

PT 355 International Organizations and Human Rights Advocacy

Seminar Leader: Dr. Danyah Jaber and Dr. Berit Ebert
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Office Hours: by appointment

Course Description

This seminar exposes students to the practical work of human rights actors in the context of securing and advocating for human rights through inter- and supranational organizations. It is divided into two sections. Section A begins by giving students a general overview of the role of key players in creating and implementing human rights. It then delves into the processes, institutions and material factors that influence inter- and supranational behaviors vis-a-vis human rights obligations. Lectures look in-depth at the role of individuals and collectives of peoples in campaigning for human rights and addressing respective violations. This will culminate into the analysis of cases that have been key in shaping the international human rights regime. Section B familiarizes students with the practical abilities needed to run human rights advocacy campaigns. Through guest lecturers, students will be introduced to insight and expertise on lobbying; campaigning; and research, monitoring, and reporting. These campaigns will be centered around their chosen cases that lobby specific inter- or supranational organizations with a two-day training with Amnesty International in Berlin. Finally, students will develop human rights-based approaches and strategies to create their own advocacy campaign. At the end of the semester (completion week: December 14-21, 2024), all students of the seminar will meet in Berlin and visit organizations such as the representative office of the European Union and meet with experts from Human Rights Watch, Amnesty International, the Berlin office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, as well as the European Center for Constitutional and Human Rights.

The seminar will be led by Dr. Danyah Jaber (Al-Quds Bard) and Dr. Berit Ebert (Bard College Berlin). Many of the lectures and workshops are provided by guest speakers who have direct experience of working in international and supranational organizations as well as grassroots and NGO campaigns. Classes at Al-Quds Bard and at Bard College Berlin - will take place at the same time and will be taught together so that students will always work with their peers at the respective partner college. They will be virtually connected via zoom conferencing. The classrooms are equipped for that purpose.

Requirements

Academic Integrity

Bard College Berlin maintains the highest standards of academic integrity and expects students to adhere to these standards at all times. Instances in which students fail to meet the expected standards of academic integrity will be dealt with under the Code of Student Conduct, Section 14.3 (Academic Misconduct) in the Student Handbook.

Accessibility

Bard College Berlin is committed to inclusion and providing equal access to all students; we uphold and maintain all aspects of Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990, and the ADA Amendments Act of 2008, and Section

3 of the German Disability Equality Act of April 27, 2002 (Federal Law Gazette I p. 1468). If you have a disability, or think you may have a disability, please contact the Disability Accommodation Coordinator, Atticus Kleen, (accommodations@berlin.bard.edu) to request an official accommodation. Requests for longer-term accommodations should be made as early as possible to ensure adequate time for coordination and planning. Please note that accommodations are not retroactive and may require advance notice to implement. If you have already been approved for accommodations with the Disability Accommodation Coordinator, please arrange to meet with me outside of class so that we can develop an implementation plan.

Students may face extenuating circumstances related to various personal or external factors, which impact their academic performance. While these circumstances often do not fall within the legal framework of Disability Accommodations, Bard College Berlin is committed to supporting students experiencing such circumstances. A student needing a short extension or a replacement assignment because of an extenuating circumstance is encouraged to make arrangements directly with instructors if possible. If further support is needed, please visit the [Bard College Berlin Accessibility page](#). Questions about this process can be directed to James Harker (j.harker@berlin.bard.edu) or Maria Anderson-Long (m.andersonlong@berlin.bard.edu).

Attendance

Attendance at all classes is a crucial part of the education offered by Bard College Berlin. To account for minor circumstances, two absences from twice-per-week courses or the equivalent (e.g. one absence from a once-per-week course) should not affect the participation grade or require documentation.

Bard College Berlin may not offer credit for any course in which a student has missed more than 30% of classes, regardless of the reasons for the absences. The full Bard College Berlin attendance policy can be found in the Student Handbook, Section 2.8.

Assessment and Assignments

CASE STUDY AND PRESENTATION: Students are required to submit a 2,000-word essay focusing on a case study of human rights advocacy or campaigning. This case study will draw on the analytical frameworks of normative changes in human rights adherence by international or supranational organizations. **Your case study essays are due on October 28, at 2:00 p.m. (Berlin) / 3:00 p.m. (Al-Quds). Please send them via email to both course instructors b.ebert@berlin.bard.edu and djaber@staff.alquds.edu.** Students will then present their chosen cases in week 8.

A 3,000-WORD CAMPAIGN PROPOSAL will be the final assessment. For the proposal, students are requested to work in pairs (AQB and BCB) both online and in Berlin. An adequate period of time will be devoted to this in-depth work in the context of the Berlin visit in week 13. **The advocacy plans are due on December 27, 2024. Please send them via email to both course instructors b.ebert@berlin.bard.edu and djaber@staff.alquds.edu.**

Class engagement is based on in-class participation.

