

Irish Centre for Human Rights, University of Galway

**European Convention on Human Rights: Law and Politics
LW5120**

2025-2026 Course Outline

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| Objective | This module will introduce students to the key principles underpinning the European Convention on Human Rights and core tenets of the Strasbourg Court's case law, including areas of doctrinal tension and expansion, while examining current issues affecting the influence of the Convention and the Court on European legal and political systems. | | |
| Lecturer | Name Dr Edel Hughes | Office Hours Email for appointment | E-mail edel.hughes@universityofgalway.ie |
| Learning Outcomes | On successful completion of this module students will have: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Researched and discussed the procedures of the European Court of Human Rights (ECtHR);• Read, summarised the key facts and legal findings of, and critically appraised case law relating to several articles of the European Convention on Human Rights (ECHR);• Demonstrated a clear understanding of the key underpinning principles, and the doctrinal development in a range of areas, of ECHR law; and• Communicated their critical analysis of the current position of ECHR law as it relates to an issue or set of issues arising in one or more European jurisdictions. | | |
| Timetable | Semester 2 Weeks 1-12: Wednesday 11am – 1pm | | |
| Workload | 250 hours in total (10 ECTS) | | |
| Format | In-person Class venue: ICHR seminar room | | |
| Programme(s) | All LLM programmes at the School of Law, University of Galway. | | |
| Course Material | Course materials will be available on Canvas and through the University of Galway Library. Required reading will be posted a week in advance of each seminar. Core texts You are encouraged to use, as a main text for this course, William A Schabas, <i>The European Convention on Human Rights: A Commentary</i> (OUP 2015), available online: | | |

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| | <p>https://search.library.nuigalway.ie/permalink/f/3b1kce/TN_cdi_askewsholts_vlebooks_9780191066771</p> <p>The European Court of Human Rights' case-law guides are another extremely useful resource: https://ks.echr.coe.int/web/echr-ks/all-case-law-guides</p> <p>Other useful texts: Janneke Gerards, <i>General Principles of the European Convention on Human Rights</i> (CUP 2019), available online: https://search.library.nuigalway.ie/primo-explore/fulldisplay?docid=353GAL_ALMA_DS51204705810003626&context=L&vid=353GAL_VUJ&lang=en_US&search_scope=PRIMO_CENTRAL&adaptor=Local%20Search%20Engine&tab=local&query=any,contains,Janneke%20Gerards</p> <p>Harris, O'Boyle & Warbrick, (4th ed.) <i>Law of the European Convention on Human Rights</i> (OUP 2018)</p> <p>Jonas Christoffersen, Mikael Rask Madsen, <i>The European Court of Human Rights between Law and Politics</i> (OUP 2013)</p> <p>Janis, Kay & Bradley, <i>European Human Rights Law: Text & Materials</i> (3rd Edition) (OUP 2008)</p> <p>Ovey, Jacobs & White, <i>The European Convention on Human Rights</i> (6th Edition), (OUP, 2014)</p> <p>Merrills, <i>The Development of International Law by the European Court of Human Rights</i> (Manchester University Press, 1993)</p> <p>A. Mowbray, <i>Cases and Materials on the European Convention on Human Rights</i> (OUP 2012)</p> <p>See also the Council of Europe's human rights handbooks: https://www.coe.int/en/web/human-rights-rule-of-law/human-rights-handbooks</p> <p>Useful Web Addresses:</p> <p>European Court of Human Rights Home Page: http://www.echr.coe.int</p> <p>European Court of Human Rights HUDOC case search page: <a documentcollectionid2":["grandchamber"],"chamber":["chamber"]"="" href="https://hudoc.echr.coe.int/eng#{">https://hudoc.echr.coe.int/eng#{"documentcollectionid2":["GRANDCHAMBER"],"CHAMBER":["CHAMBER"]}</p> <p>Recent decisions by the European Court are available by accessing HUDOC. Please note, the easiest way to do a text search through HUDOC is to list the respondent (state) and by the main article involved, and then to search by date or alphabetically. The system does not always respond if you list the title so make sure to try a few ways.</p> |
| Assessment | <p>This module is assessed by way of a 5,000 word essay (excluding references and bibliography) for which a choice of titles will be provided.</p> |

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| | The essay submission date and instructions are set out in the 'Guidelines for LLM students'. |
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Indicative Seminar outline

| Week | Topic |
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| 1 | Introduction to the ECHR: Context, background, institutions |
| 2 | Introduction to the ECHR: Overview of Convention Rights |
| 3 | Scope of the Convention and Principles of Interpretation |
| 4 | Article 2 |
| 5 | Article 3 |
| 6 | Article 8 |
| 7 | Article 9 |
| 8 | Articles 10 and 11 |
| 9 | The principle of democracy and the ECHR |
| 10 | Current Issues I |
| 11 | Current Issues II |
| 12 | Essay presentations and review |