



Kingston University London

HUMAN RIGHTS

MA

quality **innovation** diversity **opportunity** reputation

About the course

COURSE OVERVIEW

This human rights course takes a broad conception of human rights as its basis – what HG Wells once said was the belief that everyone is entitled to the “nourishment... care and attention needed to realise [their] full possibilities of physical and mental health from birth to death”. It looks at how far human rights are embedded in definitions of citizenship and to what extent they form the basis of national and international law. In addition, it explores the extent to which human rights are enshrined in and supported by a deeper politics and culture, by institutions, structures, movements and values.

If you would like to develop a career as a practitioner or researcher in the field of human rights and are interested in the connections between theory and practice, this course is ideal.

WHAT YOU STUDY

This extensive and challenging course deals with political developments in the UK, Europe and internationally. You will look at nation-states, international and transnational organisations, and at campaigning movements and pressure groups, recognising their contribution to the development and securing of human rights. This involves a study of the current international situation and of relations between states and non-state actors where conflicts have resulted in considerable violations of human rights.

The MA is linked to the Helen Bamber Centre for the Study of Rights and Conflict (www.kingston.ac.uk/helenbamber), which has an extensive research and teaching programme in human rights, conflict and genocide prevention. The option modules offered reflect this research and teaching strength. This course is underpinned by a grounding in case law in human rights.

CAREERS

There are many types of organisations working in the human rights fields, from large global organisations like Amnesty International, which covers the full range of human rights issues, to small local groups like the Kingston Community Action Group.

During the course, we encourage you to consider the kind of career you wish to follow. If you have a particular area of human rights work in mind, you can organise your work placement and write your dissertation on a topic that relates directly to that sector. For example, if you are interested in the right to development, we will help you to find a placement in a development-centred non-governmental organisation (NGO) and develop a dissertation topic that will provide you with in-depth knowledge of a relevant area.

SPECIAL FEATURES

- This MA has been developed in collaboration with a number of organisations committed to the defence and extension of human rights.
- Alongside the taught modules, there is a work experience module and opportunities to conduct your own research.
- Much of the course is issue- or case-based, enabling you to focus on major contemporary concerns in the field.
- This MA is taught by academics and human rights practitioners who combine their teaching with work in the human rights field.
- You can study this course on a part-time or full-time basis, enabling you to fit in your studies with other commitments.

Course content

MODULES

The course comprises four core modules and a choice from seven option modules. You will also carry out a dissertation project, which is the equivalent of two modules.

Please note that this list of modules is indicative and not intended as definitive.

Core modules

Frameworks and Foundations of Human Rights

This module provides you with an in-depth knowledge of the institutions and mechanisms involved in the protection and promotion of human rights norms, and enables you to develop a critical understanding of the historical, political and legal context surrounding the development of a particular human right. We move from a consideration of the historical evolution of human rights to analysis of the national, regional and international architecture of contemporary human rights laws and institutions before considering a particular right in relation to history and human rights frameworks. The particular right considered will vary from year to year; in 2006 we examined freedom of expression and opinion.

Achieving Human Rights: Theories of Strategies for Change

This module aims to allow you to reflect critically on the strategic challenge of defending, protecting and promoting human rights and to be introduced to the core theories of strategies for change. You will identify and critically evaluate methodologies of particular strategies for change through a series of practical examples, such as the campaign for access to medical treatment for HIV/AIDS.

The Meaning and Protection of Human Rights

This module provides you with a critical understanding of the scope and content of core human rights and the conceptual issues involved in fundamental debates about human rights. We take a series of the most important issues in contemporary human rights and explore how we should think about and examine competing interpretations and approaches to rights from different traditions. Recently we have explored a range of rights including torture, non-discrimination and equality, economic, social and cultural rights, self-determination, slavery and the right to development.

Achieving Human Rights: Case Studies for Strategies for Change

What are the main strategic challenges in defending, protecting and promoting human rights? This module evaluates different ways of pursuing strategies for change and identifies and assesses best practice in campaign and impact assessment methodologies. An introduction to campaign and impact analysis methodologies will be followed by case studies in areas such as the ‘War on Terror’ and corporate accountability, or exploring more general themes such as monitoring compliance and popular public campaigning.

Work Placement

This module enables you to undertake a work placement in a human rights organisation. This may be either in a governmental or non-governmental organisation. You can choose an area connected to your overall career ambitions or use the placement as a chance to expand your horizons.



You are supported in researching, applying for and securing your placements by the module leader and placements administrator.

You will have the opportunity to experience, reflect upon and analyse the reality of working within a human rights organisation and apply your knowledge, experience and analytical skills to reviewing the effectiveness of an aspect of the organisation's work.

