

---

<b>COURSE:</b>	<b>LAWS 2105B – Social Justice and Human Rights</b>
<b>TERM:</b>	<b>FALL 2020</b>
<b>PREREQUISITES:</b>	<b>1.0 credit from LAWS 1001, LAWS 1002, PSCI 1100, PSCI 1200 or HUMR 1001 or PAPM 1000 [1.0]</b>
<b>CLASS:</b>	<b>Day &amp; Time: Please check Carleton Central for current Class Schedule. Room: All Courses in the Fall 2020 term are offered online. Lectures in this course will be delivered primarily through <i>pre-recorded videos</i> posted to CULearn. There will also be a limited number of "live", online discussion sessions conducted using the Big Blue Button conferencing platform. These will occur during our regularly scheduled class times (see the Course Components descriptions below for more details).</b>
<b>INSTRUCTOR:</b>	<b>Stephen J. Tasson</b>
<b>CONTACT:</b>	<b>Office: Room D488 Loeb Building Office Hrs: Tuesdays 10:00 – 11:00am or by appointment (online through Big Blue Button (CULearn link)) Telephone: None Email: <a href="mailto:steve.tasson@carleton.ca">steve.tasson@carleton.ca</a></b>

---

### **CALENDAR COURSE DESCRIPTION**

Theories and practices of law and social justice. Issues examined may include: civil democracy and repression; global governance and the rule of law; democratic movements and social power; human rights instruments, regimes and remedies; armed conflict; and humanitarian intervention.

### **COURSE DESCRIPTION**

The course aims to introduce and explore key debates surrounding the theoretical foundations and contemporary practices of "human rights"; and to 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 and post-cold war periods, we consider some of the dominant critiques of human rights (and "humanitarianism") from these

periods and explore the central ambiguities of a steady reliance on human rights in more recent and contemporary struggles for “social justice”.

A number of the discussions will be framed around a series of challenging, but necessary, questions: What are human rights and what do they do? Are there limits to what rights claims might encompass or achieve? Crucially, what is the relationship between ‘the law’ and such rights? What impacts do the institutionalization, or instrumentalization, of human rights play in addressing a wide variety of injustices? Might the way we conceive of or practical realize “human rights” impede social and political movements seeking social justice? Is there a growing “rights consciousness” today? Has this also meant a polarization of strategies to define and protect “human rights”? What might be done – and justified – in the name of human rights (both domestically and internationally)?

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 the limits of legal communities. 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 convincing arguments employing such conceptual frameworks.

### ***Core Course Objectives (or, ‘what I want you to get out of the course’)***

1. Identify and contrast competing historical “perspectives” on the foundations of human rights (as intertwined political and legal projects). Be able to discuss the implications of adopting (or not) these perspectives to understand contemporary rights projects.
2. Develop a working familiarity with Hannah Arendt’s influential theories of personal and legal responsibility, political action, statelessness and “human rights”. Begin to develop the capacity to apply these theories to contemporary debates and political and legal strategies of inclusion and exclusion within communities.
3. Be able to understand and articulate “social justice” and “human rights” as both *practical (i.e. cultural)* and *ideological* projects of social change.
4. Understand and evaluate key theoretical challenges and practical ambiguities of the expansion of liberal “human rights” and the practicalities of “humanitarianism” as modern regulatory projects.
5. Become familiar with the basic principles of “transitional justice”. Develop the ability to critically evaluate the utility of this approach to addressing past (and ongoing) human rights abuses and state violence.
6. Hone your ability to summarize and critically evaluate the strengths and weaknesses of competing written arguments. This includes the ability to appreciate distinctions between similar arguments and the ability to discuss the logical implications of prescriptive arguments.
7. Improve your ability to effectively structure, and persuasively communicate, ideas and arguments in formal writing (e.g. essays).
8. Develop your capacity to reflexively locate yourself and your own structural position within some of the core debates we investigate in the course.

### **REQUIRED TEXTS**

There are **no required texts** to purchase for the course. All required readings are available to you through the course CULearn page.

Optionally, you may wish to purchase the following text(s) that we will refer to at a few different points throughout the course. The \*required\* portions of this text(s) is available to you on CULearn. Owning the text(s) may be a useful future resource in your future studies.

Arendt, Hannah. (2003). *The Portable Hannah Arendt*. New York: Penguin Classics.

This text is available as a hardcopy from multiple booksellers in Ottawa ([Octopus Books](#) is the best) and also from less-savory online retailers (for under \$20).

