

**Dalhousie University**  
**Department of Political Science**  
**Human Rights: Foundations (POLI 3505)**  
**Fall 2017**

**Monday and Wednesday, 1:05pm-2:25, LSC Common Area C238**

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## **COURSE OVERVIEW**

This course provides an advanced introduction to the study of human rights. The first section of the course examines key philosophical issues and debates. We introduce the concept of human rights and explore debates about universality, cultural relativism, feminist perspectives about human rights, the role of economic, social and cultural rights, and human rights in International Relations theory. The second section of the course addresses the international human rights institutions that have been created since 1945. We discuss the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the United Nations Human Rights Council, the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, and the major international human rights treaties. The third section of the course uses a human rights-based approach to examine a variety of contemporary issues, including Canadian politics, torture, global civil society and NGO advocacy, sexual orientation and gender identity, development and globalization, children, migrants and refugees, Indigenous Peoples, the environment, genocide and humanitarian intervention, and transitional justice.

## **REQUIRED BOOK AND READINGS**

There is one required book for purchase, which is available at the Dalhousie University Bookstore. Other readings will be made available online by the instructor. The required book is:

Michael Goodhart, ed., *Human Rights: Politics and Practice*, 3rd ed. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2016.

## **GRADE DISTRIBUTION**

- 1) Mid-Term Exam (Held in class October 13): 25%
- 2) Research Paper (Due in class November 15): 50%
- 3) Final Exam (Take-home exam due in class December 1): 25%

## ASSIGNMENTS

1) **Mid-Term Exam:** The mid-term exam will be held in class on October 13. It is worth 25% of the course grade. The first portion of the mid-term exam will ask students to define and explain the significance of key terms. The second portion will ask students to write an essay in response to a question. Both portions will give students some choice about which terms and essay questions they wish to answer.

2) **Research Paper:** Students will write a research paper of approximately 2,500 words (8-10 pages, double spaced, Times New Roman, 12 point font). Students are free to choose their topic provided that it relates to human rights. The instructor will provide some suggested topic questions for consideration. The paper is due in class on November 15. It is worth 50% of the course grade. Late papers will be assessed a penalty of 5 percentage points per day. Papers submitted more than 7 days late will not be accepted. Students must submit a hard copy of the paper to the instructor. Papers cannot be submitted via email. The late penalty is administered based on the date that a hard copy was submitted.

3) **Final Exam:** The final exam will be a take-home exam that is due in class on December 1. It is worth 25% of the course grade. Students will write one essay in response to a question provided by the instructor.

## UNIVERSITY POLICIES, STATEMENTS, GUIDELINES and RESOURCES for SUPPORT

1) **Academic Regulations.** This course is governed by the academic rules and regulations set forth in the [University Calendar](#) and the Senate.

2) **University Statements.**

**a) Academic Integrity.** At Dalhousie University, we are guided in all of our work by the values of academic integrity: honesty, trust, fairness, responsibility and respect (The Center for Academic Integrity, Duke University, 1999). As a student, you are required to demonstrate these values in all of the work you do. The University provides policies and procedures that every member of the university community is required to follow to ensure academic integrity. Click [here](#) to read more.

**b) Accessibility.** The Advising and Access Services Centre is Dalhousie's centre of expertise for student accessibility and accommodation. The advising team works with students who request accommodation as a result of: a disability, religious obligation, or any barrier related to any other characteristic protected under Human Rights legislation (NS, NB, PEI, NFLD). Click [here](#) to read more.

**c) Student Code of Conduct.** Everyone at Dalhousie is expected to treat others with dignity and respect. The Code of Student Conduct allows Dalhousie to take disciplinary action if students don't follow this community expectation. When appropriate, violations

of the code can be resolved in a reasonable and informal manner—perhaps through a restorative justice process. If an informal resolution can't be reached, or would be inappropriate, procedures exist for formal dispute resolution. Click [here](#) to read more.

