THE AMERICAN UNIVERSITY OF PARIS
Fall 2020

Course Title: Women, Conflict and International Law
Course No: PO/LW5080
Professor: Susan H. PERRY
Semester: Fall 2020
Schedule: Tuesday 10:55-12:25
Francisco 4:20pm-5:55pm

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Prerequisites: Graduate students or with permission
Credits: 4
Exam period: TBD
Classroom: C-104
Office Hours: by appointment on Teams

Course summary:
Conflict resolution addresses two very different sets of circumstances: societies at war and
societies that, at first glance, appear to be at peace. International attention tends to focus on the
former, where violence is militarized and regional or international actors are called upon to
mediate, and sometimes intervene to end the conflict. Yet not all conflicts are hot; low-grade civil
conflict may have an equally pernicious effect in stable societies whose vulnerable populations
are at risk on a daily basis. This course examines the impact of both overtly violent and long-
term, low-grade civil conflict on women. Traditionally viewed as weaker members of society,
women suffer from forms of violence ranging from trafficking in human beings to domestic
beatings, from forced marriage to prostitution. These individualized, intimate forms of violence
sap the strength and adaptability of any society, as the community is unable to benefit from the
full contribution of all members. Endemic poverty, lack of infrastructure, and susceptibility to
disease characterize those pockets of the population exposed to low-grade civil conflict. In some
cases, the entire female population is at risk, reducing the possibility for a nation state to compete
effectively in the global arena.

This course will examine the existing international legal framework for the protection of
women’s rights and contrast the law with the nearly universal perception that the world of women
is a private sphere, one where laws made in the public realm have less weight, or are more
difficult to implement due to lack of witnesses, or worse, community acceptance of certain types
of gender-based violence. But, civil society activists are making progress across the globe in
combating insufficient implementation of women’s rights. This course will explore their
remarkably innovative strategies to achieve conflict resolution and the protection of women in
challenging circumstances. Special attention will be focused on women’s rights with respect to

In addition to lectures and discussion, please note that considerable creative thinking is
required for this course. The professor is interested not only in what the reading says on a specific
subject, but also what new insights students can bring to their research topics. Students will be
asked to draft and submit briefs to the UN treaty body committees in response to calls for
commentary on subjects related to the course.

Learning Goals:

* Clear analytical thinking as demonstrated by contributions to in-class discussions and
  argumentation as developed in written work
* Succinct, well-organized oral expression as demonstrated via in-class presentations
  and contributions
* Lucid, well-structured written work as demonstrated in VHA and final complaint
* Initiative in selection of original sources as part of overall research
**Covid-19 adaptations:**

We will work together in the classroom and online this semester.

1. The course **Blackboard** site will house all readings for the semester. The course **Teams** platform will serve as a back-up library (under Files) and also be used for group projects, as well as class recordings and live online teaching.
2. Professor Sharon Weill and I will invite online guests to speak with LW5000 and LW/PO5080 live throughout the semester, and record these discussions in order to accommodate your school and job schedules. While we would love to bring these remarkable individuals to campus, Covid-19 precautions oblige us to limit the number of students (and guests) in the classroom, so we will all attend these guest lectures on **Teams**.
3. The UN submissions will function via the Teams platform, and all students will be asked to contribute to drafting procedures. We will devote a class session to discussing this initiative, and students will be provided with detailed instructions. Students will lead submission initiatives.
4. We will adhere to a conservative reading of the EU General Data Protection Regulation (2018). Recordings will remain within the designated real and virtual classroom space and may not be shared laterally under any circumstances. Discussions will remain private. We will strive to create a community of trust in both the real and virtual classroom.

All students must wear a mask, sanitize their hands before entering the classroom, and respect social distancing. Online etiquette will be the same as in-class etiquette – exquisite politeness.

**Grading System:**

In addition to the required reading, students will be expected to prepare (for) the following:

- **In-class discussion and submitted questions** (10%).
- **Visual History Archives Analysis** (30%). Each student will select one testimony from the VHA and prepare an analysis of core crimes from the assigned worksheet. Due November 3.
- **UN submissions for the AUP Working Group on Human Rights** (20%). Students will have the opportunity, alone or in small groups, to organize and build the AUP Working Group on Human Rights (with support from the Civic Media Lab), and/or file one or more submissions to the CRC in response to the call on children and digital technology, due November 15 at: ([https://www.ohchr.org/EN/HRBodies/CRC/Pages/GCChildrensRightsRelationDigitalEnvironment.aspx](https://www.ohchr.org/EN/HRBodies/CRC/Pages/GCChildrensRightsRelationDigitalEnvironment.aspx)). Other submission initiatives are welcome.
- **CEDAW Complaint** (40%). Following an in-class workshop on how to write a human rights complaint for review by a UN treaty body committee, students will render a 10-page complaint to CEDAW that demonstrates clear mastery of a specific subject related to gender that is covered by the human rights treaty system, particularly CEDAW. Due December 11. No complaint will be accepted without a printed copy of a Safe Assign plagiarism check – please organize this in advance!

**University’s Covid-19 temporary amendments:**

“Students studying at The American University of Paris are STILL EXPECTED TO ATTEND ALL scheduled classes. Due to the Covid-19 pandemic, students will have the option of attending classes remotely when special circumstances apply. For example, when students are placed under
quarantine by the French authorities or by their doctor, or when students present symptoms of Covid-19 and are directed, by their doctor or the AUP Health Office, to remain home. It is still the student’s responsibility to be aware of any specific attendance policy that their professor might have set in the course syllabus. In particular, Students attending remotely from distant Time Zones should check with their professors about the specific attendance policy for remote learners.”

**Professor’s Attendance Policy:**

Barring death, hospitalization, or a note from the Dean, one absence (in-class or online) per semester will be permitted. If you have Covid or are in quarantine, please attend required course sessions online, or download the recorded sessions. If we are temporarily shut-down, then we will all simply move online. 😊

Further full or half class absences will be penalized by 2 percentage points per absence. For example, if a student is absent twice during the semester, a final grade of 80 (B-) will be reduced to 78 (C+).

Chronic lateness will be penalized at the professor’s discretion.

Required attendance for assigned guest lectures.

**Plagiarism:**

*Presenting someone else’s ideas as your own is unacceptable under any circumstances. Special anti-plagiarism measures have been built into this course to encourage all students to do their own work.*

**Texts:**

In addition to weekly Blackboard readings, the core e-texts for the course will be:


[The Oxford handbook of gender and conflict](http://proxy.aup.fr/login?url=http://dx.doi.org/10.1093/oso/9780198848950.001.0001)


Optional texts available via the Library include:

[Activists Beyond Borders](https://ebookeentral.proquest.com/lib/aup/detail.action?docID=3138636)


*Please check the Assignments rubric of our course Blackboard site or Files rubric of our Teams site every week!*

Please also note that all major international criminal law instruments and a good deal of jurisprudence is on line at the University of Minnesota’s Human Rights Library search engine at:  
[www1.umn.edu/humanrts/lawform.html](http://www1.umn.edu/humanrts/lawform.html)

**Course Outline:**

**Week One**  
9/25  
Course Introduction – IHRL, IHL & ICL through a gendered lens

*Reading:*

- EU General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR 2018)
- Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR 1948)
- International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR 1976)
- International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (ICESCR 1976)

**Week Two**  
9/29-10/2  
Transnational women’s networks: combatting Covid-19

Part One: History of transnational advocacy and CEDAW  
Part Two: Violence against women under lockdown

*Reading:*

- Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW 1981)

*Optional reading:*

Week Three
10/9

**Intersectional discrimination and international law**

Part One: Intersectional discrimination and the UNHRC (individuals)
Part Two: Gendered intersectional discrimination and the ICJ (States)

*Reading:*

- Statute of the International Court of Justice (1948)

Week Four
10/13-16

**Trafficking in Women and Children**

Part One: Protection during peacekeeping operations
Part Two: Impact of environmental degradation on women and girls

*Reading:*


Week Five
10/20-23

**Honor Killings**

Part One: Rethinking Honor Codes (+ VHA tutorial)
Part Two: Pakistan case study

*Reading:*

- Convention Against Torture (CAT 1984)

*Optional reading:*

In-class workshop with Constance de Paris on using the Visual History Archive on Tuesday, October 20. Prepare VHA midterm assignment, due **November 3**.

**Week Six** 10/27-30  
**Women and International Justice**

Part One: International humanitarian law + international criminal justice  
Part Two: Reproductive genocide

*Reading:*

- Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide (1951)  

*Optional reading:*


**Week Seven** 11/3-6  
**Impact of war crimes on women**

Part One: The gendered impact of war  
Part Two: SAFE standards in war

*Reading:*


**Visual History Archive due November 3.**

**Week Eight** 11/10  
**Bordered identities: asylum seekers versus migrants**

Part One: Convention on Refugees - female *refoulement*

*Reading:*

- Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees (1951)  

**UN submissions** for CRC on children and digital technology, due **November 15**.
Week Nine  
11/17-20  

Specific vulnerabilities of female migrants  
Part One: Child marriage in Syria (guest speaker Anna Chapman)  
Part Two: Female refugees in Europe  

Reading:  

In-class workshop with Nicole Santiago on drafting a CEDAW complaint, Tuesday, November 17. Final complaint due December 11.

Week Ten  
11/24-27  

Female Genital Cutting – intersectionality of rights  
Part One: FGC and the European Convention on Human Rights  
Part One: Tostan and the building of a human rights culture  

Reading:  
- European Convention on Human Rights (1953)  

Optional reading:  

Week Eleven  
12/1-4  

Gender and Environmental Hazards – hard v. soft law  
Part One: Reproductive rights and big business  
Part Two: The case of cosmetics, Males en peril  

Reading:  
- EU Charter of Fundamental Rights (2012), articles 3, 9, 37.  

Optional viewing:  
- Rachel Carson at https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SeJNRaE11A0
Week Twelve 12/8-11

**Gendered Technological Impacts – reinventing existing law**

Part One: Equal access, equal use
Part Two: Is online activism gendered?

*Reading:*
- Convention on Long-Range Transboundary Air Pollution (1979)
- PERRY & RODA (2017) *Digital Tightrope*. Palgrave, Ch. 3.

*Optional reading:*

**Final CEDAW complaint December 11.**

Week 13 Exam period
**Gendered Conflict in France**
Slide by slide discussion of all class topics as they pertain to France - innovation, progress and lost ground.

“Je remonte de siècle en siècle jusqu’à l’Antiquité la plus reculée; je n’aperçois rien qui ressemble à ce qui est sous mes yeux. Le passé n’éclairant plus l’avenir, l’esprit marche dans les ténèbres.”
Alexandre de Tocqueville (1835) *De la démocratie en Amérique.*