

The course will challenge students to draw upon specific cases to broaden their understandings of what constitutes a right, an abuse, and a protection. We will explore contemporary and historical cases, and students will have an opportunity to study a particular case of a human rights violation, including an examination of the deep and proximate causes, ways that the violations might have been avoided, and pathways toward alleviation, reconciliation, and justice.

LEARNING GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

Goal #1: To experience a cultural, historical, policy or other event in the District of Columbia that relates to the course.

Objective #1: During the term, you will be required to attend at least one congressional hearing. You will also hear presentations from guest speakers working on different aspects of human rights politics and policy.

Goal #2: To improve your ability to communicate persuasively in writing.

Objective #3: You will develop several types of analytic writing assignments related to human rights problems and issues. You will also work in small groups with your classmates and individually with me to improve your research and writing.

Goal #3: To improve your ability to communicate persuasively orally.

Objective #3: In addition to discussing your projects in small groups, you will also develop a full class presentation of your project. At least once during the semester you will brief the entire class on a recent news item related to human rights.

Goal #4: To improve your ability to critically examine competing arguments, and use empirical evidence to research and apply theory to practice.

Objective #4: Through different writing assignments and case studies, you will be able to theoretically justify and empirically evaluate competing hypotheses/answers to the questions posed and the practical problems addressed.

REQUIREMENTS AND EVALUATION

I have designed the course assignments to provide a solid theoretical and historical foundation of understanding in human rights, while providing opportunities to apply this understanding to specific cases of interest. The course is a seminar, with a combination of student and professor-led lectures and presentations, and significant discussions. To make this work, each student must come to class having closely read the readings for the week. In addition to discussing readings, our meetings may consist of reflection on relevant experiences in your internships, current affairs in the US and abroad, and guest speakers.

| <u>Assignment</u> | <u>Points</u> |
|--------------------------------|---------------|
| Attendance and Participation | 15 |
| News presentation(s) | 5 |
| Statement of the Problem | 10 |
| Blog post | 15 |
| Infographic | 15 |
| Human Rights Impact Assessment | 30 |
| HRIA presentation | 10 |
| <u>Total Points Possible</u> | <u>100</u> |

1. ***Attendance and Participation [15 points]***. You must attend all class sessions, complete the reading *before* class, and actively engage in any discussions (with specific reference to readings, when relevant) and group work. If you need to miss class for an approved reason (e.g., illness, religious holiday), you must let me know in person or via email **BEFORE** class and provide documentation, and you will lose **1.5 points** for each unexcused absence.
2. ***Weekly News Briefing [5 points]***. At the beginning of each class, at least one student will brief the class on some piece of news or analysis published **during the previous week** that relates to human rights. These might relate to the specific case you are studying/plan to study, but this is not a requirement. These presentations can be short, but you should be prepared to discuss the key background of the issue at hand and key details of the story to facilitate and stimulate class discussion. I will circulate a Doodle poll during the first week of the term for you to sign up and select your preferred weeks.
3. ***Statement of the Problem [10 points]***. You should start thinking about the topic you want to research as early as possible. This assignment is the first step in your development of your human rights impact assessment. A short (max 1 page double spaced) statement of the policy problem you will research should be submitted to our Canvas page by **7:00 pm on Wednesday January 24**. We will dedicate a significant portion of class on Tuesday to discussing your topics. I will divide you into groups of 4 or 5 students and allow you time to discuss your proposals and give each other constructive feedback. These will undoubtedly evolve and sometimes change completely, but I want to see evidence that you to have given some *serious* thought to finding a compelling human rights problem to research.

4. **Blog Post [15 points].** The human rights problem you address and the topic you explore should be controversial enough that people might disagree on the nature of the problem, the solution, or both. In these pieces, you should take a position and develop an evidence-based and logical argument for a given position. These short written pieces (1200 – 1500 words) can be more analytical or more polemical, but should be evidence-based. We will discuss this assignment in greater detail before it is due **Wednesday, February 7 at 7:00 pm.**
5. **Infographic on Problem [10 points].** Graphics and other visual representations of data are increasingly important to making compelling arguments and presenting empirical evidence. To help you begin to hone some of these skills, you will be required to create an infographic that presents evidence in support of your argument. A polished draft of this assignment should be posted to Canvas by **7:00 pm on Wednesday, February 21.** A portion of your grade for this assignment will be thoughtful participation in an anonymous peer review exercise in which you comment on and comment on someone else's infographic.
6. **Human Rights Impact Assessment [35].** Students will choose an issue of human rights abuse or humanitarian crisis, select a specific case, and write an analytical report explaining:
 - a. how and why the abusive situation developed;
 - b. how the human rights regime and other domestic and international actors responded;
 - c. how the situation might have been avoided and how the community of the concerned might be or might have been more effective in addressing it.
7. **HRIA Presentation [10].** Presentation of the findings of your Human Rights Impact assessment

