

HUMANITARIAN AFFAIRS

Through multi-disciplinary coursework in subjects spanning the field of humanitarian affairs, the Institute of International Humanitarian Affairs (IIHA) equips students with the tools required to respond thoughtfully and effectively in humanitarian crises. The IIHA combines the theoretical and practical aspects of humanitarian affairs to generate debate, initiate discourse, and encourage information sharing among participants and faculty.

For more information about graduate-level Humanitarian Affairs, please visit our page on the Fordham website.

Admissions Requirements

- A statement of interest connecting the student's goals for the program with the expertise and activities of the degree, up to 500 words.
- Official degree transcripts confirming prior degree conferral are required for all applicants, regardless of matriculation status. These should be ordered at least one month prior to the application deadline for your program of interest.
- Resume/CV
- Official GRE scores (Graduate School of Arts and Sciences – Code #2259)
- Writing sample (5 - 20 pages)
- Three letters of recommendation (two of which must be academic, submitted directly by referees)
- English Proficiency for international applicants whose native language is not English. Competitive applicants will have earned TOEFL scores above 100 and/or an IELTS score of 7.5 or higher.

Humanitarian Affairs

Candidates for the M.S. in Humanitarian Studies are expected to have a 3.0 or higher undergraduate GPA based on a 4.0 scale.

International Humanitarian Action

Candidates applying for the Master in International Humanitarian Action must have:

- Successful completion of the International Diploma in Humanitarian Assistance (IDHA).
- At least five years experience in humanitarian assistance or a related field.
- GREs are accepted but not required.
- A bachelor's degree from an accredited college or university is required.

To apply for the MIHA:

- Create an application
- Select "Graduate School of Arts and Sciences."
- Select "Masters in Humanitarian Action"

To apply to the Advanced Certificate in International Diploma in Humanitarian Assistance (IDHA):

- Create an application
- Select "Graduate School of Arts and Sciences."
- Select "Advanced Certificate in International Diploma in Humanitarian Assistance"
- Select either Spring, Summer or Fall

To apply to the Advanced Certificate in International Diploma in Operational Humanitarian Assistance:

- Create an application
- Select "Graduate School of Arts and Sciences"
- Select "Advanced Certificate in International Diploma in Operational Humanitarian Assistance"

To apply to the Advanced Certificate in International Diploma in the Management of Humanitarian Action:

- Create an application
- Select "Graduate School of Arts and Sciences"
- Select "Advanced Certificate in International Diploma in the Management of Humanitarian Action"

To apply to an IIHA short course or professional training:

- Create an application
- Select "Graduate School of Arts and Sciences"
- Select "International Humanitarian Action"
- Select "Non Degree/Non Matriculated"
- Indicate the desired course(s) on form.

For more information about admissions to the Graduate School of Arts and Sciences, please visit their page on the Fordham website.

Programs

- M.S. in Humanitarian Studies
 - Communities and Capacity Building Thematic Area
 - Human Rights Thematic Area
 - Livelihoods and Institutions Thematic Area
- Advanced Certificate in Humanitarian Assistance

Courses

HUST 5005. NOHA Network on Humanitarian Action Study Abroad. (0.5 to 12 Credits)

This is an administrative registration for students participating in the NOHA Network on Humanitarian Action Study Abroad program.

HUST 5012. Contemporary Issues in Humanitarian Action. (0 to 3 Credits)

This course will introduce students to the pressing issues and acute challenges of contemporary humanitarian response through three modules on (1) Threats and Vulnerabilities, (2) Accountability in Humanitarian Response, and (3) Innovations in Humanitarian Response. The aim of the course is to examine how the international community forms consensus regarding best practices, and how this, in turn, informs humanitarian practice.

Attributes: PMMA, PSIC, PSJH.

HUST 5013. Fundamentals of Humanitarian Action. (0 to 3 Credits)

This course will introduce students to the principles of humanitarian action through three modules on (1) Defining Humanitarian Assistance, (2) Management, and (3) Strategic Planning. The aim of the course is to provide an overview of the critical aspects of international humanitarian coordination from an organizational perspective.

Attributes: PMMA, PSIC, PSJH, PSNM.

