Semester description:

**MA in Global Refugee Studies (GRS)**
7th semester (1st semester of the MA)

Methodology and Methods

International Development

Theories of International Relations

International Organisations, Human Rights and International Law in the Context of Refugees

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**Information about the semester**
School: The School of Political Sciences
Study Board: Board of Studies for International Affairs

Regulations and Curriculum:
GRS: https://studieordninger.aau.dk/2020/23/1937

**Description of the semester:**

The purpose of the first focus of the 7th semester at GRS is to give students an insight into theories on International Relations (IR) and a number of chosen inter-disciplinary topics such as; a) The Westphalian system and its alternatives b) Collective goods theory and its implications for refugee governance, c) International political economy perspectives on forced displacement and migration, d) Refugees, security and securitization and e) Causal links between armed conflict and displacement. The course identifies the most important actors and institutions with a critical focus on the interaction of ideology, politics and economics.

The second focus will explore issues surrounding subjects connected within the overall area of “International Development” “and “Culture, Identity and Politics”. Here theoretical perspectives on refugees and immigrants from the perspective of political philosophy, social science and anthropology will be explored. The overall idea behind the two courses is that we start from a birds-eye perspective by investigating the relations between the refugee, the nation-state and the EU. This will be followed up by a focus on the refugees’ own subjective experiences of conflict, flight and arrival. Theoretically, the two courses create a movement from historical, policy- and argumentation-oriented approaches, over a structuralist one and towards more experience-near and phenomenological approaches. As such this theoretical movement is designed to make students familiar with some of the fundamental, and different, disciplinary approaches, which have dominated the fields of refugee, development and forced migration studies.

While the third focus of the semester will include a seminar series aims to give students a knowledge of international organizations working within the field of refugees as well as the legal framework
governing refugees. This includes understanding conventions relevant for refugees and how these conventions and policies form part of a general human rights framework. This seminar series is organized around four themes: 1) the emergence of the refugee regime, 2) the legal frameworks around asylum, refugee rights and non-refoulement, 3) the practical application of refugee laws in the asylum process and 4) how the refugee regime becomes part of a general human rights framework. In this way, the seminar series will explore how the refugee regime came into existence, how it works as a legal system and finally how the legal system becomes part of a political process around human rights.

This course is linked to the other two courses on 7th semester (Political Change and Theories of International Relations). The purpose of the three courses is to give an overview of the theories related to refugees and forced migration issues from a political, economic and in relation to international law.

Methodology and Methods (5 ECTS)

Methodology is central to the social sciences. Often, however, methodology gets reduced to what kind of interviews is employed and qualitative versus quantitative analysis. Social science and humanities methodology involves a range of different techniques like discourse analysis, household surveys, archival research, narrative analysis, ethnographic analysis to mention just a few. These are all distinctly different and can help us answer very different question. It is crucial that students (and researchers) constantly reflect on what the limitations and what the strengths are of each of them. This is, so to speak, the heart of the academic enterprise. While topics can be relevant and interesting, it is the methodological considerations that we engage in which constitute a given piece of work as academic or not. The objective of this course is therefore to ‘increase the methodological awareness and reflection in GRS student projects’. While we can talk of methodology in the abstract, it is best taught very close to practice – much in line with Problem-Based Learning as the central pedagogical tool of AAU and GRS. Hence, in this course, we will make our point of departure the projects of 7 semester students who participate in the course. The specific aims of the course (the learning goals) then are to 1) help students and project groups to engage in methodological discussions and reflections; 2) be able to reflect methodologically on the works of others and 3) increase the level of methodological reflection in the written assignments.

Organisation of the semester

The semester is divided into two parts: course work (20 ECTS) and project work (10 ECTS). All information regarding objectives, content, scope, teaching and learning methods, schedule, prerequisite requirements for participation, general and specific learning objectives, assessment criteria and examination forms can be received from GRS: https://studieordninger.aau.dk/2020/23/1937

For detailed course/lecture information, reading material and teacher’s PPT documents , please refer to https://www.moodle.aau.dk/

Semester coordination and secretariat

Study Secretary: Morten Melander Olsen
Fredrikskaj 10B, 3rd floor room 304
Phone: 9940 2507
E-mail: mortenmo@id.aau.dk

Programme Coordinator: Danny Raymond
(7+8+10 semester)
Fredrikskaj 10B, 3rd floor room 303
Phone: 9940 4445
E-mail: Raymond@dps.aau.dk

Programme Coordinator: Vibeke Andersson
(9 semester Mobility)
Fredrikskaj 10B, 3rd floor room 312
Phone: 9940 7192
E-mail: van@dps.aau.dk