



Course and Examination Fact Sheet: Autumn Semester 2021

9,355: The Impact of Human Rights Norms on Business

ECTS credits: 4

Overview examination/s

(binding regulations see below)

Decentral - Presentation (in groups - all given the same grades) (35%)

Examination time: term time

Decentral - examination paper written at home (individual) (65%)

Examination time: term time

Attached courses

Timetable -- Language -- Lecturer

[9,355,1.00 The Impact of Human Rights Norms on Business](#) -- Englisch -- [Boanada Fuchs Vanessa](#)

Course information

Course prerequisites

Prior knowledge of International Public Law is welcomed, but not obligatory.

Learning objectives

Students enrolled in this course will

- Understand the connections between business human rights and the environment through the study of landmark cases
- Gain good knowledge of the international human rights system and the evolution of guidelines, norms, and binding treaties impacting the business sector
- Be able to follow recent discussions concerning the emergence of domestic regulatory frameworks and international treaties that create obligations associated to business sectors
- Be able to analyze and adjust corporate conduct in light of human rights norms

Course content

This course focuses on the impacts of business on the environment and society through the lens of development and human rights studies. The course prepares graduate students in international affairs and business to discuss and incorporate human rights standards in the planning, execution, and evaluation of everyday corporate affairs practices. The conversations held in class also assist students in engaging with different perspectives from the community to the state level, from the NGO to the corporate multi-national.

Course structure and indications of the learning and teaching design

This course is organized as a block seminar. The first part of the course is dedicated to the study of the international human rights system, in general, and as it applies to business. The second part, based on the analysis of human rights violation cases involving different business sectors, students will discuss topics such as environmental disasters and infrastructural works on the lives of local communities; commodity trade and environmental degradation; global value chains and work; amongst others. Finally, the course will address contemporary discussions concerning the development of binding norms and domestic frameworks that incorporate human rights amongst corporate obligations.

Course literature

Sample literature



- Alston, Philip, ed. (2005). *Non-State Actors and Human Rights*. Oxford: Oxford University Press
- Cassel, Doug. (2020). 'Progress in the Newest UN Draft Treaty on Business and Human Rights'. Business & Human Rights Resource Centre.
- Clapham, Andrew (2007). *The Historical Development of International Human Rights*, in *Human Rights, A Very Short Introduction*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, p.23-56 Chapter Two
- Clapham, Andrew. (2006). *Human Rights Obligations of Non-State Actors*. Oxford, New York: Oxford University Press.
- Deva, S., & Birchall, D. (Eds.). (2020). *Research Handbook on Human Rights and Business*. Edward Elgar Publishing.
- Deva, Surya and Bilchitz, David, eds. (2013). *Human Rights Obligations of Business: Beyond the Corporate Responsibility to Respect?* Cambridge: Cambridge University
- Engle Merry, Sally (2016). "Human Rights Indicators" in *The Seductions of Quantification, Measuring Human Rights, Gender Violence, and Sex Trafficking*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Goodale, Mark (2018). *The Myth of Universality: The UNESCO "Philosopher's Committee" and the Making of Human Rights*. *Law and Social Inquiry* 43(3): 596- 617.
- Ramasastri, A. (2015). *Corporate social responsibility versus business and human rights: Bridging the gap between responsibility and accountability*. *Journal of Human Rights*, 14(2), 237-259.
- Ruggie, J. (2008). *Protect, respect and remedy: A framework for business and human rights*. *Innovations: Technology, Governance, Globalization*, 3(2), 189-212.
- Ruggie, John G. (2017). 'The Social Construction of the UN Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights'. *Corporate Responsibility Initiative Working Paper* (67)
- Sen, Amartya K. (1999). *Development as Freedom*. New York: Knopf.
- Sikkink, Katherine (2011). *The Effects of Human Rights Prosecutions in Latin America*. In *The Justice Cascade, How Human Rights Prosecutions are Changing World Politics*. New York: W.W. Norton, pp129- 161
- Skinner, Gwynne, Chambers, Rachel E and McGrath, Sarah. (2020). *Transnational Corporations and Human Rights: Overcoming Barriers to Judicial Remedy*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- United Nations (2011). *Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights: Implementing the United Nations 'Protect, Respect and Remedy' Framework*. New York: United Nations.
- Wettstein, F. (2012). *CSR and the debate on business and human rights: Bridging the great divide*. *Business Ethics Quarterly*, 22(4), 739-770.