HUST 5014. Humanitarian Resource Management and Administration. (0 to 3 Credits)

This course will introduce students to the operational aspects of humanitarian response and focus primarily on the role of human resources (HR) and financial management. In response to the continuing professionalization of the humanitarian sector, this course will provide students with a common understanding of hiring practices, budget management, and donor relations in a humanitarian intervention.

Attribute: GSSE.

HUST 5015. Information Management. (0 to 3 Credits)

This course will introduce students to the principles and strategies behind the effective flow of information in a humanitarian setting. Gathering and managing information is crucial in order to understand the cause of the emergency, identify impacted populations, and determine crisis-afflicted geographical locations. The aim of this course is for students to understand the components of a successful information management network within a humanitarian intervention and identify how information can contribute to future preparedness.

Attributes: PSIC, PSJH, PSNM.

HUST 5016. Monitoring and Evaluation in Humanitarian Response. (0 to 3 Credits)

This course will introduce students to the principles and theoretical frameworks behind data collection and analysis in the context of humanitarian response. It will cover qualitative and quantitative research methods used in humanitarian program monitoring and evaluation (M&E). The aim is to give students an overview of basic methodologies utilized in the field as well as the tools to determine appropriate M&E strategies in various humanitarian settings.

Attribute: PMMA.

HUST 5025. Cash, Commodities, and Services in a Humanitarian Response. (0 to 3 Credits)

For decades, humanitarian assistance was delivered by the supply of commodities and services, often by international humanitarian organizations. More recently, technological advances have made it practical, and cost-effective, to provide humanitarian assistance through cash transfers. This development has both been welcomed as the new way forward and viewed with some suspicion by others who view it as lacking in accountability. This course will examine the roles played by cash transfers, commodities, and services in response to humanitarian crises, along with the advantages and disadvantages of each. The course will also examine the mechanisms now in place for the further development and regulation of cash transfers.

Attribute: HUCB.

HUST 5035. Forced Migration: The Humanitarian Challenge of the Decade. (0 to 3 Credits)

Millions of people worldwide have been forcibly displaced across countries and continents for a wide range of reasons, including armed conflict and natural disasters. Some have become refugees or Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs), while others live as irregular migrants. Some have been trafficked and live as victims of modern slavery. All find their futures dependent on political decisions and local perceptions driven by the media. This course will equip students to understand the complexity of forced migration and its relevant legal and protection framework, including International Refugee Law and the Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement. It will also address recent developments and the shift in emphasis from solving the problem of forced migration to the provision of durable solutions. This course is recommended for students who are interested in forced migration or who may wish to work in the areas of protection and response to affected populations. It is also recommended for humanitarian practitioners who are already working in this field and want to improve their knowledge and understanding of these complex issues.

Attributes: HUHR, PSIC, PSJH.

HUST 5045. Humanitarian Advocacy: Communicating the Need and Motivating the Response. (0 to 3 Credits)

Humanitarians work in hostile environments where people are struggling for survival in situations of armed conflict or natural disasters. In such environments, people may have been forced to flee their homes with few—if any—belongings and may have suffered or witnessed human rights violations. Their plight needs to be communicated to the world in a way that will motivate the deployment of the protection and aid they so desperately need. This course will prepare students for the task of advocacy in humanitarian environments. It will focus on the identification of the most vulnerable members of a large group of survivors and the communication of their needs. It will equip students with the skills required to effectively communicate with local authorities as well as the international donor community. Students will learn to write in a different way than the academic style expected in other courses, focusing on effective advocacy messaging. This course is recommended for students who may envision working directly in advocacy for responding to humanitarian needs. It is also recommended for humanitarian practitioners who wish to prepare for a role in advocacy or are already working in this area.

Attributes: HUCB, PMMA.

HUST 5061. International Disaster Management. (0 to 3 Credits)

Covering the full spectrum of the disaster management cycle and, for the first time, integrating epidemiology, economics, behavioral psychology, and business administration into the curriculum, this course provides the fundamental insights needed to bridge the gap between national emergency planning, international humanitarian coordination, and global disaster risk reduction.

Attribute: HULI.