**d) Diversity and Inclusion – Culture of Respect.** Every person at Dalhousie has a right to be respected and safe. We believe inclusiveness is fundamental to education. We stand for equality. Dalhousie is strengthened in our diversity. We are a respectful and inclusive community. We are committed to being a place where everyone feels welcome and supported, which is why our Strategic Direction prioritizes fostering a culture of diversity and inclusiveness (Strategic Priority 5.2). Click [here](#) to read more.

**e) Recognition of Mi'kmaq Territory.** Dalhousie University would like to acknowledge that the University is on Traditional Mi'kmaq Territory. The Elders in Residence program provides students with access to First Nations elders for guidance, counsel and support. Visit the office in the McCain Building (room 3037) or contact the programs at [elders@dal.ca](mailto:elders@dal.ca) or 902-494-6803 (leave a message).

**f) University Policies and Programs.**

- Important Dates in the Academic Year (including add/drop dates)  
[http://www.dal.ca/academics/important\\_dates.html](http://www.dal.ca/academics/important_dates.html)
- University Grading Practices: Statement of Principles and Procedures  
[https://www.dal.ca/dept/university\\_secretariat/policies/academic/grading-practices-policy.html](https://www.dal.ca/dept/university_secretariat/policies/academic/grading-practices-policy.html)
- Scent-Free Program  
<https://www.dal.ca/dept/safety/programs-services/occupational-safety/scent-free.html>

**g) Learning and Support Resources.**

- General Academic Support - Academic Advising:  
[https://www.dal.ca/campus\\_life/academic-support/advising.html](https://www.dal.ca/campus_life/academic-support/advising.html)
- Copyright and Fair Dealing: <https://libraries.dal.ca/services/copyright-office/fair-dealing/fair-dealing-guidelines.html>
- Libraries: <http://libraries.dal.ca>
- Student Health Services: [https://www.dal.ca/campus\\_life/health-and-wellness/health-services.html](https://www.dal.ca/campus_life/health-and-wellness/health-services.html)
- Counselling and Psychological Services:  
[https://www.dal.ca/campus\\_life/health-and-wellness/counselling.html](https://www.dal.ca/campus_life/health-and-wellness/counselling.html)
- Black Student Advising: [https://www.dal.ca/campus\\_life/communities/black-student-advising.html](https://www.dal.ca/campus_life/communities/black-student-advising.html)
- Aboriginal Student Centre:  
[https://www.dal.ca/campus\\_life/communities/native.html](https://www.dal.ca/campus_life/communities/native.html)
- ELearning Website: <https://www.dal.ca/dept/elearning.html>
- Student Advocacy Services: <https://www.dsu.ca/services/community-student-services/student-advocacy-service>

- Dalhousie Ombudsperson: [https://www.dal.ca/campus\\_life/safety-respect/student-rights-and-responsibilities/where-to-get-help/ombudsperson.html](https://www.dal.ca/campus_life/safety-respect/student-rights-and-responsibilities/where-to-get-help/ombudsperson.html)
- Writing Centre: [https://www.dal.ca/campus\\_life/academic-support/writing-and-study-skills.html](https://www.dal.ca/campus_life/academic-support/writing-and-study-skills.html)
- Studying for Success program and tutoring: [https://www.dal.ca/campus\\_life/academic-support/study-skills-and-tutoring.html](https://www.dal.ca/campus_life/academic-support/study-skills-and-tutoring.html)

## OTHER IMPORTANT INFORMATION

1) **Academic Integrity.** All assignments submitted may be subjected to evaluation by a University approved a computer service that checks assignments for plagiarism. Students are required to retain an electronic copy of all papers in addition to the hard copy submitted to the professor.

2) **Academic Accommodation.** Students may request accommodation as a result of barriers experienced related to disability, religious obligation, or any characteristic protected under Canadian human rights legislation.

Students who require academic accommodation for either classroom participation or the writing of tests and exams should make their request to the Advising and Access Services Center (AASC) prior to or at the outset of the regular academic year. Please visit [www.dal.ca/access](http://www.dal.ca/access) for more information and to obtain the Request for Accommodation form.

