



POLI 3505 – Foundations: Human Rights

Instructor: Dr. Larissa Atkison

Schedule: Tuesdays and Thursdays: 1:05-2:25

Location: DUNN 135

Office Hours: T/TH 3:45-5pm, HH 354

Email: lr453470@dal.ca

Website: Brightspace

Course Description

This course explores the concept of human rights in theory and in practice. We will study the ideas, laws, structures and actors that influence how human rights are conceptualized, to whom and what they apply, and how they are enforced. The first half of the course introduces the concept of human rights, including their history, philosophy, laws, institutions, and policies. We will consider the international community's understanding of human rights, the decisions states make to enforce rights at home and abroad, actors beyond the state, such as the United Nations, and key debates related to morality, cultural relativism, and humanitarian intervention. The second half of the course looks at specific rights and the mechanisms that protect them. We will examine political and philosophical contestation around what ought to count as a right, how rights, are implemented, prioritized, conceptualized, and protected globally. This interdisciplinary course provides a framework for students to develop and articulate analyses of human rights.

Learning Objectives:

- 1) Identify and define the key concepts and ideas that shape the politics of human rights;
- 2) Recognize, assess, and evaluate the primary debates in the field to develop analytical arguments;
- 3) Comprehend and respond to the scholarly literature on human rights;
- 4) Understand and articulate the evolution of human rights, including the interrelationships between the philosophies and implementation of rights.

Required Readings

Please purchase:

- 1) DiGiacomo, Gordon. 2016. *Human Rights, Current Issues and Controversies*. University of Toronto Press

2) Donnelly, Jack. 2013. *Universal Human Rights in Theory and Practice*, 3rd ed. Cornell University Press.

Other readings as noted; these will be available on Brightspace.

Communication with the Professor

In all email communications with me, please include POLI 3505 in the subject line and proper greetings and salutations. Always sign-off with your full name. I will do my best to respond in 24 hours.

Office hours are Wednesdays from 9:30 to 11:30 or (occasionally) by appointment. My office is room 362 in the Henry Hicks Building.

We will be using Brightspace. Please check it regularly for announcements, assignments, and other resources.

Assignments

1) *Midterm (25%)* – February 13 (in-class)

2) *Annotated bibliography (10%)* – March 7 (in-class and on Brightspace)

Students will prepare an annotated bibliography of the scholarly sources that they will draw on for their research papers. No fewer than eight sources must be included. In addition to a proper citation, students will provide an overview and evaluation of each piece. Annotations should be no longer than 150 words each. Students **must** include their paper topics at the top of their assignment. More information will be provided in-class and on Brightspace.

3) *Research paper (35%)* – March 24 (in-class and on Brightspace)

Drawing on the annotated bibliography, students will produce a research paper of 2500-3000 words (approximately 10 pages) that articulates an analytical argument related to human rights. More information will be provided in-class and on Brightspace. Due in class and on Brightspace.

4) *Take home exam (30%)* – April 7 (on Brightspace)

***Please note: This is an exam and exam rules apply. No extensions will be offered except in the most extreme circumstances.

Letter grades have a grade point assigned that is used to calculate your GPA (Grade Point Average). The following table explains and defines Dalhousie's grading system and shows the GPA value that corresponds with each letter grade.

| Grade | Grade Point Value | | Definition | Notes |
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|---------------|--------------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------------|---|
| A+ A A- | 4.30 4.00 3.70 | 90-100 85-89 80-84 | Excellent | Considerable evidence of original thinking; demonstrated outstanding capacity to analyze and synthesize; outstanding grasp of subject matter; evidence of extensive knowledge base. |
| B+ B B- | 3.30 3.00 2.70 | 77-79 73-76 70-72 | 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. |
| C+ C C- | 2.30 2.00 1.70 | 65-69 60-64 55-59 | Satisfactory | Evidence of some understanding of the subject matter; ability to develop solutions to simple problems; benefitting from his/her university experience. |
| 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' is required). |
| 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 obtained | | Compassionate reasons, illness | |
| P | Neutral | | Pass | |
| TR | Neutral | | Transfer credit on admission | |
| Pending | Neutral | | Grade not reported | |

Academic Integrity

At Dalhousie University, we are guided in 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 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.

