

**Course Outline**  
*for*  
**International Human Rights/Humanitarian Law**

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FIRST SEMESTER 2022

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**Aim**

Welcome to International Human Rights and humanitarian Law course. The course builds upon public international law taught in the second semester of the penultimate year. It is thus advisable that students who choose to register the course should be familiar with key aspects of the Public International law. The course aims to provide students with the knowledge and ability to critically analyse contemporary issues in human rights and international humanitarian law (IHL). It has been designed to enable LLB students, in their final year of study, obtain both essential knowledge of, and critical insight into, topical issues in human rights and humanitarian law, and acquire the ability to relate those issues to the contemporary South African situation. Students who register for this course will be expected to actively participate during lectures and seminars. Therefore, they will be expected read the materials listed in the reading list provided and make adequate preparations. Students will also be encouraged to develop critical perspectives in light of their diverse historical and socio-economic backgrounds.

**A Learning Outcomes**

On completion of this course, students are expected to be able to:

1. Discuss and critically evaluate the fundamental concepts, principles and theories underlying international human rights and humanitarian law
2. Analyse and determine the current scope of selected substantive human rights and concepts in international humanitarian law
3. Critically discuss and debate international and regional human rights enforcement mechanisms, as well as main protection regimes of international humanitarian law
4. Critically evaluate the strengths and weaknesses of the contemporary regimes of international human and humanitarian law.
5. To develop a critical awareness of the international human rights system, the implementation of international human rights standards and the protection regimes of international humanitarian law.
6. To be able to apply legal knowledge on the subject to a practical situation and draw reasoned conclusions supported by legal authority.

**B Mode of delivery**

As already stated, this is an online course. There will be audio lectures available to students. It is expected that students will participate by listening to the lectures and discussing their views through the RUConnected platform or by exchange of emails. There is no comprehensive handout for the course. However, the course outline and a reading list will be posted on the relevant RUConnected page. The reading list for each topic will be very general but useful in understanding key legal issues. In addition, supplementary materials may be posted from time to time. Students are expected to listen to all the audio lectures and must take them seriously. They are also expected to do their own research to enrich their knowledge of the subject.

## C Course Content

The course is divided into two parts because it covers two branches of law. Part A deals primarily with the principles of international human rights law, and Part B, covers selected topics on international humanitarian law. The first part will be covered in 8 weeks (first term), while the latter in 5 (second term).

### Part A

1. The idea of human rights, universalism and the challenges of cultural diversity.
2. Sources and normative foundations of human rights law.
3. International human rights standards: individual rights, civil and political rights, social, economic and cultural rights, and group rights.
4. Implementation of human rights law: Charter-based and Treaty-based mechanisms
5. Implementation: the African human rights system

### Part B

6. Definitional aspects and scope of IHL
7. Sources of IHL and basic concepts.
8. Protection of combatants and prisoners of war.
9. Protection of civilians
10. Conduct of hostilities
11. IHL and human rights: Divergence or convergence?

## D Resources

The Basic Texts for this Course are **Steiner, Alston & Goodman, *International Human Rights Law in Context: Law, Politics, Morals*** (Oxford, 3rd Ed., 2008) and **Marco Sassòli, Antoine A Bouvier, *How Does Law Protect in War*** (ICRC 2011). Students are strongly encouraged to visit the **ICRC webpage**, which contains a wealth of materials on international humanitarian law, in addition to the texts and materials indicated here.

*Other texts and materials that may be consulted are:*

1. Frans Viljoen, *International Human Rights in Africa*, (OUP, 2007).
2. Frits Kalshoven & Liesbeth Zegveld, *Constraints on Waging War: An Introduction to International Humanitarian Law*, 4<sup>th</sup> ed.(ICRC 2001).
3. Francisco Martin, *International Human Rights and Humanitarian Law: Treaties, Cases & Analysis*, (Cambridge 2006).
4. Rene Provost, *International Human Rights and Humanitarian Law*, (Cambridge 2002).

