

POLI 4403: HUMAN RIGHTS: PHILOSOPHICAL ISSUES (WINTER 2023 – T 11:35  
– 14:25)

Marion McCain Arts and Social Sciences, Room 2190  
Dalhousie University  
*Dalhousie University is located in Mi'kma'ki, the ancestral and unceded territory of the Mi'kmaq.*

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Office Hours:  
M: 1-2

COURSE DESCRIPTION

An examination of the historical and conceptual development of human rights, this course looks specifically at normative and political issues involved in the emergence of human rights from the modern era to present. It covers the shift from natural law to human rights, the “right to have rights,” the emergence of states' rights to sovereign governance, and the development of specific classes of rights – or lack thereof.

COURSE FORMAT

This course is a reading seminar. Students will be expected to lead one class each over the semester, and to guide and direct the class. All students are required to meet on Mondays before class to discuss their questions and direction. There will be a group presentation on one book chapter in the middle of the semester, and a final “conference” at the end, where all students will be expected to give a properly formatted 10-minute academic presentation based on their final essay.

OFFICE STUDENT HOURS

Office hours are generally underutilized by students. Some students misunderstand them to be time during which the professor should not be disturbed, while others might feel reluctant or ill-equipped to advocate for themselves before a professor. In reality, this is time scheduled specifically for you in your professor's schedule. Whether you would like to discuss a grade, clarify course material, or to simply chat, you are highly encouraged to use this time for your benefit.

EMAIL POLICY

Email is the best way to get in touch outside of class and scheduled office hours. Emails should be used for brief questions that can be answered quickly. All other inquiries (discussions of course material, assignments, or other matters) should be handled in office hours. During the work week, you can expect a response within twenty-four (24) hours. Please send all emails from your Dalhousie address and *always* include “POLI 4403” in the subject line.

If you require immediate assistance, include “URGENT” in the subject line. Please note that this is to be used in emergencies only; it is not a way to jump the queue or a solution for questions and requests left to the last minute.



In the event of changes to the class schedule (class cancellations, etc.) or other unforeseen situations, an update will be sent to the class via email and posted as an announcement on Brightspace.

## GRADE COMPONENTS, DUE DATES, AND MARKING SCHEME

Students will be required to lead one seminar each (as a team). Sign up is on the first day.

All students are expected and required to actively participate in class by closely and critically engaging with the assigned readings before class, and by following the questions and guidance of seminar leaders and the professor. Participation is extremely important – however: ensure that respect, decency, and decorum remain paramount. While these are challenging and contentious topics, intellectual rigour never means rancour nor condescension.

There are two reading responses to be done. These are to be critical and insightful contemplations on the readings, in accordance with the questions posed. Reading responses must be handed in before the date. There is one group project which will be discussed in class.

The essay is due one week before the Final Conference, in rough draft form for instructor, and then peer review, then final submission. The final drafts will be presented in class on the final day of seminar. Papers will undergo peer review from students with related interests in the week before. Final drafts are then due after the final day of class following presentation and response.

Grading breakdown is as follows:

Reading Responses (2 x 10%): 20%  
Group presentation (1 x 10%): 10%  
Personal leadership of seminar (1 x 5%): 5%  
Paper outline (1 x 5%): 5%  
Peer-review (1 x 5%): 5%  
Final conference presentation + Q&A (1 x 10%): 10%  
Final paper (1 x 30%): 30%  
Participation & attendance (1 x 15%) 15%  
**Total:** 100%

## ASSIGNMENT SUBMISSION, LATE PENALTIES, AND EXTENSIONS

All assignments are to be submitted on Brightspace by 11:59 pm on the day they are due.

Extensions will be granted provided they are reasonable.

## COURSE AT A GLANCE

*Tuesday January 10, 2023*

**† Course Introduction & Seminar Pickin'**



Tuesday January 17, 2023

† **Rights in Context: A Brief History of Human Rights**

- 📖 Micheline R. Ishay, *The History of Human Rights From Ancient Times to the Globalization Era*. Introduction & Chapter 1 & 2.
- 📖 Jack Donnelly, *Universal Human Rights in Theory and in Practice*, Introduction & Chapters 1-3 (Part I)

Tuesday January 24, 2023

† **Early Rights Regimes**

- 📖 George William Van Cleve, *A Slaveholders' Union: Slavery, Politics, and the Constitution in the Early American Republic*. Introduction & Chapter 1.
- 📖 Eric Foner and Matt Karp, "Expanding the Slavocracy," <https://jacobin.com/2017/03/slavery-civil-war-us-south-dubois-foner-karp>

Tuesday January 31, 2023

† **Denying Rights**

- 📖 Howard, Thomas & Brophy, Alfred (2019). "Proslavery Thought". In McInnis, Maurie D.; Nelson, Louis P. (eds.). *Educated in Tyranny: Slavery at Thomas Jefferson's University*.
- 📖 Andre Fleche, "The First Red Scare," <https://jacobin.com/2015/08/first-red-scare-civil-war-european-socialists-bornstein-republicanism>

