

2021/2022 Training for First-Year PhD-students

“Getting Started with Your PhD-trajectory”

5 November 2021 (online)*

Morning session – Methodology of Human Rights Research

10:30-10:50 Kick-off and online meet & greet

- Prof. F. Coomans/ Dr. V. Tünsmeier from the Maastricht Centre for Human Rights

11:00 - 12:30 Matching your research question to the appropriate method

- Prof. F. Coomans, Dr. A. Broderick, Dr. A. Nunes Chaib

Human rights research encompasses many different fields and types of research questions and methods. Moreover, it is a field of research where many different disciplines come together. For this reason, and to ensure the quality of the work we produce, a number of steps have to be taken once the research question has been articulated. First, we need to clarify the type of question (normative vs empirical, purely legal vs interdisciplinary). Second, what consequences does this have for the type of research you can and cannot do? And lastly, foundational rules of the field may limit the type of analysis you can use. For example, for international human rights law, analysis of international legal provisions has to adhere to legal rules of interpretation, notably the VCLT.

To help you in deciding on the appropriate methodology, Prof. Fons Coomans will introduce you to the fundamental methodological concerns, followed by Dr. Andrea Broderick who summarize the use of the VCLT in your PhD. Dr. André Nunes Chaib in turn will introduce participants to empirical research methods, in particular qualitative empirical research. Afterwards there will be the opportunity to ask questions in the group.

Participants will be informed of reading materials closer to the training date.

Lunch break (12:30-14:00)

* A second part of this training will take place in the Spring of 2022 in person at Maastricht University.

Afternoon session – Setting yourself up for success

14:00-15:00 Planning your PhD trajectory and keeping an eye out for the future

- Dr. Andrea Broderick/ Dr. V. Tünsmeyer

In this session we will go over some key skills and strategies that will help you in your PhD trajectory (finding your writing style, communication with supervisors, peer support etc.). Depending on your questions and time we will also be going over questions you should ask yourself throughout your PhD trajectory for the time that follows after your defense (i.e. career path and related preparations).

15:15 – 16:15 Pick our brains – Informal Drinks/ Coffee/ Tea/ and asking questions

To close the day, this informal online get together gives you the opportunity to ask questions, connect with each other, possibly find a mentor and to ask PhD students who are in their 3rd or 4th year anything on a peer-to-peer level.