

Carleton University
Department of Political Science
<https://carleton.ca/polisci/>

Fall 2020

PSCI 3307 A
Politics of Human Rights
Wed. 1135-1425

Online and asynchronous: Listen to the recorded lectures, do the readings, respond to the discussion questions, for about one lecture session a week.

Professor: Peter Atack

Office hours. We can't hold these. Instead call me at home Monday- Friday 11-4

Home number: 613-724-2437

Email: peter.atack@carleton.ca (please put PSCI3307 in subject line). Note please give me 48 hours for a reply, Monday to Friday. Sometimes, for mysterious reasons, this Carleton address may not work. Home email patack@rogers.com (everything goes there anyway).

Welcome to the course

This course is designed to introduce students to some of the contentious issues surrounding human rights. We ask difficult questions about human rights so we can understand where they came from, who do they serve, and why do they matter. We will trace from where the concept of human rights came from so that we may understand the specific forms and norms they have taken in this Western (un)Civilization. We will re-examine some the philosophic roots of the concept of rights to determine whether rights are universal or only a reflection of a particular history, a specific set of economic arrangements or a peculiar set of ideological biases. We will also examine the political, social and economic functions of human rights so that we may understand both their relative importance but also to examine how they can be fulfilled and protected.

Because human rights are so central to our conception of our identities, our society and our values both shared and disputed, it will require intellectual discipline and openness to freely and fairly examine these issues. Students will be expected to come prepared and open minded to the lectures. After the lectures engage with your fellow students online in discussion fora to spark your own thinking and growth. Understanding these issues also requires a willingness to question one's own ideas, ideals and values. Because this is such a contentious topic that requires self examination, students should listen to the lectures and discuss things afterwards online.

Students are given the opportunity to explore additional issues that emerge from the course in their term paper.

cuLearn content. Students will find 8 useful sections on the web site

1. Power point slides: These contain:
 - A) A list of concepts, places, terms and people.

- B) Quotations that are used in the lecture,
 - C) Learning outcomes for the lecture.
 - D) Images used to illustrate the subject.
 - E) Summary of the central points and ideas raised in the lecture. However, since any good lecture (and lecturer) will have more to say than just the power point slides do listen to the big blue button lectures and have fun thinking.
2. Big Blue button lectures. Recorded as the term progresses.
 3. Weekly discussion fora with a horrible nasty moral and ethical question to provoke thought.
 4. Question for clarification to the professor on a weekly basis.
 3. A list of song titles and film suggestions pertaining to human rights.
 4. Clippings: These are short articles relating to human rights usually from non-academic sources. They can be read for interest but are not mandatory. If you have suggestions or interesting things you want to share, send it to me and I'll post it.
 5. Instructions and helpful hints for the assignments. They will contain useful information and FAQs.
 6. Readings. Are now all available online through the Library link. Does not include the course textbook.
 7. Drop boxes for the assignments. Open before due dates and usually a bit after. There will be late boxes

Required Readings and Course Text: Required readings are available online. The only course text is Tony Evans, *The Politics of Human Rights: a Global Perspective*. 2nd Edition (London: Pluto Press, 2005). Available for purchase at Octopus Books in the Glebe at 113 Third Avenue almost at the corner of Bank. They do run a website for shipping.

Course Requirements:

- Participation: 10%: Participate in the discussion for a, ask questions. Let's break the covid wall.
- Proposal: 15% October 7th
- Critical interpretation of popular culture
15%: Due November 11th
- Research Paper: 30%: December 9th.
- Final Exam: 30%: During Final Exam Period

Participation: While I suspect the big brother of cuLearn records who listens to the lectures and hence I could check this for attendance, it feels like an invasion of your privacy. Yet, in the past students who come, listened and participated learned so much more than the ghosts who don't attend. Instead I'd like to use the discussion questions for this. I won't mark or correct these posts but speaking up and writing will be noted, noticed and rewarded. Posting a question to the professor also works for this.

Proposal: must include: two double-spaced pages (essay and paragraph format) explaining the proposed essay. The two page length does not include a bibliography. The proposal must include 1) a clear research question or what is it you are going to examine 2) a description of what issues you are going to examine in order to answer your question, and 3) a tentative thesis statement which is essentially the one sentence answer to your question and also 4) a bibliography with at least 8 academic sources. Warning: a research paper proposal is not an outline. **Due Date: Oct 4th**

Critical interpretation of popular culture: must be 5-6 pages, double spaced and paginated. One of the crucial lessons of the course is that popular culture reflects our belief in the values of human rights. Taking either one of the songs or films listed on culearn, comment on how this song or film critically or uncritically reflects the values of human rights. It is permissible to use either a music video or film not listed as long as it's easily available online. However documentaries would not be suitable for this assignment. How has popular culture in this instance helped to push forward the human rights agenda? Are there silences that reveal our own hidden assumptions about human rights? **Due date: Nov 8th**

Research Paper: must be 12-15 pages in length. Essays should be double-spaced. Essays should include a title page, page numbers and bibliography. Essays will be on a topic of your choice that relates to human rights. Essays can either be a critical philosophy piece on an issue in the literature on human rights or an examination of case study. **Due date: Nov 29th.**

Final Exam: will be conducted during the final exam period on the content of the course. The purpose of the exam is for the student to be able to discuss their understanding of the issues rather than simply be tested on specific readings. Online we have been releasing the exam on a set date, emailing it to you and then you put it in the online dropbox.