Tuesday February 7, 2023

† **Capital & Rights Regimes**

- 📖 Ellen Meiksins-Wood, *The Origin of Capitalism: A Longer View*
- 📖 ~1000-word **Critical Review of Wood due.**

Tuesday February 14, 2023

† **The State of Exception: Carl Schmitt & Liberal Abrogation**

- 📖 <https://plato.stanford.edu/entries/schmitt/>
- 📖 Selected excerpts from Schmitt reader (posted on Brightspace)
- 📖 **Group Presentation on one chapter of: *The Pro-slavery Argument: As Maintained by the Most Distinguished Writers of the Southern States***

Tuesday February 28, 2023

† **The State of Exception & Rightlessness: Canadian Edition**

- 📖 James Daschuk, *Clearing the Plains*, Introduction & Chapter 6-9.
- 📖 K. Luciuk, *Enemy Alien*

Tuesday March 7, 2023

† **Removing Rights, or: "...one soul does not equal another soul"**



- 📖 Robert Paxton, *The Anatomy of Fascism*
- 📖 ~1000-word Critical review of Paxton due.

Tuesday March 14, 2023

### † Liberalism & Anti-Liberalism

- 📖 Brad R. Roth "Retrieving Marx for the human rights project." *Leiden Journal of International Law* 17, no. 1 (2004): 31-66.
- 📖 Eric Posner, "The case against human rights"  
<https://www.theguardian.com/news/2014/dec/04/-sp-case-against-human-rights>
- 📖 Micheline R. Ishay, *The History of Human Rights from Ancient Times to the Globalization Era*. Chapter 3.

Tuesday March 21, 2023

### † Whose Rights Matter?

- 📖 Will Kymlicka, "Human Rights without human Supremacism", *Canadian Journal of Philosophy*, vol. 48, Issue 6, 2018.
- 📖 Rebecca Hill, *Men, Mobs, and Law: Anti-Lynching and Labor Defense in US Radical History*. Duke University Press, 2009. Introduction & Chapter 3.
- ! Paper help & writing techniques
- 📖 **Rough Draft Reminder**

Tuesday March 28, 2023

### † Whither Human Rights?

- 📖 Sam Moyn, *Not Enough: Human Rights in an Unequal World*
- 📖 **Rough Draft Due & Peer Review**

Tuesday April 4, 2023

## ! Conference Presentations !

### ACCESSIBILITY

Students with diverse learning styles and needs are welcome in this course. The Student Accessibility Centre is Dalhousie's centre of expertise for matters related to student accessibility and accommodation. If there are aspects of the design, instruction, and/or experiences within this course (online or in-person) that result in barriers to your inclusion please contact:

*Student Accessibility Centre*

([https://www.dal.ca/campus\\_life/academic-support/accessibility.html](https://www.dal.ca/campus_life/academic-support/accessibility.html)) for all courses offered by Dalhousie with the exception of Truro.

*Student Success Centre in Truro for courses offered by the Faculty of Agriculture*

(<https://www.dal.ca/about-dal/agricultural-campus/student-success-centre.html>)



## CONDUCT IN THE CLASSROOM – CULTURE OF RESPECT

Substantial and constructive dialogue on challenging issues is an important part of academic inquiry and exchange. It requires willingness to listen and tolerance of opposing points of view. Consideration of individual differences and alternative viewpoints is required of all class members, towards each other, towards instructors, and towards guest speakers. While expressions of differing perspectives are welcome and encouraged, the words and language used should remain within acceptable bounds of civility and respect.

## 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). (Read more: <http://www.dal.ca/cultureofrespect.html>)

## 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. (Read more: [https://www.dal.ca/dept/university\\_secretariat/policies/student-life/code-of-student-conduct.html](https://www.dal.ca/dept/university_secretariat/policies/student-life/code-of-student-conduct.html))

## 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. 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. (Read more: [http://www.dal.ca/dept/university\\_secretariat/academic-integrity.html](http://www.dal.ca/dept/university_secretariat/academic-integrity.html))

## ORIGINALITY CHECKING SOFTWARE

The course instructor may use Dalhousie's approved originality checking software and Google to check the originality of any work submitted for credit, in accordance with the Student Submission of Assignments and Use of Originality Checking Software Policy. Students are free, without penalty of grade, to choose an alternative method of attesting to the authenticity of their work, and must inform the instructor no later than the last day to add/drop classes of their intent to choose an alternate method. (Read more: [https://www.dal.ca/dept/university\\_secretariat/policies/academic/student-submission-of-](https://www.dal.ca/dept/university_secretariat/policies/academic/student-submission-of-)



[assignments-and-use-of-originality-checking-software-policy-.html\)](#)

## DOING HISTORY AT DALHOUSIE

It is recommended that you familiarize yourself with this exceptionally useful document in advance of the course:

[https://cdn.dal.ca/content/dam/dalhousie/pdf/fass/history/Doing%20History%20at%20Dalhousie%20September%202019%20\(003\).pdf](https://cdn.dal.ca/content/dam/dalhousie/pdf/fass/history/Doing%20History%20at%20Dalhousie%20September%202019%20(003).pdf)

## INTERNATIONALIZATION

At Dalhousie, ‘thinking and acting globally’ enhances the quality and impact of education, supporting learning that is “interdisciplinary, cross-cultural, global in reach, and orientated toward solving problems that extend across national borders.” (Read more: <https://www.dal.ca/about-dal/internationalization.html>)

## FAIR DEALING POLICY

The Dalhousie University Fair Dealing Policy provides guidance for the limited use of copyright protected material without the risk of infringement and without having to seek the permission of copyright owners. It is intended to provide a balance between the rights of creators and the rights of users at Dalhousie. (Read more:

[https://www.dal.ca/dept/university\\_secretariat/policies/academic/fair-dealing-policy-.html](https://www.dal.ca/dept/university_secretariat/policies/academic/fair-dealing-policy-.html))

## STUDENT USE OF COURSE MATERIALS

These course materials are designed for use as part of the POLI 4403 course at Dalhousie University and are the property of the instructor unless otherwise stated. Third party copyrighted materials (such as books, journal articles, music, videos, etc.) have either been licensed for use in this course or fall under an exception or limitation in Canadian Copyright law. Copying this course material for distribution (e.g. uploading to a commercial third-party website) may lead to a violation of Copyright law.

## UNIVERSITY POLICIES, GUIDELINES, AND RESOURCES FOR SUPPORT

Dalhousie courses are governed by the academic rules and regulations set forth in the University Calendar and the Senate. Important student information, services and resources are available as follows:

*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)

*Classroom Recording Protocol*



[https://www.dal.ca/dept/university\\_secretariat/policies/academic/classroom-recording-protocol.html](https://www.dal.ca/dept/university_secretariat/policies/academic/classroom-recording-protocol.html)

*Dalhousie Grading Practices Policy*

[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)

*Grade Appeal Process*

[https://www.dal.ca/campus\\_life/academic-support/grades-and-student-records/appealing-a-grade.html](https://www.dal.ca/campus_life/academic-support/grades-and-student-records/appealing-a-grade.html)

*Sexualized Violence Policy*

[https://www.dal.ca/dept/university\\_secretariat/policies/health-and-safety/sexualized-violence-policy.html](https://www.dal.ca/dept/university_secretariat/policies/health-and-safety/sexualized-violence-policy.html)

*Scent-Free Program*

<https://www.dal.ca/dept/safety/programs-services/occupational-safety/scent-free.html>

*General Academic Support – Advising*

[https://www.dal.ca/campus\\_life/academic-support/advising.html](https://www.dal.ca/campus_life/academic-support/advising.html) (Halifax)

*Student Health & Wellness Centre*

[https://www.dal.ca/campus\\_life/health-and-wellness.html](https://www.dal.ca/campus_life/health-and-wellness.html)

*On Track (helps you transition into university, and supports you through your first year at Dalhousie and beyond)*

[https://www.dal.ca/campus\\_life/academic-support/On-track.html](https://www.dal.ca/campus_life/academic-support/On-track.html)

*Indigenous Student Centre*

[https://www.dal.ca/campus\\_life/communities/indigenous.html](https://www.dal.ca/campus_life/communities/indigenous.html)

*Elders-in-Residence (The Elders in Residence program provides students with access to First Nations elders for guidance, counsel and support. Visit the office in the Indigenous Student Centre or contact the program at [elders@dal.ca](mailto:elders@dal.ca) or 902-494-6803)*

<https://cdn.dal.ca/content/dam/dalhousie/pdf/academics/UG/indigenous-studies/Elder-Protocol-July2018.pdf>

*Black Student Advising Centre*

[https://www.dal.ca/campus\\_life/communities/black-student-advising.html](https://www.dal.ca/campus_life/communities/black-student-advising.html)

*International Centre*

[https://www.dal.ca/campus\\_life/international-centre.html](https://www.dal.ca/campus_life/international-centre.html)



*South House Sexual and Gender Resource Centre*

<https://southhousehalifax.ca/about/>

*LGBTQ2SLA+ Collaborative*

<https://www.dal.ca/dept/hres/education-campaigns/LGBTQ2SIA-collaborative.html>

*Dalhousie Libraries*

<http://libraries.dal.ca>

*Copyright Office*

<https://libraries.dal.ca/services/copyright-office.html>

*Dalhousie Student Advocacy Services*

<https://www.dsu.ca/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)

*Human Rights and Equity Services*

<https://www.dal.ca/dept/hres.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)

*Study Skills/Tutoring*

[http://www.dal.ca/campus\\_life/academic-support/study-skills-and-tutoring.html](http://www.dal.ca/campus_life/academic-support/study-skills-and-tutoring.html)