At university we advance knowledge by building on the work of other people. Academic integrity means that we are honest and accurate in creating and communicating all academic products. Acknowledgement of other people's work must be done in a way that does not leave the reader in any doubt as to whose work it is. Academic integrity means trustworthy conduct such as not cheating on examinations and not misrepresenting information. It is the student's responsibility to seek assistance to ensure that these standards are met. We will be using Urkund in this class as a tool to avoid academic integrity issues.

In your work, please be sure to:

- Make sure you understand Dalhousie's policies on academic integrity. Please visit http://www.dal.ca/dept/university_secretariat/academic-integrity/academic-policies.html
- Do not cheat in examinations or write an exam or test for someone else.
- Clearly indicate the sources used in your written or oral work (including diagrams, videos, etc.).
- Do not use the work of another from the Internet or any other source and submit it as your own.
- When you use the ideas of other people (paraphrasing), make sure to acknowledge the source.
- Do not submit work that has been completed through collaboration or previously submitted for another assignment without permission from all instructors involved.
- This is not a comprehensive list. If you are ever unsure about any aspect of your academic work, please contact me or a TA. The library also offers services to help you ensure your academic integrity.
- Academia can be incredibly stressful. Whatever you do, do not be tempted to plagiarize or otherwise cheat. It is not worth it. Instructors are required to report every suspected offence.

Classroom Etiquette

This classroom is a safe, equitable, and professional learning environment, in which students are encouraged to express their views in a collegial and respectful manner. To maintain a healthy learning environment, there is a zero-tolerance policy on discrimination and harassment of any sort.

Please familiarize yourself with the Dalhousie University rules and regulations on student rights and responsibilities, which can be found here: https://www.dal.ca/campus_life/safety-respect/student-rights-and-responsibilities.html

Absences and Late Policy

Dalhousie students are asked to take responsibility for their own short-term absences (3 days or less) by contacting their instructor by email prior to the academic requirement deadline or scheduled time and by submitting a completed Student Declaration of Absence to their instructor in case of missed or late academic requirements. The Student Declaration of Absence Form was introduced in select courses to replace sick notes for absences of three days or fewer that result in missed or late academic requirements. The Student Declaration of Absence Form functions the same as a sick note.

You may use the Student Declaration of Absence Form **once** during this academic year. Please ensure it is provided to me prior to the beginning of class. The form may only be used in cases of missed class work.

More information is available here: https://www.dal.ca/campus_life/safety-respect/student-rights-and-responsibilities/academic-policies/student-absence.html

The late policy is 3% per day. If you think you will be unable to submit an assignment on-time, please contact me as soon as possible to discuss *potential* alternative arrangements.

No extensions will be offered for the take-home exam except in the most extreme circumstances. Documentation to support any rationale will be required.

The submission of the form does not provide an automatic exemption from any academic requirements that were missed or late during an absence. Any alternate coursework arrangements for missed or late academic requirements are at the instructor's discretion.

For students experiencing or anticipating barriers to their learning environments or other issues, please see the Accommodations Office. Accommodation levels the playing field to support your success. It reduces or removes barriers to your learning to ensure fair and equitable access to your classroom, testing or co-op/fieldwork environments. Accommodations can be introduced when a protected characteristic (as defined by provincial human rights legislation) may place you at a disadvantage compared to other students who are not affected by a protected characteristic. I encourage these students to work with the office to ensure that their needs are met.

If you face a serious unexpected challenge during the course for which you require special accommodations, please notify me as far in advance as possible.

Schedule and Assigned Readings

SECTION ONE: HUMAN RIGHTS FOUNDATIONS

Week 1 Introduction

T/Jan. 7

- Introduction to course themes

TH/Jan. 9

- Donnelly, Jack. "The Concept of Human Rights (Chapter 1)." *Universal Human Rights in Theory and Practice* (hereafter *UHRTP*), 7-23. (Temporarily available on Brightspace)
- Donnelly, Jack. "A Brief History of Human Rights." (Chapter 5) *UHRTP*, 75-92 (Temporarily available on Brightspace.).
- Ishay, Micheline. 2004. "What are human rights? Six historical controversies." *Journal of Human Rights*. 3(3), 359-371.

