

## **Human Rights**

PSCI 4357

Fall 2019

Tuesday and Thursday: 1:00pm-2:15pm

Room: JSOM 2.804

**Professor:** Rebecca Cordell

**Office:** Green Hall 3.108E

**Email:** [Rebecca.Cordell@utdallas.edu](mailto:Rebecca.Cordell@utdallas.edu)

**Office Phone:** (972) 883-4985

**Office Hours:** Thursday 11:00am-12:00pm

**Website:** [www.rebeccacordell.com](http://www.rebeccacordell.com)

Teaching Assistant: Mireille Mutesi

Office: Green Hall 2.816

Email: [Mireille.Mutesi@utdallas.edu](mailto:Mireille.Mutesi@utdallas.edu)

Office Hours: Friday 10:00am-12:00pm

---

### **Course Description**

What are human rights? Why are human rights violated? How can we measure human rights violations? How can international human rights law be enforced? From state sponsored violence to limitations on freedom of speech and the press, human rights affect our lives in numerous ways. This course examines the politics of human rights in a scientific and rigorous way. Students will gain an understanding of how to ask and answer questions on the causes and consequences of human rights violations from a social science perspective.

We begin the course by exploring major concepts of human rights and transition to an overview of what motivates the state to engage in human rights violations. We proceed to consider how we can measure and analyze human rights violations around the world, over time, and then explore how human rights violations can be prevented and how perpetrators can be held accountable. The course concludes by exploring contemporary debates in human rights and a discussion of what the future holds for human rights.

This course's goal is to teach undergraduates the major theories and explanations of the politics of human rights as well as how to critically evaluate human rights issues in different countries and in different time periods. The readings for this course survey major explanations of human rights violations and how human rights have emerged in domestic and international law. Students will be exposed to theoretically driven as well as empirical research.

---

### **Course Objectives and Learning Outcomes**

Upon completion of this course, students should:

- Gain familiarity with the major theories of state violence and human rights.
- Gain understanding with concepts in human rights research and contemporary debates in human rights.

- Be able to apply explanations of repression and human rights to the explanation and understanding of real-world scenarios.
- Be able to explain historical cases in light of the theories presented in class.
- Be able to read and understand empirical research in the social sciences.

---

## Textbooks and Materials

Carey, Sabine C., Mark Gibney, and Steven C. Poe. 2010. *The Politics of Human Rights: The Quest for Dignity*. Cambridge University Press.

The textbook is available to students free of charge as an Ebook. It can be accessed via a password protected course website, along with all book chapters (see eLearning for the URL and password).

---

## Assignments & Academic Calendar

### Week 1 (August 20-22): Introduction: History and Concepts

1. Carey, Sabine C., Mark Gibney, and Steven C. Poe. 2010. "The Concept of Human Rights." In *The Politics of Human Rights: The Quest for Dignity*. Cambridge University Press. Chapter 1.
2. Donnelly, Jack, and Daniel Whelan. 2017. "Human Rights in Global Politics: Historical Perspectives." In *International Human Rights*, 5th ed. Routledge. Chapter 1.

### Week 2 (August 27-29): Theories of Human Rights

1. Donnelly, Jack, and Daniel Whelan. 2017. "Theories of Human Rights." In *International Human Rights*, 5th ed. Routledge. Chapter 2.
2. Carey, Sabine C., Mark Gibney, and Steven C. Poe. 2010. "State Responsibilities" and "Rights with Responsibilities." In *The Politics of Human Rights: The Quest for Dignity*. Cambridge University Press. Chapter 2 and 3.

Thursday: In class film

### Week 3 (September 03-05): International Law, NGOs and Human Rights

1. Simmons, Beth A. 2009. "Why International Law? The Development of the International Human Rights Regime in the Twentieth Century." In *Mobilizing for Human Rights: International Law in Domestic Politics*. Cambridge University Press. Chapter 2.
2. Clark, Ann Marie. 2001. "Amnesty International in International Politics" and "How Norms Grow." In *Diplomacy of Conscience: Amnesty International and Changing Human Rights Norms*. Princeton University Press. Chapter 1 and 2.

#### **Week 4 (September 10-12): Universalism and Relativism**

1. Donnelly, Jack. 2003. "The Relative Universality of Human Rights" and "Universality in a World of Particularities." In *Universal Human Rights in Theory and Practice*, 2nd ed. Cornell University Press. Chapter 6.
2. Kalev, Henriette D. 2004. "Cultural Rights or Human Rights: The Case of Female Genital Mutilation." *Sex Roles* 51(5-6): 339-348.

