



**Department of Political Science
POLI 4505 / Human Rights: Legal Issues
Winter 2019**

**Section 01, Tues, Thurs, 17:35 – 18:55, 0.5 Credits.
Life Sciences Center, Common Area, C236**

Instructor: Dr. Matthew MacLellan
E-mail: matt.s.maclellan@gmail.com
Office and Office Hours: Rm. 352, Henry Hicks Building, 16:25-17:25.

Prerequisites: Previous third year course work in Political Science or Law, Justice and Society

Course Description:

This seminar-style (face-to-face) course focuses on the legal issues and debates involved in the development and enforcement of contemporary domestic and international human rights. After briefly examining the genesis of the modern notion of human rights (including some of its foremost critics), students will learn about the changing legal status of international human rights treaties and conventions and become familiar with the various international treaty bodies, courts, tribunals, and the implications of their decisions and recommendations in domestic contexts, through an analysis of some of the prominent issues and controversies pertaining to human rights today.

Required Course Texts:

Lynn Hunt, *Inventing Human Rights: A History*. New York: W. W. Norton & Company, 2007).

Human Rights: Current Issues and Controversies, eds., Gordon DiGiacomo. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2016.

Additional Readings will be posted on Brightspace.

COURSE EVALUATION:

Participation	15%
Book Review.....	15%
Class Presentation	20%
Research Essay	25%
Final Test	25%

Participation (15%):

POLI 4505 is a combination of lecture and course discussions, and the course will be conducted with the expectation that students attend classes having read all assigned materials in advance and are prepared to discuss materials. If students wish to enhance their participation mark, they must be prepared to share their views and questions on current events in class. If you cannot attend class, you must inform the instructor by e-mail and state the reason why.

Book Review (15%):

Each student will write a brief book review of Lynn Hunt's *Inventing Human Rights* (approx. 5 pages). These reviews should assess the strengths and weaknesses of Hunt's analysis, and suggest how Hunt's account contributes to our contemporary understanding of human rights. See the more detailed *Book Review Outline* on Brightspace.

Class Presentation (20%):

Each student will be responsible for presenting on one of the assigned chapters from *Human Rights: Current Issues and Controversies*. The presentation must include a summary of the reading that highlights important aspects for further discussion in class, as well as a number of questions

designed to generate class discussion. The presenter will be responsible for guiding subsequent discussion. The presentation should be approx. 30-40 minutes, and students will be assessed based on their analytical skill, presentation competence, and maturity in grasping and presenting the material. A more detailed presentation will be posted on Brightspace.

Research Essay (25%):

Each student will write an 8-10 page research essay on one of the chapter topics covered in *Human Rights: Contemporary Issues and Controversies*. In addition to drawing on outside research material to supplement course content, this research essay is also an argumentative essay, meaning students must take an argumentative position on the topic they choose. For more detail, see *Research Essay Outline* on Brightspace.

Final Test (25%):

The final course test will be a take-home test that will cover all course readings as well as course lectures and discussions.

Grading

Letter grades will be assigned as outlined in the *2018-20119 Dalhousie University Academic Calendar*. Plus and minus grades are included within these categories:

A+	90-100	4.30
A	85-89	4.00
A-	80-84	3.70
B+	77-79	3.30
B	73-76	3.00
B-	70-72	2.70
C+	67-69	2.30
C	63-66	2.00
C-	60-62	1.70
D	50-59	1.00
F	0-49	0.00

Course Schedule and Reading Assignments

**Please note that the instructor may amend the schedule of readings with due notice.*

Tues, Jan 8: Course Introduction: discussion of expectations, requirements, evaluation, etc.

PART ONE: HISTORICAL CONTEXT

Thurs, Jan 10:

Lynn Hunt, *Inventing Human Rights: A History*

“Introduction” and “Chapter 1: ‘Torrents of Emotion.’” (pp. 15-70).

Tues. Jan. 15:

Lynn Hunt, *Inventing Human Rights: A History*

“Chapter 2: ‘Bone of their Bone’: Abolishing Torture” and “Chapter 3: ‘They Have Set a Great Example’: *Declaring Rights*.” (pp. 71-145).

Thurs, Jan 17:

Lynn Hunt, *Inventing Human Rights: A History*

“Chapter 4: ‘There Will be no End of it’: *The Consequences of Declaring*” and “Chapter 5: ‘The Soft Power of Humanity’: *Why Human Rights Failed, Only to Succeed in the Long Run*” (pp. 146-214).

Tues, Jan 22:

Lynn Hunt, *Inventing Human Rights: A History*, cont.

*Samuel Moyn, “On the Genealogy of Morals.” *Human Rights and the Uses of History* (New York: Verso, 2015): 1-18.

Thurs, Jan 24:

*Edmund Burke, *Reflections on the Revolution in France* (excerpts), in *Political Philosophy: the Essential Texts*, eds., Steven Cahn (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015):

Tues, Jan 29:

*Karl Marx, "On the Jewish Question." *The Marx-Engels Reader*, eds., Robert C. Tucker (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 1978): 26-52.

