

NNHRR Annual PhD Training 2020

Hosted by Utrecht University

First Day: Methodology of Legal Research – 16th November

Location: Social Impact Factory, Utrecht

8.30-9.00 Coffee

9.00-9.30 Kick off with opening speech and introductions: Professor Antoine Buyse, Director of SIM and Dr León Castellanos-Jankiewicz, Academic Coordinator NNHRR

9.30-11.00 Methodology in legal scholarship, Professor Elaine Mak, Utrecht University

The first session will provide an overview and critical reflection to what methodology means in 'legal scholarship'. It will address the different types of research design, giving attention to different research objectives such as descriptive, classifying, comparative, theory-building, evaluative and normative. It describes several methodological features relating to these different objectives, and draws attention to the choices that have to be made when designing a research methodology. It gives particular attention to the need to determine normative points of reference for evaluative and normative research, making explicit and justifying the (normative) choices that are made and acknowledging the limits of the research design. In the first session, attention will also be paid to the increased focus on interdisciplinarity in academic research and its implications for legal doctrinal research.

11.00-11.30 Coffee

11.30-13.00 Inter, multi or transdisciplinary research? choices and implications [speaker and exact content to be confirmed]

This session will explore the importance of multiple methods for PhD research conducted within law schools. It will look at the various ways in which non-legal disciplines can inform legal research design, from the building of a normative/ theoretical framework, to the analysis of conclusions. It will examine how data from different disciplinary studies can be translated and incorporated into legal studies, and provide guidance on how to identify and navigate some of the risks that relying on data emerging from non-legal methodologies. The session will provide insights into the different aims of interdisciplinary research, from the least ambitious (e.g. to seek inspiration from other disciplines) to the most ambitious (e.g. to seek to integrate two disciplines into a new discipline).



13.00-14.00 Lunch

14.00-15.30 **How to conduct open-semi structured interviews? Dr Stephanie Rap, Leiden University**

This session will explore research based on open semi-structured interviews. After addressing the reasons to use interviews as a method, it will address choice of respondents and gaining access. It will address how to combine interviewing with other qualitative methods, for example observations, focus groups, etc. Attention will be given to the design of interviews, looking at different kinds of questions and different roles for the interviewer. The session will also cover the ethical considerations that accompany interviewing, with attention being given to consent, use, anonymity, note-taking and recording.

15.30-16.30 **The human rights researcher: academic, activist or both? Professor Yvonne Donders, University of Amsterdam, Chair, NNHRR**

Doing human rights research is all about normativity. Many human rights researchers are also human rights activists. How does that influence your research? Some have accused human rights researchers of "human rightism" (Alain Pellet), turning every issue into a human rights issue. Other have maintained that human rights lawyers are notoriously "wishful thinkers" (John Humphrey), doing sloppy legal analysis and arguing towards a pre-set goal, which is often that human rights and the human rights system should be strengthened. How do you see this (or not) in your own research? How do you combine your academic mind with your human rights heart?

18.00 **Dinner and social activity [if possible with coronavirus situation]**

Second day: Surviving a PhD – 17th November

Location: Social Impact Factory, Utrecht

9.30-11.00 **Research question workshop, Dr Katharine Fortin and Dr Julie Fraser, Utrecht University**

Each PhD candidate will discuss their research questions, sub-questions and research design with a partner trying to qualify their research objectives and identify and define any relevant norms used in their research. They will then present to the group, explaining any difficulties they have in the current research design and seeking input from their peers.

11.00-11.30 **Coffee**

11.30-13.00 Mindfulness and surviving the PhD trajectory, Jacky Limvers, Utrecht University

Mindfulness is a combination of Western psychology and buddhist meditation. A great deal of research has been done into its effects on wellbeing, learning ability, stress and worry. Mindfulness practice is training your attention. It may offer a different outlook on things we usually take for granted. Being more aware of what is going on in your mind and body, it can help you to release stress, make beneficial changes or accept when changing is not an option. In this workshop you will learn some exercises that you can also do at home that will help you keep stress at bay during the PhD trajectory.

13.00-14.00 Lunch

14.00-14.30 Academic blogging: why and how? Professor Antoine Buyse and Dr Katharine Fortin, Utrecht University

Antoine Buyse and Katharine Fortin will explain some of the benefits of legal blogging, with reference to their own experiences as founder and editor of the [ECHR blog](#) and the [Armed Groups and International Law](#) blogs. They will also provide some advice on the 'dos' and 'don'ts' of legal blogging, explaining what in their view makes a good blog post.

14.30-15.00 The NNHRR blog – meeting with editors

15.00-15.30 Coffee

15.30-16.30 Academic output, during your PhD and beyond? Navigating the world of publishing, Dr Brianne McGonigle Leyh, Utrecht University

It is sensible to start thinking early about where and how you're going to publish your PhD research. This session will run through the advantages and disadvantages of the different publishing options that are available. It will address how to choose a publisher and how to prepare your manuscript for publication, touching on practical details like editing, indexing, printing, copies, costs and sales.