

UNIVERSITY DIPLOMA IN RELIGIONS AND HUMAN RIGHTS

Main Language of Instruction:

French ☐ English ☐ Arabic ☒

Campus Where the Program is Offered: CSH

OBJECTIVES

- Deepen understanding of human rights from a religious perspective, integrating human rights principles and religious values while fostering critical reflection on misconceptions.
- Promote more just and inclusive communities through a culture of respect for human rights, social justice, and openness to religious and cultural pluralism.
- Examine religious pluralism, political systems, and minority rights through the study of religion-society relations, including the impact of media in complex contemporary societies.
- Analyze the intersections between religion and human rights, including freedom of religion and belief, gender equality, family and child rights, minority rights, and emerging issues such as environmental justice and technology, to develop a comprehensive framework linking religious values and contemporary human rights.

PROGRAM LEARNING OUTCOMES (COMPETENCIES)

- Identify the similarities and differences between Christianity and Islam, including their various schools of thought, within a comparative religious and historical framework, and situate them within the broad understanding of religion or belief in international human rights law.
- Examine contentious issues critically and address them in ways that foster peaceful coexistence.
- Approach Islamic-Christian studies from a renewed perspective that promotes a culture of justice and peace.

ADMISSION REQUIREMENTS

- Candidates wishing to obtain a University Diploma must hold a University degree.
- Candidates wishing only to obtain a certificate of attendance and participation must hold the Lebanese Baccalaureate or its officially recognized equivalent, as determined by the Equivalence Committee of the Lebanese Ministry of Education and Higher Education.

PROGRAM REQUIREMENTS

30 Credits: Required Courses (30 credits)

Required Courses (30 Cr.)

Introduction to Human Rights and Religion (3 Cr.), Interpretation of Religious Texts and their Relation to Human Rights, Religion, and Society (3 Cr.), Political Systems and Religion (3 Cr.), Freedom of Religion and Belief (3 Cr.), Family, Women's and Children's Rights in Religion (3 Cr.), Rights of Minorities (3 Cr.), Media and Human Rights (3 Cr.), Human Rights Environment, and Artificial Intelligence (3 Cr.), Internship/Research Project (6 Cr.).

COURSE DESCRIPTION

017IDHRI1	Introduction to Human Rights and Religion	3 Cr.
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This course is divided into two parts: an introduction to human rights and a sociological approach to religion. It addresses key questions such as: what human rights are, why they matter, their origins, who holds them, and the main international documents that define them.

It also examines their scope of application, including rights-holders, duty-bearers, and the state's obligations, as well as the distinction between individual, collective, and societal rights. Core principles such as equality, non-discrimination, human security, and an adequate standard of living are also explored.

This course introduces the multiple ways religion has been defined in academic thought. Interpretations range from formal or doctrinal definitions to approaches that emphasize empirical, emotional, intuitive, ethical, and moral dimensions. It adopts a sociological understanding of religion as its analytical framework.

017TRDL1	Interpretation of Religious Texts and their Relation to Human Rights, Religion, and Society	3 Cr.
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This course examines the schools of Qur’anic interpretation and their differences, with a comparison between classical exegetical traditions and modern purposive approaches that emphasize human rights. It also studies the interpretation of the Bible as the foundational text of Christianity, focusing on how interpretations have sometimes been used to justify positions that conflict with human dignity, and how the principles of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights have become a reference point in contemporary biblical interpretation. Finally, the course introduces the study of religious phenomena in society from a humanities perspective, drawing especially on sociology and the anthropology of religion to help students understand diverse religious expressions.

017PSAWI3	Political Systems and Religion	3 Cr.
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This course examines the fundamental relationship between politics and religion, focusing on types of political authority and their connection to religious systems. It also analyzes how religion is used in contemporary political systems as a tool for acquiring, consolidating, and governing power. In addition, this course addresses issues of pluralism, coexistence, secularism, and minority–majority relations, including dynamics of inclusion and exclusion.