## **EVALUATION**

**(All core components must be completed in order to receive a passing grade in this course)**

Standing in a course is determined by the course instructor subject to the approval of the Department and of the Faculty Dean. This means that grades submitted by the instructor may be subject to revision. No grades are final until they have been approved by the Department and the Dean.

"Unit" Reflections (3)	15%	(continuous, see below)
Weekly Reading Quizzes (Best 6)	15%	(continuous, see below)
Term Paper I (approx. 6 pages)	20%	(due 11pm EST, October 11)
Term Paper II (approx. 8 pages)	25%	(due 11pm EST, November 21)
Take-home Exam	25%	(due 11pm EST, December 22)

**NOTE:** There is NO scheduled final exam for this class

## **COURSE COMPONENTS**

### **"Unit" or "Section" Reflections (15%)**

The course is divided into a number of "units" or "sections" (see the **Required Reading Schedule** on CULearn). Before the conclusion of each unit, you will be provided a set of prompt questions that you have to discuss/ reflect on and submit. These response/reflections should minimally:

- A) demonstrate that you have been reading (or watching) the required course materials for the section; and
- B) that you have considered the topics discussed in the unit in some depth.

The main aim of these submissions should be to demonstrate to me (or your TA) your level of "engagement" with the material from the "unit". In some instances, the questions will prompt you to reflect on your own feelings and experiences and/or on events that are happening in the

world today. The questions may be challenging. Again, the core goal is to show you are working through the course material in a thoughtful and engaged way.

More formatting and rubric details appear CULearn. Unless otherwise specified these submissions should be **approx. 300 words and be double-spaced**. Like other written components of the course, these Reflections are submitted via CULearn and must be submitted before the deadlines indicated there.

**NOTE:** There are **NO LATE penalties for these submissions**. If they are not submitted on time they **WILL NOT be accepted** for grading (there are no “extensions” available).

This component is very short and the deadlines for these are \*purposefully flexible\* to allow you to complete them in a timely manner (do not leave them until the last minute as, again, part of the task is to show “engagement” (the opposite of which is evidenced by submitting an obviously “rushed” effort).

### Quizzes (20%)

Staying “on top of” the course readings is a necessary requirement for success in the course. Without this foundation your engagement with the course will be limited and you will struggle with key parts of the lectures and assignments. Throughout the term there are near-weekly small “quizzes” (the dates are indicated on the **Required Readings Schedule** on CULearn). The quizzes are not meant to be difficult but to assess that you have been keeping up with the weekly materials, as well as test basic comprehension of some key topics and concepts from those materials.

Each quiz will be comprised of 10 or fewer multiple-choice questions and will be completed through CULearn. Again, the precise schedule of quizzes is available on the **Required Readings Schedule** as well as in the **Calendar** on CULearn.

**NOTE:** You will receive a **grade of zero for a quiz** you do not complete (or “miss”). Only the top 6 quiz grades count toward this component grade so you have some flexibility if you are unable to complete all the quizzes for whatever reason.

### Term Paper I (20%) Term Paper II (25%)

There are two term papers in the course. Each will ask 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. Term Paper I is will be approx. 1500 words (roughly 6 pages, double-spaced) in length and Term Paper II will be approx. 2000 words (roughly 8 pages, double-spaced) in length. The specific length, questions, and rubrics for evaluation will outlined in the assignment sheets and will also be discussed each in more detail in advance of the deadlines. Note that extensive research will not be required for these papers.

**Final Exam (25%)**

The final exam for course is a take-home exam (consisting primarily of short answer and essay style questions) made available in the final week of classes and must be completed during the formal exam period and submitted through CULearn. Tips for how to approach the “exam” and the rubrics for evaluation will be discussed in advance of its release.

**NOTE:** As the “take home” exam is an exam there are **NO LATE penalties** for late submissions. Late exams **will not be accepted**. Extensions can only be granted by the Registrar’s Office after a formal application.

Complete the exam early, if possible. You have a considerable time period to complete it. If you anticipate **ANY issues** with submission please contact me directly (**not your TA**) ASAP to discuss it. Depending on circumstances I may be able to assist you in applying for a formal deferral from the Registrar.