Policy on Late Submission of Papers

Essays that are up to 24 hours late will be downgraded up to one full grade (from B+ to C+, for example). Essays that are more than 24 hours late will not be accepted. Where a professor agrees to accept a late assignment, it should be submitted by the new deadline

agreed upon by both parties. Thereafter, the student will receive a failing grade for the assignment. Grades and comments will be returned to students in a timely fashion. Students are also entitled to make an appointment to discuss essay assignments and feedback during instructors' office hours.

Students receive mid- and end-of-semester grades for their seminar work. Students are entitled to make an appointment with an instructor to discuss seminar participation or may be asked to meet with the instructor at any stage in the semester regarding class progress.

Grade Breakdown

- Case study and presentation (35%)
- 3,000-word campaign proposal (30%)
- Reflecting on the work done (google form) (5%)
- Class engagement week 1–7 (15%)
- Class engagement starting week 8 and Berlin trip (15%)

Final grades for graduating students will have to be sent to the registrars on 16 December 2024 by noon. Graduating students in this class will, therefore, hand in their advocacy campaign proposal by December 10, 2024, at noon. Final grades for all students in Berlin will be sent to the registrar on 3 January 2025. These students will submit their advocacy campaign proposal by December 27, 2024.

Schedule

Section A: Actors and Mechanisms of inter- and supra-national organizations

Week 1 (September 2)

The Concept of Human Rights

This class offers an introduction to contemporary human rights discourses in their broader historical and theoretical contexts. It examines the philosophical background of the categories making up the terms, "human" and "rights" by exploring the political, social, and cultural dimensions made by these terms. Students will receive a foundational understanding of rights claims as well as the legal ways of advancing, defending, and enforcing rights, and a brief introduction to human rights instruments and institutions. With this class, students will be better able to examine and advocate for specific contemporary challenges/cases.

Week 2 (September 9)

Human Rights and Feminism. 19th Century Women as a Special Case?

This class provides a case study on the development of the conceptualization and advocacy for women's rights. The case explores 19th century Europe, which was characterized by people's experiences of rising poverty coupled with war and national industrialization as promoted by protectionist measures. As a consequence, a critical debate began about how a society should be organized free of exploitative structures. Rights of those who were not part of the leading power structures, became part of the discourse, which was dominated by a male elite. The women of the 1848/49 revolution in the German Confederation, including Mathilde Franziska Anneke, Louise Aston, Emma Herwegh, Johanna Kinkel, Amalie Struve, or those of the French February Revolution of 1848, such as Marie Comtesse d'Agoult and George Sand, demanded the participation of women in all areas of life. These 19th century activists placed women's rights as an integral part of humanity at the center of their thinking,

demanding the abolition of all distinctions of class and the "[full, human] equality of both sexes" (Amalie Struve). They emphasized an educationally based and thus equal opportunity, socio-economically egalitarian concept of freedom, a "new humanity" (Louise Aston). Nothing less than the equality of all people and the "common citizenship of all people [Gesamtbürgerschaft]" (Johana Kinkel) formed the basis of this demand.

Readings:

- Arendt, H. (1972). Civil Disobedience. In H. Arendt, *Crises of the republic: lying in politics, civil disobedience, on violence, thoughts on politics and revolution*, (pp.69–102). New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich.
- de Gouges, O. (1791). Declaration of the Rights of Woman and the Female Citizen. In Warman, C. (Ed.). (2016), *Tolerance: The Beacon of the Enlightenment* (1st ed., Vol. 3, pp. 49–51). Open Book Publishers. <https://doi.org/10.11647/OBP.0088>

Week 3 (September 16)

International Organizations. The United Nations

This class offers a comprehensive introduction to international organizations. It begins by acquainting students with the legal features of the "international community": the subjects and relations of international law, states, and international organizations. Through the specific example of the United Nations, it delves into the role of UN agencies in protecting and assisting human rights with reference to contemporary issues.

Readings:

- United Nations (1945) Charter of the United Nations and Statute of the International Court of Justice, 1 UNTS XVI. [Familiarize yourself with this document].
- Clapham, A. (2009) "United Nations Charter-Based Protection of Human Rights", in Krause, C. and Scheinin, M., *International Protection of Human Rights: A Textbook*, Turku: Abo Akademi University Institute for Human Rights.
- Lewis-Anthony, S. and Scheinin, M. (2004) "Treaty-Based Procedures for Making Human Rights Complaints within the UN System", in Hannum, H. (ed.), *Guide to International Human Rights Practice* (4th edition), Ardsley: Transnational Publishers.

Week 4 (September 23)

Supranational Organizations. The European Union

When the European Community for Coal and Steel, the forerunner of the European Union (EU) was founded in 1951, human rights played only a marginal role. However, recently a new development set in, advancing the antidiscrimination discourse to include human rights, both on the national as well as on the European level. Although the Treaties of the 1950s made no reference to human rights, the 1986 Single European Act and the 1993 Maastricht Treaty both mention their protection. But it was only in the 2000 Nice Summit that the EU announced its own Charter of Fundamental Rights with a direct reference to trans* people, in Article 21, and made the Charter legally binding with the adoption of the Treaty of Lisbon in 2009. How are human rights treated in this context? In the supranational construction of the EU, what are their legal effects?

