Research in Conflictual Political Contexts. Ethics and Methodology

ECTS : 3

Description du contenu de l'enseignement :

In their classification of the world's political regimes according to their degree of democracy, Lührman et al. (2018) estimate that less than 10% of the world's population currently lives in "total democracy". Since the 1920s, the number of closed autocracies has declined significantly, while that of liberal democracies has increased. Nevertheless, the majority of countries remain in grey zones, divided between democratic systems with authoritarian practices, and authoritarian regimes that can be, however, legitimized by regular electoral processes.

What's more, while global armed conflicts are no longer on the scale of those of the 19th and 20th centuries, armed violence in its various forms has increased in number and duration in many parts of the world.

Situations of political tension, whether or not accompanied by armed violence, are therefore frequent environments for international professionals. Many executives and employees of companies, journalists, humanitarian aid workers, diplomats, and experts are confronted with complicated, high-risk working conditions, both for themselves and for their contacts. And this is not limited to agents operating from societies under political stress. Interactions between stable and crisis-ridden spaces are also subject to both methodological and ethical rules that differ profoundly from what they might be in pacified contexts.

The aim of this course is to give students who are called upon to work in or interact with politically tense environments or subjects to episodes of collective violence, **a mastery of both the methods and the ethical fundamentals** imposed by these types of situations.

Sessions will be organized around three main themes:

(1) **Professional efficiency** in adverse contexts (approaching recalcitrant agents, obtaining inaccessible data, guaranteeing double-checking),

(2) **Safety & security** (one's own, that of others, that of one's data),

(3) **Mastering the economic, societal, and political dynamics** of unstable environments.

Compétence à acquérir :

This course enables students to acquire the fundamentals of the codes and methods expected when working in tense or even conflict-ridden environments.

Mode de contrôle des connaissances :

Grading will be based on various analytical papers (case studies).