

Advancing Gender Equality through and in the Trade Agenda

July 2021, ECTS Credits: 3

Elisa Fornalé, World Trade Institute, Bern and TBC

Content Outline

This course explores the potential of the trade-gender nexus in accelerating the path to gender equality and to influence gendered structures that embrace the distributions of economic resources. Over the last years, gender equality and women empowerment has been grappled with domestic and international trade in different frameworks. Extremely influential in this regard, came the Buenos Aires Declaration on Trade and Women's Economic Empowerment, which was adopted in 2017. This Declaration, for the first time, expressly linked equal participation of women and men in trade policy to the notions of inclusive economic growth and sustainable development.

This course starts by offering an historical account of concepts, principles, sources, and institutional framework that contribute to define the contours of a "gender-positive trade environment" and to provide new opportunities for removing resilient barriers to equal participation and economic empowerment of women. Then, the second part offers a timely introduction of some contemporary developments in the making of the trade agenda by covering specific thematic areas: the formation of gender/trade frameworks; regional integration and gender sensitivity; international cooperation on trade-related gender issues. The last part will concentrate on the gendered dimensions of institutional cultures and practices. The proportion of women currently occupying positions in international institutions, such as WTO councils, committees, other bodies, and in trade delegations is still very low. The course will provide some insights in terms of legitimacy and representativeness of institutional environments to identify best practices for moving from *de jure* to *de facto* equality through and in trade policy.

Aims:

- To familiarize the students with the nexus between trade and gender in policy making, policy implementation and institutional frameworks;
- To provide the students with the theoretical and practical knowledge of the key areas of international trade law and international human rights (equal and participatory rights);
- To develop and enhance students' cognitive and practical skills about new opportunities for women's economic empowerment.

On successful completion of the course, students shall *know*:

- The different sources of trade law and human rights law to shape socio-economic policy;
- The strengths and weaknesses of the international legal frameworks to ensure equal treatment of men and women in trade;
- What gender inclusiveness in international and national trade policy entails.

On successful completion of the course, students shall *be able to*:

- Identify the role of institutions in supporting women as economic actors and in promoting gender equality;
- Analyze current challenges to enhance women's participation in a changing trade agenda;
- Provide gender-based advice on trade initiatives and policies.