Readings:

- The Schuman Declaration. (1950). https://european-union.europa.eu/principles-countries-history/history-eu/1945-59/schuman-declaration-may-1950_en
- Pernice, I. (2008). *The Treaty of Lisbon and Fundamental Rights*. Walter Hallstein-Institut, Working Paper 07/08.

Week 5 (September 30)

EU and UN Case Studies

This class will reflect on cases from the EU (C-13/94: *P v S and Cornwall County Council*) and the UN reflecting on human rights issues and their impact on other policy fields as well as their limits. In addition, we will look at how advocacy has helped to propel human rights to the international sphere, for example in the legal dispute between the European Commission and the Republic of Poland. The session will provide students with an insight into locating ongoing cases as well as with a brief introduction into the work of advocacy campaigns.

Readings

- Court of Justice of the European Union (1996). *P v S and Cornwall County Council* (C-13/94), April 30, 1996. ECLI:EU:C:1996:170
- Anderson, E. S. (1999). What is the Point of Equality?. *Chicago Journals*, 109(2), 287–337. <https://doi.org/10.1086/233897>

Week 6 (October 7)

Lecture by Alexander Aleinikoff

Alex Aleinikoff is Dean of The New School for Social Research and University Professor at The New School. He has served as Director of the Zolberg Institute on Migration and Mobility since January 2017. Aleinikoff has written widely in the areas of immigration and refugee law and policy, transnational law, citizenship, race, and constitutional law. His latest book, *New Narratives on the Peopling of America* (co-edited with Alexandra Delano), will be published by the Johns Hopkins University Press in 2024. He is also the author of *The Arc of Protection: Reforming the International Refugee Regime* (Stanford University Press, 2019, co-authored by Leah Zamore) and *Semblances of Sovereignty: The Constitution, the State, and American Citizenship* (Harvard University Press, 2002). He is a co-author of leading legal casebooks on immigration law and forced migration. He is currently working on several projects relating to climate migration and reform of the international protection regime. Before coming to The New School, Alex was United Nations Deputy High Commissioner for Refugees from 2010-2015. He was Dean, Executive Vice President for Law Center Affairs, and a faculty member at Georgetown University Law Center, and was a faculty member at the University of Michigan Law School. He served as Co-chair of the Immigration Task Force for President Barack Obama's transition team in 2008. From 1994 to 1997, he served as the general counsel, and then Executive Associate Commissioner for Programs, at the Immigration and Naturalization Service.

Week 7 (October 14)

Case preparation in student pairs (one each from AQB and BCB)

Students will be paired (one from AQB and another from BCB). Once paired, they will be asked to explore a case study of interest to them that they can campaign for to be reviewed by an international or supranational organization. Their chosen cases and campaign measures will be presented when visiting Berlin. Students will use this session to start preparing their contribution. This will build the framework for their advocacy campaigns at the end of the course.

Fall Break (October 21-25, 2024)

SECTION B: SKILLS AND STRATEGIES

Week 8 (October 28): Actions and Methods of Human Rights Advocacy

Case Presentations

Your case study essays are due on October 28, at 2:00 p.m. (Berlin) / 3:00 p.m. (Al-Quds). Please send them via email to both course instructors b.ebert@berlin.bard.edu and djaber@staff.alquds.edu. Midterm grades in Berlin will be sent to the registrars at the end of week 8 on November 1, 2024.

Week 9 (November 4): Actions and Methods of Human Rights Advocacy

Case Presentations

Completion Week (December 14–21, 2024): Student Trip to Berlin

The one-week visit to Berlin will bring the students from Al-Quds Bard and Bard Berlin together for a week of practical work, visits of Berlin based human rights organizations, conversations with faculty and students from Bard Berlin as well as other universities and visits to key museums in Berlin. They will learn how other disciplines and institutions approach the important question of what it means to live a human life. During the time in Berlin, students will have the time to work on their advocacy plans together. **The advocacy plans are due on December 27, 2024.** Final grades in Berlin will be submitted by the professors to the registrars on January 3, 2025.

The **draft schedule** (in process of being finalized) of the week is the following:

December 14 (Saturday)

Arrival in Berlin, check in at hotel

December 15 (Sunday)

Lunch with Nassim AbiGhanem
Berlinische Galerie
Dinner and discussion of expectations

December 16 (Monday)

Human Rights Watch
Volkswagen representative office
UNHCR
Lecture by Kenneth Roth (confirmed)

December 17 (Tuesday)

Seminar and Discussion with Tamara Adrián at Bard College Berlin (confirmed)
Manuel Schwab and Hanan Toukan in conversation
Kerry Bystrom
Public Lecture Tamara Adrián (confirmed)

December 18 (Wednesday)

Digital Verification Corps (DVC) with Amnesty International

December 19 (Thursday)

Digital Verification Corps (DVC) with Amnesty International

December 20 (Friday)

European Commission Representation
Lunch discussion with Nadija Samour
International Rescue Committee
Creation of advocacy plan and wrap-up

December 21 (Saturday)

Departure

Library and Book Purchase Policies

Your readings will be available online via [google classroom](#).