017HURF1	Freedom of Religion and Belief	3 Cr.
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This course examines religious freedom as a key issue within contemporary human rights discourse, particularly in contexts marked by religious tensions and conflicts. It considers how religion shapes public debates around crises and how it relates to questions of human rights, the common good, and the preservation of civil and international peace. The course also enables students to situate religious freedom within broader interreligious and intercultural dialogue.

It further focuses on the analysis of relevant texts and legal frameworks, their historical development, and their application to contemporary issues.

017DFFRI2	Family, Women’s and Children’s Rights in Religion	3 Cr.
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This course introduces social justice, gender equality, and inclusion through an intersectional framework. It examines forms of discrimination—both direct and indirect—across household, community, national, and international levels. It analyzes how discrimination is embedded in laws, social practices, and gender roles, using key international conventions and case studies to assess their impact on different groups. Students will learn to identify the causes and effects of discrimination on human rights and to develop responses using a GESI (Gender Equality and Social Inclusion) and intersectional approach. The course also explores the relationship between religion and women’s rights through key feminist theories and their approaches. It further examines personal status laws in Lebanon, focusing on their structure, their link to the political system, and their impact on family life, particularly on women.

017MINRI2	Rights of Minorities	3 Cr.
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This course defines minorities—religious, ethnic, linguistic, and national—and provides an anthropological overview of minority communities in the Middle East, with attention to their social, political, and identity-related challenges. It examines the role of religion in shaping minority identity and community resilience, as well as majority–minority dynamics in religiously plural societies, including socio-economic marginalization and access to public services.

The course also traces the historical development of minority protection in international law, focusing on key instruments such as Article 27 of the ICCPR and the 1992 UN Declaration on the Rights of Persons Belonging to National or Ethnic, Religious and Linguistic Minorities. It addresses core minority rights, including the right to identity and cultural expression, non-discrimination and equality before the law, access to education, language use, religious practice, and participation in public and political life. Finally, the course explores overlapping identities (such as gender, disability, and refugee status) and the resulting forms of compounded discrimination, as well as tensions between religious law and minority rights in areas such as personal status, family law, and inheritance.

017MEDRI1	Media and Human Rights	3 Cr.
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This course explores the relationship between human rights and the media, examining how media can both advance and undermine human rights. It considers the role of media in raising awareness, shaping public opinion, and promoting accountability, while also addressing challenges such as censorship, disinformation, hate speech, and smear campaigns. Through the analysis of contemporary issues and case studies, the course enables students to assess the impact of media on the protection and promotion of human rights.

017HRAII2	Human Rights, Environment, and Artificial Intelligence	3 Cr.
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This course examines the role of religions today in shaping environmental responsibility and responding to climate change. It explores how religious traditions contribute to ecological awareness, environmental stewardship, sustainable lifestyles, and shared responsibility toward the earth and humanity. Drawing on contemporary religious documents, faith-based environmental initiatives, and major climate agreements, the course links faith, values, human rights, climate justice, and collective action.

This course also examines the impact of AI on human rights. Students will explore ethical, legal, and social implications of AI systems, focusing on issues such as privacy, discrimination, surveillance, freedom of expression, and accountability. They will engage with both the technological foundations of AI and the legal and policy frameworks governing its use.

017PFETI2	Internship/Research Project	6 Cr.
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Students will choose between an internship and a research project.

The internship enables students to design inclusive initiatives grounded in human rights principles, particularly equality, non-discrimination, and freedom of religion or belief. It also develops their ability to apply interfaith dialogue techniques, build trust, address tensions, and foster mutual understanding among diverse groups, while promoting collaboration among religious leaders, civil society actors, and youth to strengthen social cohesion. Alternatively, students may undertake a research project on a topic related to one of the diploma modules. Under the supervision of an instructor and following an appropriate research methodology, they will develop a contemporary issue of relevance in a paper of approximately 20 pages.