Additional course information

In the case of the President's Board having to implement new directives due to the SARS-CoV-2 pandemic in AS2021, the course information listed above will be changed as follows:

- The course is conducted online via the platform Zoom.
- The recordings of the course are available for 30 day.
- The lecturer informs via StudyNet on the changed implementation modalities of the course;
- Course content such as excursion and guest lecture may be cancelled or postponed.

The examination information listed below would be changed as follows:

- The group presentation will be conducted online; no changes necessary to the examination information concerning the individual paper.

Examination information



Examination sub part/s

1. Examination sub part (1/2)

Examination time and form

Decentral - Presentation (in groups - all given the same grades) (35%)

Examination time: term time

Remark

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Examination-aid rule

Presentations

In presentations, aids for visual presentation can be used. These aids can be specified or restricted by the lecturers.

Supplementary aids

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Examination languages

Question language: English

Answer language: English

2. Examination sub part (2/2)

Examination time and form

Decentral - examination paper written at home (individual) (65%)

Examination time: term time

Remark

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Examination-aid rule

Term papers

Written work must be written without outside help according to the known citation standards, and a declaration of authorship must be attached, which is available as a template on the StudentWeb.

Documentation (quotations, bibliography, etc.) must be carried out universally and consistently according to the requirements of the chosen/specified citation standard such as e.g. APA or MLA.

The legal standard is recommended for legal work (cf. by way of example: FORSTMOSER, P., OGOREK R., SCHINDLER B., Juristisches Arbeiten: Eine Anleitung für Studierende (the latest edition in each case), or according to the recommendations of the Law School).

The reference sources of information (paraphrases, quotations, etc.) that has been taken over literally or in the sense of the original text must be integrated into the text in accordance with the requirements of the citation standard used. Informative and bibliographical notes must be included as footnotes (recommendations and standards e.g. in METZGER, C., Lern- und Arbeitsstrategien (latest edition)).

For all written work at the University of St.Gallen, the indication of page numbers is mandatory, regardless of the standard chosen. Where page numbers are missing in sources, the precise designation must be made differently: chapter or section title, section number, article, etc.

Supplementary aids

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Examination languages

Question language: English

Answer language: English



Examination content

In the second part of the course, students shall select and present (in groups) landmark cases that addressed human rights violations at international courts and changed the perspective on how corporations and states should act to protect and respect rights and remedy violations. At the end of the semester, students will hand in a paper (4.000 words, on average, excluding bibliography) focusing on the study of one topic connected to business and human rights to be defined in agreement with the lecturer.

Examination relevant literature

In addition to the course's recommended readings, the relevant literature for examination will be selected by the lecturer in collaboration with the students and posted on StudyNet on Nov.13th.

Please note

Please note that only this fact sheet and the examination schedule published at the time of bidding are binding and takes precedence over other information, such as information on StudyNet (Canvas), on lecturers' websites and information in lectures etc.

Any references and links to third-party content within the fact sheet are only of a supplementary, informative nature and lie outside the area of responsibility of the University of St.Gallen.

Documents and materials are only relevant for central examinations if they are available by the end of the lecture period (CW51) at the latest. In the case of centrally organised mid-term examinations, the documents and materials up to CW 42 are relevant for testing.

Binding nature of the fact sheets:

- Course information as well as examination date (organised centrally/decentrally) and form of examination: from bidding start in CW 34 (Thursday, 26 August 2021);
- Examination information (regulations on aids, examination contents, examination literature) for decentralised examinations: in CW 42 (Monday, 18 October 2021);
- Examination information (regulations on aids, examination contents, examination literature) for centrally organised mid-term examinations: in CW 42 (Monday, 18 October 2021);

Examination information (regulations on aids, examination contents, examination literature) for centrally organised examinations: two weeks before the end of the registration period in CW 45 (Monday, 8 November 2021).