



PSCI 3307

The Politics of Human Rights

Instructor: Noah Schwartz

Online Office Hours: Mondays: 13:00 – 14:00 (or by appointment) through CuLearn

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Course Description

There is no better time to discuss human rights than during a period of crisis. The political fallout from the COVID-19 pandemic has raised several questions central to human rights, but these questions are far from new. While the term “human rights” is often thrown around in conversation, the concept is highly contested. What are human rights? Where do they come from? Who has them? Who is responsible for protecting them? How do we balance rights and security? These are some of the key questions we will tackle in this course.

This course blends asynchronous (on your own time) and synchronous learning. The course is six (6) weeks long and contains twelve (12) modules. Students are expected to complete two (2) modules per week. This will include completing the readings, watching the recorded lectures through CuLearn, and participating in one (1) online discussion group per week.

The course is divided into two halves. The first half of the course provides the historical and theoretical background information necessary to have an informed discussion of human rights. The second half of the course focuses on unpacking case studies by applying those theories. The course is organized around four central learning outcomes (LOs). Please take careful note of the LOs for the course, as they will guide *everything* that we do this term.

Learning Outcomes

By the end of the course, you will be able to:

- 1) **Distinguish** between the major theoretical perspectives on human rights. This includes being able to:
 - Define the major theoretical perspectives.
 - Outline the key ideas of each theory.
 - Explain the major strengths and weaknesses of each theory.
- 2) **Analyze** important human rights issues using the theoretical tools from the course. This includes being able to:
 - Identify key human rights issues.
 - Apply theories and concepts from the course to unpack key domestic and international human rights issues.
- 3) Demonstrate the ability to **acknowledge** and **respect** alternate views. Including being able to:
 - Discuss, in good faith, the main arguments of positions that you may disagree with.
 - Engage respectfully in debates with those whose ideas you oppose.
- 4) **Write** a research paper taking an informed position on a human rights issue. This involves being able to:
 - Identify relevant scholarly research on the topic.
 - Develop a research question and a specific, argumentative thesis statement.
 - Defend your thesis statement with evidence from relevant scholarly sources from the fields of human rights, political science, or a related discipline.
 - Demonstrate the ability to cite sources using a major academic citation style (APA, MLA, Chicago, Harvard, etc.)

Discussion Groups:

Discussion groups will take place in an online environment through **Big Blue Button**. You can access them through the course CuLearn Page. Students are **not** required to have/use a webcam to participate; however, being able to meet face to face creates a more personal learning environment.

Students will be divided into two groups:

Group A – Wednesdays, 14:35-15:25

Surname (last name) starts with the letter A-K.

Group B – Wednesdays, 15:35-16:25

Surname (last name) starts with the letter L-Z.

Assessments:

Note – All assessments are to be submitted on CuLearn by 10:00 pm on the due date.

Introduce Yourself/Syllabus Check (5%) – Due Friday, July 10 by 10:00 pm on CuLearn.

Online courses can feel isolating and anonymous, so let's get to know one another! Please post a short 200-word paragraph introducing yourself to your classmates in the "Introduce Yourself" discussion board on CuLearn. Feel free to be creative. You are welcome to include a picture of yourself (or your pet!) in your post (but this is **not** mandatory). You are also welcome to record your introduction as a video rather than text. Your introduction should answer the following questions:

Basic Info – Your preferred name, hometown, and degree major. *i.e. Rajesh from Barrie majoring in Health Science.*

Course Info – Why are you taking this course? What topic are you most excited for?

Career/Life Goals – What do you want to do after university? What do you want to achieve?

Fun Fact – Tell us a fun fact about yourself! *i.e. in my spare time, I own and operate a private zoo full of exotic animals, like Tigers.*

This assignment is **pass/fail**.

Participation (15%) – Ongoing.

