

Syllabus

Global Governance: The Art and Science of Negotiation

Negotiation Simulation on the Military Use of Artificial Intelligence (J4M165)

Academic Year: 2025-2026

Semester: Spring

Instructor: Martin Dahinden

Credits: 6 ECTS (open to Master's Students)

Schedule: Tuesday, 14h15-16h00

Language: English

Location: Uni Dufour, Room 408 (UNIGE Student's)/Virtual for partner Universities

Office Hours: By appointment

Course Description, Aims and Objectives

The seminar offers students the opportunity to apply knowledge on multilateral diplomacy to a case study of multilateral negotiations. For the academic year 2026 the military use of artificial intelligence / autonomous weapons has been selected as a case study.

Artificial intelligence enables the development and deployment of autonomous drones and robotic systems capable of performing missions without direct human control, such as surveillance, reconnaissance and targeted strikes. The wars in Ukraine and Gaza are examples of the intensive use of artificial intelligence in warfare. There is a lack of international regulation on the military use of artificial intelligence, but there are multilateral negotiations on the topic. Geneva plays an important role in these efforts.

Students will acquire basic knowledge of multilateral diplomacy and negotiations and have the opportunity to examine political, technological, legal, and humanitarian dimensions of the military use of artificial intelligence. They will deepen their knowledge through experts' presentations, mandatory readings and preparatory work for the negotiation simulation. Moreover, this seminar will be an opportunity to analyze existing instruments of international law, technological developments as well as the ongoing disputes on the issue.

Students will apply their knowledge through their participation in a simulation exercise of multilateral negotiation to be held at the University of Geneva on May 19 and 20, 2026. Negotiation tables will be chaired by former Ambassadors having extensive experience of international negotiations. Students will work in teams.

Negotiation Method

Students will familiarize themselves with the practice of diplomatic negotiations and various negotiation approaches and theories. This includes the diplomatic engineering a method developed by the FDFA is used to prepare and conduct the negotiation simulation. This process-based approach is rooted in real-world negotiation experience and on negotiation theories. Diplomatic engineering aims at matching pragmatic solutions to a given problem applying situation-specific instruments and tools as it is done in engineering science. Based on an overall analysis, the approach aims at splitting a complex negotiation problem into precise sub-problems. The latter are, as far as possible, reduced to a technical level to create space for

rational dialogue and to identify realistic key objectives. Technical knowledge and objective criteria are applied to progressively solve sub-problems and to obtain win-win solutions. Diplomatic engineering is a collaborative approach that requires the composition of a team including not only experienced negotiators but also a broad range of technical expertise

The simulation exercise is intended for Master's and PhD's degree students at the Global Studies Institute of the University of Geneva (GSI/UNIGE), the ETH Zurich, University of Zurich, and the National University of Singapore (NUS/To be confirmed)

The course will be taught in English over one semester. The sessions dedicated to the negotiation method and experts' presentations will be held online, while the two-day simulation will take place in person at the University of Geneva on 19-20 May 2026. The seminar is headed by former Ambassador Dr. Martin Dahinden and Dr. Stéphan Davidshofer.

Assessment and Credit Requirements

To obtain the 6 ECTS credits for this course, students must meet the following conditions:

I. Active participation in class (60%)

1. Attend all seminar sessions either in person or via videoconference and actively participate in discussions. If you cannot attend a session, please notify the teaching assistant in advance. Excessive absences will be penalized.
2. Participate in person in the two-day simulation exercise.
3. Do the required readings.

II. Texts to be submitted before and after the simulation (40%)

1. In preparation for the simulation, students will prepare a half-page summary of their negotiating mandate and draft brief statements, if possible, in collaboration with the representatives of the respective countries.
2. After the simulation, a report (1500 words) and a press release are to be submitted.