

# **Getting to know the United Nations and other international organizations: how do they work to promote international cooperation and human rights worldwide**

## **Objectives and structure of the course**

*This course aims at providing students with an ample overview of the work of international organizations. In particular, the professor will share with students her 10 years experience in the UN, with various agencies such as UNESCO, the World Health Organization and the High Commissioner for Human Rights, as well as in NGOs (FIDH-International Federation for Human Rights) in order to provide them with knowledge on:*

- *the type of work that is being done within international organizations*
- *the skills required to work in a international and multicultural environment, both in headquarters and in the field*
- *other countries' culture, customs, and legal framework, in several continents*
- *more specific subjects related to international organizations, such as human rights protection and complaint mechanisms, the way NGOs promote human rights and cooperate with international organizations, the way the UN and other international organizations deal with issues of current concern such as the fight against terrorism, irregular migration and the trafficking of human beings, the UN approach to development cooperation and the partnership between the UN and businesses to promote corporate responsibility*

*For each module, explanations of the framework from a theoretical point of view will be followed by the sharing of practical cases that clearly illustrate the subject-matter, drawing from the experience of the professor both in headquarters and during missions in the field. The objective is thus that students learn about concrete situations occurring in various countries around the world, and how these situations are being dealt with. Finally, each module concludes with a seminar where students work in groups on practical cases.*

## **PROGRAM OF THE COURSE**

*(structured in 6 Modules)*

### **MODULE I. THE MAIN INTERNATIONAL AND REGIONAL ORGANIZATIONS**

#### **Class – Theory:**

1. The organizations pertaining to the UN system (UN Secretariat, HCR, OHCHR, UNESCO, WHO, WIPO, UNICEF etc.): their objectives, structure and functioning, both in the headquarters and in the field.
2. Other relevant organizations:
  - At the universal level: WTO, World Bank, IMF etc.
  - At the regional level: European Union (EU), Council of Europe, African Union (AU), Organization of American States (OAS), League of Arab States etc.

**Practical class:**

1. Presentation of the competencies required to work in the UN, and the possible channels to get employed in the UN system.
2. Queries and open discussion with the students.

**MODULE II. HUMAN RIGHTS AS A CROSS-CUTTING PRIORITY: COMMON VALUES PROMOTED BY INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS****Class – Theory:**

1. Introduction to human rights:
  - An historical perspective of its evolution.
  - Analysis of the main rights, the treaties and other international texts that recognize them, and their legal force and applicability at the national level.
  - The mainstreaming of human rights through the UN system: a priority that cuts across all fields of work.
2. Making the protection of human rights effective through monitoring and complaint mechanisms accessible to victims of human rights violations:
  - at the universal level: UN complaint and protection mechanisms
  - at the regional level: complaint and protection mechanisms in the Council of Europe, the African Union, the OAS etc.

**Class - Case study:**

1. Monitoring racial discrimination: the investigative mission of the UN Special Rapporteur on contemporary forms of racism to Brazil and its conclusions.
2. Submitting a complaint on behalf of a victim: case studies of various complaints submitted to UN and non UN bodies, and their results.

**Seminar:** Work in groups on a practical case.

**MODULE III. THE KEY ROLE OF NGOS AND OTHER CIVIL SOCIETY ACTORS IN INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION FOR THE PROTECTION OF HUMAN RIGHTS****Class – Theory:**

1. Analysis of the contribution that civil society makes towards:
  - the development of international human rights standards
  - their advocacy nationally and internationally
  - the functioning of the human rights monitoring and complaint mechanisms for the protection of victims
  - the development of projects in the field that enhance human rights protection

2. Analysis of how the UN work contributes to the work of civil society.

**Class - Case study:**

1. The work of Doctors Without Borders (MSF) in promoting access to health for HIV patients, and its cooperation with international organizations such as the Global Fund to Fight HIV/AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria: the cases of Honduras, Guatemala etc.
2. How do NGO help preparing a monitoring mission: case studies of various missions undertaken by UN Special Rapporteurs.

**Seminar:** Work in groups on a practical case.

**MODULE IV. CURRENT CHALLENGES: THE PROTECTION OF HUMAN RIGHTS IN THE FIGHT AGAINST TERRORISM, IRREGULAR MIGRATION AND HUMAN TRAFFICKING AND OTHER CONTEMPORARY FORMS OF SLAVERY**

**Class – Theory:**

1. The respect for human rights in the fight against terrorism
2. Legal framework for irregular migration: what duties and what rights?
3. The international framework to fight against human trafficking and for the protection of the rights of the victims.

**Class - Case study:**

1. Common actions taken by various UN bodies in relation to the detention centre in Guantanamo and the phenomenon of secret flights and detentions in the context of countering terrorism.
2. The fight against human trafficking: the joint work of UN bodies, regional organizations and NGOs in South-East Asia.

**Seminar:** Work in groups on a practical case.

**MODULE V. COOPERATION FOR DEVELOPMENT: THE UN APPROACH**

**Class – Theory:**

1. The human rights based approach to development cooperation developed by various UN agencies: added value, objectives and methodology.
2. The adoption of this approach by various national cooperation agencies and NGOs in the design and implementation of their development work.

**Class - Case study:**

Analysis of concrete cases where this approach has been adopted and of the results achieved.

**Seminar:** Work in groups on a practical case.

## **MODULE VI. BUSINESS AND HUMAN RIGHTS: INTERNATIONAL GUIDELINES FOR CORPORATE RESPONSIBILITY**

### **Class – Theory:**

1. The UN Global Compact:
  - 10 principles in the area of human rights, labour, the environment and anti-corruption to promote corporate responsibility.
  - The Global Compact Governance Framework: how does it work and who participates?
2. Other international initiatives to promote corporate responsibility

### **Class - Case study:**

Analysis of the results achieved. Reference to the monitoring work of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General on Business and Human Rights.

**Seminar:** Work in groups on a practical case.

## **FINAL SESSION**

Students will work in small groups in order to prepare an essay that develops a specific aspect relating to one of the subjects covered by the program, which has been of particular interest to them. The members of the group will then present the essay, which will first be submitted to the professor for its evaluation, orally to the rest of the class. An open discussion with questions and answers will follow the presentation.

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### **Tutorship**

Students will be provided with an indication of the time (1 hour per week) when the professor will be available for tutorship, either in an individual or collective format, according to the needs. Tutorship through email will also be made available.

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### **Timetable**

Monday and Thursday, from 16h00 to 18h00. From 18 March until 3 June. Room AA02, Edifici G. M. de Jovellanos.

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Professor: Ms. Valentina Milano