The participation grade will be made up of weekly **online** discussion groups. We will use Big Blue Button to hold discussion groups through CuLearn. Discussion groups will take place on Wednesdays only (one per week). Students will be divided randomly into two groups. Your

participation grade is based on: (1) your attendance in discussion groups, and (2) the **frequency** and **quality** of your contributions to discussions. It is not enough to simply attend the online discussion groups to achieve a good participation grade. You must participate actively.

Annotated Bibliography (10%) – Due Friday, July 17 by 10:00 pm on CuLearn.

An annotated bibliography provides a properly formatted list of some of the sources you will use for your final paper, as well as a brief explanation of why they are useful to your project. Your annotated bibliography should begin with a 200-300 word explanation of your idea. This should contain a topic for your paper and a tentative research question.

This research question should not just be a restatement of the essay prompt (see Final Paper Guide on CuLearn). You must show that you have thought about the prompt, done some initial research, and come up with a more specific research question.

You must then identify your first **five (5) academic sources** for your paper. You must write a short paragraph for each source that lays out: a summary of the article/book and how this source will be useful for your paper (i.e. providing you with background information on your chosen theory or case study, supporting one of your arguments, etc.).

Secret Questions (5%) – Due by (1) Friday, July 24 at 10:00 pm and (2) Friday, August 7 at 10:00 pm

Two secret questions will be included in the lectures (one in modules 1-6, and one in modules 7-12). These will **not** be included in the PowerPoint slides. You must watch the lectures to get the secret questions. You will write a 200-300 word response to each question. Please cite any course material you refer to in preparing your answer. You do **not** need to use outside material, but please cite appropriately if you do.

Midterm Checkup (25%) – Monday, July 27. It can be completed anytime between 8 am and 10 pm. Once you start the test, you have 2hrs to complete it.

This 2hr online test will be made up of three (3) **short answer** questions and one (1) **essay question**. Short answer questions will be centered around key concepts. Students should be able to **define, explain** the significance of, and provide an **example** for each of the key concepts. The essay question requires students to write a short essay on a given question. The short essay should include a **thesis statement** and be properly **structured** with an introduction, body, and conclusion.

Paper Abstract (10%) – Due by Friday, July 31 at 10:00 pm.

An abstract is like a summary of a paper. They are usually placed before the paper in academic journals. When applying for conferences, academics are usually asked to submit a short abstract of their paper. For this assignment, you must submit a short, 250-word abstract that

introduces: (1) the topic of your paper, (2) your research question, (3) your tentative thesis statement, and (4) a summary of your main arguments so far.

Final Paper (30%) – Due by Friday, August 14 at 10:00 pm.

The final paper is the major summative assignment for this course. It should be 2500-3000 words (approx. 10-12 pages). Your paper should be based on one of the prompts listed in the final paper guide on CuLearn. This will balance the need to make sure final papers stay within the subject matter of the course, while also ensuring that students have the flexibility to research a case study or issue that interests them. Please see the final paper guide for more information.

Teaching Approach

The focus of this course is on **active learning**. As a result, you are expected to take **responsibility** for your learning. Keeping up with weekly readings will be important, as not all course content will be directly delivered during the modules. You are expected to come to the discussion groups prepared to discuss the key concepts from the readings.

Materials

To ensure that the requirements for this course do not contradict public health guidelines regarding social distancing, all readings for this course will be made available **online** through the **ARES** system on CuLearn, or the Carleton Library website.

CuLearn Disclaimer

Given that this is a human rights class, it is important to note that students should not have the expectation of privacy when using CuLearn. Students should be aware that **any** activity that they engage in on CuLearn is visible to the course instructor. That means that the instructor for any course (not just this one) can track: how often each student signs in to CuLearn, which documents they open, how long they spend on a given page or activity, etc.

Module Schedule/Readings

My philosophy on course readings is one of academic pragmatism. I understand that students face enormous pressure as a result of academic expectations, part-time jobs, family expectations, life stresses, etc. In a normal academic course, most students read selectively, and many ignore the readings altogether (albeit to their detriment).

