

Course manual
Joint Master's Programme in
International Humanitarian Action

All universities
Version 2020

Intensive Programme

Semester 1

Supported
by the



Credits awarded: 5 ECTS
equivalent to 125 work hours (1 ECTS = approx. 25 hours)

Period: First semester, block 1.

Language of instruction: English

1. Introduction

The Intensive Programme (IP) module is the initial component of the NOHA Joint Masters Programme. It is a 5-days inter-university joint course introducing students to the main components of contemporary humanitarianism. In 2020-2021, the programme will be fully taught online.

The IP:

- Brings together approximately 140 students, over 30 lecturers, researchers, consultants, international experts, policy makers, aid managers;
- Presents a wide range of issues central to humanitarianism by different specialists both from practice and academia;
- Combines activities that contributes to the multicultural and interdisciplinary training of future humanitarian action professionals;
- Integrates theory (through lectures) and practice (through workshops) in a student-oriented manner based on NOHA's learning philosophy;
- Serves as a forum where participants from various parts of the world and with different backgrounds, perspectives and expectations share knowledge and experiences on current issues and problems in the area of humanitarian action.

In terms of knowledge and understanding, the IP introduces students to :

- ✓ The key elements of the legal and normative framework of humanitarian action
- ✓ The main actors and institutions in the humanitarian field, their characteristics and policies
- ✓ The specificities of the humanitarian action, with a specific emphasis on contemporary challenges (i.e. the Covid-19 pandemic)
- ✓ The key sectors and activities of humanitarian actors
- ✓ Contemporary challenges pertaining to the implementation of humanitarian principles, the coordination of humanitarian actors, the complexities of humanitarian context and the need to better connect humanitarian, development and peacebuilding activities

2. Learning outcomes

Network Learning outcomes	Intensive Programme course objectives. At the end of the IP, students
Has a critical understanding of the humanitarian principles and standards and the problematic nature of the dilemmas involved	know the main elements of the legal and normative framework of contemporary humanitarian action recall humanitarian principles
Has highly specialised knowledge and a critical understanding of humanitarian	Understand the main dimensions of the concept of humanitarian action and grasp its

concepts and theories.	relationship with adjacent concepts (development, peace, security)
Has innovative expertise on a particular current theme in humanitarian action with an interdisciplinary understanding in terms of its political, legal, anthropological, public health and management aspects.	Understand the specificities of humanitarian action in a pandemic Recognize the specificities of each disciplinary approach to humanitarianism
Has specialised skills to conceptualise, interpret and critically analyse complex humanitarian crises and interventions on the basis of a variety of sources, generating new interdisciplinary expertise to help solve complex humanitarian problems.	Identify the key stakeholders of humanitarian field and their specificities Define the characteristics of humanitarian contexts Know the various components of humanitarian interventions
Has demonstrated the ability to position one's own research findings in the broader context of humanitarian action.	Compare his own argument with other stances on humanitarian action
Has developed an open attitude towards acquiring new knowledge and understanding about professional and academic developments in humanitarian action.	Recognize and appreciate the values of differences in cultural, disciplinary perspectives on humanitarian action
Has highly specialised knowledge of the diversity of actors and stakeholders, their interaction and competition, and a thorough understanding of the importance of coordination between different levels in the humanitarian system.	Identify the key stakeholders of the humanitarian action Recognize the main institutions of humanitarian coordination

3. Course material

All the course materials will be made available by September 1st on :

- ✓ The IP page on the University of Warsaw website: <https://noha.uw.edu.pl/master-programme-in-humanitarian-action/ip/>
- ✓ The IP module course page on NOHA Blackboard : <https://noha.rug.nl/>

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The course materials include

- ✓ Compulsory readings that aim to prepare students to the recorded lectures (see reading list at the end of this course guide)
- ✓ Recommended videos to get acquainted with the panel discussions and workshops 'themes
- ✓ Presentations of lecturers and guest speakers

To access the course readings, please log in your home university's library resources. In case of issues, your home university coordinator is your contact point.

4. Teaching and learning methodology

To meet the course objectives, the IP combines three main types of learning activities

1. **Lectures** aiming to introduce students to the key concepts and dimensions of

humanitarian action. Lectures build on compulsory readings and, when relevant, propose quizzes to test students' understanding of key concepts. To support students' autonomous learning, lectures will be made available one week before the start of the Intensive Programme;

2. **Panel discussions** allowing students to critically engage with the lectures and course materials. Panels bring together academics from NOHA Global network and practitioners to explore contemporary challenges of humanitarian practice and explore new areas for research and practice
3. **Interactive workshops** aiming to activate students and allow them to apply the acquired knowledge and understanding in a multidisciplinary and intercultural way.

