



MASTER OF SCIENCES IN “TRANSITIONAL JUSTICE” STUDY PROGRAM Informative Brochure

The Master of Sciences in “Transitional Justice” program at the Faculty of Social Sciences of the University of Tirana is established to consolidate the conduct of research and teaching in the field of transitional justice in Albania. Through a comprehensive and integrated curriculum, the Master’s Programme will address those dimensions that are critical for understanding transitional justice in Albania, with specific reference to the social, political, institutional and legal context in which the transition from the communist past took place to the main actors and to what extent justice has been/can be achieved. The programme will draw lessons from comparisons with other societies transitioning from war-to-peace or authoritarianism-to-democracy.



The establishment of the Master programme in Transitional Justice was supported through the project “Building capacities of Albanian institutions and professionals in the field of transitional justice” (2020-2023) is implemented by OSCE Presence in Albania and is funded by the Federal Republic of Germany:



FORM OF STUDIES AND DIPLOMA

The second cycle, Master of Sciences in “Transitional Justice” study program is a program of 120 credits and academic duration of 2 academic years (4 semesters), in Albanian and full-time form of studies. Upon completion of this study program, a second cycle, Master of Sciences in “Transitional Justice” diploma is issued, in the Faculty of Social Sciences of the University of Tirana, in reference to level 7 of the Albanian Framework of Qualifications.

CURRICULA OF THE STUDY PROGRAM

The curricula of the Master in the field of Transitional Justice program is a contemporary and in line with international standards, developed by professors of the University of Tirana, with the mentorship of three international experts, professors recruited by the OSCE Presence in Albania.

The curricula of the program curriculum has been drafted to link the three areas of study, sociology, law, and history, and meets the profile of a researcher in the field of transitional justice. The modules analyze issues, measures, policies and institutions of transitional justice from an interdisciplinary perspective - including research methods - and give the opportunity for in-depth analysis at local, national, regional and international levels.

A special element in this curriculum is the emphasis on the practical dimension as within each subject / syllabus, but also in a separate module in the master curriculum.

In the framework of the projects on the establishment of the Centre for Justice and Transformation and Master in Transitional Justice the Presence has donated to the Centre for Justice and Transformation/Faculty of Social Sciences books and other relevant academic materials to be used by the Centre staff, the academic staff and the students of the Master’s Programme. The Presence has also provided online access to relevant academic journals in the field of transitional justice, law, social sciences and history.

MODULES AND CREDITS

FIRST YEAR OF STUDIES

- **Human Rights and Transitional Justice - 8 ECTS**

The course enables students to assess, distinguish and analyze acts of assault, abuse and violation of human rights, especially in post-authoritarian societies. For example, crimes against humanity that took place during the wars in Yugoslavia differ from the human rights violations during the dictatorship in Albania. Students will be able to understand why the destruction of villages, the taking of children hostage, the destruction of a country's infrastructure and media censorship are serious crimes dealt with by transitional justice. By recognizing human rights principles, their norms, moral and legal standards, students will be able to distinguish among them and understand why justice measures are applied in some cases and not in others.

- **Transitional Justice and International Human Rights Law - 8 ECTS**

Students will acquire knowledge about the fundamentals of the International Human Rights Law and its significance to societies transitioning from armed conflict or authoritarian regimes to a democratic political system, respecting human rights, will learn about the practice and case law of the international and regional human rights bodies and mechanisms, focusing on topics relevant to

transitional justice and will be introduced to “fundamental” rights associated with transitional justice (the right to truth, justice, reparation and guarantees of non-repetition). During this course students will understand the role of civil, political, economic, social, and cultural rights in the context of Transitional Justice and will analyse the jurisdiction over transitional justice mechanisms, as the European Court of Human Rights has played an important role in the establishment of normative standards, thus contributing to both transitional justice jurisdiction and the rule of law.

- **Transitional Justice and History: Theoretical Approaches - 8 ECTS**

The course is divided into two parts, with the first part dedicated to the theoretical aspect of transitional justice and history. This part aims to shed light on the developments of transitional justice in the 20th and 21st centuries, and reflects on contemporary debates in this field. The course will probe into discourses on accountability and social reconciliation, and promote the idea of how transitional justice can serve that "justice be made". The course aims to provide a multidimensional research on current political, moral and theoretical debates in the field of transitional justice. An essential aspect of the course is the analysis of the effectiveness of strategies employed by post-totalitarian / post-communist societies to deal with the legacies of political crime and human rights violations.

The second part of the course focuses on the main narratives and discourses on communism and communist legacy in the context of memory policies in Albania. It explains the aspects of remembrance policies and commemoration of events from the communist past. Students will learn how to raise analytical questions in the discourse on the memory of communism and transitional justice in post-communist Albania, and are encouraged to engage intensively in discussions on the topics of the course syllabus.