Thurs, Jan 31:

*Hannah Arendt, "The Decline of the Nation-State and the Rights of Man" (1968). *The Origins of Totalitarianism* (New York: Harcourt Books, 1976): 267-304.

PART TWO: CONTEMPORARY LEGAL ISSUES

Tues, Feb 5:

Chapter 2: The Genesis and Evolution of the Postwar Human Rights Project
Roland Burke and James Kirby

Thurs, Feb 7:

Chapter 3: Political Institutions and the Protection of Human Rights
Gordon DiGiacomo

Tues, Feb 12:

Chapter 1: The Evolution of Human Rights Protection in Canada
Brooke Jeffrey

Thurs, Feb 14:

Chapter 4: Federalism and Rights: The Case of the United States, with Comparative Perspectives
John Kincaid

Tues, Feb 19: WINTER STUDY BREAK

Thurs, Feb 21: WINTER STUDY BREAK

Tues, Feb, 26:

Chapter 5: Human Rights NGOs
David Zarnett

Thurs, Feb 28:

Chapter 11: The Politics of Women's Rights

Caroline Andrew

Tues, Mar 5:

Chapter 9: Aboriginal Rights: The Right to Self-Government versus the Right to Self-Determination

Gordon DiGiacomo and Tracie Scott

Thurs, Mar 7:

Chapter 14: Freedom of Religion: A Change in Perspective?

Melanie Adrian

Tues, Mar 12:

Chapter 12: "All Manner of Wickedness Abounds": Reconciling Queer Rights and Religious Rights

Karen Busby

Thurs, Mar 14:

Chapter 15: Whither Economic and Social Rights? Assessing the Position of Economic and Social Rights in the Neoliberal, Post-Crisis Context

Susan Kang and Jennifer Rutledge

Tues, Mar 19:

Chapter 19: Now You See Me: Privacy, Technology, and Autonomy in the Digital Age

Valerie Steeves

Thurs, Mar 21:

Chapter 10: DisAbling Human Rights? Moving from Rights to Access and Inclusion in Daily Life

Deborah Stienstra

Tues, Mar 26:

Chapter 13: The Arab Spring and Human Rights: Discarding the Old Clichés

Mahmood Monshipouri and Kelley O'Dell

Thurs, Mar 28:

Chapter 6: Temporary Migrant Workers in Canada: Protecting and Extending Labour Rights
Tanya Basok

Tues, Apr 2:
Chapter 17: Human Rights and Climate Change
Sam Adelman

Thurs, Apr 4:
Conclusion: the Effectiveness of Rights Instruments
Gordon DiGiacomo

General Course Rules

- Cells phones and other communications devices are not to be used in class and should be turned off prior to entering the classroom. Texting in class is distracting to others. Lap tops are NOT to be used for web browsing, messaging, entertainment, paper-writing for other classes, or for any purpose other than to learn the material in this class. If you distract the Instructor or fellow students with your lap top, you may be asked to leave the class.
- To encourage open and more engaging discussions, students are encouraged to freely share their opinions and also be receptive to hearing other viewpoints. If you have a view on an issue that is counter to that of another class member or the instructor, you may challenge or critique the viewpoint but not the individual; respectful professional behavior is demanded at all times.
- Questions relating to assignments, class attendance or other issues may be emailed and responses can normally be expected within 24 hours after receipt. Please do not email an urgent question within 24 hours of an exam or assignment deadline.
- The course lectures are not being recorded, though students are free to do so.
- All assignments must be passed in on time. Late assignments will only be excepted under extraordinary circumstances (see instructor for help in such instances).
- All assignments must be completed to received a final grade.

Plagiarism and Intellectual Honesty

All universities, Dalhousie included, considers it a serious matter to present the work of someone else in such a way as to give one's reader reason to think it to be one's own. This is called plagiarism and is a form of intellectual dishonesty. If plagiarism is suspected, the matter must go immediately to the University Senate for adjudication and the imposition of an appropriate penalty, which may involve forfeiture of credit for the course or even outright dismissal from the University.

University Statements

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.

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.

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.

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.

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 or 902-494-6803 (leave a message).

University Policies and Programs

- Important Dates in the Academic Year (including add/drop dates)
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
- Scent-Free Program
<https://www.dal.ca/dept/safety/programs-services/occupational-safety/scent-free.html>

Learning and Support Resources

- General Academic Support - Academic Advising:
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 and Wellness (includes Counselling and Psychological Services):
https://www.dal.ca/campus_life/health-and-wellness/services-support/student-health-and-wellness.html
- Black Student Advising: https://www.dal.ca/campus_life/communities/black-student-advising.html
- Indigenous Student Centre: https://www.dal.ca/campus_life/communities/indigenous.html
- ELearning Website: <https://www.dal.ca/dept/elearning.html>
- Student Advocacy Services: <http://dsu.ca/dsas>
- Dalhousie Ombudsperson: 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
- Studying for Success program and tutoring: https://www.dal.ca/campus_life/academic-support/study-skills-and-tutoring.html