In addition, students will be introduced to the NOHA network, its specificities and main components through a presentation of the programme's main learning paths member universities and alumni network.

5. Programme and training activities

The programme consists of five intertwined pillars:

- I. Introduction to NOHA educational activities: the NOHA Joint Master's
- II. Principles and History of Humanitarian Action
- III. Actors and institutions of Humanitarian Action
- IV. The contexts of Humanitarian Action
- V. Key sectors and activities
- VI. Thematic workshops

I. Introduction to NOHA educational activities: The NOHA Joint Master's

The Network on Humanitarian Action (NOHA) is an international association of Universities to enhance professionalism in the humanitarian sector, by promoting humanitarian values and providing certificated high level courses (Joint Master's in International Humanitarian Action), as well as refreshment courses (seasonal NOHA Schools) and promoting research and policy papers on key humanitarian issues.

The NOHA Joint Master's in International Humanitarian Action is an interuniversity, multidisciplinary postgraduate programme that provides high quality academic education and professional competencies for personnel working or intending to work in the area of humanitarian action. In addition to collaboration and support from the European Union, the NOHA Programme enjoys the backing of non-governmental organisations (NGOs), inter-governmental organisations (IGOs), and other actors of the humanitarian action community with whom the Network has strong collaborative links.

During the first day, students will be introduced to the programme and have an opportunity to meet their university coordinators and directors.

II. Principles and History of Humanitarian Action

Historical accounts of humanitarian action date the creation of the contemporary humanitarian system back from 1863 with the founding of the International Committee of the Red Cross, considered as the guardian of international humanitarian law. Yet, people's solidarity in crisis is as old as humanity itself. Since its origins, the humanitarian system has grown into a diverse field,

including close to 5000 organizations most of them active at the local and national level. Humanitarian actors share a joint commitment to the humanitarian principles. This section will introduce students to the history, legal and normative framework of humanitarian action.

III. Actors and Institutions of Humanitarian Action

Humanitarian aid has become a highly professionalized arena of various kinds of humanitarian stakeholders. The increase in armed conflicts, emerging global challenges such as environmental disasters, water scarcity, food-, financial-, and refugee crises or extreme poverty require comprehensive responses. The individual as well as combined efforts of humanitarian organization of different nature in cooperation with governmental agencies shape the sector and should therefore be discussed.

This session will address the following questions: Who are the different actors in humanitarian action? How does cooperation between the different stakeholders work? What is the working situation for humanitarian action professionals? What different approaches to humanitarian action are implemented by the organizations?

IV. The contexts of Humanitarian Action

International humanitarian action is in its nature multi- and interdisciplinary, and thus requires humanitarian professionals to critically analyze and be fully aware of the social, political, legal, cultural and security environment, provide quality services in the broad field of humanitarian relief and be informed on their theoretical insights and humanitarian principles. The specificity of humanitarian action lies in the crisis contexts in which it is implemented. Humanitarian actors are daily confronted to the complexities of contemporary armed conflicts, the increase in disasters and to new challenges such as pandemic and conflict-induced crisis. This session will make students aware of the characteristics and challenges of contemporary crises.

V. Key sectors and activities

Historically, humanitarian action has mainly consisted in protecting civilians from the impacts of crisis and providing medical assistance and life-saving services to crisis-affected population. Over its development, the humanitarian field has grown into a multi-faceted sector providing a large range of diverse services such as education in crises, early recovery support, camp coordination and management,... Humanitarian actors have also become increasingly aware of the need to anticipate crisis and build the resilience of crisis-affected population. This session will present the key activities of humanitarian actions as well as the challenges pertaining to the implementation of the nexus between development, relief and peace activities.

VI. Thematic Workshop Overview

a. Introduction to Humanitarian Negotiation

André Picot, Geneva Centre of Humanitarian Studies

“We don’t negotiate with terrorists” This sentence is very common however humanitarian workers might need to make deals with people named terrorists. Negotiators are not made but born. This is also often heard but far from reality. Of course you can learn by experience and by working closely with colleagues who master this skill but you can also learn techniques and apply tools in an academic setting that

will be of use in negotiating about dignity and suffering in a volatile, asymmetric and sometimes dangerous environment.