- **Gender and Transitional Justice (elective) - 6 ECTS**

Students will understand why gender is important to be addressed as a matter of transitional justice. They will learn that violence and conflicts are based on cultural norms leading to the use of gender-based violence and violence against women, including rape as a weapon of war. Students will also learn why sexual violence is a war crime and should be punished in the same way as other war crimes, as defined by the international criminal and humanitarian legislation. Upon completion of the course students will be able to implement transitional justice measures within gender and will know how to include the gender dimension in all transitional justice, legal and administrative mechanisms.

- **Social Justice through Transitional Justice (elective) - 6 ECTS**

The module Social Justice through Transitional Justice, aims to enhance students' knowledge and critical thinking about social justice. It aims to examine the root causes of inequality, diversity and human rights, and to prepare students to be able to respond to contemporary challenges based on an analysis of the Theory of Justice from classical to modern concepts of social justice. During this course we will illustrate and compare the perspectives of scholars like M. Sandel, Ch. Taylor, J. Habermas, John Rawls M. Walzer, A. Macintyre, R. Dworkin, and others.

This theoretical knowledge will be used for the practical analysis of real social phenomena, especially in relation to most of complex cases, also affected by the existence of dictatorial regimes.

- **Transitology and Regime Consolidation through Transitional Justice - 8 ECTS**

In this module students will learn how successive stages of institution building can lead to democracy. They will understand to what extent transitional justice mechanisms can increase or

decrease citizens' trust in the new regime, victims' trust in justice, perpetrators' trust in an impartial trial, and hope in institution building.

- **Reparations, Compensations and Commemorative Acts in Post-Autocratic Society - 8 ECTS**

The course examines victim-centred measures for the students to understand that the recognition of victims' sufferings is an obligation for the states. These measures repair the consequences of mass violence and establish human rights under the international law obligations. The victim is a person who has suffered harm under the international human rights law and international criminal law, in an armed conflict, whose life or the lives of his relatives have been threatened to testify against himself, who has been abused and violated, and has suffered systematic discrimination and social exclusion due to ethnicity, age, gender, religion, ideology, language and disability. The exclusion is made by denying them higher education, employment, social mobility. Victims have been imprisoned, subjected to inhuman degrading treatment and torture, have been humiliated in various ways and excluded from the enjoyment of basic human rights. Therefore, measures should be taken to mitigate the effects of the consequences of these crimes on the victims. These measures have also a preventive effect, deterring the occurrence of such atrocities in the future.

- **Public International Law and Transitional Justice - 8 ECTS**

Students will gain knowledge on the system and key institutions of the Public International Law, will learn how to use the relevant methods to analyze and resolve International Law issues and will be able to identify the relevant sources of International Law and interpret statutes and other sources of International Law in compliance with the established methods of interpretation. Students will also acquire a detailed understanding of specific branches of Public International Law, in particular those broadly related to transitional justice and topics related to International Law. During this course students will gain skills to formulate legal arguments for achieving a certain result and will understand international law in the context of international realities.

- **Transitional Justice and Rule of Law in the Albanian Context Compared to Post-Communist Countries in Europe (elective) - 6 ECTS**

Students will understand the different relations among the concepts of transitional justice, rule of law and democracy, will be able to test the relationships between the types of lustration and democracy and will critically understand and evaluate justice policies and the implementation of justice processes. Students will also be able to recognize transitional justice mechanisms implemented in post-communist Eastern Europe countries, to evaluate the status quo of the judiciary, especially in relation to key stakeholders, in order to identify systemic gaps that need to be reformed. During this course students will be able to compare transitional justice policies implemented in post-communist countries, mainly in the region and will analyse transitional justice mechanisms implemented in Albania.

- **Transitional Justice and International Criminal Law (elective) - 6 ECTS**

Students will understand why some of the abuses of human rights and violations of the humanitarian law are considered "international crimes" under the international law; how is this term defined, and how different international and national courts can prosecute them, will learn about the origin and development of the international criminal law, as a specialized field of the public international law and will be introduced to relevant legal principles and frameworks, such as the Rome Statute and

the domestic mechanism for the prosecution of international crimes, as well as synergies between them, including what is known as “complementarity”. Students will also be able to critically analyse the substantive international criminal law and implement the law to complex factual issues, will be introduced to past and ongoing cases of international justice and will understand their impact and perceptions on transitional societies. During this course students will learn about the objectives and impact of international justice, including how these legal processes intersect with the objectives of transitional justice, such as justice, peace, and reconciliation in affected areas and will be able to analyse how international justice relates to and affects the rights and interests of victims.

SECOND YEAR OF STUDIES

- **Vetting and Lustration: Role in Democratization - 8 ECTS**

Students will understand the difference between vetting and lustration, and differences in mechanisms, actors and institutions. Vetting and lustration in post-autocratic societies differs from those of post-war societies. However, students will be able to determine why perpetrators should be vetted and lustrated and why their ties to the authoritarian past should be checked.

Upon completion of the course, the students will be able to apply transitional justice measures and understand how concepts related to memory and reconciliation go through historical, cultural and political processes.

