

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

Fall 2023

PSCI 3307 A
Politics of Human Rights
Monday 11:35-2:25
SP 33

This course will be conducted in person via live lectures. Our experiences over the last few years with online learning has taught me how psychologically difficult and alienating online learning can be for students. Yet some features were educationally useful for students, and features we used online will be used going forward. For example, last year's lectures were recorded and then available all term. This meant students could listen to and absorb all the lectures at their own pace which improved the overall quality, breadth and thoughtfulness of exam answers. Gradebook improved marking and responses to student papers, with extra time required in chasing down student errors (note please check that you are submitting your answer and not the original assignment).

What I propose to experiment with this term is providing previous year's prerecorded lectures as a resource for students who miss a week's lecture and want to catch up. Note however that lectures get updated and changed every year. Last year's anti-Trump jibes will be replaced by Gilead and Aunt Lydia comments, though sadly the Trump worries may again be more relevant than ever, but both are illustrating important points about the politics of human rights.

Live and participatory lectures.

Live lectures allow the lecturer to respond to the events of the day, student comments, questions and even confused looks in ways that surpass a written set of lecture notes. Students also have the opportunity to engage with each other in class discussions about issues. So come, laugh, think and learn.

Professor: Peter Atack

Office: Loeb B647

Office hours: Monday 3-5 or by phone 613-617-0458. Note this is my cell number. If it is busy, leave a message and email me and I'll call you back.

Email: peteratack@cunet.carleton.ca (please put PSCI3307 in subject line). Note please give me 48 hours for a reply, Monday to Friday.

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, a peculiar set of ideological biases or a vestigial remnant of long forgotten and repressed conflicts. 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. Remember to always listen to each other's ideas and viewpoints, you will be surprised at what we all can learn. Students will be expected to come prepared and open minded to the lectures. Students are given the opportunity to explore additional issues that emerge from the course in their term paper.

Brightspace content. Students will find 7 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 lectures and have fun thinking.
2. Lectures. Recorded previously. Note that while the content of lectures always changes, and hence the powerpoints change too, you may find it useful to listen to these if you miss a lecture. Jibes, jokes and comments may change, but the song remains the same.
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. Note that they are not a rubric or a list of instructions that must always be followed but rather meant to be a helpful guide to help you begin to learn and think about the assignments, and even giggle at errors to be avoided.
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. Since the lockdowns, I have found that students need a bit more leeway and understanding when it comes to handing in work. Therefore,

each assignment except the final paper has a bit of extra time included by having a later end date than due date. If life intervenes and you need more time, the professor can and will extend dates. Email me with requests.

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%: Ask questions, participate in group discussions, contribute to class. Let's break the covid wall.
Proposal: 15% October 4th
Critical interpretation of popular culture 15% November 13th
Research Paper: 30% December 8th.
Final Exam: 30% During Final Exam Period

Participation: Students who come, listen and participate learn so much more than the ghosts who don't attend. While I don't expect perfect attendance, I have found that students who come to lectures do far better on the final exam.

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 Brightspace, 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 13th**

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: December 8th.**

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 during the formal exam period.

COURSE OUTLINE

Week 1 (Monday September 11th) 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 (Monday, September 18th) 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, (Monday September 25th) 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, (Monday October 2nd) 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).

Research Proposal due! Monday October 2nd

Week 5 (Monday October 9th) Thanksgiving

Week 6 Lecture 5 (Monday October 16th)

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.

Week 7 Monday October 23rd Reading week

Week 8 (Monday October 30th) 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 9 Lecture 7 (Monday November 6th) 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 way forward to real reconciliation?

Required Readings:

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

Week 10 Lecture 8 (November 13th) 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

Critical Reading of Popular culture Due!

Week 11 Lecture 9 (November 20th): 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 new 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.

