PSCI 3307 (A)  
Politics of Human Rights  
Tuesdays, 2:35 pm – 5:25 pm  
Please confirm location on Carleton Central

Instructor: Sophie Marcotte Chenard  
Office: Loeb D690  
Office Hours: Mondays 11:35am – 12:35pm, Tuesdays 11:35am -12:35pm, or by appointment  
Phone: (613) 520-2600 (Ext. 2577)  
Email: sophie.marcottechenard@carleton.ca

Contact Policy: The best way to contact me is via email. You can expect a reply within 48 hours (weekends excluded). Do not forget to include the course code in the subject line of the email. If your question cannot be answered by a short email, please stop by during office hours. If you are unable to come during my regular office hours, send me an email to set up an appointment or feel free to speak with me before or after class.

Course Description

Droits de l’homme, Menschenrechte, human rights: the discourse on human rights has permeated all areas of domestic and international politics. Indeed, human rights have become the main criterion of political legitimacy in humanitarian intervention, international law and global politics and constitute an essential component of our contemporary democratic liberal order. They are presented as natural, inalienable, equal rights shared by all on the grounds of our common humanity. But they raise important issues and challenges: it often remains unclear what they exactly mean and what they entail for the understanding of politics today. In the course of our investigation, we will address several fundamental questions such as: What exactly is involved in having or exercising a right? What does it mean to possess rights on the grounds of being human? What are the theoretical foundations and historical sources of human rights? To what extent are human rights prescriptive? On a more practical level, what does the human rights discourse aim to achieve? How does it foster political and social change? What are the challenges posed by globalization, security, economic interests, nationalism (and so on)? What are the changes in the theory and practices of human rights law in the last decades?

In examining these issues, we will study the relationship between politics, democracy and human rights, explore the foundations and the legitimacy of international law, and investigate the norms, institutions, applications of – and challenges to – human rights. The course will also address the role of civil society and non-state actors, the question as to whether or not collectivities can have rights, the trade-off between security and liberty after 9/11, the protection of minority rights, and the international responses to political violence.

Ultimately, the aim of this course is to investigate how the moral, judicial, social and economical dimensions of human rights interact with their essential political dimension in contemporary
world politics. This course will bring together the theoretical and practical aspects of the study of human rights and will be divided in three parts: i) Historical and Conceptual Sources, ii) Theoretical Debates and Critical Perspectives, and iii) Contemporary Issues.

Learning Objectives:

By the end of this course, students should be able to:

- Provide an elaborate account of the key theoretical perspectives on human rights and central concepts of human rights discourse (equality, autonomy, dignity, universality);
- Demonstrate a knowledge of the evolution of the idea of human rights, its theoretical and historical roots, as well as its conceptual components;
- Explain some of the political issues associated with human rights instruments and protection;
- Develop analytical tools to interpret current issues in contemporary politics related to human rights;
- Assess the impact and limits of human rights norms, both on a domestic and international level.

Required Texts (available for purchase at the Carleton University Bookstore)


Course Requirements and Grading Scheme

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Requirement</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
<th>Due Date</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Human Rights in the News</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>Due October 3rd</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mid-Term</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>October 17th</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Final Research Paper</td>
<td>30%</td>
<td>Due December 5th</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Final Examination</td>
<td>35%</td>
<td>TBD: Exam Period</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Attendance and Participation</td>
<td>5%</td>
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</table>

Use of cuLearn: Important course announcements, course materials and resources (syllabus, required readings, guidelines for the research paper) will be posted on cuLearn. Please ensure that you have access to cuLearn and consult it regularly.

Technology Policy: Computers are allowed during class, but I encourage you to turn off your electronic devices in the classroom. Several studies have demonstrated that taking notes by hand improve attention, memory and understanding. Please turn off your cell phone during class, as it cannot serve any other purpose than to distract you (you can send texts to your friends about human rights after class).
Human Rights in the News (10%): Being a good political scientist means knowing what’s going on in the world and being able to analyze current political events. You will thus be required to write a short critical analysis (4-5 pages, double-spaced, 12-point Times New Roman) on any topic in the news having to do with human rights. The critical analysis should include a brief presentation of the issue or event in question (including elements of context), an analysis of the problems raised by the issue or event and an explanation of why it is significant with regards to the theme of the course. The material seen in class and in the readings should help you in your critical assessment of the issue or event.

Among good sources are:
- [https://www.nytimes.com/](https://www.nytimes.com/)
- [http://www.independent.co.uk/](http://www.independent.co.uk/)
- [http://foreignpolicy.com/](http://foreignpolicy.com/)
- [https://www.theguardian.com/world](https://www.theguardian.com/world)
- [https://www.washingtonpost.com/](https://www.washingtonpost.com/)
- [https://www.theatlantic.com/](https://www.theatlantic.com/)

Final Essays (30%) (Due *December 5th, day of class*)

You will be required to write a final essay (12-15 pages, double-spaced, 12-point Times New Roman, 2.5 cm margins) that deals with Stephen Hopgood’s provocative argument presented in *The Endtimes of Human Rights*. Further details about the specifics of the final assignment will be distributed during the third week of the term, giving you ample time to reflect on your essay as the course progresses.

Essays should be submitted on the due date as a hard copy at the beginning of the lecture. Only physical copies will be accepted: no email submission. The essay should include a title page, page numbers and bibliography. All references should be indicated in footnotes. You will be required to go beyond the material seen in class and incorporate at least 3 external sources, one of which should be a book.

*Note: Essays submitted on the due date after the beginning of the lecture will be considered as late submissions (immediate penalty of 1 mark).