- **Memorial Landscape in Post-Communist European Countries - 8 ECTS**

In this course, we will come to understand the social significance of remembering and remembrance, and the role that public spaces have in the process of political memory. We will approach discourses on memory, public space, remembrance, national identity, political power, and public history in the process of remembering and remembrance. The focus of this course will be the relationship between memory and landscape at the background of communism heritage in the South East European countries after 1989.

- **Research Methods in Transitional Justice - 8 ECTS**

The purpose of this module is to engage students in the empirical aspects of research in transitional justice contextualizing it in the Albanian social and cultural reality, through an interdisciplinary approach and the use of research methods. Students will be provided with in-depth theoretical and practical knowledge so that they are capable to organize a study in the field of transitional justice using a wide range of methods of data collection and analysis in an interdisciplinary academic field such as transitional justice. Students will also be introduced to ethical frameworks within which research is conducted and to some of the forms of expression and presentation of results in the transitional justice field.

The students will be equipped with the appropriate methodological skills to conduct research on sensitive issues and to interview different categories of study participants.

At the end of the course, students will be able to conduct a research in the field of transitional justice through the application of one of the three main research methodologies.

- **Transitional Justice and Social Context (elective) - 6 ECTS**

In this course students will learn about the mechanisms and processes employed by transitional justice in post-authoritarian societies, exploring the transitional justice chances of driving social

change. However, transitional justice is a new scientific field, just like social history; both fields were born as a result of great efforts and activities by human rights activists to resist the blunt violation of human rights, and expand the focus of history beyond political elites by steering it towards wider social and political groups.

According to the United Nations approach to transitional justice, the latter aims to address a number of issues related to denied rights, including economic, social and cultural rights. But there is still no comprehensive initiative to include economic and social violence and cultural rights in the transitional justice -related processes.

- **History of Truth: Truth Seeking and Denial in Dealing with the Past (elective) - 6 ECTS**

This module on “truth searching and denial” analyzes one of the essential challenges of contemporary history: how to deal with the stories of the totalitarian regime and violence. The search for truth within the field of transitional justice has been a major concern since the 1980s, either by opening the official files, setting up truth commissions, or the developing counter-narratives, as expressed in the case of art and theater. Truth seeking has often been politicized and aligned to political agendas. This course aims to examine how history enables us to recognize the various layers in truth seeking in transitional justice. This would include, as Paul Gready notes, seeing truth as justice, as acceptance, and as naming.

- **Institutional Internship - 12 ECTS**

The professional internship is a training course that aims to prepare students to undertake field research and apply social research theory through empirical research projects. The professional internship is mainly organized as fieldwork for data collection, a process during which students are taught to define a research question and test it through a survey/interview questionnaire. The data collection stage takes on a special importance in professional internship as it is a prerequisite for the collection of "raw material" for the sociological analysis of a social phenomenon. Students are then guided in the process of data analysis and interpretation based on the analytical methods they learn during the course and the data processing toolkits. Goal: Assist in acknowledging the role of internship in building professional skills as researcher in the transitional justice area.

- **Microthesis - 18 ECTS**

Microthesis is the research work that the student undertakes independently with the guidance of the respective lecturer.

ACADEMIC STAFF

The Department of Sociology of the Faculty of Social Sciences is the unit that will run the Master program. Fifteen full-time lecturers have been engaged to teach in the Master of Science in Transitional Justice program, part of the academic staff of the Faculty of Law, the Faculty of Social Sciences and the Faculty of History and Philology. One lecturer will be engaged part-time. The sixteen professors that will be engaged in teaching in this study program are academic staff with degrees and scientific titles. Three academic staff with the academic title Prof. Dr., four academic staff with the academic title Prof. Assoc. Dr., two academic staff with the academic title Doc. Dr, one academic staff with PhD title and six academic staff with Doctor of Science academic title will be engaged in this program.

EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES

Graduates of the Master of Science in Transitional Law program, upon completion of this program will be well prepared to pursue a career in transitional justice, International Criminal Law and Human Rights Law.

Employment opportunities for graduated students of the program:

1. National and international institutions that work in the transitional justice field;
2. National independent organizations such as The People's Advocate, Organizata të pavarura në vend, si psh. Avokati i Popullit, Centre for Free Legal Initiatives, Albanian Helsinki Committee ;
3. Research institutions in the field of history, memory studies such as The Authority for Information on Former Sigurimi Files etc;
4. Law firms specialized in transitional justice;
5. Non-legal professions that require expertise in law and conflict resolution, including journalism, social policy advice;
6. Political advisor in the field of transitional justice to various ministries, such as Foreign Affairs, Defense, etc;
7. Independent researcher and researcher in the field of transitional justice, security and sustainable development;
8. University or other institutions of higher education, as a lecturer in the field of transitional justice.

APPLICATION

Interested students may apply at the Faculty of Social Sciences, University of Tirana.

CONTACTS

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