
Course Outline

Course: LAWS 2105D **Social Justice and Human Rights**
Term: Winter 2015-2016
Class Time: Thursday 11:35-2:25pm
Room: Check **Carleton Central** for class location

Instructor: Stephen Tasson

Contact: **Office:** Loeb Building D498 **Office Hours:** Monday 10-12pm
Email: steve_tasson@carleton.ca (or by appointment)

Academic Accommodations

You may need special arrangements to meet your academic obligations during the term. For an accommodation request the processes are as follows:

Pregnancy obligation: write to me with any requests for academic accommodation during the first two weeks of class, or as soon as possible after the need for accommodation is known to exist. For more details visit the Equity Services website: <http://www2.carleton.ca/equity/>

Religious obligation: write to me with any requests for academic accommodation during the first two weeks of class, or as soon as possible after the need for accommodation is known to exist. For more details visit the Equity Services website: <http://www2.carleton.ca/equity/>

Academic Accommodations for Students with Disabilities: The **Paul Menton Centre** for Students with Disabilities (PMC) provides services to students with Learning Disabilities (LD), psychiatric/mental health disabilities, Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD), Autism Spectrum Disorders (ASD), chronic medical conditions, and impairments in mobility, hearing, and vision. If you have a disability requiring academic accommodations in this course, please contact PMC at 613-520-6608 or pmc@carleton.ca for a formal evaluation. If you are already registered with the PMC, contact your PMC coordinator to send me your **Letter of Accommodation** at the beginning of the term, and no later than two weeks before the first in-class scheduled test or exam requiring accommodation (*if applicable*). After requesting accommodation from PMC, meet with me to ensure accommodation arrangements are made. Please consult the PMC website for the deadline to request accommodations for the formally-scheduled exam (*if applicable*) at <http://www2.carleton.ca/pmc/new-and-current-students/dates-and-deadlines/>

You can visit the Equity Services website to view the policies and to obtain more detailed information on academic accommodation at <http://www2.carleton.ca/equity/>

Plagiarism

Plagiarism is presenting, whether intentional or not, the ideas, expression of ideas or work of others as one's own. Plagiarism includes reproducing or paraphrasing portions of someone else's published or unpublished material, regardless of the source, and presenting these as one's own without proper citation or reference to the original source. Examples of sources from which the ideas, expressions of ideas or works of others may be drawn from include but are not limited to: books, articles, papers, literary compositions and phrases, performance compositions, chemical compounds, art works, laboratory reports, research results, calculations and the results of calculations, diagrams, constructions, computer reports, computer code/software, and material on the Internet. Plagiarism is a serious offence.

More information on the University's **Academic Integrity Policy** can be found at: <http://www.carleton.ca/studentaffairs/academic-integrity/>

Departmental Policy

The Department of Law and Legal Studies operates in association with certain policies and procedures. Please review these documents to ensure that your practices meet our Department's expectations.

<http://www.carleton.ca/law/student-resources/department-policies/>

Overview of the course

The course aims to introduce and explore important debates surrounding the theoretical foundations and contemporary practices of “human rights”; and to further connect these perspectives and practices to the pursuit of “social justice”. In addition to highlighting the theoretical and historical development of human rights, particularly in the post-WWII period, we consider some of the dominant critiques of human rights from this period and also explore the central ambiguities of a growing reliance on human rights in more recent and contemporary social and political struggles.

A number of the discussions will be framed around a series of challenging, but necessary, questions: What are human rights? Are there limits to what they might encompass or achieve? What is the relationship between ‘the law’ and such rights? What impact does the institutionalization, or instrumentalization, of human rights play in addressing injustices? Given heightened contemporary anxieties, what might be done – and justified – in the name of human rights?

Finally, even an introductory exploration of human rights and social justice offers a welcome opportunity to engage unruly concepts of responsibility, citizenship, legality, violence, belonging and community. A central aim of this course, then, is to enable students to critically reflect on the value and utility of these concepts in our contemporary context and to begin to make arguments employing such conceptual frameworks.

Required Texts

Note: The text is available from [Octopus Books, 116 Third Ave., Ottawa](#) (located in “the Glebe”- a 20 minute walk from campus or a short ride on the #7).

Arendt, Hannah.1963. *Eichmann in Jerusalem: A Report on the Banality of Evil*. New York: Penguin.

All other readings for which you will be responsible are available on or through CULearn.

