

Course Description
SOCM17-105 Human rights and minority rights
Leading lecturer: Mónika Kovács

Aim of the course

Aim of the course is:

In the first part of the course students get acquainted with the 30 articles of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, analysing from a social scientific point of view those rights that concern the most our program, like such as the right to life, liberty and security, to freedom of opinion and expression, to freedom of thought, conscience and religion, to the right freely to participate in the cultural life of the community, to freedom of movement, and to seek and to enjoy asylum from persecution.

After the general overview of human rights students learn about the historical development of minority rights, the most important theoretical debates as well as about those minority protection mechanisms that operate under the auspices of the UN and the European Council. The course discusses the legal protection of national and ethnic minorities in the Hungarian jurisdiction as well as the system of minority municipalities in Hungary.

The course pays special attention to the question of autonomy, including the different (personal and regional) types of autonomies of national and ethnic minorities, to the situation of the Roma minority in Hungary as well as to the status of Hungarian communities in other countries. Students will be introduced to the issues of the definition of ethnic affiliation, of the problems of data management concerning ethnic minorities, of the task of persecuting effectively hate speech and hate crimes, and of the dilemmas related to positive discrimination.

Learning outcome, competences

knowledge:

- is familiar with minority groups living in Hungary as well as with the relevant legal documents concerning minority groups
- is familiar with the historical and legal roots of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the social-historical background and the achievements of the civil rights movements

attitude:

- can apply the learnt concepts to understand current social changes
- respects human rights and equal human dignity
- respects the legitimacy of cultural differences, the importance of cultural identity to all human being, and accepts the complexity of human identity
- is sensitive to all forms of discrimination

skills:

- is able to take into account human rights in all activity
- is able to reflect on own cultural values and takes into account other value systems

Content of the course

Topics of the course

- Introduction
- The concept of human rights, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights
- The right to life, liberty and security, to freedom of opinion and expression, to freedom of thought, conscience and religion, to the right freely to participate in the cultural life of the community, to freedom of movement, and to seek and to enjoy asylum from persecution
- Minority rights in the framework of human rights
- The concept of national and ethnic minority, the development of international protection and its legal framework, the question of personal versus collective rights
- The prohibition of discrimination
- International legal documents for protection of minorities
- Who is Roma, who is Hungarian? The questions of ethnic data management
- The situation of the Roma minority
- The constitutional framework and the development of the system of minority municipalities
- The right to political participation of minorities
- Status acts and the question of multiple citizenship

Learning activities, learning methods

- individual reflections on the discussed documents and literature
- small group discussions (dilemmas, challenges, and options)
- lectures
- discussions on case studies presented by legal experts

Evaluation of outcomes

Learning requirements, mode of evaluation, criteria of evaluation: requirements

- short essays
- group presentation on a chosen dilemma
- examination

mode of evaluation: complex (written and oral)

criteria of evaluation:

- adequate knowledge of the literature and its application to the specific dilemmas
- the previously mentioned competencies will be examined

Reading list

Compulsory reading list

- Universal Declaration of Human Rights:
http://www.ohchr.org/EN/UDHR/Documents/UDHR_Translations/eng.pdf
- Human Rights: A Basic Handbook for UN Staff:
<http://www.ohchr.org/Documents/Publications/HRhandbooken.pdf>
- Minority Rights: International Standards and Guidance for Implementation, UN:
http://www.ohchr.org/Documents/Publications/MinorityRights_en.pdf

Recommended reading list

- Joseph, S. & McBeth, A. (2010). *Research Handbook on International Human Rights Law*. Edward Elgar Publishing
- Shelton, D. (2013). *The Oxford Handbook of International Human Rights Law*. Oxford University Press
- Handbook On Observing and Promoting the Participation of National Minorities in Electoral Processes, OSCE-ODIHR:
<http://www.osce.org/odihr/elections/124067?download=true>