**SCHEDULE**

The complete **Required Reading and Lecture topics schedule is available on CULearn**. If you have any questions or concerns about these topics or readings, please let me know via email. Please also note these other important term dates:

**September 7 – Statutory Holiday, University Closed**

**September 9 – Fall term begins**

**October 12 – Statutory holiday, University Closed**

**October 26 – 30 - Fall Term Break, No Classes**

**December 11 – Last Day of Fall Term Classes & Last day to hand in Fall Term work.**

**December 12-23 – Formally Scheduled Exams take place**

**STRATEGIES FOR SUCCESS IN EXTRAORDINARY TIMES**

The format and delivery of this course has been altered significantly to reflect the disruptions caused by the global pandemic. The most crucial changes are that lecture materials will be delivered **asynchronously (they will be pre-recorded and made available as per the schedule on CULearn)**. There will still be some more limited **synchronous** elements in the course (specifically the **Quizzes** and also some OPTIONAL **“Check-in”** sessions I will discuss in the first week’s video).

**My goal in this course to provide you, as students, with as much flexibility as possible whilst still acknowledging the administrative challenges of administering a large course in a way that is fair to everyone.**

**Here are a few interconnected concrete steps you can take to succeed in this course:**

- 1. Make a personal schedule and stick to it.**

The class structure very purposefully forces you to “stay on top of” the weekly work. I know that a steady drip of smaller work and assignments can be annoying, but the aim is to keep the stakes low and keep you engaged (which will improve your mark) – again, while also allowing at least some flexibility in when you complete the work. More than ever, it is critically important to keep up with the lectures and course materials. Especially now, **this course relies heavily on CULearn**. Be sure to check out the CULearn page and visit it often throughout the term (this should be part of your schedule/plan).

**2. Get it in!**

The grade weighting/ stakes on any individual component (aside from the Term Papers and Exam) are low (usually 5% or less of the course grade). Get this work in and get feedback on how to improve. (I know that *time management* can be a struggle but it is crucial for your long-term success!)

**3. Ask for help if you need help or if any course requirements are unclear.**

Your TAs and I are here to help you succeed in the course. While you may feel you are “on your own” because the course is largely asynchronous and we don’t have the pleasure of seeing one another in lecture hall or classroom every week, **you are not alone!**

Again, your TAs and I want you to succeed and so you should contact us if you have concerns! You are also part of a “class” and you should not underestimate the value of peer support and an academic community. Don’t be afraid to get to know your peers and ask (and answer their) questions on the course **Forums**. This may be intimidating at first, but more than ever your ought to recognize **you are part of a community of learning** in which we all have a shared interest in fostering understanding, disseminating knowledge and forwarding new ideas.

**4. Be open to new ideas and new ways of thinking (and communicating).**

Good courses ought to challenge us to think differently about what we think we already know and/or force us to find new ways to articulate our positions or experience. Consequently, they may prompt us to reflect on ourselves, our relationships with others, and the structures of the world around us. This can sometimes be an unsettling and uncomfortable process and different people react to these challenges very differently. In this class the source of these challenges may be the course materials (my lectures or the readings) but they may also come through interactions with your peers. The fact that our course takes place exclusively “online” means that our intentions and nuisance in our communication may be harder to measure. Be attentive to this fact and be “generous” in your communication with others in the class. Personal attacks in any part of the course (eg. the Forums) will not be tolerated (see the pinned “Ground rules” post on the Forums).

## **ACADEMIC ACCOMMODATIONS**

You may need special arrangements to meet your academic obligations during the term. For an accommodation request the processes are as follows: <https://carleton.ca/equity/wp-content/uploads/Student-Guide-to-Academic-Accommodation.pdf>

## **Pregnancy Obligation**

Please contact 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 Department of Equity and Inclusive Communities (EIC):

<https://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 Department of Equity and Inclusive Communities (EIC): <https://carleton.ca/equity/>

### **Academic Accommodations for Students with Disabilities**

If you have a documented disability requiring academic accommodations in this course, please contact The Paul Menton Centre (PMC) at 613-520-6608 or [pmc@carleton.ca](mailto: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 as soon as possible to ensure accommodation arrangements are made. Please consult the PMC Website for their deadline to request accommodations for the formally-scheduled exam (if applicable) <https://carleton.ca/pmc>

### **Survivors of Sexual Violence**

As a community, Carleton University is committed to maintaining a positive learning, working and living environment where sexual violence will not be tolerated, and survivors are supported through academic accommodations as per Carleton's Sexual Violence Policy. For more information about the services available at the university and to obtain information about sexual violence and/or support, visit: <https://carleton.ca/studentssupport/svpolicy/>

### **Accommodation for Student Activities**

Carleton University recognizes the substantial benefits, both to the individual student and for the university, that result from a student participating in activities beyond the classroom experience. Reasonable accommodation must be provided to students who compete or perform at the national or international level. Please contact your instructor 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. <https://carleton.ca/senate/wp-content/uploads/Accommodation-for-Student-Activities-1.pdf>

For more information on academic accommodation, please contact the departmental administrator or visit: <https://students.carleton.ca/services/accommodation/>

### **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: <https://carleton.ca/registrar/academic-integrity/>

### **Department 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: <https://carleton.ca/law/current-students/>

### **\*OTHER COURSE SPECIFIC POLICIES\***

(Please ask if there is any confusion or concern with any course-related policies!)