****The schedule for weekly required readings is available on CULearn****

Course Evaluation

Participation	10%	(Due: Continuous)
'Quote and Comment' Reflections (3 x 5%)	15%	(Due: Continuous)
Term Paper	35%	(Due: March 18 th)
Final Exam	40%	(Due: April 22 th)

Course Components

You must complete all components of the course to receive a passing grade. All grades are subject to the approval of the Department and the Dean. Thus, grades (e.g. those on CULearn) are not "final" until they have been approved by the Dean.

Participation

Despite the fact that this is primarily a lecture course, participation is still an important component of the course and your mark. Throughout the terms we will engage in a number of group discussions. **You are expected to contribute to the class and come prepared to participate.** Your participation mark is comprised of your basic attendance and *actual* participation in discussions and any planned exercises.

'Quote & Comment' Reflections[‡]

These brief reflections (approx. 2 double-spaced pg.) are intended to evaluate your engagement with the course readings by asking you to select a quotation (3 or 4 sentences) from a week's readings, briefly explain its meaning, and discuss its implications or significance in the context of the reading, the week's theme or the course more generally. You may also connect it to relevant contemporary issues present in the media. These reflections are not intended to be summaries of the readings (though obviously will require some summary), but rather ask you to take the selected quotation as a starting point for a more critical engagement. You are expected to submit **three** 'Quote and Comment' assignments throughout the term. These are submitted through CULearn prior to the relevant week's lecture. You may submit **one of these for each "section" of the course** (there are obviously 3 - see the reading list on CULearn).

Term Paper

There is a single term paper that asks students to summarize, synthesize and critique (i.e. take a position on) some of the materials and themes we investigate in the course. The term paper provides an opportunity to discuss the readings from the course and draw connections to some of the broader questions and themes highlighted in the lectures. The paper will be **approx. 7-8 pages** double-spaced pages in length. The specific question(s) and rubric for evaluation will outlined in the assignment sheet and will also be discussed in more detail in class.

Final Exam

The final exam for course is (likely) a take-home exam made available in the final class and completed during the formal exam period and submitted through CULearn. More details will be discussed in class.

[‡] Credit to Marta Bashovski, UVic

Some General Guidelines on Assignments for This Course (We will be discussing these requirements in more detail in class or the tutorial)

ASSIGNMENT FORMAT

Any written work submitted in this course **must** be typewritten, double-spaced, 12pt Times New Roman font with standard 1" margins. All assignments **must** include a title page that has, at minimum, your name and student number, the course code, and my name on it. Title pages, bibliographies and extensive footnotes are not counted in determining an assignment's page length. Assignments for this course are to be submitted as PDF files through CULearn unless otherwise indicated on the assignment sheet. If you anticipate any problems with this process please contact me *in advance of the deadline*. Final-hour technical problems with submission is not a valid excuse for a late assignment.

****Email is NOT considered an acceptable means of submission for assignments****

LATE ASSIGNMENTS POLICY

Late assignments will be penalized **one grade point (~3% per day)** that they are late (unless otherwise specified on the assignment instructions). It is **your** responsibility to ensure that assignments are submitted on or before the deadline.

BACKUP COPIES

Student must retain a secure copy of anything submitted for a grade in the class. This copy should be kept for at least 3 months following the end of the course in case there is any discrepancy in final grades. In the very unlikely event that a submitted assignment is mishandled, you must be able to produce another copy immediately upon request.

REFERENCING & PLAGARISM

The assignments in the course must be properly referenced and include a bibliography of all sources used in the preparation of the assignment. We will discuss citation briefly in class in the lead-up to the assignments. **Failure to reference properly or attempting to pass someone else's ideas or work off as your own is considered plagiarism. I take it very seriously and so should you.** Plagiarism can lead to serious penalties that range from failure of the course to expulsion. Engaging in it is incredibly misguided.

Friendly Warning: The internet is your friend and also your enemy. While it may be a useful resource in the initial stages of research or even provide access to books or journals, it may also be tempting to rely on – or even “liberally borrow” – information found “there” to complete tough assignments. Beyond the most obviously issue of inviting plagiarism, online information may not be entirely accurate or helpful and may in fact **unduly complicate or undermine your own (better) interpretation or arguments**. In short, these tools can sometimes be a brick rather than a life-preserver when you're struggling with a challenging assignment.