HUST 5075. Leadership and Management in Humanitarian Assistance. (0 to 3 Credits)

When responding to humanitarian emergencies, managers need the right skills to work in exceptional, rapidly changing, and sometimes dangerous situations. While some conventional techniques may be employed, having skills that take into account the environment and the emotional impact of emergencies on teams and individuals is crucial. This course will teach students the skills required to manage teams responding to humanitarian crises. For students planning to work in such environments, it is recommended that they reflect on whether they envisage being in leadership roles or might need to understand the role of those under whose management they will work. The course is also recommended for humanitarian practitioners at all levels who want to improve their leadership and management skills.

Attributes: HULI, PMMA, PSIC, PSJH.

HUST 5082. Integrity, Accountability and Transparency in Humanitarian Operations. (0 to 3 Credits)

This course will examine the values, principles, and ethical standards that humanitarian personnel must follow when engaged in humanitarian work. Adherence to these values, principles, and standards is critical in developing and maintaining beneficiary confidence, promoting a strong public image, cultivating an effective workforce, and nurturing accountability and transparency. At the end of this course, students will have a better understanding of the meaning of ethics in the context of humanitarian work; the standards of conduct applicable to humanitarian personnel; how to systematically approach ethical problem situations; key ethical and corruption risks pertaining to the humanitarian sector; how to report and deal with ethical breaches, including sexual and other interpersonal misconduct; how to make ethical decisions; and where to seek help.

Attributes: HUHR, PSIC, PSJH.

HUST 5085. Security Management: Delivering Aid in Potentially Dangerous Situations. (0 to 3 Credits)

This course will examine security management of humanitarian personnel working in high-risk environments. Students will analyze the most common security threats and trends and the ways to be proactive in order to reduce exposure to such threats. Students will also analyze organizational duty of care and learn to develop compliant security plans and to conduct security risk assessments. The concept of acceptable risk will be explored, as will the idea of balancing security risks with program delivery. Upon gaining an understanding of security planning, students will be introduced to techniques for critical incident management to reduce the impact of such events. In the final module, students will be taught how to better protect themselves during high-risk events to increase their chances of survival if deployed to work in high-risk environments.

Attribute: HULI.

HUST 5200. Human Rights Protections for Vulnerable Groups. (0 to 3 Credits)

This course will provide students with a comprehensive introduction to international practices and norms concerning the protection of vulnerable populations in humanitarian emergencies. The past 20 years of international humanitarian interventions has given rise to standardization of humanitarian activities, with a particular emphasis on protection practices. Students will gain an understanding of the landscape of organizations and entities involved in designing these frameworks and assess their efficacy and continued relevance to protecting vulnerable groups.

Attributes: GSSC, HUHR, PMMA.

HUST 5205. Children in Armed Conflict. (3 Credits)

This course will provide students with a comprehensive introduction to the impact of armed conflict on children. In the 21st century, armed conflict continues to put millions of children in harm's way, exposing them to human rights violations, including recruitment and use by armed forces and armed groups, military detention and ill treatment, rape and other forms of sexual violence, forced displacement, family separation, and physical injuries. Children also suffer from trauma and other serious and long-lasting psychological consequences resulting from the violence they have experienced. In addition to these direct violations, children are equally affected by indirect violations of their rights, including attacks on schools and hospitals and denial of humanitarian access. Students will examine the international legal framework for the protection of children in armed conflict and the international humanitarian response system designed to assist their physical and mental well-being. Students will critically assess these mechanisms for their efficacy and continued relevance for protecting children during war.

Attributes: GSSE, HUHR, PMMA, PSIC, PSJH.

HUST 5210. Access to Education During Crisis and Conflict. (3 Credits)

This course will provide students with an introduction to the growing field of education in emergencies. With as many as 40 million children living in countries affected by crisis and conflict it has become increasingly important for humanitarian practitioners to understand the complexities of planning and implementing educational programming in these settings. Building on the theoretical frameworks covered in the course courses, students will evaluate the relationship between education, international development and humanitarian aid through the use of theoretical texts and case studies from around the globe.

Attribute: HUHR.

