

CONFRONTING THE TRUTH: THE FUNCTIONS, PRACTICES AND CHALLENGES OF TRUTH COMMISSIONS

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Truth Commissions are by now an integral part of the transitional justice vocabulary and practice. In countries as varied as Peru, South Africa, Timor-Leste, Tunisia, Kenya and Brazil, truth commissions have been set up to investigate the patterns of past human rights violations.

The 2019 Spring School will provide a comprehensive, multidimensional and practical examination of this transitional justice mechanism, shedding light on both its aims and the practical challenges it has met or is likely to meet.

In engaging with these issues, the Spring School will address practically relevant questions about why to set up a truth commission and what role such an institution may play in addressing serious individually and collectively suffered wrongdoing. At the same time, the Spring School will directly engage with relevant questions about how to set up a truth commission, when and by whom.

AUDIENCE

With the aim of linking theory with practical perspectives, the 2019 Spring School will combine interactive lectures on truth commissions and the relevant normative frameworks with practical exercises which will allow students to reflect on the aims and processes of truth commissions via an active and sustainable learning experience. On the basis of a hypothetical case scenario, students will have to design and formulate the mandate of a 'moot' truth commission. Based on group work and with expert support, they will simulate roles in the advisory and drafting processes leading to the establishment of a truth commission.

Howard Varney, a leading expert on truth commissions and Senior Programme Advisor at the International Centre for Transitional Justice (ICTJ) will be present throughout the entire Spring School, delivering the courses, sharing his field experience, guiding discussions and managing the practical exercise.

OBJECTIVES

At the end of the Spring School, students will have gained insight into:

- The role of truth-seeking in transitional justice processes
- Normative frameworks and practices relevant to truth commissions
- Practical challenges faced in the process of establishing truth commissions
- the contribution of different actors and perspectives in shaping the mandate of a truth commission
- The importance of creatively adapting theoretical concepts to particular societal contexts
- The challenges in drafting detailed terms of reference to provide appropriate guidance for the work of a truth commission
- Group-based processes of argumentation and negotiation leading to some common position on particular aspects relevant to the work of truth commission.

AUDIENCE

The Transitional Justice Spring School forms part of the MAS in Transitional Justice, Human Rights and the Rule of Law. It is open to external participants – diplomats, lawyers, legal advisers, judges, NGO staff, human rights advocates, media specialists, UN staff and staff from other international organizations, and academics and students interested in the topic – who are not enrolled in the MTJ and who want to deepen their expertise in functions setting-up, practice and challenges of truth commissions.

CERTIFICATE

Participants obtain a certificate at the end of the Spring School (no ECTS credits).

FEE

The fee for attending the Transitional Justice Spring School 2018 is **1,150 Swiss Francs**. It includes tuition costs, course materials, lunch and refreshments during coffee breaks.

The fee is payable as soon as your place has been confirmed. Places are limited and participation can only be secured through the payment of the fee.

All participants are responsible for their own travel costs to Geneva, including Swiss visa fees and evening meals (approximately 30 Swiss Francs per meal).

HOW TO APPLY

Applications must be submitted via the online form available on our website.

DEADLINES

- Deadlines:
- Application start: 15 October 2018
 - Application end: 18 March 2019