COURSE OUTLINE

This course will be delivered asynchronously; in other words lectures will be recorded so students can access them throughout the term. However, lectures and subjects are better intellectually digested about one per week, rather than in a rush before exams. Therefore lectures will be released by the dates listed in the syllabus, based on a Wednesday class rotation. Listen to them during the week listed at your leisure.

Week 1 (Week of Wednesday September 9th) Lecture 1: Introduction to the Course.

Review of course requirements.

What are human rights? Where did they come from? Who benefits from a belief in human rights and how? Who benefits from a rejection of human rights? How can we discuss human rights and our values in a way that will lead to mutual understanding and learning rather than offense?

Required Reading

Tony Evans, *The Politics of Human Rights: a Global Perspective*. 2nd Edition (London: Pluto Press, 2005).

Week 2 (Week of Wednesday, September 16th) Lecture 2 A history of human rights: from religious toleration to social rights.

In what historical context did human rights arise as political solutions to unsolvable and irreconcilable conflicts?

What philosophic arguments were made that generated a discourse of rights that developed from the fifteenth to the twenty first century?

Required Reading

Micheline Ishay, 'What are human rights?: six historical controversies', *Journal of Human Rights*, 3(3), 2004 (available on-line; search journal title in Library Catalogue).

Michael Freeman *Human Rights* (London, Polity Press) Chapter 2

Jeremy Waldron (ed.), *Nonsense Upon Stilts*, London, Methuen, 1987, Chapters 1 and 2

Week 3, Week of Wednesday September 23rd) Lecture 3 : The Liberal Project and its socialist challenge.

What are the foundational rights of liberalism? Are certain liberal rights a precondition for democracy? Economic and Collective Rights: Do these rights limit only the state but also citizen's actions? What economic changes seemed to support and be supported by human rights? Does the inclusion of labour rights challenge or support capitalism? Is there a right to welfare? Why did capitalism need Keynesianism?

Required Reading

Neil Stammers, "Politics and Human Rights." *Political Studies* Volume 41, March 1993, 70-82.
Phillip Schmitter and Terry Lynn Karl, "What Democracy is ... and is not." *Journal of Democracy*, Volume 2, No.3 Summer 1991. pp-75-88.
Tony Evans, *The Politics of Human Rights: a Global Perspective*. 2nd Edition (London: Pluto Press, 2005). Ch. 1&2.

Week 4, (Week of Wednesday September 30th) Lecture 4: The right to self-determination and nationalism.

Required Reading;

Charles Taylor, "The Politics of Recognition." In *Multiculturalism: Examining the Politics of Recognition*. (Princeton N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1994).

Week 5 (Week of October 7th) Lecture 5

Post modern Critical readings of human rights.

Are rights universal or only reflective of a particular culture and history? Is the project of human rights just another imperial project that this time justifies rule by the United States?

Required Readings

Michael Ignatieff, "Human Rights as Idolatry." In *Human Rights as Politics and Idolatry*. Ed. Amy Gutman. (Princeton N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1994).
Michael Freeman *Human Rights* (London, Polity Press) Chapter 6.
Tony Evans, *The Politics of Human Rights: a Global Perspective*. 2nd Edition (London: Pluto Press, 2005). Ch.4.

Research Proposal due! Wednesday October 7th

Week 6 (Week of October 14th) Lecture 6

Human rights and the other: Who gets excluded and why? Who gets rights? Feminist readings of Human Rights.

Are women's rights not universal? When we demand universal human rights how do we understand different constructions of gender? How we judge patriarchy without succumbing to cultural imperialism? Why is gender so contentious and useful for nationalist and conservative mobilization?

Required Readings

Charlotte Bunch, 'Women's Rights as Human Rights: Towards a Re-Vision of Human Rights', *Human Rights Quarterly* (12), 1990, pp. 486-500 (available on-line).
Gail Binion, 'Human Rights: A Feminist Perspective', *Human Rights Quarterly* 17(3), 1995:509-526 (available on-line)

Week 7 (Week of October 21st) Lecture 7 Indigenous Rights.