A note taker may be required as part of a student's accommodation. There is an honorarium of \$75/course/term (with some exceptions). If you are interested, please contact AASC at 494-2836 for more information or send an email to [notetaking@dal.ca](mailto:notetaking@dal.ca)

3) **Grade Appeals.** Students who wish to appeal their grade must produce a brief written statement (approximately 250 words) explaining why they feel that the assignment/exam was not graded correctly. Appeals must be made within one week from the date on which the assignment/exam was returned. The appeal process will produce a revised grade that may be raised, unchanged, or lowered. The revised grade is final and cannot be appealed.

4) **Use of Electronic Devices.** Students are not permitted to use any electronic devices during the mid-term exam. Students are asked to turn off their cell phones during lectures. Laptops, tablets and other electronic devices may be used during lectures for note taking, but not for any purpose that, in the judgement of the instructor, is distracting to class (i.e. listening to music, streaming videos, etc).

5) **Email Communication with the Instructor.** Emails to the instructor must be sent from the student's official Dalhousie University Email Account. The instructor will not respond to emails sent from any other account except to inform students of this policy. Grades will not be discussed over Email.

6) **Grade Scale and Definitions.** All course assignments will be graded according to the following grade scale, which was approved by the Dalhousie University Senate in 2014:

Grade	Grade Point Value		Definition	
A+	4.30	90-100	Excellent	Considerable evidence of original thinking; demonstrated outstanding capacity to analyze and synthesize; outstanding grasp of subject matter; evidence of extensive knowledge base.
A	4.00	85-89		
A-	3.70	80-84		
B+	3.30	77-79	Good	Evidence of grasp of subject matter, some evidence of critical capacity and analytical ability; reasonable understanding of relevant issues; evidence of familiarity with the literature.
B	3.00	73-76		
B-	2.70	70-72		
C+	2.30	65-69	Satisfactory	Evidence of some understanding of the subject matter; ability to develop solutions to simple problems; benefitting from his/her university experience.
C	2.00	60-64		
C-	1.70	55-59		
D	1.00	50-54	Marginal Pass	Evidence of minimally acceptable familiarity with subject matter, critical and analytical skills (except in programs where a minimum grade of "C" or "C+" is required).
FM	0.00		Marginal Failure	Available only for Engineering, Health Professions and Commerce.
F	0.00	0-49	Inadequate	Insufficient evidence of understanding of the subject matter; weakness in critical and analytical skills; limited or irrelevant use of the literature.
INC	0.00		Incomplete	
W	Neutral and no credit obtained		Withdrew after deadline	
ILL	Neutral and no credit		Compassionate reasons, illness	

	obtained			
P	Neutral		Pass	
TR	Neutral		Transfer credit on admission	
Pending	Neutral		Grade not reported	

## **WEEKLY READINGS AND TOPICS**

### **September 6 – Introduction to the Class**

The Universal Declaration of Human Rights, 1948

The International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, 1966

The International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, 1966

**OPTIONAL:** Michael Goodhart, “Introduction: Human Rights in Politics and Practice,” in *Human Rights: Politics and Practice*, 3rd ed., edited by Michael Goodhart. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2016.

## **SECTION 1 – THEORETICAL APPROACHES AND DEBATES**

### **September 11 – Normative and Theoretical Foundations**

Anthony J. Langlois, “Normative and Theoretical Foundations of Human Rights,” in *Human Rights: Politics and Practice*, 3rd ed., edited by Michael Goodhart. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2016.

David Chandler, “The Critique of Human Rights,” in *Human Rights: Politics and Practice*, 3rd ed., edited by Michael Goodhart. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2016.

Jack Donnelly, *Universal Human Rights in Theory and Practice*, 3rd ed. Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2013, 7-23.

### **September 13 – Feminist Approaches**

Brooke Ackery, “Human Rights as a Critique of Power: Feminist and Non-Western Approaches,” in *Human Rights: Politics and Practice*, 3rd ed., edited by Michael Goodhart, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2016.

Zehra F. Kabasakal Arat, “Women’s Rights as Human Rights: The Promotion of Human Rights as a Counter-Culture,” *UN Chronicle* 45 (2/3) 2008: 9-13.