#### **Thursday: Comparative Paper 1 Due**

#### **Week 5 (September 17-19): Psychology of Human Rights**

1. Smeulers, Alette. 2004. "What Transforms Ordinary People into Gross Human Rights Violators." In Sabine C. Carey, and Steven C. Poe. *Understanding Human Rights Violations*. Ashgate Publishing Limited. Chapter 13.
2. McFarland Sam, and Melissa Matthews. 2005. "Who Cares About Human Rights?" *Political Psychology* 26(3): 365-385.

#### **Week 6 (September 24-26): State Repression**

1. Davenport, Christian. 2007. "State Repression and Political Order." *Annual Review of Political Science* 10: 1-23.
2. Mason, T. David, and Dale A. Krane. 1989. "The Political Economy of Death Squads: Toward a Theory of the Impact of State-Sanctioned Terror." *International Studies Quarterly*, 33(2):175-198.

Thursday: In class film

#### **Week 7 (October 01-03): Politics of Human Rights**

1. Carey, Sabine C., Mark Gibney, and Steven C. Poe. 2010. "Where are Human Rights Violated?" and "Why are Human Rights Violated? An Examination of Personal Integrity Rights." In *The Politics of Human Rights: The Quest for Dignity*. Cambridge University Press. 2010. Chapter 4 and 5.
2. Sikkink, Kathryn. 2017. "What Does and Doesn't Work to Promote Human Rights." In *Evidence for Hope: Making Human Rights Work in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century*. Princeton University Press. Chapter 6.

#### **Week 8 (October 08-10): Catch-up, Review and First Exam**

#### **Thursday: In Class Exam 1**

#### **Week 9 (October 15-17): Measuring Human Rights I**

1. Cordell, Rebecca. 2017. "Measuring Extraordinary Rendition and International Cooperation." *International Area Studies Review* 20(2): 179-197.
2. Landman, Todd, and Larissa C. S. K. Kersten. 2016. "Measuring and Monitoring Human Rights." In Goodhart, Michael. *Human Rights: Politics and Practice*, 3rd ed. Oxford University Press. Chapter 8.

### **Week 10 (October 22-24): Measuring Human Rights II**

1. Brysk, Allison. 1994. "The Politics of Measurement: The Contested Count of the Disappearance in Argentina" *Human Rights Quarterly*, 16(4):676-692.
2. Fariss, Christopher J., and Geoff Dancy. 2017. "Measuring the Impact of Human Rights: Conceptual and Methodological Debates." *Annual Review of Law and Social Science* 13: 273-294.

### **Week 11 (October 29-31): Intervention and Human Rights**

1. Carey, Sabine C., Mark Gibney, and Steven C. Poe. 2010. "Intervening to Protect Human Rights." In *The Politics of Human Rights: The Quest for Dignity*. Cambridge University Press. Chapter 6.
2. De Meritt, Jacqueline, H. R. 2014. "Delegating Death: Military Intervention and Government Killing." *Journal of Conflict Resolution* 59(3): 428-454.

### **Thursday: Comparative Study Paper 2 Due**

### **Week 12 (November 05-07): Accountability and Human Rights**

1. Carey, Sabine C., Mark Gibney, and Steven C. Poe. 2010. "Rebuilding Society in the Aftermath of Repression." In *The Politics of Human Rights: The Quest for Dignity*. Cambridge University Press. Chapter 7.
2. Hayner, Priscilla B. 2010. "Truth Commissions and the International Criminal Court." In *Unspeakable Truths: Facing the Challenge of Truth Commissions*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. Routledge Press. Chapter 9.

Thursday: In class film

### **Week 13 (November 12-14): Contemporary Issues in Human Rights**

1. Donnelly, Jack, and Daniel Whelan. 2017. "(Anti)Terrorism and Human Rights." In *International Human Rights*, 5th ed. Routledge. Chapter 12.
2. Cordell, Rebecca. 2019. "Security-Civil Liberties Trade-offs: International Cooperation in Extraordinary Rendition." *International Interactions* 45(2): 369-400.

