

**PSCI 3307B  
Politics of Human Rights  
Thursdays, 11:35-2:25  
Please confirm location on Carleton Central**

Instructor: Saloie Moreno  
Office: C662 LA  
Office Phone: (613) 520-2600 x1426 (no voicemail)  
Office Hours: Tuesdays 10:00 a.m.-12:00 p.m. or by appointment  
Email: [smoreno@connect.carleton.ca](mailto:smoreno@connect.carleton.ca)

**Course description:**

The main aim of this course is to analyze how human rights play out in politics. In this course we will explore the conceptual and historical dimension of human rights as well as the main controversies around human rights notions, such as universalism vs. relativism, feminist critiques to mainstream approaches to human rights, arguments for and against humanitarian intervention, and so forth.

**Requirements**

Students are required to attend each class and do the assigned readings prior to the class. The final grade will be based on:

- 10 % Attendance
- 20 % Presentation
- 20 % Mid-term take-home exam
- 20 % Short paper
- 30 % Final exam or final research paper

**10 % Attendance.** Attendance is 10% worth of the final grade. Each class is a combination of lecture and panel presentations, so students are highly encouraged to ask questions and participate in the class discussions.

**20 % Presentation.** Students should work in teams to put together a collective presentation. They should analyze all the assigned readings for the presentation in any given week, criticizing the material and bringing their own points of view.

Each presenter should focus on the main argument or ideas presented in the article or book chapter(s), avoiding details and irrelevant data. The presentation should be brief and concise, and each presenter should not exceed 10 minutes in length. Exceeding the assigned time limit will be penalized. If a student does not want to be part of a panel presentation, he/she can instead submit a second short paper that would be worth the equivalent of the panel presentation (20%).

**20 % Mid-term take-home exam.** The midterm exam will be distributed in-class on Thursday, February 26. Students will have to return a hard copy of the exam on Tuesday, March 3 between 10:00 a.m. and 12:00 p.m. to my office.

**20 % Short paper.** Each student should submit one short paper in a particular week of the class. The student should make an argument analyzing and criticizing the materials, using at least three sources for any given week. The short paper must be submitted no later than by February 12.

**30 % Take-home final exam or final research paper.** Students will have a choice of either taking a final take-home exam or writing a final research paper. Each student should let me know by March 26 as the latest whether he/she is taking an exam or submitting a final paper.

**The final take-home exam** will be distributed in-class on Thursday, April 2<sup>nd</sup> and students should return a hard copy of it by Monday, April 27 to the Department of Political Science.

**The final research paper** will be on a particular topic of human rights, 13 to 15 pages in length (12 points font, double space), using at least eight sources. It could be on a particular theoretical debate on human rights, a certain controversy, or a given historical episode. The deadline to submit the final paper is Tuesday, April 14 between 10:00 and 12:00 hrs. at my office.

I won't assign a specific mark for class participation, but I will use this element as a bonus in order to adjust the final grades.

**Lateness policy:** Any exam (mid-term or final) or paper (short paper or final paper) will be penalized by 10 per cent per day after the deadline. A student missing a session in which he/she is expected to give a presentation, will be penalized by 100 per cent, unless he/she provides documentation for not having attended that session. The departmental drop box cut off time is 4pm. Any assignments submitted after 4pm will be date stamped for the following weekday.

**Please Note:** This course will be supported by the WebCT Course Management System. All correspondence with the instructor will be carried through the WebCT e-mail system only. Students will be responsible for reading all information distributed to them through the WebCT course page.

**Readings and Texts:** There are two books available for purchase at the Carleton University Bookstore:

Tony Evans, *The Politics of Human Rights: A Global Perspective*, 2<sup>nd</sup> edition, London, Pluto Press, 2005, 176 pp.

Debra L. Delaet, *The Global Struggle for Human Rights*, Toronto, Wadsworth, 2006.

There will also be one course reader, additional to the required books, available for purchase at Carleton University Bookstore. All the required readings for the course are included in the course packs, whereas texts for presentations will be available on reserve at the Carleton library.

## **Course Calendar/ Reading Schedule**

### **Week one/ January 8: Introduction**

### **Week two/ January 15: Human Rights as Politics**

#### **Required reading:**

Tony Evans, *The Politics of Human Rights: A Global Perspective*, Chapter 1: “The Politics of Universal Human Rights”.

Michael Ignatieff, “Human Rights as Politics” in M. Ignatieff and Amy Gutmann (ed.), *Human Rights as Politics and Idolatry*, Princeton, Princeton University Press, 2001 .

Neil Stammers, “Human Rights and Power”, *Political Studies*, 41, 70-82.

