



Università  
per Stranieri  
di Perugia

## **EXAM PROGRAM**

Master Degree: **International Relations and Development Cooperation (RICS)**

Subject: **Gender issues and Human rights**

Year of study: **I/II**

Term: I

Professor: S.E. **Moushira Khattab**

SSD: **IUS/13**

CFU: **6**

Global workload: **150 hours**

Distribution of workload : **40 hours of lectures and 110 hours of study at home**

Lingua di insegnamento: **English**

**Academic Year 2012 -2013**

### ***Topic & Issues:***

This course is an introduction to Human Rights with special emphasis on gender issues. It is not a course in international law but rather international relations. The course aims at providing undergraduate students with a forum to become acquainted with the international context that led to the emergence of the UN human rights system. How the system functions, its strengths and weaknesses. It seeks to provide basic knowledge on, institutional structures, and content of basic human rights in a dynamic international setting.

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### ***Pedagogical method, material and objectives:***

#### Pedagogical Method:

The course will be conducted as a lecture based on a semester long discussion engaging students in debates. The personal input of students will be encouraged by their native experiences. The ultimate objective is to make students interested in, and hopefully advocates of human rights

#### Teaching Materials:

The course will be taught in English. It relies mostly on UN human rights instruments; all available in the 5 UN languages as well as the Italian language.....

Additional reading material will be assigned

#### Objectives:

The general pedagogical goals of the course are to increase the students' awareness of the following: the main characteristics of power politics and international relations that led to the establishment of the UN human rights system, institutional framework of UN human rights system. Main features of the UN human rights instruments. Special emphasis on gender will require through in-depth examination of : 1- the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, 2- the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, 3- the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, 4- the Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination against Women CEDAW and 5- the Convention on the Rights of the Child CRC., some of the major themes and debates of human rights today. The impact of the Arab awakening on the rights of women ( Egypt as a case study).

The course will target to familiarize students with:

- 1- The evolution of the United Nations human rights system, its mechanisms and how it functions.
- 2- International relations and the process of international negotiations leading to the adoption of United Nations human rights conventions.
- 3- The rights-based approach; including to development.
- 4- Raise awareness of the cost of not granting women equal rights; the cost to the family; the nation and men.
- 5- Link between equal rights for women and democracy.

- 6- Equal rights for women are legal obligations on the States as the primary duty bearer.
- 7- The Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights and the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights.
- 8- Through examination of the Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination against Women CEDAW, its Optional Protocol, and the Convention on the Rights of the Child CRC.
- 9- Working methods of the Committees on CEDAW and CRC.
- 10- Explain the link between women rights and the rights of children.
- 11- Familiarize student with the General measures of implementation of human rights for children and women.

The above mentioned objectives will be achieved through a participatory approach. Students will participate in the class debate; will do research and reaction papers.

***The Content of the course:***

***First: international efforts to deal with gender based discrimination.***

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Examine the history of the international movement for the rights of women:

- The Universal declaration for Human rights
- The international Covenant for civil and political rights
- The international Covenant for Economic; social and cultural rights
- A thorough examination of the Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination against Women and its optional protocol –Reservations by States Parties to CEDAW - reports submitted by SP to the Committee on CEDAW- Concluding observations CoB's of the committee on CEDAW- evaluation of progress achieved.
- Beijing conference and its platform of action- Follow up conferences.
- Case studies
- The establishment of UN Women in July 2010

***Second: Institutions or International mechanisms:***

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Committee on CEDAW

Committee on the Rights of the Child

The creation of UN Women merging:

Division for the Advancement of Women (DAW)

International Research and Training Institute for the Advancement of Women (INSTRAW)

Office of the Special Adviser on Gender Issues and Advancement of Women (OSAGI)

United Nations Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM)

***Third: Areas of focus***

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Gender and development: No sustainable development without equal rights for women:

It entails examination of :

Violence against Women

Peace and Security

Leadership and Participation

Engendering budgeting and planning

Education and gender discrimination

Economic empowerment

***Fourth: Practical; research and field work of student:***

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Participation in the debate during classes;

Doing research on the United Nations human rights system;

(Students will be asked at a later stage to monitor the performance of certain countries, with regards to honouring their commitment to ensure the rights of women.

Using certain countries as case study, students will examine the status of women through the reports submitted to CEDAW and/ or CRC and its CoB's. This will enable students to assess achievements on the grounds and obstacles facing implementation of the rights of women.