Let's make a deal. I have narrowed down the readings to the **bare essentials**. I've tried to focus on having 1-3 readings **max** per module. In some weeks, there is even a choice of readings

(whenever you see “OR” in the reading list, you only need to read one of the two readings that it is in between). I have also assigned a mix of secondary and primary sources.

The deal is that you have to do the readings. Does this mean reading each one in its entirety? No. But please try to read as much as you can. The more you read the higher your grade will be.

Week of July 6-10

Module 1 – Are human rights political?

Readings	The Politics of Human Rights – Tony Evans Ch. 1 The Politics of Universal Human Rights. AND The UN Declaration of Human Rights (1948).
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Module 2 – What are Human Rights? Where do they come from?

Readings	Human Rights – Politics and Practice – Michael Goodhart (ed.) Ch. 2 Normative and Theoretical Foundations of Human Rights (by Anthony J. Langlois). AND US Declaration of Independence (1776) OR The Declaration of the Rights of Man and the Citizen (1789).
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Week of July 13-17

Module 3 – What are political and civil rights?

Readings	Christian Davenport (2016) “Political Democracy and State Repression of Minorities” in Human Rights: Politics in Practice, Chapter 14. (You only need to read pages 235-238, 240-243, 248-250).
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	<p>AND</p> <p>Amartya Sen (1999) “Democracy as a Universal Value” Journal of Democracy 10(3): 3-17.</p> <p>AND</p> <p>International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR), Articles 1-27</p>
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Module 4 – What are economic and social rights?

Readings	<p>Susan Kang and Jennifer Rutledge, “Whither Economic and Social Rights? Assessing the Position of Economic and Social Rights in the Neoliberal, Post-Crisis Context”, in Gordon DiGiacomo (eds.), Human Rights. Current Issues and Controversies (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2016), pp. 359-380.</p> <p>AND</p> <p>International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (1966), Articles 1-15</p>
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Week of July 20-24

Module 5 – Who protects human rights in the era of Globalization?

Readings	<p>Tony Evans, “Chapter 5: Globalization, Democracy and Human Rights”, pp. 101-125.</p> <p>AND</p> <p>Jack Donnelly (2014) “State Sovereignty and International Human Rights” Ethics and International Affairs 28(2): 225-238.</p>
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Module 6 – Are human rights a universal? Are human rights a discourse?

Readings	<p>Tony Evans, “Chapter 2: The Discourse of Universal Human Rights”, pp. 35-54.</p> <p>OR</p>
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	Jack Donnelly. “Universal Human Rights in Theory and Practice”. Chapter 7 “Universality in a World of Particularities”, pp. 106-118.
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Week of July 27-31

Module 7 – Midterm checkup (July 27)

Readings	No readings. Please complete the midterm checkup through CuLearn.
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Module 8 – What are genocide and crimes against humanity?

Readings	<p>Jack Donnelly, Universal Human Rights in Theory and Practice, Chap. 15: “Humanitarian Intervention Against Genocide”, p. 254-273.</p> <p>AND</p> <p>Luke Glanville (2011), “Darfur and the Responsibilities of Sovereignty” International Journal of Human Rights 15(3): 462-480.</p> <p>OR</p> <p>Akhavan, Ashraph, Barzani & Matyas (2020), “What Justice for the Yazidi Genocide?: Voices from Below”, Human Rights Quarterly, 42: 1-47.</p>
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Week of August 3-7

Module 9 – How have people and groups claimed rights?

Readings	<p>Daniel D. Polsby & Don B. Kates Jr. “Of Holocausts and Gun Control”. Washington University Law Quarterly 75: 1237-1276.</p> <p>AND</p>
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	<p>R. Blake Brown (2017). “Firearm ‘Rights’ in Canada: Law and History in the Debates over Gun Control”. <i>Canadian Journal of Law and Society</i> 32(1): 97-116.</p> <p>AND</p> <p>Watch Vice News, <i>Armed and Reasonable</i>. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=q9E17gEvJWU</p>
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Module 10 – What are women’s rights and LGBTQ+ rights?