Examples of previous placements include Dignity in Dying, English PEN, Peace Brigades International (UK), Shelter, and the World Development Movement.

Research Methods

This module will create a foundation for independent study at postgraduate level and provide you with an understanding of research approaches, methodologies, resources and support for your own research work. For example, you will learn how to gather and disseminate research using contemporary resources (such as film and media), and the strategies to best make use of and gain access to such resources (both in Britain and internationally).

Dissertation

In your dissertation, you will apply the skills learnt in the research methods module in a piece of original research, studying a subject (either applied or theoretical) in considerable depth. You may then use this research to pursue your career objectives.

Option modules

The Politics of Mass Murder

This module will explore some deeply troubling events in 20th and 21st century history and politics. It has been argued that this century – “the century of extremes”, as Eric Hobsbawm called it – witnessed an exponential rise in killing for reasons and in ways that had little or no precedent in recorded history. In the course of this module, you will look at a number of cases where states engaged in the systematic attempt to murder large numbers of people, including many of those who had hitherto been its own citizens or subjects. Case studies vary from year to year but have included Stalinist Russia, Rwanda and Darfur.

Case Studies of Conflict: International Politics

This module considers a variety of different case studies each year to explore the management of conflict situations from a political, legal and military perspective, and the forms and mechanisms for conflict resolution. Case studies include the Middle East, Cyprus, Rwanda, Northern Ireland and Columbia.

Human Rights and Armed Conflict

This module explores the particular challenges and difficulties raised for human rights norms and standards by times of conflict. It considers whether, and if so when, resorting to the use of force is justifiable for human protection purposes. It explores this issue through a general background of the issues raised for human rights by armed conflict and by a concentrated case study of a particular conflict. In 2006-7, the conflict considered was the Second Gulf War.

Teaching staff

Stephen Bowen is Senior Lecturer in Human Rights and was formerly national campaigns director at Amnesty International

UK. He is currently director of external affairs at Scope.

Professor Brian Brivati is Professor of Contemporary History. His specialist subjects include history of human rights, especially genocide in the 20th Century; contemporary history;

British political history from 1867; and political biography.

Professor Ilaria Favretto is a Professor of Contemporary European History. Her research interests include the British and the Italian Left after 1945; the historical and cultural processes influencing national identity formation/the creation of a European identity; and protest and dissent in 20th century Europe.

Jane Gordon is Senior Lecturer in Human Rights. Jane also works as a barrister for organisations such as the Northern Ireland Policing Board and the Home Affairs Select Committee, and has extensive professional experience in the field of human rights.

Joanne Sawyer is Senior Lecturer in Human Rights. Formerly a barrister at the leading UK human rights organisation Liberty, Joanne currently advises Parliament's Joint Committee on

Human Rights*

ENTRY REQUIREMENTS

One or more of the following:

- a second class degree or above, or equivalent;
- relevant non-certificated learning;
- an appropriate combination of certificated and non-certificated learning;
- applications are particularly welcomed from people working in human rights organisations;
- consideration is also given to non-standard entrants and all applicants are normally interviewed by the Course Director or a senior member of the teaching team;
- international students are required to have an IELTS score of 6.5 or an equivalent qualification.

ATTENDANCE / DELIVERY

Timetables are subject to change from year to year.

Details of semester one attendance will be available in August.

DURATION

One year full-time or two years part-time.

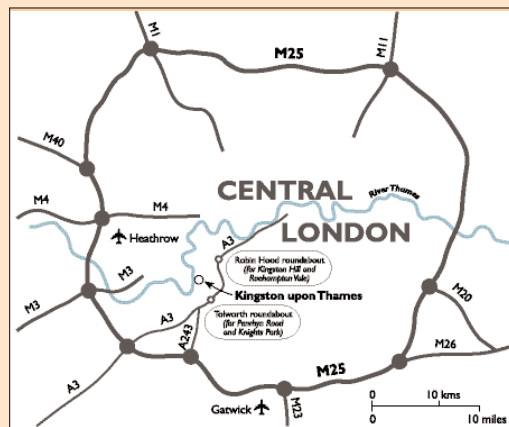
ASSESSMENT

There is a variety of assessment methods for the course, including essays, reports, project work, presentations and a dissertation.

**This course is subject to validation.*

Location

Located beside the Thames, Kingston University is within the London travel-pass zone. Easily accessible from surrounding areas, such as Surrey and Middlesex, its local train stations (Kingston; Surbiton) are also only 25 minutes from Waterloo.



Further information

Please contact the Faculty's Admissions Office for an application form or with any further queries.

Admissions Office (Postgraduate Courses)
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Or visit the course webpage: www.kingston.ac.uk/pghumanrights