Students will learn to assess the compromising language of international documents and its implementation on the ground. They will also examine and evaluate the outcome documents of major international conferences.

***Fifth: Documents needed for the course;***

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In preparation for the course students will be required to read:

The Universal declaration on Human Rights

The Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW)

The Convention on the Rights of the Child

Beijing platform of action

The International Conference on Human Rights and its final outcome document "Vienna Declaration" 1993

**International Human Rights in Context: Law, Politics and Morals**, Steiner, Alston, and Goodman eds. (3<sup>rd</sup> ed. 2008).

Visit the website of:

CEDAW- CRC- UNIFEM - UN Women- Commission on the Status of Women

There will be more readings required as we progress during the course.

### ***Sixth: Course requirements:***

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The final evaluation for this course will be based on three separate grades.

- **Participation 25%**

Each week, students will be expected to come to class fully prepared to discuss the readings and engage in debates.

- **Reaction Papers (35%):**

Students will need to write 2 short "reflection/reaction papers" (max 2 pages font 12). Students are free to choose the topic and the country to write their reaction papers. The objective is to enhance the students' argumentation skills and to adopt a critical approach to reading. Students will be required to support their arguments.

**First paper due on Wednesday October 17<sup>th</sup>:** Comparison between ICCPR, ICESCR and CEDAW concerning the:

a- How strong each document provides for the rights it embraces?

b- Does the level of commitment each document places on States Parties vary?

c- Do any of these documents put a ceiling or limitation on the enjoyment of any of the rights it provides?

Students will be required to give examples to support their arguments.

**Second paper due Wednesday October 31<sup>st</sup>:** Each student will choose one or two issues of human rights and examine how it is discussed in:

- The treaty or Convention concerned (example CEDAW or CRC)
- The report of a country that the student chooses (example Italy).
- The report of NGO's on the issue (example domestic violence or discrimination in the work place, or rights of migrants).
- The Concluding observation or the recommendation of the Committee in charge of monitoring the implementation of the Convention (CEDAW or CRC).
- Students will be required to make their own conclusions.

- **Written final exam 40% (open book exam). [ Date for the exam is Wednesday November 7<sup>th</sup>.**

Every effort will be made to assist students with limited knowledge of English language.

**The exam aims to test the student understanding of various issues of human rights and not their ability to memorise. It aims to engage students to become supporters of the global human rights movement, and defenders of human rights issues in their own countries and globally.**

***Course regulations:***

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Students are expected to attend classes and to arrive on time.

CELL PHONES ARE FORBIDDEN! If you have a laptop, it should be used for note-taking or in other legitimate class related ways.

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### ***Provisional schedule of classes & readings***

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*The schedule of classes may change in the course of the semester (some classes may have to be cancelled or rescheduled), and reading assignments may be either changed, edited or moved from one week to another week. Announcements to that effect will be made in class a week in advance. Students are assumed to attend and therefore be informed of such changes. In addition, students are assumed to read their e-mail messages regularly, to be informed of possible last-minute cancellations due to unforeseen circumstances.*

Please note: There will be no class on November 8<sup>th</sup>. To make up for the three hours class, we will discuss and agree on a method to make up for the three hours.

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## ***I. Evolution of the UN Human Rights System***

### **1. Introduction to Human Rights and Humanitarian Law (Wednesday October 3<sup>rd</sup> )**

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- Course Syllabus
- International movement for Human Rights after the World War II.
- Characteristics of the United Nations Human rights system-
- Difference between Domestic Law and international law.
- The UN charter and the emphasis on HR.
- The Universal Declaration of Human Rights UDHR
- The International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights ICCPR.
- The International Covenant on Economic, social and Cultural Rights ICESCR.

Reading for the class: ICCPR & ICESCR

*Reading for the class: UN Charter- UDHR- Steiner*

### **2. The translation of UDHR into legally binding documents. (Thursday October 4<sup>th</sup>)**

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- Communalities between ICCPR & ICESCR

**The translation of both Covenants into human Rights instruments that protect the right of specific groups.**

- ICCPR & ICESCR , CEDAW & CRC. Comparison that identify the strength of each human Rights instrument.
- CRC and gender

*Reading for the class: CEDAW- CRC*

### **3. Through examination and analysis of the Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination against Women CEDAW. Provisions- areas of weakness and strength as a legal document ( Wednesday October 10th)**

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### **4. Thorough examination of the Convention on the Rights of the Child and Gender (Thursday October 11th)**

