

**POL 412H/2212H: Human Rights Politics and International Relations**  
**Fall 2019, W 12-2**

**Professor:** W. Wong

Office hours: SS 3052 W 3-4

**Prerequisites:**

This is an advanced seminar on the theories and politics of human rights in international and domestic politics. In addition to the requirements stated in the Calendar, you should be able to complete and understand approximately 70 pages of reading for each meeting. The course will proceed quickly through a wide range of topics, some of which are analytically and conceptually difficult (and most of the time, important). Although an intimate knowledge of case(s) is not required, an interest in learning about human rights violations and/or resolutions to violations is an absolute must.

The course is student-driven, and therefore anyone who wants to take the course should be prepared to actively engage with others in the course, and prepare to discuss the readings and topics in class. As instructor, I will be giving a few introductory remarks to guide the course, and facilitating discussion. The size of the class means that there is more interaction between students and with the instructor – take advantage!

**Purpose of the Course:**

This course is designed to provide a theoretical and analytical overview of major issues in the study and practice of human rights with a mix of international, systems perspectives and domestically-focused research. The course is geared for those who want a broad knowledge of human rights throughout the world, but students will have the opportunity to pursue a case of their choice in the second part of the term. The knowledge of international and domestic constraints that students are exposed to in the first half of the course will help them grapple with the applications of human rights in the second half. The goal here is to introduce students to ways of thinking about human rights as a product and limitation of state action, and how human rights have become dominant in international politics since the end of World War II. The process of creating and implementing human rights is political. Students will also be exposed to how international ideals are applied on the ground by countries, non-state actors, and individuals. The course is also designed to force students to question their priors, and justify their arguments for or against action in the name of human rights. As such, students should feel welcome to express their views, and engage in lively discussions as appropriate.

**Quercus:**

You must have a [utoronto.ca](http://utoronto.ca) account to access this service (please go to Robarts Library if you do not already have an account). It is your responsibility to log into Quercus to access the information posted regarding the course ([q.utoronto.ca](http://q.utoronto.ca)).

Please message the professor through Quercus if you have any questions and to turn in any assignments. Quercus will be the only way through which announcements, assignments, and readings will be distributed. You are REQUIRED to check this site regularly.

### Readings:

Most readings are available through the Robarts [website](#) or via links through the syllabus posted online. Students will have three required books, and it is recommended that students purchase at least one of these at the U of T Bookstore:

[Sikkink, Kathryn](#). 2017. *Evidence for Hope: Making Human Rights Work in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century*. Princeton: Princeton University Press. **(KS)**

[Hopgood, Stephen](#). 2013. *The Endtimes of Human Rights*. Ithaca: Cornell University Press. **(SH)**

[Bob, Clifford](#). 2019. *Rights as Weapons*. Princeton: Princeton University Press. **(CB)**

### Course Requirements:

In this course, you will be evaluated on the basis of an in-class presentation, two “pre paper” term paper assignments, a term paper, and your participation in class. The breakdown of your course grade is as follows:

Term paper (due Dec. 6, 12pm)	35%
Term paper draft (due week 11)	20%
Participation	20%
In-class presentation	15%
Outline of term paper (due week 7)	10%

All students’ course grades will be given based on his/her/their performance on the assignments in the course, according to the above percentages. There are NO exceptions.

Your attendance in seminar is absolutely crucial to your success in this course. Missing more than two seminar meetings will result in a 50 point reduction of your Participation grade. If you do not show up the day for which you have an In-class Presentation, you will receive a 0% for that assignment.

All assignments are ***absolutely necessary***. You should not take the course if you do not think you can successfully complete these assignments.

### Grade Appeals:

Changes to student grades on assignments will only be considered if there is *demonstrable* clerical error in the calculation of a particular score. You must submit a written appeal, upon approval by the course instructor, in order to have a grade reevaluated.

**Rules and Regulations:** Please read the following carefully. By registering in this course, you agree to abide by the rules below:

- 1) All assignments must be submitted *on time*, prior to the *beginning* of class or before the stated deadline, **via email in PDF format** in order to avoid penalty. There are no exceptions. No assignments will be accepted on paper unless otherwise noted.