### **Week three/ January 22: Philosophical origins of the Human Rights Discourse**

#### **Required reading:**

Jack Donnelly, *Universal Human Rights. In Theory and Practice*, 2<sup>nd</sup>. edition, Ithaca, Cornell University Press, 2003, Chapters 2 and 3.

#### **For presentation:**

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

Costas Douzinas, *The End of Human Rights*, Portland, Hart Publishing, 2000, Chapter 5.

Debra L. Delaet, *The Global Struggle for Human Rights*, Toronto, Wadsworth, 2006, Chapter 1: “The Contested Meaning of Human Rights”.

### **Week four/ January 29: Historical origins of Human Rights**

#### **Required reading:**

Tony Evans, *The Politics of Human Rights: A Global Perspective*, Chapter 2: “The Discourse of Universal Human Rights”.

Micheline Ishay, "What are human rights ? Six historical controversies", *Journal of Human Rights*, 3 (3), 2004.

**For presentation:**

Paul Gordon Lauren, *The Evolution of International Human Rights*, 2<sup>nd</sup>. edition, Philadelphia, University of Pennsylvania Press, 2003, Chapter 5.

William Korey, *NGOs and the Universal Declaration of Human Rights: a curious grapevine*, New York, St. Martin's Press, 1998, Chapters 1 and 2.

Chris Brown, *Sovereignty, Rights and Justice, International Political Theory Today*, Malden, Blackwell Publishers, 2002, Chapter 7.

**Week five/ February 5: Universality vs. Cultural Relativism**

**Required reading:**

Pollis, Adamantia and Peter Schwab, "Human Rights: A Western Construct with Limited Applicability", in Pollis and Schwab (eds.), *Human Rights: Cultural and Ideological Perspectives*, New York, Praeger, 1979.

Pollis, Adamantia, "Cultural Relativism Revisited: Through a State Prism", *Human Rights Quarterly* 18 (2), 1996, pp. 316-344.

**For presentation:**

Amartya Sen, "Human Rights and Asian Values", Sixteenth Morgenthau Memorial Lecture on Ethics and Foreign Policy, Carnegie Council on Ethics and International Affairs, New York, 1997, pp. 5-32.

Seyla Benhabib, *The Claims of Culture*, Princeton, Princeton University Press, 2002, Chapter 2.

Amartya Sen, *Development as Freedom*, Anchor, 2000, Chapter 10.

**Week six/ February 12: Feminist perspectives on Human Rights**

**Required reading:**

Charlotte Bunch, "Women's Rights as Human Rights: Towards a Re-Vision of Human Rights", *Human Rights Quarterly* (12), 1990, pp. 486-50 (available on-line).

Gayle Binion, "Human Rights: A Feminist Perspective", *Human Rights Quarterly* 17 (3), 1995: 509-526 (available on line).

**For presentation:**

Catherine MacKinnon, "Crimes of War, Crimes of Peace", in Stephen Shute and S. Hurley (eds.), *On Human Rights: the Oxford Amnesty Lectures*, New York, Basic Books, 1993.

Alice M. Miller, "Realizing Women's Human Rights: Nongovernmental Organizations and the United Nations Treaty Bodies" in Mary Meyer and Elisabeth Prugl (eds.), *Gender Politics in Global Governance*, Lanham, Rowman & Littlefield, 1999.

Martha Nussbaum, "Women's Capabilities and Social Justice", *Journal of Human Development*, 1 (2), July 2000, pp. 219-247.

Debra L. Delaet, *The Global Struggle for Human Rights*, Toronto, Wadsworth, 2006, Chapter 7: "Sexual equality and human rights".

**February 19: No class. Winter break.**

**Week seven/ February 26: Sovereignty and international law**

**\*\*Take-home midterm exam distributed during this class\*\***

**Required reading:**

Seyla Benhabib, *The Rights of Others*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2004, Chapter 1.

Tony Evans, *The Politics of Human Rights: A Global Perspective*, Chapter 3.

**For presentation:**

Chris Brown, *Sovereignty, Rights and Justice, International Political Theory Today*, Malden, Blackwell Publishers, 2002, Chapter 5.

Christian Reus-Smit, "Human Rights and the Social Construction of Sovereignty", *Review of International Studies*, 2001, 27: 519-538.

R.J. Vincent, *Human Rights and International Relations*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1986, Chapter 7.

**Week eight/ March 5: In-class movie: “Shake hands with the devil: a journey of Roméo Dallaire” and class discussion.**

**Week nine/ March 12: Human Rights in a Global World**

**Required reading:**

Tony Evans, *The Politics of Human Rights*, Chapter 4.

Thomas Pogge, “World Poverty and Human Rights”, *Ethics and International Affairs*, 19 (1), 2005.

**For presentation:**

Carol C. Gould, *Globalizing democracy and human rights*, New York, Cambridge University Press, 2004, Chapters 7 and 8.