### **ASSIGNMENT FORMATTING and SUBMISSION**

Unless otherwise specified, any written work submitted in this course must be double-spaced, formatted to 12pt Times New Roman or Arial font with standard margins. Assignments normally must include your name and student number and the course code in the document's header (or on a title page). Title pages, bibliographies and extensive footnotes are not usually counted in determining an assignment's word count or page length.

Assignments are normally submitted **using the links provided for this specific purpose on the CULearn page for this course. It is your responsibility to ensure that assignments are submitted in a readable file format (usually .doc or .pdf formats) before the deadline.** If the assignment is unreadable it will not be considered submitted. If you anticipate any issues (technological or otherwise) you should discuss this with your TA or with me ASAP in advance of the deadline.

### **LATE ASSIGNMENTS & EXTENSIONS POLICY**

#### ***Why are deadlines so important?***

As already noted, there is a certain degree of flexibility for when the majority of class assignments in this course are submitted/completed. For other "higher stakes" assignments, like the Term Papers, a standard deadline ensures that everyone has roughly (in theory, I know) the same time to complete the work. This helps establish a minimal "baseline" that enables me to gauge, to a degree, "engagement and commitment" to this course. In practice, I fully understand you have competing commitments, responsibilities, and priorities. Some of these priorities may supersede this course and necessitate that some assignments be submitted late. While this is not ideal, it is why there is flexibility built into some submissions and why there is a policy for late submissions for major components.

Deadlines particularly matter in larger courses like this one where I rely on TAs to help grade course work. Teaching Assistants are students like you. They have their own assignments and course/research work to complete – and have their own deadlines (and in some limited cases, actual lives to live!). And currently they are also dealing with the uncertainty and disruptions caused by the pandemic. They need to plan their term schedule around when they have time to grade and complete feedback for their students and if your assignments or papers are constantly or significantly late then this puts additional pressure on them and complicates my



ability to maintain consistency in grades across the course.

**NOTE: A late assignment will normally be penalized 3% per day (e.g. a paper marked as a 68% that was 1 day late would receive a grade 65%) (unless otherwise specified on the assignment instructions).**

**Late assignments must be submitted normally through CULearn unless you are otherwise directed.**

**Email is NOT considered an acceptable means of submission for any assignment**

**Late assignment may not be graded and “returned” along normal timelines and the quantity of feedback you receive may be affected.**

### **Extension requests**

If you know in advance you will be unable to complete an assignment by the deadline you may request a deadline extension if you have a valid reason. For requests for extensions lasting **less than 7 days**, please complete the form at the following link and submit it to appropriate link on CULearn **prior to the assignment due date**: <https://carleton.ca/registrar/wp-content/uploads/self-declaration.pdf> (be sure to read this form carefully and check the relevant boxes).

**Extensions spanning longer than 7 days are not normally granted.** In those extraordinary cases where extensions lasting longer than 7 days are requested (e.g. in the case of prolonged medical issues), students should contact me directly (Steve) and may be required to provide additional information/documentation to justify the extension (usually up to a maximum of 14 days).

### **BACKUP COPIES**

Student must retain a “backup” 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 an academic integrity concern, a discrepancy in final grades or an issue with the files submitted to CULearn. Students must be able to produce a copy of assignments within 24hrs upon request.

### **REFERENCING & PLAGIARISM (Part II)**

Assignments in the course must be properly referenced and include a bibliography of all sources used in the preparation of the assignment (unless directed otherwise). I will provide some information on citation in advance of the **Term Paper** deadlines. The expectation is that you have a basic ability to reference and cite other’s work used in preparing your own assignments. As highlighted above, failure to reference properly or attempting to pass someone else’s ideas or work off as your own constitutes plagiarism. Both the university and I take it very seriously and so should you. Plagiarism can lead to penalties that are very serious. Recklessly or purposefully engaging in it is incredibly misguided. If you are struggling or unsure about how

best to use sources in preparing your work in the course, it is far better to contact me and talk to me about resources to help and about other assignment expectations.