Week 12 Lecture 10 (November 27th): 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 13 December 4th 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 Friday December 8th 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

Research Paper due

Late Penalties and extensions: Courses and time in the term, sprint upon us all
Extensions are given out at the discretion of the instructor for personal, family or

health reasons. You must request extensions by email.. Otherwise, papers will be penalized at the rate of 2% a day. **Note that while the instructor is compassionate about late papers, university regulations require all course work be submitted by the end of classes.**

Appendix

Student Mental Health

As a university student, you may experience a range of mental health challenges that significantly impact your academic success and overall well-being. If you need help, please speak to someone. There are numerous resources available both on- and off-campus to support you. Here is a list that may be helpful:

Emergency Resources (on and off campus):

<https://carleton.ca/health/emergencies-and-crisis/emergency-numbers/>

- ***Carleton Resources:***

- Mental Health and Wellbeing: <https://carleton.ca/wellness/>
- Health & Counselling Services: <https://carleton.ca/health/>
- Paul Menton Centre: <https://carleton.ca/pmc/>
- Academic Advising Centre (AAC): <https://carleton.ca/academicadvising/>
- Centre for Student Academic Support (CSAS): <https://carleton.ca/csas/>
- Equity & Inclusivity Communities: <https://carleton.ca/equity/>

- ***Off Campus Resources:***

- Distress Centre of Ottawa and Region: (613) 238-3311 or TEXT: 343-306-5550, <https://www.dcottawa.on.ca/>
- Mental Health Crisis Service: (613) 722-6914, 1-866-996-0991, <http://www.crisisline.ca/>
- Empower Me: 1-844-741-6389, <https://students.carleton.ca/services/empower-me-counselling-services/>
- Good2Talk: 1-866-925-5454, <https://good2talk.ca/>
- The Walk-In Counselling Clinic: <https://walkincounselling.com>

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 accommodation: 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 accommodation regarding a formally-scheduled final exam, you must complete the Pregnancy Accommodation Form ([click here](#)).

Religious accommodation: 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 [click here](#).

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, reach out to your instructor as soon as possible to ensure accommodation arrangements are made. For more details, [click here](#).

Accommodation for student activities: Carleton University recognizes the substantial benefits, both to the individual student and to the university, that result from a student participating in activities beyond the classroom. Reasonable accommodation will be provided to students who engage in student activities 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. For more information, please [click here](#).

For more information on academic accommodation, please contact the departmental administrator or visit: students.carleton.ca/course-outline.

Sexual Violence Policy

As a community, Carleton University is committed to maintaining a positive learning, working and living environment where sexual violence will not be tolerated. 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.

Academic Integrity

Academic integrity is an essential element of a productive and successful career as a student. Carleton's [Academic Integrity Policy](#) addresses academic integrity violations, including plagiarism, unauthorized collaboration, misrepresentation, impersonation, withholding of records, obstruction/interference, disruption of instruction or examinations, improper access to and/or dissemination of information, or violation of test and examination rules. Students are required to familiarize themselves with the university's academic integrity rules.

Plagiarism

The Academic Integrity Policy defines plagiarism as “presenting, whether intentional or not, the ideas, expression of ideas or work of others as one’s own.” This 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, websites, 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, material on the internet and/or conversations.

Examples of plagiarism include, but are not limited to:

- Any submission prepared in whole or in part, by someone else;
- Using ideas or direct, verbatim quotations, paraphrased material, algorithms, formulae, scientific or mathematical concepts, or ideas without appropriate acknowledgment in any academic assignment;
- Using another’s data or research findings without appropriate acknowledgement;
- Submitting a computer program developed in whole or in part by someone else, with or without modifications, as one’s own; and
- failing to acknowledge sources through the use of proper citations when using another’s work and/or failing to use quotations marks.

Use of Artificial Intelligence

Unless explicitly permitted by the instructor in a particular course, any use of generative artificial intelligence (AI) tools to produce assessed content (e.g., text, code, equations, image, summary, video, etc.) is considered a violation of academic integrity standards.

Procedures in Cases of Suspected Violations

Violations of the Academic Integrity Policy are serious offences which cannot be resolved directly with the course’s instructor. When an instructor suspects a violation of the Academic Integrity Policy, the Associate Dean of the Faculty conducts a rigorous investigation, including an interview with the student. Penalties are not trivial. They may include a mark of zero for the assignment/exam in question 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).

Submission and Return of Term Work

Papers must be submitted directly to the instructor according to the instructions in the course outline. The departmental office will not accept assignments submitted in hard copy.

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

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 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 Brightspace. As important course and university information is distributed this way, it is the student’s responsibility to monitor their Carleton University email accounts and Brightspace.

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/>.

Official Course Outline

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