

Business and Human Rights (BHR) S230022

Spring Semester 2020

Bachelor in Economics and Management
GSEM – University of Geneva

Faculty: Prof. Dorothée Baumann-Pauly Email: dorobaumann@gmail.com	When: Thursdays, 10.15 – 12.00h Where: UniMail, M S030
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Number of ECTS credits: 3	Evaluation: Synopsis: 20% Group project: 80%

Course Description

Headlines connecting multinational companies and human rights challenges occur with increasing frequency. Particularly in the global business context and in countries in which governments are unable or unwilling to guarantee basic rights for their citizens, corporations are regarded as the only actors that have the power and the resources to prevent or stop gross human rights violations. Against this background, the United Nations Human Rights Council unanimously endorsed a set of Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights in June 2011. The Guiding Principles (GPs) establish an authoritative global standard on the respective roles of businesses and governments in helping ensure that companies respect human rights in their own operations and through their business relationships.

The GPs create a new business reality. Corporations need to figure out what their commitment to respect Human Rights implies in practice and how they can systematically build 'respect' for Human Rights into their daily business operations. In this course we will study examples of how corporations can define universal human rights standards for their industry, enforce these standards, and remedy violations of these standards. We will also discuss how corporations can communicate their practical and sustained action to consumers and investors.

Course Objectives

The objective of this course is to equip students with skills to identify, analyze and resolve corporate human rights challenges.

The course capacitates students to be problem solvers, even on the toughest human rights challenges. It develops students' leadership potential on human rights issues by discussing case studies and frameworks for effectively addressing business and human rights problems in different industries.

Assignments

In line with the course objectives, students will be asked to identify, analyze and resolve a human rights issue that a corporation is causing or is complicit in. Groups of 2-3 students will be asked to select a business and human rights case from the database of the Business and Human Rights Research Center (<http://www.business-humanrights.org/>) and write a consultant's report on how the company could best address these allegations.

To prepare students to integrate academic BHR literature in their reports, they will also be asked to write a synopsis of an academic article for corporate practitioners, according to an agreed-upon template.

1. Synopsis (20%) – Students will have to write a short synopsis of an academic BHR article for corporate practitioners, according to a template that will be provided. Deadline: April 2, 2020.
2. Group Project (80%) – Groups of three students can select a business and human rights challenge of their choice and write a consultants' report to the CEO of the company, advising how to best address the challenge. Inspiration for BHR challenges can be found on the website of the Business and Human Rights Resource Center (<https://www.business-humanrights.org/>). Deadline: June 1, 2020.

Retake: Oral exam with Prof. Baumann-Pauly

Required Reading ("Textbook")

Baumann-Pauly, D. & Nolan, J. (eds.) (2016): 'Business and Human Rights ' From Principles to Practice' (Routledge 2016)

Available at -

<https://www.routledge.com/Business-and-Human-Rights-From-Principles-to-Practice/Baumann-Pauly-Nolan/p/book/9781138833562>

Weekly Course Schedule

#	Date	Topic	Required Preparation
1	20.02	Introduction <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Course overview & expectations - Course evaluation 	CNN Interview: https://www.cnnmoney.ch/shows/internatio

		- BHR Intro: CSR & BHR	nal-geneva/videos/geneva-launches-first-center-business-and-human-rights
2	27.02	Globalization and Human Rights	Textbook 1.1
3	05.03	Expectations and Drivers for BHR	Textbook 1.2 & 2.1
Business and Human Rights in Different Industries			
4	12.03	Human Rights in Fashion	NYU Stern Report: "Five Years After Rana Plaza" - https://issuu.com/nyu-sterncenterforbusinessandhumanri/docs/nyu_bangladesh_ranaplaza_final_rele?e=31640827/64580941
5	19.03	Human Rights in Fashion	Case: https://papers.ssrn.com/sol3/papers.cfm?abstract_id=2659202
6	26.03	Human Rights in Finance	Tbd
7	02.04	Special topic: Modern Slavery	Deadline to submit synopses !
8	09.04	Human Rights in Tech	Tbd
<i>Academic break</i>			
9	23.04	Human Rights in the Extractives Sector	Tbd

10	30.04	Guest lecture: Human Rights in the cobalt supply chain	Tbd
Approaches to BHR Challenges			
11	07.05	Industry-specific Human Rights standards through Multi-Stakeholder Initiatives (MSIs)	Textbook 4.1 And either 4.1 or 4.2
12	14.05	New Business Models that allow profits and principles to coexist	Case: Décathlon (moodle)
13	21.05	The Future of BHR Questions for final paper	Textbook 5.5 & 7.2