5. Paul Sieghart, *The International Law of Human Rights*, (Oxford, 2003).
6. Asbjørn Eide *et al eds.*, *Economic Social and Cultural Rights: A Textbook* (Martinus Nijhoff, 1995).
7. Redson Kapindu, *From Global to the Local: The Role of International Law in Enforcement of Socio-Economic Rights*, (UWC, 2009).
8. Jakob Möller *eds.*, *International Human Rights Monitoring Mechanisms* (Martinus Nijhoff, 2009).
9. Anne Bayefsky, *The UN Human Rights Treaty System in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century*, (Kluwer 2000).
10. Rachel Murray, *The African Commission on Human and Peoples Rights and International Law*, (Oxford 2000).
11. Obiora Chinedu Okafor, *The African Human Rights System: Activist Forces and international Institutions* (Cambridge, 2007).
12. Jean-Marie Hanckaerts, *Customary International Humanitarian Law*, (Cambridge 2005).
13. Yves Sandoz, Christophe Swinarski, Bruno Zimmermann *eds.*, *Commentary on the Additional Protocols (8 June 1977) to the Geneva Conventions (1949)* (ICRC 1987).
14. Several published articles and book chapters contained in the reading list (hard copy provided).

*The following websites may also be useful:*

15. The ICRC: <http://www.icrc.org>
16. The United Nations: [www.un.org](http://www.un.org)
17. Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights: [www.unhchr.ch](http://www.unhchr.ch)
18. The African Union: [www.au.int](http://www.au.int)
19. African Court on Human and Peoples' Rights [www.african-court.org](http://www.african-court.org)
20. The African Commission on Human and Peoples Rights: [www.achpr.org](http://www.achpr.org)
21. The International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda: [www.ictt.org](http://www.ictt.org)
22. The International Criminal Tribunal for Yugoslavia: [www.icty.org](http://www.icty.org)
23. The International Criminal Court: [www.icc-cpi.int](http://www.icc-cpi.int)
24. The European Court of Human Rights: [www.echr.coe.int](http://www.echr.coe.int)

Students should note that there are many electronic copies of books and articles via Hein Online or LexisNexis to which the Law Library subscribes, and which are accessible. They must endeavour to make use of these.

## **E Assessment**

The final mark for the course is compromised of the following components:

Examination:	Out of 60 marks
Class work:	Out of 40 marks
<b>Total:</b>	<b>100 marks</b>

## ***Term work***

Term work will consist of two extensive essays.

For the International Human Rights Law component of this course there will be an essay which will be made available at the beginning of the semester. This assignment shall be due on Friday 25 March 2022.

For the International Humanitarian Law component of this course, the essay assignment will be available on RUConnected by mid-May 2021. Students are expected to submit their essays on Monday 16 May 2022.

Each of the essays should not exceed 2000 words in length, must be typed in double spacing, and must contain a signed declaration on plagiarism. The essays are research related and students will be expected to deal with problems that are ordinarily not covered by lecturers, but which will be examinable, nonetheless. In addition, *the essays are expected to be in the form of a publishable article and referenced in the house style of the SALJ*. No late assignments will be accepted for marking. Submissions shall be via email (to [l.juma@ru.ac.za](mailto:l.juma@ru.ac.za)) and as an attachment. There will be no test in this course.

### ***Examination***

The June/July examination will be a 4 hour paper that will be out of 60 marks (The class component having contributed 40 marks). It will be in a quiz format and to be done on RUConnected platform. Students shall be required to answer ALL questions. All the questions will require students to apply their knowledge to solving practical problems.

### **F Evaluation**

Students will be required to complete evaluation questionnaires according to the Law Faculty's evaluation cycle, and should time permit. Student responses to these questionnaires assist the faculty in improving the quality of teaching as well as for curriculum development. An external examiner will assess the quality of the exam paper and student answers and will complete a report on the course. Nonetheless, students are encouraged to discuss difficulties and problems regarding the course with the lecturer – either personally or through a class representative.

### **G Instructor and Contacts**

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