

THE CONCEPT OF HUMAN SECURITY AND ITS APPLICATION TO EVERYDAY PEACE

Professor: **Shahrbanou TADJBAKHS**

Language of instruction: **English**

Number of hours of class: **2.5h**



Objective of the Course

The objective of the session is to familiarize students with an alternative conception of security, one based not on concerns for the survival of the state, but for the wellbeing, survival and dignity of people and communities. How does this shift of point of view offer different answers to the questions whose security, security from what and security how? The session will examine how the human security approach differs from realism and liberalism and what alternative policy approaches it offers to policy challenges such as how to build sustainable peace, what to do prevent people from joining violent extremist groups and how to address the refugee flows.



Summary

The Masterclass on Human Security is designed to heighten the sense of empathy in students by making them aware of the implications of crisis situations - be they wars, pandemic, environmental catastrophes, financial crisis, etc. - on the everyday lives of people in multi-dimensional ways. It introduces students to a broader conception of “security,” one which concerns itself with preventing and alleviating risks to people’s survival, livelihoods and dignity.

Traditional security thinking and the tools of national security, i.e., military force, proves inadequate when it comes to protecting the lives and well-being of people threatened by crisis such as the COVID-19 pandemic, climate change, economic crisis and famines. The pandemic for example showed how insecurity can spread in a domino effect across people, nations and sectors: A health insecurity had devastating impacts on the economic, food, personal, environmental, and political security of states and people everywhere in different ways and to different degrees. The same can be said about the multi-dimensional impacts of the war in Ukraine, in the Middle East or climate change globally: These crises impact people first and foremost in multi-dimensional

ways. Solutions are therefore needed that can capture mutual vulnerability between insecurities, but current narrow national security strategies and concepts are not designed to respond to such complexity.

Human Security, seen from the perspective of people, goes beyond stability to encompass other ways that the survival, well-being and dignity of people can be ensured: managing pandemics, saving jobs in the midst of a financial crisis, having access to reliable supply of quality food and clean water, being protected from pollution, being free from gross violations of human rights, etc. Human Security means being free from fear, from want and from indignities.



Professor's Biography

Shahrbanou Tadjbakhsh is a professor, researcher and UN consultant who specializes in human security, peacebuilding, counter-terrorism and radicalization, with geographic specialization in Central Asia and Afghanistan. At Sciences Po, she teaches within the Paris School of International Affairs (PSIA), Master's Level courses on Human Security and a course on Understanding and Responding to Violent Extremism as well as a course on Human Security within the Summer School Program. In the Fall of 2024, she is also teaching at the Graduate Institute of Geneva her course on Violent Extremism. She is author of more than 30 academic and policy publications, among them *A Rock Between Hard Places; Afghanistan in its Regional Security Complexes* (with Kristian P. Harpviken) (Hurst Publishers, 2016), Editor of *Rethinking the Liberal Peace: External Models and Local Alternatives* (Routledge 2011) and Author with Anuradha Chenoy of *Human Security: Concepts and Implications* (Routledge, 2007).

As first a full-time staff at UNDP and then as a consultant for various UN agencies for the past 25 years, she has been developing strategic documents, policy papers, trainings and evaluations at the national, regional and global levels on development and security issues. As policy advisor, trainer and drafter, she helped teams preparing National Human Development Reports for UNDP. She has helped the UN Human Security Unit develop guidelines for operationalizing the Human Security Approach and conducts trainings for UN staff and governments and evaluations of programmes. She helped draft two joint Plans of Actions for the Implementation of the UN Global Counter Strategy in Central Asia (2011 and 2021) for the UN Regional Center for Preventive Diplomacy in Central Asia (UNRCCA) and the UN Office on Counter Terrorism (UNOCT). She has helped prepare national Plans on Counter-Terrorism and Prevention of Violent Extremism for the countries of Central Asia and has worked on the return and repatriation of Foreign Fighters from war zones.

Tadjbakhsh holds a Bachelor's Degree from Georgetown University (1987), a Master's Degree (1991) and a Doctoral Degree (1994) from Columbia University. She is Iranian-American and a resident of France.