Special focuses:

- ✓ Prohibition of Torture
- ✓ Anti-Racism and non-discrimination
- ✓ Freedom from poverty
- ✓ Right to health
- ✓ Human Rights of women
- ✓ Rule of Law and fair trial
- ✓ Religious freedoms
- ✓ Right to education
- ✓ Human Rights of the child
- ✓ Human Rights in armed conflict
- ✓ Freedom of expression and freedom of the media
- ✓ Right to Democracy
- ✓ Minority Rights



SANT'ANNA  
INSTITUTE  
SORRENTO

✓ Right to Asylum

### **Textbook**

*UNDERSTANDING HUMAN RIGHTS - MANUAL ON HUMAN RIGHTS EDUCATION*, edited by W. Benedek, European Training and Research Centre for Human Rights and Democracy (ETC), 2012.

Additional complementary readings on specific issues and relevant case studies will be provided throughout the course.

### **Course Policy**

#### Attendance

You are allowed **two** unexcused absences (**one** in the Summer terms). Documentation for any other absence **MUST** be produced and **APPROVED** by the professor or the Academic Director. For absences due to illness, please provide the professor with a doctor's note upon returning to class as well as inform him and/or the school the first day of illness. Each unexcused absence after the second will reduce your grade by 3 percentage points.

#### Late submissions

Assignments not submitted by the due date will receive a penalty of 10% for the first 24 hours, 20% for a 48 hour delay. No submissions will be accepted more than 3 days after the deadline, unless arrangements have been made with the instructor (for extensions under exceptional circumstances, apply to the course instructor).

#### Personal Technology

Please turn cell phones off during class. Laptops may be to take notes, however social networking, e-mailing, surfing the Internet, playing games, etc. are absolutely forbidden during class. Any student caught doing the aforementioned activities during class will be asked to turn off their cell phones and/or computers.

Repeated violations of this rule after the first warning will result in the student being marked absent for the day and permanently losing their laptop privileges. Be respectful; the use of personal electronic devices during class is limited to academic purposes.

#### Contesting a grade

If students wish to contest a grade they must make an appointment to do so in person. The student should contact the instructor with any concerns within ONE week of receiving the grade. The student must also demonstrate that they have read the comments accompanying the grade by presenting a brief written statement specifying why the grade does not reflect the quality of the work.

It is at the discretion of the instructor to decide whether the work and the student's request warrant any increase or decrease in the grade. Students should retain a copy of all submitted assignments and feedback (in case of loss) and should also retain all of their marked assignments.