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- **Application of CEDAW- Case studies on certain States**
  - **Comparison between CRC- CEDAW-ICCPR- ICESCR on specific issues- General measures of implementation and the right to non-discrimination; ( Wednesday October 17<sup>th</sup> )**
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*Reading for the Class:*

- *Reporting guidelines of the Committee-*
- *Mirvat Rishmawi, Article 4: the Nature of States Parties' Obligations, A Commentary on the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child,(Leiden: Martinus Nijhoff Publishers, 2006)*
- *Implementation Handbook for the Convention on the Rights of the Child: 2007, Rachel Hodgkin, and Peter Newell, prepared for UNICEF.*

## ***II. Institutions***

### **5- Structure of United Nations Human Rights System.**

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**The Role of Human Rights Treaty Bodies: Thursday October 18<sup>th</sup>**

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- Main characteristics of the system; its institutions, the pattern of international relations and power politics that contributed towards the creation of the new HR system. The emphasis on implementation.
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### **The Committee on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination against Women CEDAW; and the Committee on the Rights of the Child**

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- Working methods and the political dynamics of the Committee on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination against Women CEDAW.
- The role of both Committees in: 1- monitoring the implementation by States Parties of its obligation under the Conventions; 2- receiving complaints; 3- interpreting the Conventions with the objective of assisting SP to implement their obligations.
- The interaction between the Committee and States Parties to the Convention. 1- List of issues; 2- written replies; 3- Dialogue or examination of the report; 4- recommendations of the Committee
- Cooperation with NGO's, UN agencies and IGO's; 1- receiving information, 2- pre-session.  
*Reading for the Class: SP reports, CRC reporting guidelines - NGO's reports, CoB's of both committees*

#### **Cooperation between CEDAW and CRC - rights of the girl child.**

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- How each treaty body handled the rights of the girl child?  
Joint General Comment??

### **6- World Conference on Human Rights, Vienna 1993- (Wednesday October 24<sup>th</sup>)**

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- Thorough study of the Vienna Declaration and its implication on the human rights movement;
  - **The role of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights in supporting treaty bodies (CEDAW & CRC)**
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- *Reading for the class:*  
Paper circulated to /students about the conference and the declaration.

### **UN Women: The new entity on Gender equality (Thursday October 25<sup>th</sup>)**

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- The entities that comprise the new organ;
  - Its mandate;
  - Its approach;
  - Main areas of focus
  - **Priority issues on the agenda for Human Rights movement for gender equality and non-discrimination**
  - **Assessment of the international movement for human rights. International Institutions and Sovereignty**
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*Reading for the class:*

- **International Human Rights in Context: Law, Politics and Morals**, Steiner, Alston, and Goodman eds. (3<sup>rd</sup> ed. 2008). Pp 669-735,
- *Review of the implementation of the Beijing Platform for Action and the outcome documents of the special session of the General Assembly entitled "Women 2000: gender equality, development and peace for the twenty-first century" – Report of the Secretary-General. Commission on the Status of Women, 49th session, 28 February – 11 March 2005 (E/CN.6/2005/2)*
- *Paper circulated to students "About UN Women.*
- *Annual reports of UNIFEM-*
- *Visit the website of UN Women*

### **III. Economic and Social Rights- (Wednesday October 31<sup>st</sup> )**

▪ **Justiciability**

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- *Reading for the class: CRC General Comment no. 5*
- – *Mirvat Rishmawi, Article 4: the Nature of States Parties' Obligations, A Commentary on the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, (Leiden: Martinus Nijhoff Publishers, 2006)*

▪ **Resources**

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*Reading for the class:*

- CEDAW General Recommendation No. 7 (seventh session, 1988)
- ICESCR General Comment no. 3 and no. 9HRI/GEN/1/Rev.8- May8th, 2006
- CRC General Comment no. 5
- *, Article 4: the Nature of States Parties' Obligations, A Commentary on the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, (Leiden: Martinus Nijhoff Publishers, 2006)*

*N.B: other readings will be assigned as the course progresses.*

**IV. Case Studies: ( Thursday November 1st )**

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***Arab awakening and women rights: Case of Tunisia and Egypt***

***Why the two countries?***

*Are women's rights lost in transition?*

*Or is it a spring without flowers?*

*Is the commitment to human rights stronger or diluted?*

***Reading for the class:*** articles by Dr Moushira Khattab

*Visit my website/; <http://www.moushirakhattab.com>*