- 2) The penalty for work turned in after the stated deadline will be 4 points per day or fraction of a day. If you submit it after the deadline on the day it is due, you will be docked 4 points. If you turn in a paper the day after it is due, you lose another 4 points (so 8 points total), and so on. The late penalty includes holidays and weekends, and “days” end at 6pm. No grace period, unless you have been granted an extension, as explained in #3.
  - a. Late work will be collected upon agreement with instructor – do not randomly leave things “for the professor.”
- 3) Extensions on course assignments are rarely granted, and only under unavoidable and unforeseeable extenuating circumstances. To seek an extension you must submit a hard copy of a one page explanation justifying your request one week prior to the due date to the instructor. This document should indicate how the circumstances surrounding your request were both unavoidable and unforeseeable. You must contact the instructor to schedule a meeting in which you will submit this document and make your case. In some instances, the instructor may request additional supporting documentation, in accordance with University policy before any extension is granted. Extensions will not be granted unless such a meeting has been held. Unless informed otherwise, doctors’ notes are not required.
- 4) All at-home assignments are to be typed, 12-point Times New Roman, double-spaced, 1” (2.5 cm) margins. DO NOT fudge these measurements. Staple your assignment in the upper left-hand corner.
- 5) **ACADEMIC HONESTY: All written assignments must follow basic academic citation rules.** When you use other people’s words and ideas, you must properly cite them, whether these words come from the readings, the Internet, or in class. Failing to do so constitutes plagiarism, and is a very serious academic offense. Please consult me if you are unsure about what constitutes plagiarism. See also: [www.writing.utoronto.ca/advice/using-sources](http://www.writing.utoronto.ca/advice/using-sources). I WILL REPORT ANY AND ALL CASES OF SUSPECTED PLAGIARISM. “Not understanding” or “I did not mean to” will not be suitable defenses for cases of plagiarism. In order to promote an environment of academic integrity, these following procedures will hold for all written work submitted in class.
  - a. **Students must attach a signed copy of the Academic Integrity Checklist to each paper assignment. The Integrity Checklist form is available on Quercus. Please note that papers will NOT be accepted without this form. Accordingly, I will apply late penalties to your paper (see #2) until the Checklist is submitted.**
  - b. Students are strongly advised to keep rough draft-work and hard copies of their essays and assignments. These should be kept until the marked assignments have been returned.
- 6) Photography, audio recording, and video recording of lecture and lecture materials (i.e. slides) is NOT permitted.
- 7) There are no exceptions to the absence from class rules stated above. If you do not think you can commit to attending the required number of classes this term, I advise against taking this course.
- 8) **Final grades are final.** Please do not try to negotiate your grade with the instructor. You should ask for help *before* an assignment – I am always happy to answer your questions

and make sure you understand what's expected of you. Making the effort before the grades are turned in will always be more beneficial to you than making the case afterward for why you need two extra points.

### **Assignment Descriptions:**

#### Term paper: 35%

*What is the future of human rights?* Throughout this course, you will have read one of four books that discusses alternative futures for human rights. Where do you stand? Articulate a clear thesis and support it using readings from the course. This paper is preceded by the Outline of the term paper and the Term paper draft. *Length: 4000-4500 words (412); 5000-5500 words (2212)*

#### Term paper draft: 20%

You will prepare a rough draft of your term paper to share with a pre-assigned group from whom you will receive substantive and editorial comments. Your draft should contain a rough sense of the argument, and provide a good chunk of the evidence you will be using to support that argument. If you provide less material, your peer comments will be less useful. Your mark is based on the quality of the comments you provide to your peers in addition to the draft you supply. *Suggested length: 3000-3500 words (412); 4000 words (2212)*

#### Participation: 20%

In such a small class, if I do not know your name and what you have contributed to the seminar by the end of the course, this part of your grade will suffer. You should plan to speak up at least once per class meeting to maintain a B+ mark or higher in this category. This means: asking for more information, asking for clarifications, and making comments, but also referring to the reading and making connections, offering analysis, etc.

When we have special guests, please make an effort to prepare at least one question you have with regard to the topics written about by the author and post it to the appropriate Quercus discussion board.

*You cannot adequately participate if you do not do all of the reading!* Your grade will be affected if it is clear that you are not keeping up with the assigned readings per week. If necessary, reading quizzes will be given.

#### In-class presentation: 15%

You will prepare a 300-word summary of the reading, due by 6pm the day before your presentation, to be posted on Quercus's discussion board as an attachment. This assignment asks you to be a critical reader: you will offer a quick synopsis of a given reading, distilling the main point (what's the basic argument?) and describe the evidence given by the author(s). Do you find their evidence credible? Are there other readings (or other sources) that tell you otherwise? As a guide, your summary should be no more than 2 minutes when presented orally.

For the presentation itself, you will work as a group to come up with and present the "fundamental point" of the day's readings...is there one? Or are there many? How can we come

up with “an answer”? On what points do the authors agree or disagree? Remember, you are fundamentally “making an argument” that you will defend in front of your peers. Make sure you do not just read the summaries, but you can always draw on specific points from the readings.

Your presentations will offer food for thought for the rest of the day’s meeting.

Outline of term paper: 10%

Outline requirements TBD

Schedule of Topics and Readings:

### **UNIT 1: What are we studying?**

*Discussion questions to begin:*

How can we define a human being?

What gives us rights?

How do we know when something is a right versus an ideal?

Does law enable or disable discussion? Why?

Are human rights actually universal, or is that a political move?

### **Week 1: Orientation**

Welcome!

[Berns, Gregory](#). “Dogs are People, Too.” *New York Times*. October 5, 2013.

[Wilford, John Noble](#). “Almost Human, and Sometimes Smarter.” *New York Times*. April 7, 2007.

[Watters, Ethan](#). “We Aren’t the World.” *Pacific Standard*. February 5, 2013.