Week Two: Foundations and Controversies

T/Jan 14

- Donnelly, Jack. "The Universal Declaration Model." (Chapter 2) *UHRTP*, 24-39 (On Brightspace if not yet available in bookstore).

- Donnelly, Jack. "Equal Concern and Respect." (Chapter 4) *UHRTP*, 55-71.
- Universal Declaration of Human Rights:
https://www.ohchr.org/EN/UDHR/Documents/UDHR_Translations/eng.pdf

Th/Jan. 16

- Donnelly, Jack. "The Relative Universality of Human Rights." (Chapter 6) *UHRTP*, 83-105
- Donnelly, Jack. "Universality in a World of Particularities." (Chapter 7) *UHRTP*, 106-120.

Week Three: Situating Foundations

T/Jan. 21

- Donnelly, Jack. "Dignity: Particularistic and Universalistic Conceptions in the West." (Chapter 8) 10) 121-32.
- Donnelly, Jack. "Human Politics and Dignity in Confucian China." (Chapter 9), 147-158.
- Donnelly, Jack. "Humans and Society in Hindu South Asia." (Chapter 10), 147-58.

Th/Jan. 23

- Jeffrey, Brooke. 2016. "The Evolution of Human Rights Protection in Canada." (Chapter 1) *Human Rights: Current Issues and Controversies*, 3-29 (Hereafter *Human Rights*).
- DiGiacomo, Gordon. "The Genesis and Evolution of the Postwar Human Rights Project." (Chapter 2) *Human Rights* 30-51.

Week Four: The Post War Human Rights Regime at Home and Abroad

T/Jan. 28

- Donnelly, Jack, "International Human Rights Regime." (Chapter 11) *UHRTP*, 161-96.
- Donnelly, Jack. "Human Rights and Foreign Policy." (Chapter 12) *UHRTP*, 197-218.
- DiGiacomo, Gordon. "Political Institutions and the Protection of Human Rights." (Chapter 3) *Human Rights*, 57-82.

Th/Jan. 30

- Donnelly, "Human Rights, Democracy and Development." (Chapter 13) *UHRTP*, 219-234.
- Ibhawoh, Bonny. 2011. The Right to Development: The Politics and Polemics of Power and Resistance. *Human Rights Quarterly* 33(1), 76-104.
- Zarnett, David, "Human Rights NGOs." (Chapter 5) *Human Rights*, 114-41.

Week Five: Humanitarian Intervention and Critics

T/Feb. 4

- Donnelly, Jack. "Humanitarian Intervention against Genocide." (Chapter 15) *UHRTP*, 254-273.

- Welsh, Jennifer M. 2016. "The Responsibility to Protect after Libya & Syria." *Daedalus*, 145(4), 75-87.

TH/feb. 6

- Ibhawoh, Bonny. 2000. "Between Culture and Constitution: Evaluating the Cultural Legitimacy of Human Rights in the African State." *Human Rights Quarterly*, 22(3), 838-860
- Mutua, Makau. 2001. "Savages, Victims, and Saviors: The Metaphor of Human Rights." *Harvard International Law Journal* 42, 201-245 (Brightspace)

Week Six: Review and Midterm

T/feb. 11 - Midterm Review

TH/feb. 13 - MIDTERM

Week Seven: Reading Week

T/feb. 18 – NO CLASS

TH/feb. 20 – NO CLASS

SECTION TWO: HUMAN RIGHTS TOPICS

Week Seven: Stateless and Migration Rights

T/feb. 25

- Arendt, Hannah. "The Decline of the Nation State and the End of the Rights of Man." (excerpts on Brightspace).
- Weissbrodt, David and Collins, Clay. 2006. "Human Rights of Stateless Persons." *Human Rights Quarterly* 28(1), 245-276.

