

Human Rights
PSCI 4357
Fall 2023

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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.

Student Learning Objectives/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.

Assignments & Academic Calendar

WEEK/ DATES	TOPIC/LECTURE	READING	ASSESSMENT / ACTIVITY	DUE DATE
1	Introduction: History and Concepts	Carey, Gibney, and Poe. 2010. Chapter 1. Donnelly and Whelan. 2017. Chapter 1.		
2	Theories of Human Rights	Donnelly and Whelan. 2017. Chapter 2. Carey, Gibney, and Poe. 2010. Chapter 2.	Reading Quiz	08/28
3	International Law, NGOs and Human Rights	Simmons. 2009. Chapter 2. Clark. 2001. Chapter 2.	Reading Quiz	09/04
4	Universalism and Relativism	Donnelly. 2003. Chapter 6. Kalev. 2004.	Reading Quiz Refugee Reports	09/11 09/15
5	Psychology of Human Rights	Smeulers. 2004. Baisley. 2014.	Reading Quiz	09/18

WEEK/ DATES	TOPIC/LECTURE	READING	ASSESSMENT / ACTIVITY	DUE DATE
6	State Repression	Davenport. 2007. Mason and Krane. 1989.	Reading Quiz	09/25
7	Politics of Human Rights	Carey, Gibney and Poe. 2010. Chapter 5. Sikkink. 2017. Chapter 6.	Reading Quiz	10/02
8	Catch-up, Review and First Exam		First Online Exam	10/12-10/13
9	Measuring Human Rights I	Cordell. 2017. Landman and Kersten. 2016. Chapter 8.	Reading Quiz	10/16
10	Measuring Human Rights II	Brysk. 1994. Fariss and Dancy. 2017.	Reading Quiz	10/23
11	Intervention and Human Rights	Carey, Gibney and Poe. 2010. Chapter 6. De Meritt. 2014.	Reading Quiz Human Rights Comparative Paper	10/30 11/03
12	Accountability and Human Rights	Carey, Gibney and Poe. 2010. Chapter 7. Zvobgo. 2019.	Reading Quiz	11/06 11/10
13	Contemporary Issues in Human Rights	Donnelly and Whelan. 2017. Chapter 12. Cordell. 2019.	Reading Quiz Refugee Data	11/13 11/17
14	No Classes: Fall Break/Thanksgiving			

WEEK/ DATES	TOPIC/LECTURE	READING	ASSESSMENT / ACTIVITY	DUE DATE
15	The Future of Human Rights	Carey and Ghodes. 2021. Ghodes. 2020.	Reading Quiz	11/27
16	Catch-up, Review and Second Exam		Second Online Exam	12/07-12/08

Required Textbooks and Materials

All book chapters and journal articles are available to students free of charge. They can be accessed via the eLearning course homepage.

Baisley, Elizabeth. 2014. "Genocide and constructions of Hutu and Tutsi in radio propaganda." *Race & Class* 55(3): 38-59.

Brysk, Allison. 1994. "The Politics of Measurement: The Contested Count of the Disappearance in Argentina" *Human Rights Quarterly* 16(4):676-692.

Carey, Sabine C and Anita R. Gohdes. 2021. "Understanding Journalist Killings." *Journal of Politics* 83(4): 1216-1228.

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

Clark, Ann Marie. 2001. *Diplomacy of Conscience: Amnesty International and Changing Human Rights Norms*. Princeton University Press.

Cordell, Rebecca. 2017. "Measuring Extraordinary Rendition and International Cooperation." *International Area Studies Review* 20(2): 179-197.

Cordell, Rebecca. 2019. "Security-Civil Liberties Trade-offs: International Cooperation in Extraordinary Rendition." *International Interactions* 45(2): 369-400.

Davenport, Christian. 2007. "State Repression and Political Order." *Annual Review of Political Science* 10: 1-23.

De Meritt, Jacqueline, H. R. 2014. "Delegating Death: Military Intervention and Government Killing." *Journal of Conflict Resolution* 59(3): 428-454.

Donnelly, Jack, and Daniel Whelan. 2017. *International Human Rights*, 5th ed. Routledge.

Donnelly, Jack. 2003. "Human Rights and Cultural Relativism." *Universal Human Rights in Theory and Practice*, 2nd ed. Cornell University Press. Chapter 6.

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.

Gohdes, Anita R. 2020. "Repression Technology: Internet Accessibility and State Violence." *American Journal of Political Science* 64(3): 488-503.

Hayner, Priscilla B. 2010. "Truth Commissions and the International Criminal Court." In *Unspeakable Truths: Facing the Challenge of Truth Commissions*, 2nd ed. Routledge Press. Chapter 9.

Kalev, Henriette D. 2004. "Cultural Rights or Human Rights: The Case of Female Genital Mutilation." *Sex Roles* 51(5-6): 339-348.

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.

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.

Sikkink, Kathryn. 2017. *Evidence for Hope: Making Human Rights Work in the 21st Century*. Princeton University Press.

Simmons, Beth A. 2009. *Mobilizing for Human Rights: International Law in Domestic Politics*. Cambridge University Press.

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.

Zvobgo, Kelebogile. 2019. "Designing Truth: Facilitating Perpetrator Testimony at Truth Commissions." *Journal of Human Rights* 18(1): 92-110.

Grading Policy

Assignments and Exams

Attendance and Participation (10% of your grade): Students will be evaluated on 1) attendance 2) completion of class exercises 3) contributions to class discussions.

Weekly Reading Quizzes (20% 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 at midnight before class via eLearning.**

Refugee Rights Data Project (15% of your grade): For this assignment, you will gain experience in assessing how governments around the world treat refugees and asylum seekers. In groups, you will be assigned two tasks during the semester that contribute toward a new academic research project measuring violations of refugee rights using the World Refugee Survey (WRS) country reports. This project requires students to work as a team to fulfill the data collection and coding briefs and communicate clearly and regularly to ensure that the work is completed on time.

- 1) **Refugee Reports:** First, your group will *collect data* on a set of countries assigned to you by the Teaching Assistant using the Refugee Reports Data Collection Instructions and annual World Refugee Survey reports (see eLearning for further details). **Deadline: September 15 at midnight via eLearning.**
- 2) **Refugee Data:** Second, you will *code data* extracted from these reports using a coding handbook (see eLearning for further details). The data will be used to help researchers identify global patterns and explanations on the treatment of refugees and asylum seekers fleeing persecution and violence. **Refugee Data: November 17 at midnight via eLearning.**

Human Rights Comparative Paper (15% of your grade): Compare two Amnesty International Annual Country Human Rights Reports published in the same year for two different countries in the same geographic region. 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 theory can be used to explain these similarities and/or differences. Students should discuss their case selection with the Teaching Assistant at least two weeks prior to the due date for this assignment. 4 pages (12-point font, 1-inch margin, double spaced). **Paper due: November 03 at midnight via eLearning.**

First Online Exam (20% of your grade): The first exam will cover material in the first half of the semester. The exam will contain multiple choice questions only. **Exam: October 12-13 at midnight via eLearning.**

Second Online Exam (20% of your grade): The second exam will cover material in the second half of the semester. The exam will contain multiple choice questions only. **Exam: December 07-08 at midnight via eLearning.**

Grading Scale:

A+ = 97-100%

A = 94-96%

A- = 90-93%

B+ = 87-89%

B = 84-86%

B- = 80-83%

C+ = 77-79%

C = 74-76%

C- = 70-73%

D+ = 67-69%

D = 64-66%

D- = 60-63%

F = 0-59%