GRADING POLICIES

There are a total of 100 points possible in this course. Grades will be allocated according to the following criteria, on a 100-point scale:

- A: for superior work (93-100 on scale)
- A-: for excellent work (90 - 92 on scale)
- B+: for very good work (88 - 89 on scale)
- B: for good work (83 - 87 on scale)
- B-: for work between good and just satisfactory (80 - 83 on scale)
- C+: for high satisfactory (78 - 79 on scale)
- C: for satisfactory work (73 - 77 on scale)
- C-: for borderline satisfactory work (70 or 72 on scale)
- D: for work which is not satisfactory, not completed, or demonstrative of some other failure on the student's part (such as to participate in class)
- F: failure to meet minimum course goals

CLASS POLICIES

By taking this class, you agree to adhere to the rules and obligations presented on this syllabus, but also acknowledge my right to alter them, as necessary.

1. Do all required readings. You are strongly encouraged to bring questions, comments, and criticisms of the material to class.
2. Attend all class sessions. If you need to miss a class, you must inform me in advance and document any absence due to illness. I will take formal attendance periodically, but regularly make note of who is absent and dock points from your participation grade proportionately. If you know in advance that you will need to leave early, you should notify me before the class period begins and minimize disruption. Please notify me if you plan to be absent to observe a religious holiday at some point during the semester.
3. Show respect to me and to your colleagues by paying attention and actively participating in class. When I (or anyone else) am speaking, I expect all students to give their full attention.
4. This term I am going to experiment with a no laptop (or phone or tablet) policy. Taking notes by hand, and fully engaging with the people in the room, [improves learning](#). Moreover, I know from past student evaluations that social media used by others is a major distraction. If you violate this policy I may confront you in class, but I also regularly make notes to myself and deduct points from your participation grade.
5. You will lose **5 percentage points** for every day that written work is late. This means that if your work is worthy of a 10/10, you will receive a 9.5 if it is 24 hours late.

6. I trust that you all know how to use email and blackboard. As such, mistyping my email address, forgetting to include the attachment, or any apparent failures of technology are not valid excuses for late work. It does not matter if you can show me that you completed the work before the due date (e.g., with a date stamp), if I do not receive it, it is late. It is insignificant when you complete the work. What is significant is when I have it in my possession to begin *my work* of evaluating it and providing feedback. This is an important lesson for your professional lives, too.
7. If an emergency comes up during the term that affects your ability to successfully complete the requirements for the course, please notify me as quickly as possible and I will do my best to accommodate you. You should discuss such issues with your Program Advisor, as well.

STATEMENT ON WEATHER EMERGENCIES

In the event of a weather emergency, UCDC follows the federal government's decisions about delays and closures. That said, we may still hold class at my discretion in the event of a federal government closure.

POLICY ON ACADEMIC MISCONDUCT

UCDC has a zero-tolerance policy for cheating, plagiarism, and any other form of dishonesty. Students should refer to their home campus Student Code of Conduct for the regulations that apply to them. The burden is on each student to know what behaviors constitute cheating and plagiarism. Ignorance of these behaviors is not an adequate defense. I have and will report plagiarism and other academic misconduct, and will use my discretion to either give you a zero on the assignment, partial credit, a chance to make-up work, and so forth, depending on the nature and severity of the offense. Importantly, you cannot re-submit your work from other classes to get credit, even if it is your own work.

STATEMENT ON SEXUAL HARASSMENT AND SEXUAL VIOLENCE

The University of California is committed to creating and maintaining a community where all individuals who participate in University programs and activities can work and learn together in an atmosphere free of harassment, exploitation, or intimidation. Every member of the community should be aware that the University prohibits sexual harassment and sexual violence, and that such behavior violates both law and University policy. The University will respond promptly and effectively to reports of sexual harassment and sexual violence, and will take appropriate action to prevent, to correct, and when necessary, to discipline behavior that violates this policy on Sexual Harassment and Sexual Violence.