Using a classical project cycle grid with: Analysis, Strategy, face-to-face, Lessons learned; is already a good starting point, often neglected in practice. For this brief introduction to HN we shall concentrate on the Analysis phase using tools developed for humanitarian workers applied to a case study.

b. Building resilience in humanitarian work

Chamutal Afek Eitam, The Garrison Institute

Psychological stress is widely recognized as a major contributor to absenteeism, high staff turnover, poor morale and reduced productivity at work. Stress has also been shown to significantly impair memory and the ability to learn. Across a range of contexts, various studies have produced alarming statistics on the topic of aid worker mental health. The occurrence of chronic stress and burnout among humanitarians reflects the profound mental and physical impact of the work, whilst also affecting the quality of support provided to populations in need. Although exposure to suffering and stressors may be unavoidable, what can be controlled is how you react to these stressors, and the toll they take on your wellbeing. Knowing the causes and symptoms of stress is helpful but seldom sufficient. True resilience requires specific skills, and these skills can be learned. In this short introductory workshop on aid worker resilience, participants will grasp the theory and science behind contemplative practices and have an opportunity to experience some contemplative preventative measures and interventions for stress-management.

c. Managing public health in humanitarian crises

Cooperativa Humanitaria Team

This workshop will introduce students to the management of public health programmes in humanitarian crises and to the specificities of medical-humanitarian emergencies. By the end of the session, the participants:

- ✓ will have become familiar with one of the most usual response to medical-humanitarian crises (refugee/displaced populations).
- ✓ Will be able to identify the main elements that allow humanitarian NGOs to respond in an effective manner (standards, procedures and tools previously defined, multidisciplinary teams, professionalism, commitment, humanitarian values, etc.)
- ✓ Will understand, which is the role of an international humanitarian worker on the field.

d. Humanitarian Action in time of pandemic. An Anthropological Perspective

Małgorzata Wosińska

This workshop will deal with the problem of management of crisis experience in non-European societies. The participants will deal with the question whether Global South is able to deal better with humanitarian crises in times of pandemic in comparison to Global North. The workshop will deal with the phenomenon of the post-traumatic growth and

different adaptation mechanisms in societies affected by violence and epidemics (ebola, malaria).

6. Workload

125 hours (1 ECTS = university dependent but approx. 25 hours).

The workload is calculated considering the hours of preparation, attendance and participation in the Intensive Programme from 7 to 11 September.

Classes & online activities:	30 hrs.
Preparation and processing:	25 hrs.
Take-home exam approx.:	25 hrs.
Workshop:	20 hrs.
Literature:	22 hrs. (approx. 300 pages)

7. Assessment methods

All universities apply a common assessment procedure for the IP - a written **academic essay**, analyzing the following statement:

In a famous essay published in *The Lancet* in 2017, Paul Spiegel a public health expert of humanitarian action noted : “*The humanitarian system was not designed to address the types of complex crises that are happening at present; it is not simply overstretched—it is no longer fit for purpose*”

Building the knowledge and concepts discussed during the IP, critically analyze the key issues raised in the statement above, supporting your argument with relevant examples. In your answer, please make sure you refer to the compulsory readings and discuss the key four themes of the IP (history and principles, actors and institutions, contexts and sectors and activities)

The essay should amount to **2,500 words** (+/- 10%) and should be written in the language of instruction of the students’ home university. The essay must be written in accordance with academic standards: this means for instance that proper references whenever sources are used should be provided. Your writing style is expected to be analytically precise.

Students are required to hand in the essay electronically via NOHA Blackboard before **1 October 2020, 23.59**

Deadlines are strict; extensions are not possible because the online learning system (NOHA Blackboard) closes the assignments on the specified dates automatically. All assignments must be uploaded to NOHA Blackboard and are automatically scanned for plagiarism. In case of plagiarism the assignment is considered as not submitted, which leads to failing the course. In severe cases, plagiarism can lead to a case before the exam commission.

In case of failure to the first submissions, students are offered a possibility of resit. The modalities of the resit are defined by each university.

Attendance to the jointly organized Intensive Programme is a mandatory component of the module. When a student is unable to attend the whole or part of the IP, the NOHA Director and the NOHA Coordinator concerned should be informed prior to the beginning of the programme. Depending on the situation, they will decide whether the student should write an assignment of 2,500 words or 5,000

8. Assessment criteria

The module is graded in accordance with the (national) grading system in place at the home university.

Content (80%):

- Clarity, justification and precision of the statement;
- Relevance and quality of the argumentation;
- Conceptual and theoretical elaboration;
- Relevance and adequacy of the example used
- Logical structuring of the paper
- quality and relevance of sources used.

Format and presentation (20%):

- overall care : consistency of the handouts, impeccable writing style
- formal academic writing including proper use of references and bibliography.

There are different technical standards on written assignments. At NOHA we have not adopted one specific format. Negligence of the formal requirements negatively affect the grade of the assignment.