**OPTIONAL:** The Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, 1979

### **September 18 – Culture and Cultural Relativism**

Roja Fazaeli, “Religion and Human Rights,” in *Human Rights: Politics and Practice*, 3rd ed., edited by Michael Goodhart, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2016.

Jack Donnelly, "Cultural Relativism and Universal Human Rights," *Human Rights Quarterly* 6 (4) 1984: 400-419.

### **September 20 – Economic, Social and Cultural Rights**

Asbjørn Eide, "Economic, Social and Cultural Rights as Human Rights," in *Economic, Social and Cultural Rights: A Textbook, 2nd ed.*, edited by Asbjørn Eide, Catarina Krause, and Allan Rosas, 21-40. Boston: Martinus Nijhoff Publishers, 2001.

Kenneth Roth, "Defending Economic, Social and Cultural Rights: Practical Issues Faced by an International Human Rights Organization," *Human Rights Quarterly* 26 (1) 2004: 63-73.

### **September 25 – International Relations Theory and Human Rights**

Tim Dunne and Marianne Hanson, "Human Rights in International Relations," in *Human Rights: Politics and Practice*, 3rd ed., edited by Michael Goodhart. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2016.

Thomas Risse and Kathryn Sikkink, "The Socialization of International Human Rights Norms into Domestic Practices: Introduction," in *The Power of Human Rights: International Norms and Domestic Change*, edited by Thomas Risse, Stephen C. Ropp, and Kathryn Sikkink, 1-38. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999.

## **SECTION 2 – CANADIAN AND INTERNATIONAL HUMAN RIGHTS INSTITUTIONS**

### **September 27 – The Universal Declaration of Human Rights**

Johannes Morsink, *The Universal Declaration of Human Rights: Origins, Drafting and Intent*. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1999, 1-35.

Susan Waltz, "Reclaiming and Rebuilding the History of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights," *Third World Quarterly* 23 (3) 2002: 437-448.

### **October 2 – The United Nations Human Rights Council and the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights**

Kevin Boyle, "The United Nations Human Rights Council: Politics, Power and Human Rights," *Northern Ireland Legal Quarterly* 60 (2) 2009: 121-133.

Human Rights Watch, "UN: Violators Undermine Human Rights Council," *Human Rights Watch*, 24 October 2016.

Kenneth Roth, "Nikki Haley Should Help Fix the UN Human Rights Council, Not Abandon It," *Human Rights Watch*, 5 June 2017.



Felice D. Gaer and Christen L. Broecker, "Introduction," in *The United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights: Conscience for the World*, edited by Felice D. Gaer and Christen L. Broecker, 1-32. Leiden: Martinus Nijhoff Publishers, 2013.

#### **October 4 – International Human Rights Law and Regimes**

Rhona K. M. Smith, "Human Rights in International Law," in *Human Rights: Politics and Practice*, 3rd ed., edited by Michael Goodhart. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2016.

Thomas Buergenthal, "The Evolving International Human Rights System," *American Journal of International Law* 100 (4) 2006: 783-807.

#### **October 9 – Thanksgiving (No Class)**

No readings

#### **October 11 – Human Rights in Canada**

Dominique Clément, Will Silver and Daniel Trottier, "The Evolution of Human Rights in Canada," *Canadian Human Rights Commission*. Ottawa: Minister of Public Works and Government Services, 2012.

Jennifer Tunnicliffe, "Canada and the Human Rights Framework: Historiographical Trends," *History Compass* 12 (10) 2014: 807-817.

**OPTIONAL:** The Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms, 1982

#### **October 16 – Mid-Term Exam Review Class / Research Paper Preparation Class**

No readings

#### **October 18 – Mid-Term Exam**

No readings

### **SECTION 3 – CONTEMPORARY HUMAN RIGHTS ISSUES**

#### **October 23 – Torture**

William F. Schulz, "Torture," in *Human Rights: Politics and Practice*, 3rd ed., edited by Michael Goodhart. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2016.

Ryder McKeown, "Norm Regress: US Revisionism and the Slow Death of the Torture Norm," *International Relations* 23 (1) 2009: 5-25.

