Program Overview

The Brandeis in the Hague Semester Program is an intensive academic experience open to students in all fields of study. It covers a wide range of global concerns, combining classroom study and immersion in the human rights networks associated with this dynamic city in the Netherlands, well-known as the “international center for peace and justice.”

Students take a full 16-credit course load, including directly enrolling at Leiden University and an internship, as well as participating in visits to the major international tribunals sitting in The Hague. In all these activities students engage a wide range of policy issues: ethnic conflict, gender violence, national and regional reconciliation, economic development, environmental protection, social rights, and responsive governance. These projects encourage students to build on their prior interests in areas of history, culture, ethics, science, and the arts.

The Hague is a long-famous center of diplomacy for international peace, hosting the International Court of Justice (or “World Court”) in the ornate Peace Palace. More recently, it is the new home for several tribunals created to address mass injustice, including the International Criminal Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia, the Special Tribunal for Lebanon, and the International Criminal Court. These innovative courts offer possible new tools for managing conflict and promoting justice in the future global environment. The Brandeis in The Hague Program explores these dynamic possibilities in both theory and practice. It connects legal events to broader struggles for human rights and for peaceful development in society and economy. The many challenges of global justice provide an opportunity for students to test their liberal arts skills, with The Hague as a living laboratory. Brandeis offers students a full immersion in these justice networks, building on our success in teaching intensive summer programs in The Hague since 2010.

Students live in the nearby university town of Leiden in a comfortable environment complete with windmills, canals, small shops and restaurants, amidst a vibrant student culture. The Netherlands is a magnet for international students, while also serving as a convenient launching point for European travel.

A program for anyone interested in human rights, social justice, global studies, or international law.

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About Leiden University

Leiden University is the oldest university in the Netherlands and was founded in February 1575, as a gift from William of Orange to the citizens of Leiden after they had withstood a long siege by the Spanish. It was the first university in the Netherlands to practice freedom of belief and religion, as reflected in the university’s motto. It was this atmosphere of freedom of speech that provided the right environment for philosophers such as Spinoza and Descartes to develop their ideas.

Course Work

During the Spring Semester Program students earn a total of 16 credits. The core courses are closely supervised by Professor Richard Gaskins (Legal Studies) in cooperation with faculty from Leiden University. Students enroll in the following four courses worth four credits each:

- The Spirit of International Law
- Networks of Global Justice
- Internship/Practicum
- Direct enrollment course at Leiden University

The Spring Semester opens up unique options for theory and practice. After building a solid academic base, students apply their skills through an internship in one of the Hague international courts, in a human rights organization, or in a field-based research project. Brandeis student interns have monitored the fairness of trials at the International Criminal Court; assisted legal counsel defending Liberian strongman Charles Taylor; helped plan peace initiatives in high-conflict areas (Kashmir, Balkans, Middle East); assisted war crimes courts for Sierra Leone and Lebanon; researched the testimony of forensic anthropologists in genocide trials, and examined how African countries are changing their local human rights laws. Other Hague placements have explored further issues in human rights, including gender violence and child victims in regions of armed conflict.

Students also have an opportunity to study the fundamentals of Dutch language and culture.

Housing

Students will live in residence halls at Leiden University in the adjacent university town of Leiden, which is approximately 15 minutes from The Hague by fast train. There are kitchens in the residence halls as well as a number of food venues in the area.

Eligibility

The admissions committee strives to accept students who are the best possible match for the program. Both Brandeis and non-Brandeis students from all majors and minors are encouraged to apply. Interest in human rights and international law should be demonstrated by a commitment to varied academic work, research, internships, and other volunteer work both on and off the home institution’s campus.

Students from outside Brandeis bring valuable diversity to the program and are encouraged to apply. The Hague programs have welcomed students from Albion College, Amherst College, Colby College, Tufts University, the University of Michigan, and Wellesley College. Meet with your college or university’s study abroad advisors, academic advisors, and faculty to assist in program selection and preparation.

Program Application

Applications are reviewed on a rolling admissions basis until the closing deadline. Students are encouraged to apply well before the admissions deadline. Applications will be reviewed up until the deadline, provided spaces are still available.

Visit go.brandeis.edu/hague for more information on the application process.

Program Dates

Late January – Late May

Find Out More

For program fees, application procedures, a list of former participants, housing, FAQs and more, please visit us on the web. If you would like to speak with a program representative, please call the Office of Study Abroad.

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