<p>Readings</p>	<p>Gail Binion, ‘Human Rights: A Feminist Perspective’, <i>Human Rights Quarterly</i> 17(3), 1995:509-526.</p> <p>AND</p> <p>Christine Keating (Cricket) and Cynthia Burack (2016) “Sexual Orientation, Gender Identity, and Human Rights” in <i>Human Rights: Politics in Practice</i>, Chapter 11, 182-197.</p> <p>AND</p> <p>The Yogyakarta Principles https://yogyakartaprinciples.org/principles-en/</p>
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Week of August 10-14

Module 11 – What are indigenous rights?

<p>Readings</p>	<p>Ulf Johansson Dahre, “The Politics of Human Rights: Indigenous Peoples and the Conflict on Collective Human Rights”, <i>The International Journal of Human Rights</i>, 12, (1), 2008, pp. 41–52.</p> <p>AND</p> <p>Sheryl Lightfoot (2016) <i>Global Indigenous Politics: A Subtle Revolution</i>, Ch 1 – Indigenous Politics as Global Change</p>
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Module 12 – How can we reconcile human rights and security?

Readings	<p>David Luban, “Eight Fallacies about Liberty and Security.” In Human Rights and The War on Terror. Ed. Richard Ashby Wilson, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005). pp242-257.</p> <p>AND</p> <p>Peter Gallison and Martha Minnow, “Our Privacy, Ourselves in the Age of Technological Intrusions.” In Human Rights and The War on Terror. Ed. Richard Ashby Wilson, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005). Pp- 258-294.</p> <p><i>(Note – This reading may be replaced if a suitable COVID-19 related reading is published within the next few months. You will be given at least 14-days notice should this occur).</i></p>
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Course Policies

Illness

We are living amid an unprecedented public health crisis. Now, more than ever, it is important to take care of our physical and mental health. **Please contact me as soon as possible** if you are suffering a ***physical*** or ***mental*** health-related problem and require accommodations.

Please also remember to wash your hands regularly with soap and water for at least 20 seconds, and follow all public health guidelines. These can be found at:

1. The City of Ottawa: <https://www.ottawapublichealth.ca/en/index.aspx>
2. Government of Ontario: <https://covid-19.ontario.ca/>
3. Government of Canada: <https://www.canada.ca/en/public-health/services/diseases/coronavirus-disease-covid-19.html>

Late Papers

All assignments should be submitted through CuLearn. All assignments are due, at the latest, by 10:00 pm on the assigned due date. There will be a **5% per day** late penalty on all assignments unless you have contacted me in advance with a legitimate reason for being late.

Extensions will be handled on a case by case basis. Please email me ***at least 48hrs before the due date of the assignment*** if you wish to request an extension. Legitimate excuses for extensions include, but are not limited to illness, mental health issues, documented learning disability, death/illness of a family member/friend, providing support for a sick friend/family

member/roommate, etc. Barring exceptional circumstances, late assignments will not be accepted more than **three (3) days** after the original deadline.

24hr Policy

Requests to meet to discuss a grade on a paper will not be acknowledged until 24hrs after the paper has been handed back. This is to allow for you to have a cool-off period and reflect on the comments on your assignment.

Course Conduct

There is an expectation that everyone in this course will be committed to the pursuit of scholarly exploration, knowledge acquisition, and intellectual freedom. When contentious issues are being discussed, it is expected that everyone will comport themselves in a spirit of mutual respect and exchange. Rudeness, disruption, harassment, and threats will **not** be tolerated.

