

Refugee Protection and Forced Migration

13 July – 07 August 2026

CATEGORY Law & Economics

COURSE STRUCTURE

You will receive a total of **45 hours of academic lessons** (one lesson equals 45 minutes; 15 hours per week). Lessons will comprise lectures, group work, discussion sessions, and excursions.

WEEKLY SCHEDULE

HUWISU courses are grouped into different time tracks. Your course will take place in **Track C**

Tuesday: 1.30 pm – 3.00 pm & 3.30 pm – 5.00 pm

Wednesday: 1.30 pm – 3.00 pm & 3.30 pm – 5.00 pm

Friday: 9.00 am – 10.30 am & 11.00 am – 11.45 am

COURSE LANGUAGE

This course is taught in **English**, including the readings. For the understanding of the texts and the discussions in class, a language-level of B2 (Common European Framework of Reference for Languages) is required.

TARGET GROUP

Advanced **undergraduate law** students and **students with an academic background that qualifies them to participate** in the course.

CREDITS & CERTIFICATES

Participants will receive **6 ECTS** credit points and a certificate if they attend regularly (at least 80% attendance), participate actively and fulfil all course assignments. Additionally, six weeks after the end of the course a Transcript of Records is issued by Humboldt-Universität zu Berlin. All courses are accredited according to the European Credit Transfer System (ECTS).

CULTURAL ACTIVITIES

In addition to the academic program, you are invited to **join our cultural and social program**. We offer a fine selection of interesting activities that aim to give you an unforgettable stay in Berlin. Through excursions, social gatherings, and sport activities, you have the opportunity to get to know the city, the university, and to meet students from all parts of the world. **Costs for these offers are included in the program fee.** Below, you find examples of previously offered cultural activities. You will be informed about the respective cultural program shortly before the start of the program via email as well as during the course period.



POLITICAL AND HISTORICAL GUIDED TOURS

- Federal Chancellery (*Bundeskanzleramt*)
- German Parliament (*Bundestag*)
- House of Representatives (*Abgeordnetenhaus*)
- Topography of Terror exhibition
- Political Archive of the Federal Foreign Office

CULTURAL GUIDED TOURS

- Kreuzberg Tour
- Museum Island (*Museumsinsel*)
- Berlin Cathedral (*Berliner Dom*)
- Daytrip to Potsdam
- Exhibitions

SOCIAL GATHERINGS

- Welcome Session
- Beach Volleyball
- Farewell Get2gether

EXPECTATIONS & POLICIES

Preparation for lively discussions in the classroom: Be on time, have at least the required readings completed, and points in mind for discussion or clarification.

Assignments: Complete all assignments according to the specified requirements on the schedule including handing them over to the lecturer.

Commitment in class: Pay particular attention to the lecturer and respect differences of opinions (classmates', lecturers').

Academic guidelines: Comply with academic integrity policies (such as no plagiarism or cheating, nothing unethical) especially the academic honor code and the student code of conduct.

Attendance policy: No unexcused absences are permitted. Students must follow teachers' instructions to catch up on missed work – to excuse absence please contact the HUWISU office.

COURSE DESCRIPTION

This course examines the protection regime pertaining to refugees and other forced migrants, such as internally displaced persons (IDPs) and some stateless persons. It gives special attention to the evolving set of legal norms, institutions, procedures, and practice that have emerged from the international community's resolve to protect refugees and other forced migrants.

The course adopts two complementary methodologies: seminars and case studies combined with presentations by the students. The seminars begin with an introduction to the international human rights and the asylum regimes, and with a review of relevant concepts and definitions. It then continues with a historical perspective of the pre-United Nations initiatives to protect refugees and introduces the normative ethics and politics of refugee protection. That is followed by an analysis of both the legal and institutional pillars of the refugee regime, i.e. of the refugee definitions captured in various international instruments and of the protection granted by the UNHCR, respectively. The normative and institutional arrangements put in place for the protection of IDPs and stateless persons will be referred to throughout the course.

The seminars are complemented by a 'hands-on' methodology, namely a major case study and presentations by the students both on the state of refugee protection in their countries of origin/residence and on current significant situations (i.a. Myanmar, Syria, Venezuela, European asylum crisis, Mediterranean situation, Ukraine).

COURSE OBJECTIVES AND LEARNING OUTCOMES

This course aims to provide class members with the necessary knowledge and tools which will allow them to understand and position themselves critically with regard to a variety of issues related to refugees and other forced migrants.

By the end of the course, students will be equipped with historical, political, and normative knowledge necessary to understand the main challenges involving the legal and institutional protection of refugees and forced migrants. They will also have learned how to use the concepts and procedural tools which allow differentiating refugees, IDPs, and stateless persons from other migrants (e.g. economic and environmental migrants) and protecting them.

READINGS

Reading materials will be available via Moodle during the course.

ASSIGNMENT INFO

Students will be expected to prepare written assignments and actively participate in class; to make presentations on the state of refugee protection in their countries of origin/residence (10 minutes); to make group presentations on current significant situations (20/30 minutes); and to actively participate in the case study (interview, oral pleading, sentence).

The final grade will be composed of written assignments and class participation (30%), country presentation and/or current significant situation presentation (35%), and case study (35%).

A minimum of 80% class attendance is required. Failure to fulfil one of the mentioned components results in failure of the class.

YOUR INSTRUCTOR

Dr. José H. Fischel de Andrade read Law (LLB), International Law (LLM), International Relations (MSt) and History of International Relations (PhD) at the universities of Brasília, São Paulo, and Cambridge and is a former Postdoctoral Research Fellow at The Graduate Institute (HEID) in Geneva.

He teaches part-time in Berlin (Humboldt) and enjoyed implementing the fruits of his teaching and research in challenging areas: he has served in the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) in various positions from 1995 to 2025.

More information: <https://unimi.academia.edu/JoseHFischeldeAndrade>

COURSE SCHEDULE

Session 1: Introduction and the International Human Rights Regime

Session 2: The Asylum Regime

Session 3: A historical account of refugee protection

Session 4: The ethics and politics of refugee protection

Session 5: The normative pillar: refugee definitions in universal and regional instruments

Session 6: (cont.)

Session 7: The institutional pillar: UNHCR's mandate and activities

Session 8: (cont.)

Session 9: Case-studies and country presentations

Session 10: (cont.)

Session 11: (cont.)

Session 12: (cont.)

The course and its syllabus are subject to change. Last update: January 2026