HUST 5215. Accountability for Sexual and Gender-Based Violence in Humanitarian Settings. (3 Credits)

Sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV) is a well-documented public health and human rights issue that is under-resourced and poorly responded to in most countries across the globe. In crisis settings, existing systems for physical and social protection are further destabilized or destroyed. SGBV is commonplace in many societies but can contribute to conflict, is exacerbated by conflict, is frequently used as a weapon of war, and is poorly responded to in post-conflict settings, despite having lasting consequences on individuals, families, and communities. In this course, students will consider why SGBV is such a challenging topic in the context of conflict and examine how the domestic and international communities have handled accusations of SGBV or documented cases of SGBV. In particular, we will identify how SGBV has been defined in domestic and international laws, and how it has been handled in post-conflict settings using a range of judicial and non-judicial approaches. This course will use a range of case studies and will emphasize the perspectives of affected populations.

Attributes: HCWL, HUHR, PJGS, PJST, PMMA, WGSS.

HUST 5300. International Responses to Migration. (3 Credits)

This course will provide students with an enhanced awareness and understanding of the complex interaction between migration and humanitarian interventions from the point of view of the migrant, national authorities, and the international humanitarian community. With the crisis in the MENA region, particularly in Syria, and the mass migration to southern Europe it is imperative for students to understand the different motivations and determinants of action from regional (EU), national and local stakeholders as well as the diverse circumstances of the migrating populations. Students will be encouraged to critique the influence and motivations of mass and social media on the understanding of the economic, political, legal, and cultural factors of migration.

Attributes: HULI, PMMA, PSIC, PSJH.

HUST 5310. Urban Humanitarian Operations. (0 to 3 Credits)

This course will examine the interconnected systems that make up today's urban contexts, the impact on urban populations when these systems are disrupted by conflict and disasters, and the programmatic models used by humanitarians to respond to the needs of conflict and disaster-affected populations. Students will analyze programmatic models that are specific to urban contexts, as well as those traditionally used in camp and rural settings that can be modified for use in urban areas. Through case studies, students will also analyze existing best practices and ways of increasing the resilience of affected populations in both formal and informal urban settlements. At the end of this course, students will be able to create a desk review summary and stakeholder analysis of an urban context, plan a multi-cluster/sector initial rapid assessment (MIRA) of a disaster- or conflict-affected urban setting, and develop a cluster- or sector-specific urban program plan.

Attribute: HULI.

HUST 5350. Climate Change in the West African Sahel: Impact on Water and Migration. (0 to 3 Credits)

This course will examine the impact of climate change on societies, cultures, and economies in the West African Sahel, which includes Burkina Faso, Chad, Mali, Mauritania, Niger, and Nigeria. The Sahel, a transitional zone between the Sahara Desert and the savanna in sub-Saharan Africa, has been particularly affected by climate change, which has led to unpredictable rainfall and drought. This is also an area of significant out-migration to other parts of Africa and Europe. Considering the movement of Sahelian populations in search of areas with heavier rainfall or irrigation, this course aims to examine the interdependence existing between climate change, conflict, and migration in order to confront the challenges facing rural and urban development in the Sahel. The course goes beyond approaches focused on the physical and chemical aspects of water to develop a constructive perspective, valuing local and international responses to climate change and water management.

Attributes: HULI, PSEV, PSJH, URSG.

HUST 5410. Gender Integration in Humanitarian Action. (3 Credits)

This course will introduce students to the myriad ways in which gender impacts the experience of both the humanitarian crises and subsequent intervention. Students will explore the legal, political, cultural, and economic frameworks that contribute to gender inequality as well as those that provide support for vulnerable groups. Emphasis will be placed on the tension between international guidelines/norms, program implementation, and unanticipated consequences of gender programming.

Attributes: HUCB, PSIC, PSJH.

HUST 5500. Mental Health in Complex Emergencies. (0 to 3 Credits)

Over the past several years, the IIHA has run a popular 12-day course largely for mental health professionals. We will now be offering a distance learning course covering similar materials over a 15-week semester.