Carleton E-mail Accounts

All email communication to students will be **via official Carleton university e-mail accounts and/or cuLearn**. As an important course and University information is distributed this way, it is the student's responsibility to monitor their Carleton and cuLearn accounts

Requests for Academic Accommodation

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

Pregnancy obligation

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. For more details, visit the Equity Services website: carleton.ca/equity/wp-content/uploads/Student-Guide-to-Academic-Accommodation.pdf

Religious obligation

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. For more details, visit the Equity Services website: carleton.ca/equity/wp-content/uploads/Student-Guide-to-Academic-Accommodation.pdf

Academic Accommodations for Students with Disabilities

If you have a documented disability requiring academic accommodations in this course, please contact the Paul Menton Centre for Students with Disabilities (PMC) at 613-520-6608 or pmc@carleton.ca for a formal evaluation or contact your PMC coordinator to send your instructor your Letter of Accommodation at the beginning of the term. You must also contact

the PMC 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 your instructor as soon as possible to ensure accommodation arrangements are made.

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 its 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: carleton.ca/sexual-violence-support

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: students.carleton.ca/course-outline

Plagiarism

The University Senate defines plagiarism as “presenting, whether intentional or not, the ideas, expression of ideas or work of others as one’s own.” This can include:

- 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;
- submitting a take-home examination, essay, laboratory report or other assignment written, in whole or in part, by someone else;
- using ideas or direct, verbatim quotations, or paraphrased material, concepts, or ideas without appropriate acknowledgment in any academic assignment;
- using another’s data or research findings;
- failing to acknowledge sources through the use of proper citations when using another’s works and/or failing to use quotation marks;
- handing in "substantially the same piece of work for academic credit more than once without prior written permission of the course instructor in which the submission occurs.

Plagiarism is a serious offence which cannot be resolved directly with the course's instructor. The Associate Deans of the Faculty conduct a rigorous investigation, including an interview with the student, when an instructor suspects a piece of work has been plagiarized. Penalties are not trivial. They may include a mark of zero for the plagiarized work or a final grade of "F" for the course.

Student or professor materials created for this course (including presentations and posted notes, labs, case studies, assignments and exams) remain the intellectual property of the author(s). They are intended for personal use and may not be reproduced or redistributed without prior written consent of the author(s).

Submission and Return of Term Work

Papers must be submitted directly to the instructor according to the instructions in the course outline and will not be date-stamped in the departmental office. Late assignments may be submitted to the drop box in the corridor outside B640 Loeb. Assignments will be retrieved every business day at **4 p.m.**, stamped with that day's date, and then distributed to the instructor. For essays not returned in class please attach a **stamped, self-addressed envelope** if you wish to have your assignment returned by mail. Final exams are intended solely for the purpose of evaluation and will not be returned.

Grading

Standing in a course is determined by the course instructor, subject to the approval of the faculty Dean. Final standing in courses will be shown by alphabetical grades. The system of grades used, with corresponding grade points is:

Percentage	Letter grade	12-point scale	Percentage	Letter grade	12-point scale
90-100	A+	12	67-69	C+	6
85-89	A	11	63-66	C	5
80-84	A-	10	60-62	C-	4
77-79	B+	9	57-59	D+	3
73-76	B	8	53-56	D	2
70-72	B-	7	50-52	D-	1

Approval of final grades

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

Carleton Political Science Society

"The Carleton Political Science Society (CPSS) has made its mission to provide a social environment for politically inclined students and faculty. By hosting social events, including Model Parliament, debates, professional development sessions and more, CPSS aims to involve all political science students at Carleton University. Our mandate is to arrange social and academic activities in order to instill a sense of belonging within the Department and the larger University community. Members can benefit through our networking opportunities, academic engagement initiatives and numerous events which aim to complement both academic and social life at Carleton University. To find out more, visit us on Facebook <https://www.facebook.com/CarletonPoliticalScienceSociety/> and our website <https://carletonpss.com/>, or stop by our office in Loeb D688!"

Official Course Outline

The course outline posted to the Political Science website is the official course outline.