### **Week 14 (November 19-21): The Future of Human Rights**

1. Ghodes, Anita R., and Sabine C. Carey. 2017. "Canaries in a Coal-Mine? What the Killings of Journalists Tell Us About Future Repression." *Journal of Peace Research* 54(2): 157–174.
2. Bell, Sam, K. Chad Clay, and Amanda Murdie. 2012. "Neighborhood Watch: Spatial Effects of Human Rights INGOs." *Journal of Politics* 74(2): 354-368.

### **Week 15 (November 26-28): No Classes**

### **Fall Break/Thanksgiving**

### **Week 16 (December 03-05): Catch-up, Review and Second Exam**

### **Thursday: In Class Exam 2**

---

## **Grading Policy**

### **Assignments**

Attendance and Participation (15% of your grade): Students will be evaluated on 1) attendance 2) contributions to class discussions 3) in class group exercises.

Weekly Quizzes (15% of your grade): Once a week there will be a quiz on eLearning designed to assess your comprehension of the weekly readings. **Due every Monday before class.**

### **Papers:**

- Comparative Study Paper 1 (15% of your grade): 4 pages (12-point font, 1-inch margin, double spaced). Compare two Amnesty International Annual Country Human Rights Reports published 10 years apart for the same country. In the paper you should describe 1) Why you chose this country 2) How the human rights situation is similar and/or different in the two years compared 3) What theories can be used to explain these similarities and/or differences. Students should discuss their case selection with the Professor at least two weeks prior to the due date for this assignment. **Paper due: September 12.**
- Comparative Study Paper 2 (15% of your grade): 4 pages (12-point font, 1-inch margin, double spaced). Compare two Amnesty International Annual Country Human Rights Reports published in the same year for two different countries in the same geographic region. The two countries must be different from the country chosen for Comparative Study Paper 1. In the paper you should describe 1) Why you chose these two countries 2) How the human rights situation is similar and/or different in the two countries compared 3) What theories can be used to explain these similarities and/or differences. Students should discuss their case selection with the Professor at least two weeks prior to the due date for this assignment. **Paper due: October 31.**

First Exam (20% of your grade): The first exam will cover material in the first half of the semester. The exam will contain multiple questions, short answer questions and short essay questions. **In class exam: October 10.**

Second Exam (20% of your grade): The second exam will cover material in the second half of the semester. The exam will contain multiple questions, short answer questions and short essay questions. **In class exam: December 05.**

Grading Scale:

A+ = 97-100%

A = 93-96%

A- = 90-92%

B+ = 87-89%

B = 83-86%

B- = 80-82%

C+ = 77-79%

C = 73-76%

C- = 70-72%

D+ = 67-69%

D = 63-66%

D- = 60-62%

F = 0-59%

---

## Course & Instructor Policies

**Attendance and Participation:** Regular attendance and participation in class is essential to your success in this course and will be considered in the calculation of your final grade. Students are expected to arrive in class before the start of the class period. No accommodations will be made for students who arrive late and miss a weekly quiz as a result. Student participation will be assessed on the quantity and quality of contributions to class discussions and class group exercises. Excused absences are limited to religious and cultural holidays, official UTD events/business, and extreme emergency or serious illness.

**Late assignments and missed exams:** Written assignments are due on the date assigned, in the form specified. No late assignments will be accepted and will result in a failing grade for that assignment. The Professor reserves the right to make exceptions to this policy as circumstances warrant, usually only with prior approval or under instances of extreme emergency or serious illness. Appropriate documentation might be required in some cases.

**Grade disputes:** If you have questions or concerns regarding your grade, you must wait 48 hours after your assignment/exam has been returned to you before contacting the Teaching Assistant or Professor. You should always email the Teaching Assistant before

the Professor to discuss your grade as they will have graded your assignment/exam and are in the best position to provide you with the reasons for your grade. In your email, you must provide an argument explaining why you believe your grade should be changed. If your conversation with the Teaching Assistant has not resolved the issue, you can request that I regrade the entire assignment/exam. I reserve the right to raise your grade or lower it on any part of the assignment/exam.

Academic misconduct: Students are expected to do their own assignments, and not in collaboration or consultation with others. The Professor will follow all UTD rules and processes regarding academic dishonesty including plagiarism, collusion, cheating and fabrication. For more information see:

<http://www.utdallas.edu/deanofstudents/dishonesty/>  
<http://www.utdallas.edu/deanofstudents/managing/>.