This is a training course for mental health professionals and program staff who wish to establish mental health or psychosocial programs in a humanitarian context within conflict and post-conflict areas. This course is also open to Fordham graduate students in humanitarian studies or other relevant disciplines. It will aim to provide practical orientation and training, including how to conduct rapid assessments, designing and setting up mental health services or psychosocial programs (exploring the differences between them), and clinical work and therapeutic approaches in non-Western contexts. It will address the issues of cultural validity, conflict resolution and negotiation, taking care of oneself and dealing with burnout. This course will also introduce potential field workers to essentials such as personal security, logistics, and practical aspects of humanitarian work in the field.

Attributes: HUCB, PMMA.

HUST 5600. International Humanitarian Law: Policy and Practice. (0 to 3 Credits)

This course will explore the development and application of International Humanitarian Law (IHL), also known as the law of armed conflict. IHL is a set of rules that, in times of armed conflict, seeks to protect people who are not or are no longer participating in hostilities, and to restrict the means and methods of warfare. The rules of IHL aim to balance military necessity against fundamental principles of humanity. IHL also provides a normative framework to facilitate the delivery of aid by humanitarian organizations engaged in mitigating the suffering caused by armed conflict. Students will examine the rules of international customary law, as well as treaty law, which form the legal bases for IHL; in particular the four Geneva Conventions of 1949 and their two additional protocols of 1977, and the Hague Regulations of 1907. Students will also study the principles of proportionality and distinction between military objectives and civilian objects, as well as the prohibition against means of combat that lead to unnecessary suffering and superfluous injury, which underpin this body of law. Questions to consider throughout the course include: What is international humanitarian law? How is it created, interpreted, applied, and enforced, and how does it evolve? How does it intersect with other branches of public international law, mainly international criminal law and international human rights law? This course will use case studies to illustrate principles and concepts.

Attribute: HUHR.

HUST 5801. Humanitarian Internship. (1 Credit)

Students will have an opportunity to intern at prominent international humanitarian organizations, helping them gain the necessary exposure and understanding of the dynamics of such organizations and their mission. Our location enables students to pursue internships at and exposure to various United Nations agencies, diplomatic missions, international nongovernmental organizations, and prominent research and think-tank institutions. Students will complete an internship tutorial that matches their concentration area.

HUST 5990. Master's Thesis Research I. (2 Credits)

Students should develop a thesis topic with a Fordham faculty advisor and a reader who has significant practical experience in humanitarian affairs, ideally after completing Module 2. This project is the culminating demonstration of the knowledge and skills gained throughout the MIHA coursework. The thesis will focus on practical examples of past mistakes, contributing possible solutions to the existing literature. The research methods necessary to writing the thesis are taught within the context of each module. Thesis projects should incorporate learning from previous MIHA courses, followed by final editing, defense and approval.

HUST 5991. Master's Thesis Research II. (2 Credits)

This project is the culminating demonstration of the knowledge and skill gained throughout the MIHA coursework. The thesis will focus on practical examples of past mistakes, contributing possible solutions to the existing literature. The research methods necessary to writing that thesis are taught within the context of each module. Thesis projects should incorporate learning from previous MIHA courses, followed by final editing, defense and approval.

HUST 5992. MSHS Thesis. (2 Credits)

In order to successfully complete the M.S. in Humanitarian Studies, students will be expected to synthesize the cumulative knowledge gained from their coursework, additional research, and internship experience (if appropriate) to write an original, substantive, and academic final thesis. The subject will be agreed upon between the student and their faculty advisor in conjunction with a humanitarian aid professional recognized by the Institute for Humanitarian Affairs.

HUST 5993. MSHS Thesis Research. (0 Credits)

In order to successfully complete the M.S. in humanitarian studies, students will be expected to synthesize the cumulative knowledge gained from their coursework, additional research, and internship experience (if appropriate) to write an original, substantive, and academic final thesis. This course will allow students to complete research for their thesis.

HUST 6000. International Diploma in Humanitarian Assistance. (0 to 8 Credits)

The International Diploma in Humanitarian Assistance (IDHA), the flagship program of the Institute of International Humanitarian Affairs, equips mid-career professionals to drive the humanitarian sector of the future in a more effective, sustainable, and dignified direction. Students will also develop a holistic perspective on global humanitarian issues to propel them to the next level in their careers, helping them create positive social change both in and out of the field.

HUST 8999. Independent Study. (1 Credit)

This is a graduate tutorial/independent study registration for humanitarian studies.