Students who wish to speak confidentially about an incident of sexual misconduct should contact UCDC's Counseling Services at UCDCCounseling@gmail.com. To report sexual misconduct to ask questions about UCDC policies and procedures regarding sexual misconduct, please contact the UCDC Title IX administrator, Josh Brimmeier (202-974-6214 or josh.brimmeier@ucdc.edu). Because the University of California is legally obligated to

investigate reports of sexual misconduct, the confidentiality of reported misconduct cannot be guaranteed.

STATEMENT ON ACCOMMODATIONS FOR STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES

In compliance with the Federal Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended (Public Law 93--- 112) and the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (Public Law 101---336), University of California policy prohibits unlawful discrimination on the basis of disability in its programs, services, and activities. If you require accommodation for class, please let me know at our first meeting (if not earlier) so the necessary arrangements can be made.

UCDC WRITING COACH

If you want help to improve your writing, you may visit the UCDC writing coach, **Dr. Michael McCarthy**. He will hold office hours on Tuesdays and Wednesdays throughout the term from 6:30 to 9:30pm in Room 350. Schedule an appointment for a 30-minute session at <http://ucdcprogram.schedulista.com/>.

TEXT

Recommended text:

Ishay, Micheline I. 2008. *The History of Human Rights: From Ancient Times to the Globalization Era*, (2nd Edition). Berkeley, CA: University of California Press.

Additional readings will be available online or posted to our blackboard page. The Ishay book and other readings will serve as the foundation for class discussions and lectures, but will also be useful to you as you develop your assignments. You will need to do a considerable amount of additional reading of scholarly works, government and think tank reports, and news articles related to your chosen topic, as well.

SCHEDULE

Week 1: Jan 11 *Introductions*

Week 2: Jan 18 *What are Human Rights?*

- International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR):
<http://www.ohchr.org/en/professionalinterest/pages/ccpr.aspx>
- International Covenant on Economic, Social, and Cultural rights (ICESC):
<http://www.ohchr.org/EN/ProfessionalInterest/Pages/CESCR.aspx>

Recommended: Ishay, Chapter 1, “Early Ethical Contributions to Human Rights,” pp. 15-61.

Week 3: Jan 25 *Identification of Human Rights Problem*

→ Statement of Problem submitted to Canvas by 7:00pm Wed Jan 24

Activity: We will spend the bulk of class working in small groups discussing the human rights problems you plan to research

Week 4: Feb 1 *Enlightenment Origins of Human Rights*

- Ishay, Chapter 2, “Human Rights and the Enlightenment,” pp. 63-116.

Week 5: Feb 8 *Socialist Origins of Human Rights*

→ Blog post submitted to Canvas by 7:00pm Feb 7

- Minkler, Lanse. “Introduction: Why Economic and Social Human Rights?” in *The State of Economic and Social Human Rights*. Edited by Lanse Minkler. (Cambridge, 2013). pp. 1-12.
- Rhoda Howard Hassmann. 1983. “The Full-Belly Thesis: Should Economics Rights Take Priority Over Civil and Political Rights? Evidence from Sub-Saharan Africa” *Human Rights Quarterly*. 5(4): 467-490.

Recommended: Ishay, Chapter 3, “Human Rights and the Industrial Age: The Development of a Socialist Perspective on Human Rights,” pp. 117-172

Week 6: Feb. 15 *Institutionalization of Human Rights*

- Required reading TBD

Recommended: Ishay, Chapter 4, “The World Wars: The Institutionalization of International Rights and the Right to Self-Determination,” pp. 174-243

Week 7: Feb 22 *Human Rights and (Neoliberal) Globalization*
→ Infographic submitted to Canvas by 7:00 pm Feb 21

- Required reading TBD

Recommended: Ishay, Chapter 5, “Globalization and Its Impact on Human Rights,” pp. 245-311

Activity: In class double-blind peer review of infographics

Week 8: March 1 *Human Rights in the 21st Century*
Round 1 of Human Rights Impact Assessment Presentations

- Required reading TBD

Recommended: Ishay, Chapter 6, “Promoting Human Rights in the Twenty-First Century: The Changing Arena of Struggle,” pp. 315-355.

Week 9: Mar 7 *Round 2 of Human Rights Impact Assessment Presentations*

Week 10: Mar 14 *Round 3 of Human Rights Impact Assessment Presentations*
→ FINAL HUMAN RIGHTS IMPACT ASSESSMENT REPORT DUE