Classroom conduct: Classroom discussion should be civilized and respectful to everyone and relevant to the topic we are discussing. All students are expected to be courteous and considerate of their classmates. Disrespectful language and personal attacks will not be tolerated. Students whose behavior is disruptive and/or threatening either to the Professor, Teaching Assistant or other students will be asked to refrain from such behavior or, in severe cases, to leave the classroom.

If you need help: There are many issues that you might be dealing with in your college career or personal life that can prevent you from succeeding on this course. At UTD, you are not alone. There are many free resources available on campus to help support you during times of struggle, including the Student Success Center, the Student Wellness Center, and Student Counselling Center. For more information, see here: <https://www.utdallas.edu/studentaccess/campus/>.

Sexual misconduct: UTD prohibits sexual misconduct as defined in the University Policy Statement. The University will promptly discipline any individuals or organizations within its control who violate this Policy. If you or someone you know has been sexually assaulted, harassed, or been a victim of relationship violence or stalking, you can find the appropriate resources here: <http://www.utdallas.edu/oiec/title-ix/resources>. Students considering sharing personal information in email, in person, or within assignments or exams should be aware that faculty members and teaching/research assistants are required by UT Dallas policy to report information about sexual misconduct to the UT Dallas Title IX Coordinator. Per university policy, faculty have been informed that they must identify the student to the UT Dallas Title IX Coordinator. Students who wish to have confidential discussions of incidents related to sexual harassment or sexual misconduct should contact the Student Counseling Center (972-883-2527 or after hours 972- UTD-TALK or 972-883-8255), the Women's Center (972-883-8255), a health care provider in the Student Health Center (972-883-2747), the clergyperson (or other legally recognized religious advisor) of their choice, or an off-campus resource (i.e., rape crisis center, doctor, psychologist). Students who are sexually assaulted, harassed, or victims of sexual misconduct, domestic violence, or stalking, are encouraged to directly report these

incidents to the UT Dallas Police Department at 972-883-2222 or to the Title IX Coordinator at 972-883-2218.

Accommodations for persons with disabilities: UTD is committed to equal access to educational, recreational and social endeavors for students with disabilities. Students who require any accommodations for this course should contact the Professor as soon as possible, as well as the Office of Student Access Ability to discuss their individual needs for accommodations. For more information see: <https://policy.utdallas.edu/utdbp3100>.

Diversity in the classroom: It is the Professor's intention to create a learning environment that is intentionally inclusive and appreciative of diversity in all its forms including ethnicity, race, gender, sexual orientation, disability, age, socioeconomic status, religion and culture. Students may share their preferred names and pronouns to the class or privately to the Professor. These gender identities and expressions should be honored by the Professor, Teaching Assistant and students.

Technology in the classroom: Students are allowed to use laptop computers to take class notes or when instructed to do so by the Professor. All other technology must be turned off and stowed away. Students violating this rule will be asked to leave the class for that day.

Communication:

- Email: The best way to get in touch with me outside of class and office hours is to contact me via email. I will try to respond to your email within 48 hours (excluding weekends). When you contact me or the Teaching Assistant, you should communicate professionally and avoid informal salutations and unprofessional or casual language. The appropriate salutations in emails to me are "Dr. Rebecca Cordell" or "Professor Cordell". Your email should be clear and concise and end with a signature e.g. "Yours Sincerely, Student". You should always consult the syllabus and course materials on eLearning before emailing me to see if the answer to your question can be found there. The ability to write effective emails is an important job skill that will help you to succeed in your future career.
- Office Hours: You are strongly encouraged to visit me during office hours. I am committed to answering your questions and concerns. If you would like the Professor or Teaching Assistant to provide specific feedback on your work during office hours, you should send email the relevant materials 24 hours in advance. Office hours provide an excellent opportunity for you to gain feedback on ideas for your assignments and for me to get to know you. This is especially helpful if you require a reference letter for graduate school, a professional college, or job at a later date.

Course website: The syllabus, all announcements, information on assignments, and other materials related to the course will be available on Elearning.

---

**Comet Creed**

*This creed was voted on by the UT Dallas student body in 2014. It is a standard that Comets choose to live by and encourage others to do the same:*

“As a Comet, I pledge honesty, integrity, and service in all that I do.”

---

**UT Dallas Syllabus Policies and Procedures**

The information contained in the following link constitutes the University’s policies and procedures segment of the course syllabus.

Please go to <http://go.utdallas.edu/syllabus-policies> for these policies.

***The descriptions and timelines contained in this syllabus are subject to change at the discretion of the Professor.***