

UFS & SIENA COIL PROJECT

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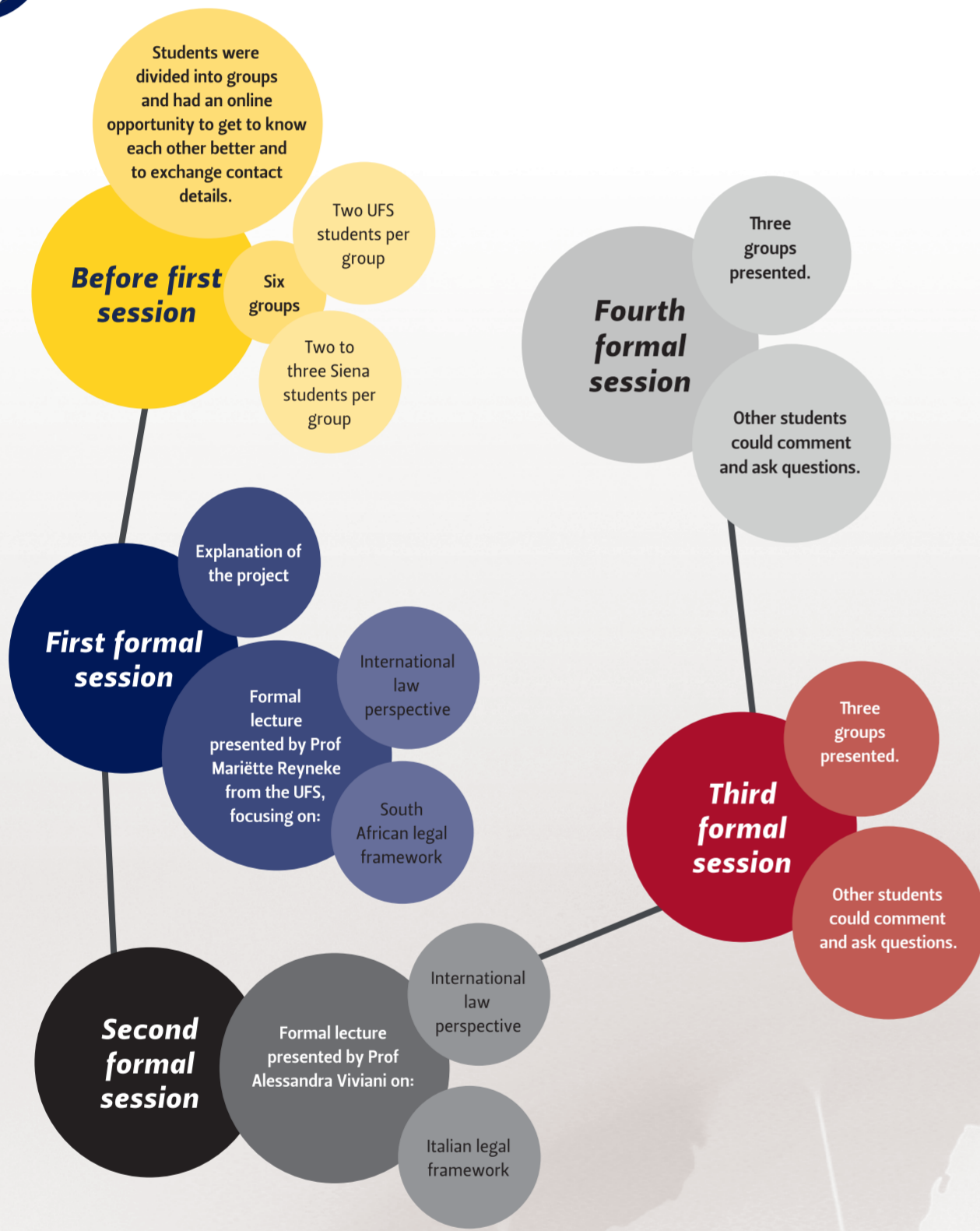
1 WHEN: May 2023

2 Topic: Child abuse

Child abuse is a global issue that suited the module outcomes of the UFS and Siena students. In particular, the topic could be explored from a multidisciplinary perspective, thus allowing the possibility of students from different qualifications working together. At the same time, the topic gave the opportunity to explore different cultural perspectives, contributing to the development of intercultural competences.

- For their presentation, each group could choose a topic that interested them, but was related to child abuse. The presentation had to contain the SA and Italian perspectives.

3 Format



4 Information on students

What	UFS	Siena
Module	Elective module: Education Law First time this module was presented; module capped at 12 students	Elective module: Gender Discrimination and Violence First time a COIL module was presented in this course
Degree	LLB	Master's Degree in International Relations
Level	Fourth-year students	First and second year
Number of students	12 – Whole class required to take part in the project	14 – Part of a bigger class; given the option to participate on a voluntary basis

5 Assessment of project

The University of the Free State (UFS) students were not directly evaluated on their participation in the COIL project itself. However, they were required to apply the knowledge and insights gained during the project towards their final evaluation in the Education Law module. In this module's summative assessment, students were tasked with creating a school safety policy document that addressed six critical issues jeopardising children's safety, including bullying, sexual abuse, and corporal punishment. Consequently, the concepts and themes investigated during the COIL project were relevant and could be incorporated into their summative assessments.

The students from the University of Siena chose to participate in the module on a voluntary basis. They were evaluated for their participation and on the quality of their presentations. This evaluation was considered part of the final mark they received for the course.

6 Advantages for students

This marked the inaugural COIL project experience for this cohort of LLB students. Their initial enthusiasm was palpable when I introduced the project and informed them of the opportunity to collaborate with international peers. Throughout the project, their commitment was evident, as they consistently attended all classes, even though class attendance is not mandatory at the UFS.

Furthermore, their post-project feedback was overwhelmingly positive, with many students recommending a repeat of this initiative with next year's cohort. They relished the international exposure and took pride in contributing distinctive perspectives to the discussions.

Students from Siena were also very enthusiastic about the experience. This was their first COIL exposure, and they were thrilled to have the opportunity to meet with colleagues from South Africa and to discuss a topic they considered relevant. They added the attendance of the COIL meeting to their usual classes.

7 Lessons for the future

The UFS students attended the online presentations from their respective homes, each participating individually. They suggested that it would be beneficial for the entire class to convene in the faculty's committee room after the presentations. Their rationale was to foster ongoing class discussions among UFS students, as the online format hindered effective interaction. Additionally, they expressed the desire for a dedicated period to make more constructive use of the information by contextualising it within the education context during these discussions. In summary, they believed that they could derive greater benefits from the experience with increased interaction time.

Students from Siena suggested a longer module to have better opportunity to meet and engage with their peers. They had some challenges working together on the group presentations and would in some cases have loved to build a stronger relationship with their peers. Some connectivity issues were also mentioned. Overall, they believed that the COIL module was a very positive addition to their curriculum. As facilitator, it would be important to find ways to make sure that students really do interact with one another as much as possible.

8 Benefits for Lecturers

It can be challenging to connect with international peers, but this project provided an excellent opportunity to do so. In our case, we did not have a long time to plan the COIL, but the fact that the topic was a shared research interest was crucial to organising the module. Finding someone who shares similar interests can be even more challenging, and this project not only allowed me to meet someone with similar interests, but also opened up the possibility of collaborating on a topic we both find intriguing, with the potential for co-publishing.