Late Penalties: 1 mark per day, including weekends (For example, a student who would have received a grade of 27/30, but submitted her essay two days after the deadline will have a grade of 25/30).

Papers that have not been submitted seven days after the deadline will not be accepted. Extensions will be granted upon presentation of medical certificate or other appropriate document only. Medical certificate cannot be retroactive: if you are ill or have any other legitimate reason for not being able to submit your assignment in time, you need to come see me before the deadline. It is important to note that extensions will not be granted for computer-related problems.
Mid-Term (20%): There will be an in-class mid-term test on October 17th. The test will be two hours in length and will cover all lectures and mandatory readings. It will consist of short answers and a choice of long essay questions.

Final Exam (35%) (Exam Period: TBD): A comprehensive final exam is scheduled during the exam period and will cover all lectures and mandatory readings.

Participation and Attendance (5%): It goes without saying that attendance to class is required in order to succeed in the course. To get the full 5 points, regular attendance and active participation in class are strongly encouraged; this includes participating to group discussions, raising questions related to the readings as well as raising general questions about the issues discussed in class. Participation will be evaluated on the basis of quality more than quantity. Students who miss more than 3 classes, for any reason, will be given a zero.

Course Schedule

Week 1 (Sept. 12): Introduction: The Political Dimension of Human Rights, Distribution and presentation of the syllabus

Required Readings:


Document: Universal Declaration of Human rights (1948)

Further Readings:


Week 2 (Sept. 19): Human Rights in Context: A Political and Intellectual History

Required Readings:


**Documents:**
- Magna Carta (1215)
- English Bill of Rights (1689)
- US Declaration of Independence (1776)
- The Declaration of the Rights of Man and Citizen (1789)

**Further Readings:**


**Week 3 (Sept. 26):  Universalism versus Cultural Relativism: Theoretical Debates and Criticisms**

**Required Readings:**


Further Readings:


**Week 4 (Oct. 3): The Limits of Civil/Political Rights: What about Economic and Social Rights?**
*First assignment due*

**Required Readings:**


**Document:**
International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (1966)

**Further Readings:**


Ran Hirschl, E. Rosevear, “Constitutional Law Meets Comparative Politics: Socio-economic


**Required Readings:**


**Further Readings:**


**Week 6 (Oct. 17):** MID-TERM TEST

**Week 7 (Oct. 24):** *FALL BREAK* (No lecture)

**Week 8 (Oct. 31):** Beyond the State: Human Rights, International Norms and International Law

**Required Readings:**


**Further Readings:**


**Week 9 (Nov. 7):** Accountability and the Protection of Human Rights: Civil Society, and Non-State Actors

**Required Readings:**


**Documentary:** The E-Team (Netflix)
Further Readings:


**Week 10 (Nov. 14): Nationalism and Political Violence: Crimes against Humanity, Human Rights and Humanitarian Intervention**

Required Readings:


Further Readings:


Alex Bellamy, “Responsibility to Protect or Trojan Horse? The Crisis in Darfur and Humanitarian Intervention after Iraq”, *Ethics and International Affairs*, 19(2), 2005:31- 53.

**Week 11 (Nov. 21): Women’s Rights as Human Rights: Feminist perspectives**

**Required Readings:**


**Further Readings:**


**Week 12 (Nov. 28): Human Rights, Security and the War on Terror in a Post 9/11 Order**

**Required Readings:**


**Further Readings:**


**Week 13 (Dec. 5): Human Rights and Minorities (+ Final Review)**

**Final Essay due as a hard copy at the beginning of the class**

**Required Readings:**


**Further Readings:**


**Exam Period:** Final Examination
Academic Accommodations

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

For Religious Observance: Students requesting accommodation for religious observances should apply in writing to their instructor for alternate dates and/or means of satisfying academic requirements. Such requests should be made during the first two weeks of class, or as soon as possible after the need for accommodation is known to exist, but no later than two weeks before the compulsory academic event. Accommodation is to be worked out directly and on an individual basis between the student and the instructor(s) involved. Instructors will make accommodations in a way that avoids academic disadvantage to the student. Instructors and students may contact an Equity Services Advisor for assistance (www.carleton.ca/equity).

For Pregnancy: Pregnant students requiring academic accommodations are encouraged to contact an Equity Advisor in Equity Services to complete a letter of accommodation. Then, make an appointment to discuss your needs with the instructor at least two weeks prior to the first academic event in which it is anticipated the accommodation will be required.

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:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Percentage</th>
<th>Letter grade</th>
<th>12-point scale</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
<th>Letter grade</th>
<th>12-point scale</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>90-100</td>
<td>A+</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>67-69</td>
<td>C+</td>
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<tr>
<td>85-89</td>
<td>A</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>63-66</td>
<td>C</td>
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<tr>
<td>80-84</td>
<td>A-</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>60-62</td>
<td>C-</td>
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<tr>
<td>77-79</td>
<td>B+</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>57-59</td>
<td>D+</td>
<td>3</td>
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<tr>
<td>73-76</td>
<td>B</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>53-56</td>
<td>D</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>70-72</td>
<td>B-</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>50-52</td>
<td>D-</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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**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 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. Holding social events, debates, and panel discussions, 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 numerous opportunities which will complement both academic and social life at Carleton University. To find out more, visit [https://www.facebook.com/groups/politicalsciencesociety/](https://www.facebook.com/groups/politicalsciencesociety/) or come to our office in Loeb D688.

**Official Course Outline:** The course outline posted to the Political Science website is the official course outline.