How did different types of imperialism address indigenous peoples' rights upon colonization? Who has the right to self-determination? How do First Nations coexist within a larger community? Does the indigenous prophet the Great Peacemaker of the Haudenosaunee offer a different kind of politics as a way forward? Does restorative justice offer us a way forward to real reconciliation?

Required Readings:

Cindy Holder, Jeff J. Cornthassel, "Indigenous Peoples and Multicultural Citizenship: Bridging Collective and Individual Rights." *Human Rights Quarterly* Vol. 24 No. 1 February 2002. pp-126-151.

Week 8 Week of October 28th Reading Week Email and call

Week 9 November 4th Lecture 8 Genocide

From the Holocaust (or Shoah) to Rwanda, when can we say never again? What causes genocides, what does it tell us about modernity, what effects have these crimes had?

Required Reading

Jacques Semelin, "Toward a vocabulary of massacre and genocide." *Journal of Genocide Research* (2003) 5(2), pp. 193-210

Scott Straus, "Genocide and Human Rights." In *Human Rights Politics and Practice* Michael Goldhart ed. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009)

Week 10 Lecture 9 (November 11th): Lynch mobs, sharecropping and segregation, The New Jim Crow, grey wastes and Neoliberal orders.

What is the relationship between the use of violence by non-state actors to maintain oppression and economic exploitation and plantation agriculture?

How has the extra-legal use of violence and the carceral state been used to discipline labour and guarantee capital?

Race, class, relations of production in the United States.

What are you going to do when they come for you? What do you do when the state declares war on its citizens? Does the new Jim Crow need a new John Brown or Black Panther?

Required Reading

Ta-nehisi Coates, *We were Eight Years in Power: An American Tragedy.* "The Black family in the Age of Mass Incarceration." (New York, One World Publishing, 2017) pp. 223-281.

Critical Reading of Popular Culture Due!

Week 11 November 18th Lecture 10: What is to be Done? Night and Fog, death Squads and Transitional Justice.

Repression under authoritarian regimes involved the use of extralegal regimes of state terror or night and fog terror tactics and death squads. The transition to new democratic regimes involved creating new forms of justice and reconciliation.

How do societies heal after civil wars and crimes against humanity? The case for (and against) truth and reconciliation commissions. Do they lead to peace or justice?

Required readings:

Adam Jones, "Review: Parainstitutional violence in Latin America." *Latin American Politics and Society*, 46:4 Winter 2004. pp.- 127-148.

James Cockayne, "Hybrids or Mongrels? International War Crimes Trials as degradation ceremonies." *Journal of Human Rights*, 4:4, 2005. pp.445-473

Roy Lidlicker, "Ethical Advice, Conflict management vs. human rights in ending civil wars." *Journal of Human Rights*, 7:4 2008. pp. 376-387.

Week 12 November 25th Lecture 11 , Crimes in the War against Terror and the Surveillance State

Rendition, torture and Guantanamo. How has the war against terror been a war against human rights? Big brother is watching you, and they now have the technology to do it (badly). How governments are using algorithms to listen to us all. How the method of a surveillance state may support the new global order.

Required Reading

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.

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. especially 258-268, 273-289.

Week 13 December 2nd Lecture 12: The politics of Migration: Human right or a method for ensuring insecurity

The case of the Irish potato famine and migration compared to contemporary illegal immigration in the US. How does this issue reflect ideology around belonging rights and economic need?

Linda Allegro, "Latino Migrations to the U.S. Heartland : "Illegality," State Controls, and Implications for transborder labour rights." *Latin American Perspectives* 2010:30 pg 172

Week 14: December 9th Lecture Thirteen Globalization and Human Rights (Research Paper is due) December 9th.

The growth of globally based movements and organizations for human rights has fundamentally changed how we successfully pursue protecting human rights as universal rights. But at the same time what we can demand as rights have been restricted and

reduced by the neoliberal global order. Are human rights without rights to social and economic resources simply “nonsense upon stilts”? Does the discontent with globalization stem from the death of democracy?

Tony Evans Chapter 4, 5.

Academic Accommodations

Late Penalties: We are all struggling to get used to this brave new world of online classes. Therefore reasonable accommodations and extensions will be available to all students for assignments. Just email or speak to the professor. There is an official late penalty of ½ % to your final grade for late papers. **Note university regulations require that all course work be handed in by end of classes or December 11th.**

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.

Accommodations during COVID

Due to COVID, instructors will not request or require a doctor’s note when students seek accommodation for missed term work or exams due to illness. Instead, students will be asked to complete the self-declaration form available here: https://carleton.ca/registrar/wp-content/uploads/COVID-19_Self-declaration.pdf

Pregnancy

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

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.

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

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.

More information on the University’s Academic Integrity Policy can be found at: <https://carleton.ca/registrar/academic-integrity/>

Intellectual property

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).

Carleton E-mail Accounts

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

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.