



FRIEDRICH-ALEXANDER
UNIVERSITÄT
ERLANGEN-NÜRNBERG

PHILOSOPHISCHE FAKULTÄT
UND FACHBEREICH THEOLOGIE

Institute of Economics and Business

Prof. Dr. Matthias Fifka, Chair for
Strategic and Values Oriented
Management

Kochstr. 4 (17), 91054 Erlangen
Tel.: +49 (0)9131/85-22376
Fax.: +49 (0)9131/85-22060

Master Program Development Economics and International Studies

Global Business and Human Rights in Latin America

Winter Term 2025/26

CONTACT

Milena Stoermer: milena.m.stoermer@fau.de

COURSE DESCRIPTION

In a time characterized by unrestricted and unregulated markets, complex and intertwined supply chains, the pressing issues of climate change and environmental degradation, prevalent corruption, as well as widespread and systematic human rights violations, confidence in the business world has been steadily declining. Through media presence, digital communication as well as the transparency of corporate sustainability reporting's, the public is even more skeptical about the private sector and its contribution to societal welfare. Victims in countries with weak legal frameworks, especially in Latin America, often lack access to justice when harmed by actions linked to multinational corporations. In 2011, the United Nations Human Rights Council adopted the UN Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights, a set of 31 principles that clarify the State's role in protecting individuals from business-related human rights abuses. These principles also outline a framework for corporate responsibility, emphasizing the importance of respecting human rights and providing effective remedies. Many States, including those in Latin America, have formulated national action plans on business and human rights. National jurisdictions and the European Union have introduced mandatory human rights due diligence requirements for companies, a concept detailed in the Guiding Principles. Various courts and national human rights institutions have also applied the Guiding Principles to address access to remedies for human rights abuses by transnational corporations.

The Global Business and Human Rights seminar examines how human rights violations can be linked to corporate activities and possible dilemmas when businesses operate in different

countries, with a particular focus on Latin America. The course will focus on the practical aspects of corporate human rights due diligence, demonstrating how companies can effectively navigate human rights challenges across their global operations and supply chains in Latin America. Participants will examine emerging sector-specific and thematic issues within the human rights and business landscape, evaluating the effectiveness of current initiatives across the world and in the Latin American region.

VENUE AND TIME

Lecture:	Thursday	23.10.2025	→	09:00 – 16:00	Room 01.055
	Friday	06.11.2025	→	09:00 – 16:00	Room 01.055
	Wednesday	08.01.2026	→	09:00 – 15:00	Room 01.055

COURSE OBJECTIVE:

This course aims to enhance participants' understanding of how human rights concerns impact business and society.

- To understand, describe and explain key debates and concepts in business and human rights (BHR) and its relevance for corporations.
- To develop familiarity with the UN Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights, including their objectives and limitations.
- To critically analyze, reflect and evaluate BHR topics, using academic research papers as well as case studies.
- To understand and communicate personal values in thinking about the role of business in society.

REGISTRATION AND ACCESS TO MATERIAL

Registration for the StudOn course will be available from Friday, **September 15th, 2025** until Sunday, **October 13th, 2025** via the following link:

https://www.studon.fau.de/studon/ilias.php?baseClass=ilrepositorygui&cmdNode=125:q5&cmdClass=ilObjCourseGUI&cmd=view&ref_id=6515099

COURSE DESIGN AND ASSIGNMENTS

The first session will be dedicated for introducing the topic on Business and Human Rights (BHR). Students will select an academic research paper during class, which will be presented in the second session. Students will analyze academic research articles that conceptually and empirically examine BHR, particularly in the context of developing countries. The various

student presentations are supposed to support students in selecting a seminar topic for their final presentations and papers. In this session, we will also go through further theoretical and conceptual input on BHR as well as a short refresher on qualitative research methods.

If class size permits, groups will be formed in the first seminar session. These groups will choose and define their topic within the first week of the seminar. The chosen topic will be presented on **Wednesday, January 8th, 2026**. With the input and discussion received during the presentation, students will prepare a seminar paper which will be handed in by **February 15th, 2026**.

Students will be assessed in groups for the presentation as well as for the written assignment.

- Presentation: 35%
- Written Assignment: 65%

The presentation will be based on the case study of choice discussed during the seminar sessions which will lay the foundation of the written assignment. The aim of the written assignment is to examine a multinational corporation and its impact on a BHR topic in Latin America. Further information on the presentation and written assignment will be provided in the first session of the seminar.

The presentation should not exceed 25 minutes and contains a maximum of 20 slides. The presentations will take place on **January 8th, 2026** in Room 1.055 in Erlangen. The seminar paper should follow the DEIS Guidelines (*Guidelines for Seminar Papers and Final Papers*) which is provided on the Institute Homepage or in the DEIS Information StudOn folder. Submission deadline for the seminar paper is **February 15th, 2026**.

Students are encouraged to search for suitable literature themselves, as this is an important part of scientific work. The starting point can be that of the textbooks and papers recommended below. However, sources beyond these are expected.

RELEVANT LITERATURE:

Wettstein, F. (2022). *Business and human rights: Ethical, Legal, and Managerial Perspectives*. Cambridge University Press.

REQUIREMENTS

Only students that are in the **3rd semester** of the DEIS program are eligible for attending the seminar. Students should have attended the lecture on **International Business Ethics I**. Basic

knowledge of economics and business administration is required. In order to achieve the learning objectives, attendance will be compulsory.

RELEVANT LINKS

Homepage of the Institute of Economics: <http://www.economics.phil.uni-erlangen.de>

Library of the Friedrich-Alexander University Erlangen-Nürnberg (FAU):

www.ub.uni-erlangen.de