### **Week 2: What are Human Rights?**

Chapter 1 of KS, Chapter 1 of CB, Chapter 1 of SH

[Burke, Roland and James Kirby](#). 2016. “The Genesis and Evolution of the Postwar Human Rights Project.” In *Human Rights: Current Issues and Controversies*. Ed. Gordon DiGiacomo. Toronto: University of Toronto Press. 30-56.

[Freeman, Michael](#). 1996. “Human Rights, Democracy, and ‘Asian Values.’” *The Pacific Review* 9 (3): 352-366.

### **Week 3: What are the Politics of Human Rights?**

Chapter 2 of KS, Chapter 2, 3 of CB, Chapter 2, 3 of SH

[Carpenter, R. Charli](#). 2007. “Setting the Advocacy Agenda: Theorizing Issue Emergence and Nonemergence in Transnational Advocacy Networks.” *International Studies Quarterly* 51 (1): 99-120.

[Moravscik, Andrew](#). 2000. "The Origins of Human Rights Regimes: Democratic Delegation in Postwar Europe." *International Organization* 54 (2): 217-252.

[Ingram, James D.](#) 2008. "What is a 'Right to have Rights'? Three Images of the Politics of Human Rights." *The American Political Science Review* 102 (4): 401-416.

#### **Week 4: International Human Rights Law**

Chapter 3 of KS, Chapter 4 of CB, Chapter 4 of SH

[Simmons, Beth A. and Anton Strezhnev](#). 2017. "Human Rights and Human Welfare: Looking for a "Dark Side" to International Human Rights Law." In *Human Rights Futures*. Ed. Stephen Hopgood, Jack Snyder, and Leslie Vinjamuri. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. 60-87.

[Hafner-Burton, Emilie M.](#) 2012. "International Regimes for Human Rights." *Annual Review of Political Science* 15: 265-286.

#### **UNIT 2: Who is Responsible?**

*Discussion questions to begin:*

What are states? What are non-state actors?

Who are the legitimate agents of change for "making" human rights?

When are some kinds of actors more effective at making human rights than others?

How do non-state actors fit into the Westphalian model of international relations?

How do states affect one another's policies on human rights?

Are states "more responsible" for human rights?

#### **Week 5: The Role of States**

Chapter 4 of KS, Chapter 5 of CB, Chapter 5 of SH

[Kelley, Judith G. and Beth A. Simmons](#). 2014. "Politics by Number: Indicators as Social Pressure in International Relations." *American Journal of Political Science* 59 (1): 55-70.

[Wahl, Rachel](#). 2017. *Just Violence: Torture and Human Rights in the Eyes of the Police*. Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press. Introduction, Chapter 2.

#### **Week 6: Intergovernmental organizations**

Chapter 5 of KS, Chapter 6 of CB, Chapter 6 of SH

[Greenhill, Brian](#). 2010. "The Company You Keep: International Socialization and the Diffusion of Human Rights Norms." *International Studies Quarterly* 54 (1): 127-145.

[Ayoub, Phillip M.](#) 2013. "Cooperative transnationalism in contemporary Europe: Europeanization and political opportunities for LGBT mobilization in the European Union." *European Political Science Review* 5 (2): 279-310.

#### **Week 7: (International) nongovernmental organizations (NGOs)**

*Outlines due at beginning of class!*

Chapter 6 of KS, Chapter 7 of CB, Chapter 7 of SH

[Pruce, Joel R. and Alexandra Cosima Budabin](#). 2016. "Beyond Naming and Shaming: New Modalities of Information Politics in Human Rights." *Journal of Human Rights* 15 (3): 408-425.

[Stroup, Sarah S. and Wendy H. Wong](#). 2017. *The Authority Trap*. Ithaca: Cornell University Press. Chapter 1, 3.

### **Week 8: The Market**

Chapter 7 of KS, Chapter 8, 9 of CB, Chapter 8 of SH

[Barman, Emily](#). 2016. *Caring Capitalism: The Meaning and Measure of Social Value*. New York: Cambridge University Press. Chapter 1.

[Bartley, Tim and Curtis Child](#). 2014. "Shaming the Corporation: The Social Production of Targets and the Anti-Sweatshop Movement." *American Sociological Review* 79 (4): 653-679.

### **UNIT 3: How well are we doing?**

*Discussion questions to begin:*

What are rights that one might have based on group identity?

How are the issues of concern discussed in this week's readings different from other weeks?

How do measurement questions affect "legal" and "illegal" (or "questionable") practices differently?

Are we "succeeding" on human rights? How?

### **Week 9: Gender and sexual orientation**

[Andrew, Caroline](#). 2016. "The Politics of Women's Rights." In *Human Rights: Current Issues and Controversies*. Ed. Gordon DiGiacomo. Toronto: University of Toronto Press. 262-280.

[Merry, Sally Engle and Peggy Levitt](#). 2017. "The Vernacularization of Women's Human Rights." In *Human Rights Futures*. Ed. Stephen Hopgood, