

The University of Iceland Human Rights Institute and iCourts, the Danish National Research Foundation's Centre of Excellence for International Courts at Copenhagen University, invite all PhD students to attend a high-level seminar entitled

## **METHODS OF HUMAN RIGHTS LAW RESEARCH**

**26-27 May 2015**

### **Description and objective:**

Research in the field of international human rights law covers a broad range of issues, adjudicated or otherwise governed by multiple international courts and decision-making bodies. This course is designed for all doctoral candidates who deal with issues in international human rights law.

It has been argued that human rights research, and in particular human rights law research, suffers from a lack of methodological reflection and rigour, and that much such scholarship is tainted by 'activism' or 'wishful thinking' in support of the goal of enhancing human rights protection. Against this background, the course will explore different schools of thought on human rights, which breed different approaches to human rights research, reflect on the practices of human rights bodies (with a particular emphasis on the European Court of Human Rights), and contrast social scientific approaches with classical methods of legal research.

The twin objectives of the course are, firstly, to increase the students' awareness of different approaches and different methodologies in human rights law research and, secondly, to assist doctoral candidates in the development of their own methodology.

### **Format:**

The instructors will be Oddný Mjöll Arnardóttir, professor of law at the University of Iceland (course organiser), Davíð Þór Björgvinsson, professor of law at the University of Copenhagen and the University of Iceland and former judge at the European Court of Human Rights, Marie-Bénédicte Dembour, professor of law and anthropology at the University of Brighton and Mikael Rask Madsen, professor of law and Director of iCourts at the University of Copenhagen.

The first day of the course will be devoted to the instructors' presentations and discussions based on the readings assigned by them. The second day will focus on presentation and discussion of the participants' own research projects. During the second day the participants will also attend a public lecture by Marie-Bénédicte Dembour, who will address themes from her book 'When Humans Become Migrants' (OUP 2015).

All participants are expected to submit a short paper (3-4 pages) explaining their *problématique* and the methodological questions and challenges they face in their work at its present stage. The papers will be sent to the instructors and the other participants in the course before the commencement of the course. Each participant will be given 10 minutes to present his or her paper orally, after which 10 minutes of feedback and discussions will follow. The individual papers are to be submitted to the course organiser, Oddný Mjöll Arnardóttir ([oddnyma@hi.is](mailto:oddnyma@hi.is)) by Monday 27 April 2015.

### Learning Outcomes:

Upon completion of the course the participants will be able to

- demonstrate awareness of different schools of thought in human rights scholarship;
- understand the implications of different research methodologies;
- apply that awareness and understanding to their own research projects;
- present their research projects, both orally and in writing; and
- give and receive feedback on research projects.

### Practical details:

- The course will take place at the University Iceland Faculty of Law, in the Lögberg building, Sæmundargata 8, room 402 (see [http://english.hi.is/university/map\\_campus](http://english.hi.is/university/map_campus)).
- The organisers are not in a position to offer any reimbursement of travel costs.
- Readings will be made accessible to participants 6 weeks prior to the commencement of the seminar.
- Participation in the two-day seminar and submission of the written paper will be credited with 4 ECTS units.
- The number of participants is limited. Participants will be selected based on their application, which shall consist of their CV and a short description of their research project (1 page).
- The deadline for applications is on Wednesday 1 April 2015. Please apply by e-mail to Sigrún Á Heygum Ólafsdóttir, project manager ([sah@hi.is](mailto:sah@hi.is)). She will also answer any practical questions.
- All other questions can be directed to Oddný Mjöll Arnardóttir, course organiser ([oddnyma@hi.is](mailto:oddnyma@hi.is)).



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