

Faculty of Law



INT2325 International Protection of Human Rights

[30h] 4.5 credits

This course is taught in the 1st semester

Teacher(s): Olivier De Schutter
Language: French
Level: Second cycle

Aims

This course seeks to familiarise students with the international and regional mechanisms for the protection of human rights through the in-depth study of a specific theme, which is defined each year on the basis of current developments. An important dimension of the course consists of confronting students with materials presented in the format in which they are dealt with by negotiators and agents in international institutions.

Content and teaching methods

This course is based on an active teaching approach. The methods followed seek to fulfil the three aims of the course:

1. to convey an understanding of the most important systems of European and international human rights protection as well as of the guarantees they provide;
2. to encourage students to familiarise themselves with the sources of the subject matter, including the normative instruments and the case law of human rights bodies;
3. to equip students with the tools they require to develop a critique of these texts.

Students are asked to look at the subject as a set of materials on the basis of which human rights claims are formulated, in specific contexts, rather than as a structured set of rules designating one single correct solution.. A reliance on non-legal sources and materials is strongly encouraged. In fact, students are asked to abandon the classical position of the judge to adopt that of the lawyer advising clients.

It would be misleading to imagine that we can discuss, in a course of 30 hours, the full set of international human rights norms, as well as the case law interpreting these norms. However, through active participation in the course, students should develop the ability to identify the relevant materials and use those materials in the course of their argumentation in the field of human rights.

The teaching methods which are used are therefore be the following:

- a) case studies, which require that the students prepare these texts in advance in order to be able to take part in the class discussions;
- b) exchanges with guest speakers active in the international protection of human rights (public servants, judges, representatives of non-governmental organisations);
- c) simulations (important court events), in order to familiarise students with the procedures used at the European Court of Human Rights and the European Committee of Social Rights.

Other information (prerequisite, evaluation (assessment methods), course materials recommended readings, ...)

The evaluation is based on active participation in the course (10/20), in particular in the framework of any simulation in which the student takes part, and on a final examination which consists of preparing a case note or a dissenting opinion to a judicial decision (10/20).

Programmes in which this activity is taught

DVLP3DS/AF Diplôme d'études spécialisées en études du développement
 (études africaines)