**OPTIONAL:** Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment, 1984

### **October 25 – Global Civil Society and NGO Advocacy**

Marlies Glasius and Doutje Lettinga, "Global Civil Society and Human Rights," in *Human Rights: Politics and Practice*, 3rd ed., edited by Michael Goodhart, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013.

Margaret E. Keck and Kathryn Sikkink, *Activists Beyond Borders: Advocacy Networks in International Politics*. Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1998, 1-38.

### **October 30 – Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity**

Christine Keating and Cynthia Burack, "Sexual Orientation, Gender Identity, and Human Rights," in *Human Rights: Politics and Practice*, 3rd ed., edited by Michael Goodhart, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013.

Jena McGill, "SOGI .... So What? Sexual Orientation, Gender Identity and Human Rights Discourse at the United Nations," *Canadian Journal of Human Rights* 3 (1) 2014: 1-38.

### **November 1 – Development and Globalization**

Sakiko Fukuda-Parr, "Human Rights and Politics in Development," in *Human Rights: Politics and Practice*, 3rd ed., edited by Michael Goodhart. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2016.

David L. Richards, "Economic Globalization and Human Rights," in *Human Rights: Politics and Practice*, 3rd ed., edited by Michael Goodhart. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2016.

"The Right to Development at a Glance," The United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights,"

[http://www.un.org/en/events/righttodevelopment/pdf/rtd\\_at\\_a\\_glance.pdf](http://www.un.org/en/events/righttodevelopment/pdf/rtd_at_a_glance.pdf)

### **November 6 and 8 – Reading Week (No Classes)**

No readings

### **November 13 – University Closed in Lieu of Remembrance Day (No Class)**

No readings

## **November 15 – Children’s Rights**

\*\*\* Research Papers due in class \*\*\*

Vanessa Pupavac, “Children’s Human Rights,” in *Human Rights: Politics and Practice*, 3rd ed., edited by Michael Goodhart. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2016.

David M. Rosen, “Child Soldiers, International Humanitarian Law, and the Globalization of Childhood,” *American Anthropologist* 109 (2) 2007: 296-306.

**OPTIONAL:** The Convention on the Rights of the Child, 1989

## **November 20 – Migration and Refugees**

Gil Loescher, “Human Rights and Forced Migration,” in *Human Rights: Politics and Practice*, 3rd ed., edited by Michael Goodhart. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2016.

“Brief History of Canada’s Responses to Refugees,” Canadian Council for Refugees, April 2009. <http://ccrweb.ca/en/brief-history-canadas-responses-refugees>

**OPTIONAL:** Convention and Protocol Relating to the Status of Refugees, 1951 and 1967

## **November 22 – Indigenous Peoples**

Paul Havemann, “Indigenous Peoples and Human Rights,” in *Human Rights: Politics and Practice*, 3rd ed., edited by Michael Goodhart. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2016.

Erica-Irene Daes, “The UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples: Background and Appraisal,” in *Reflections on the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples*, edited by Stephen Allen, Alexander Xanthaki, 11-40. Oxford: Hart Publishing, 2011.

**OPTIONAL:** United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, 2007

## **November 27 – The Environment**

John Barry and Kerri Woods, “Human Rights and the Environment,” in *Human Rights: Politics and Practice*, 3rd ed., edited by Michael Goodhart, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2016.

## **November 29 – Genocide and Humanitarian Intervention**

Scott Straus, “Genocide and Human Rights,” in *Human Rights: Politics and Practice*, 3rd ed., edited by Michael Goodhart. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2016.

Alan J. Kuperman, "Humanitarian Intervention," in *Human Rights: Politics and Practice*, 3rd ed., edited by Michael Goodhart. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2016.

**OPTIONAL:** Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide, 1948

#### **December 4 – Transitional Justice**

Joanna R. Quinn, "Transitional Justice," in *Human Rights: Politics and Practice*, 3rd ed., edited by Michael Goodhart. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2016.

Rosemary L. Nagy, "The Scope and Bounds of Transitional Justice and the Canadian Truth and Reconciliation Commission," *The International Journal of Transitional Justice* 7 (1) 2013: 52-73.

#### **December 5 – Take Home Exam Due in Class**

No readings