TH/feb. 27

- Allen, William, Bridget Anderson, Nicholas Van Hear, Madeleine Sumption, Franck Düvell, Jennifer Hough, Lena Rose, Rachel Humphris and Sarah Walker. 2018. "Who Counts in Crises? The New Geopolitics of International Migration and Refugee Governance." *Geopolitics* 23(1), 217-243.
- Peters, Michael A, and Besley, Tina. 2017 "The Refugee Crisis and the Right to Political Asylum." *Geopolitics, History and International Relations* 9(1), 7-16.

Week Eight: Sexual Minorities and Religious Rights

T/March 3

- Nussbaum, Martha. 2016. "Women's Progress and Women's Human Rights." *Human Rights Quarterly*, 38(3), 589-622.

- Caroline Andrew, "The Politics of Women's Rights." *Human Rights* (Chapter 11), 262-279.

TH/March

- Donnelly, Jack. "Non-Discrimination for All: The Case of Sexual Minorities." (Chapter 16) *UHRTP*, 274-291.
- Karen Busby, "All Manner of Wickedness Abounds: Reconciling Queer Rights and Religious Rights." (Chapter 12) *Human Rights*, 281-308.

Week Nine: Torture and Slavery

T/March 10

- McKeown, Ryder. 2009. "Norm Regress: US Revisionism and the Slow Death of the Torture Norm." *International Relations* 23(1), 5-25.
- Kelly, Tobias. 2011. "What we Talk about When we Talk about Torture." *Humanity: An International Journal of Human Rights, Humanitarianism, and Development*, 2(2), 327-343 (Review).

TH/March 12

- Gallagher, Anne T. and Joy Ngozi Ezeilo. 2015. "The UN Special Rapporteur on Trafficking: A Turbulent Decade in Review." *Human Rights Quarterly* 37(4), 913-940.
- Nolan, Justine and Gregory Bott. 2018. "Global supply chains and human rights: spotlight on forced labour and modern slavery practices." *Australian Journal of Human Rights* 24(1), 44-69.

Week Ten: Group, Economic, and Aboriginal Rights

T/March 17

- Donnelly, "The West and Economic and Social Rights." (Chapter 14) *UHRTP*, 235-53.
- Susan Kang and Jennifer Rutledge, "Economic Rights and Group Rights." (Chapter 15) *Human Rights*, 359-80.

Recommended: Moyn, Samuel. 2014. "A Powerless Companion: Human Rights in the Age of Neoliberalism." *Law & Contemporary Problems* 77(4), 147-170.

TH/March 19

- Aboriginal Rights, The Right to Self Government vs. the Right to Self-Determination." Chapter 9) *Human Rights*, 218-239.
- Lightfoot, Sheryl. 2016. "Introduction." *Global Indigenous Politics: A Subtle Revolution*. Routledge, 1-32.

Week Eleven: Child, Disabled, and Climate Rights

T/March 24

Collins, Tara, and Christie Gervais. "Children's Rights: Their Role, Significance, and Potential." (Chapter 7) *Human Rights*, 168-197.

- Klassen, Thomas, R. "Age, Age Discrimination, and Ageism." (Chapter 8), 198-217.
- Stienstra, Deborah, "Disabling Human Rights: Moving from Rights to Access and Inclusion in Daily Life." (Chapter 10), *Human Rights*, 240-61.

TH/March 26

- Sam Adelman, "Human Rights and Climate Change." (Chapter 17) *Human Rights*, 411-436.
- Knur, Franziska. "The United Nations Human Rights Based Approach to Climate Change." (Brightspace).

Week Twelve: Privacy, Security, and Course Conclusions

T/March 31

- Purvis, Trevor. "Human Rights and Security." (Chapter 18) *Human Rights*, 411-35.
- Steeves, Valerie. "Now You See Me." (Chapter 19) *Human Rights*, 461-82.

TH/April 2

- Final Review and Concluding Discussion

April 7- Take Home Exam

Please note: the syllabus is subject to change at the discretion of the instructor.