Margaret E. Keck and Kathryn Sikkink, *Activists beyond borders*, Ithaca, Cornell University Press, 1998, Chapter 3: “Human Rights Advocacy Networks in Latin America”.

**Week ten/ March 19: Human rights and transitional justice**

**Required reading:**

Debra L. Delaet, *The Global Struggle for Human Rights*, Toronto, Wadsworth, 2006, Chapter 9: “Punitive Justice and Human Rights”.

**For presentation:**

David Forsythe, *Human rights in international relations*, 2<sup>nd</sup>. edition, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2006, Chapter 4: “Transitional Justice”: criminal courts and alternatives”.

Priscilla B. Hayner, *Unspeakable truths*, New York, Routledge, 2001, Chapters 11 and 12.

**Week eleven/ March 26: Humanitarian Intervention**

**Required reading:**

Geoffrey Robertson, *Crimes against humanity: The struggle for human justice*, New York, New Press, 2000, pp. 401-436.

Debra L. Delaet, *The Global Struggle for Human Rights*, Toronto, Wadsworth, 2006, Chapter 8: “Promoting Human Rights from the top down”.

**For presentation:**

Nicholas J. Wheeler, *Saving Strangers: Humanitarian Intervention in international society*, New York, Oxford University Press, 2000, Chapters 6 and 7 (available electronic resource for 2002 edition).

Jennifer M. Welsh, *Humanitarian Intervention and International Relations*, Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2003, Chapter 4 (available electronic resource).

William DeMars, "Contending Neutralities. Humanitarian Organizations and War in the Horn of Africa", in Jackie Smith et al. (eds.), *Transnational Social Movements and Global Politics, Solidarity Beyond the State*, Syracuse, Syracuse University Press, 1997.

**Week twelve/ April 2: Human rights in the era of terrorism**

**Required reading:**

David P. Forsythe, "U.S. Foreign Policy and Human Rights in an era of insecurity: the Bush Administration and Human Rights after September, 11" in Crahan et al., *Wars on Terrorism and Iraq: Human Rights, Unilateralism, and U.S. Foreign Policy*, Routledge, 2004.

**For presentation:**

Michael Ignatieff, *American exceptionalism and human rights*, Princeton, Princeton University Press, 2005, Introduction.

Carol J. Greenhouse, "Nationalizing the Local: Comparative Notes on the Recent Restructuring of Political Space", in Richard Ashby Wilson (ed.), *Human Rights in the War on Terror*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2005.

Richard Falk, "Human Rights: A Descending Spiral", in R. A. Wilson (ed.), *Op. cit.*

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**Academic Accommodations**

**For students with Disabilities:** Students with disabilities requiring academic accommodations in this course must register with the Paul Menton Centre for Students with Disabilities (500 University Centre) for a formal evaluation of disability-related needs. Registered PMC students are required to contact the centre (613-520-6608) every term to ensure that the instructor receives your letter of accommodation. After registering with the PMC, make an appointment to meet with the instructor in order to discuss your needs **at least two weeks before the first assignment is due or the first in-class test/midterm requiring accommodations**. If you require accommodation for your formally scheduled exam(s) in this course, please submit your request for accommodation to PMC by **November 7, 2008 for December examinations**, and **March 6, 2009 for April examinations**.

**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](http://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 include a mark of zero for the plagiarized work or a final grade of "F" for the course. The Department's Style Guide is available at:

<http://www.carleton.ca/polisci/undergrad/Essay%20Style%20Guide.html>

**Oral Examination:** At the discretion of the instructor, students may be required to pass a brief oral examination on research papers and essays.

**Submission and Return of Term Work:** Papers must be handed directly to the instructor 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. Please note that assignments sent via fax or email will not be accepted. Final exams are intended solely for the purpose of evaluation and will not be returned.

**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.

**Course Requirements:** Students must fulfill all course requirements in order to achieve a passing grade. Failure to hand in any assignment will result in a grade of F. Failure to write the final exam will result in a grade of ABS. FND (Failure No Deferred) is assigned when a student's performance is so poor during the term that they cannot pass the course even with 100% on the final examination. In such cases, instructors may use this notation on the Final Grade Report to

indicate that a student has already failed the course due to inadequate term work and should not be permitted access to a deferral of the examination. Deferred final exams are available ONLY if the student is in good standing in the course.

**Connect Email Accounts:** The Department of Political Science only communicates with students via Connect accounts. Important course and University information is also distributed via the Connect email system. It is the student's responsibility to monitor their Connect account.

**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 in the after-hours academic life 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, please email [carletonpss@gmail.com](mailto:carletonpss@gmail.com), visit our website at [poliscisociety.com](http://poliscisociety.com), 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.