

Humanitarian Policy (K001406)

Course size *(nominal values; actual values may depend on programme)*

Credits 5.0

Study time 150 h

Course offerings in academic year 2024-2025

A (semester 2)

English

Gent

Lecturers in academic year 2024-2025

De Cordier, Bruno

PS05

lecturer-in-charge

Offered in the following programmes in 2024-2025

[Bachelor of Arts in African Languages and Cultures](#)

crdts

offering

5

A

[Master of Science in Teaching in Languages\(main subject Oriental Languages and Cultures\)](#)

5

A

[Master of Science in Teaching in Social Sciences\(main subject Political Science\)](#)

5

A

[Master of Arts in Oriental Languages and Cultures\(main subject China\)](#)

5

A

[Master of Arts in Oriental Languages and Cultures\(main subject India\)](#)

5

A

[Master of Arts in Oriental Languages and Cultures\(main subject Japan\)](#)

5

A

[Master of Arts in Oriental Languages and Cultures\(main subject Middle East Studies\)](#)

5

A

[Master of Science in Conflict and Development Studies](#)

5

A

[Exchange Programme in Political and Social Sciences](#)

5

A

Teaching languages

English

Keywords

Humanitarian aid; emergency relief; food aid; emergencies; natural disasters; armed conflicts and complex political emergencies; institutional and private donors; UN; NGOs; OECD and non-OECD donors; humanitarian cultures; the history of the humanitarian sector; aid economy; refugees and Internally Displaced Persons; current humanitarian contexts; impact of humanitarian aid.

Position of the course

The purpose of this introductory course is to familiarize the students with the emergence, development, content, the operational framework, practices and the various actors of international humanitarian aid and emergency relief. Relation to educational competences: M.1.3., M.1.6., M.2.1., M.2.2., M.2.4., M.3.1., M.3.3., M.3.5., M.4.3., M.5.1., M.5.2., M.5.3.

Contents

The course' central theme is humanitarian assistance, a form of international aid that that is usually, though not only, deployed in response to natural disasters and violent conflict. Contrary to development aid, it is of a more short-term nature, yet it forms an often misestimated component of international relations. More concretely, the following topics will be treated in this course:

- the definition(s) and history of humanitarian aid and of the humanitarian sector;
- the historical and current proportions and composition of global humanitarian assistance and emergency relief;
- typologies of emergencies and disasters;
- the core actors of humanitarian assistance: governmental donors (OECD as well as non-OECD countries) and the characteristics of their policies; specialized UN agencies; the Red Cross; humanitarian NGOs; the private sector; the authorities of/in the recipient countries; and the populations and societies in/of the recipient

- countries;
- the humanitarian space;
- 'alternative' humanitarian aid;
- future trends of, or affecting, the humanitarian sector.

Initial competences

Since this course is positioned between introductory ('the ABC of the humanitarian sector') and more specialized, participants are to have at least notions and some insight of the international relations system and of international structures 'à la UN, the OECD, ...', as well as of the major current-topical political conflicts that form the ground of number of the world's large humanitarian crises.

Final competences

- 1 A thorough insight in the composition, functioning and realities of the humanitarian sector and emergency aid.
- 2 A framework that enables one to estimate the role and impact of the humanitarian sector when one is confronted with contexts with humanitarian presence.
- 3 Usable knowledge about the humanitarian sector when one gets employed in that sphere or aspires to be.

Conditions for credit contract

Access to this course unit via a credit contract is determined after successful competences assessment

Conditions for exam contract

Access to this course unit via an exam contract is unrestricted

Teaching methods

Lecture

Extra information on the teaching methods

Examination of the above-mentioned issues and chapters on the bases of historical as well as recent-current examples, case studies (usually 2 or 3 return throughout the classes) and practical examples, possibilities for interaction between the lecturer and the participants, and use of audio-visual materials and (with a proviso) input by former humanitarian workers or -trainers. Unless circumstances require or lead to institutional measures following which an online or hybrid class format becomes obligatory (again), the emphasis in this course is exclusively on on-campus lectures.

*If (that is, with a proviso/TBC) an external instructor can be identified/is available, we also foresee to have a more practice-oriented training seminar (poss. 1 à 1.5 days) on an operational aspect of relief aid (e.g. humanitarian coordination, humanitarian security management, needs assessment, ...); in that case, participation will be assessed and calculated in the final exam score.

Study material

Type: Slides

Name: Course presentation-syllabus.

Indicative price: Free or paid by faculty

Optional: no

Language : English

Number of Slides : 101

Oldest Usable Edition : 2024

Available on Ufora : Yes

Additional information: The detailed presentation is the substantive 'backbone' of the classes and, at the same time, the course syllabus.

References

1. Specialized journals:
 - Disasters The Journal of Disaster Studies, Policy and Management, ;
 - Alternatives humanitaires-Humanitarian alternatives;
 - The European Journal of Development Research, ;
 - Humanitarian Exchange, the Working & Discussion Papers, the Briefing Papers and the Research Reports by the Humanitarian Policy Group, Overseas Development Institute;
 - Humanitaires en mouvement-Humanitarian aid on the move, by the Groupe

Urgence, Réhabilitation et Développement;

- Forced Migration Review, ;
- Revue internationale de la Croix-Rouge-International Review of the Red Cross.

2. Some standard works:

- Allen, Tim, McDonald, Anna, en Radice, Henry (eds.) (2018), 'Humanitarianism: a dictionary of concepts', Routledge.
- Clapp, Jennifer (2012), 'Hunger in the balance. The new politics of international food aid', Cornell University Press.
- Dijkzeul, Dennis en Herman, Joost (2010), 'Humanitaire ruimte: tussen onpartijdigheid en politiek', Academia Press.
- Lieser, Jürgen, Dijkzeul, Dennis (2013), 'Handbuch humanitäre Hilfe', Springer Verlag.
- Mac Ginthy, Roger, Peterson, Jenny H. (2013) 'The Routledge companion on humanitarian action', Routledge.
- Reis, Chen, Bernath Tania (2016), 'Becoming and international humanitarian aid worker', Butterworth-Heinemann. <https://www.sciencedirect.com/book/9780128043141/becoming-an-international-humanitarian-aid-worker>
- Ryfman, Philippe (2016), 'Une histoire de l'humanitaire', La Découverte.
- Tarp, Finn (2002), 'Foreign aid and development. Lessons learnt and directions for the future', Taylor and Francis.

Course content-related study coaching

Interactive support through the Ufora platform and support and facilities connected to the lecturer's faculty in the form of access to the Faculty Library, and the use of research carried out by the department and its research wings. Students can consult with the Lecturer-in-Charge in class right before or after the classes, or in-office (by appointment).

Assessment moments

end-of-term assessment

Examination methods in case of periodic assessment during the first examination period

Written assessment

Examination methods in case of periodic assessment during the second examination period

Written assessment

Examination methods in case of permanent assessment

Possibilities of retake in case of permanent assessment

not applicable

Extra information on the examination methods

The evaluation will contain 3 (three) kinds of questions:

- knowledge of terms and concepts from the humanitarian aid sphere;
- (an) insight question(s) in which certain situations and trends, whether or not based on a case study, must be explained or assessed;
- a more practical question, based on a case study and on current-topical humanitarian affairs.

Calculation of the examination mark

- 20/20: final exam (yet, see 'Extra information on the teaching methods', last §)
- the usual conditions apply

Facilities for Working Students

Possibility of alternative examination date (conditions apply though).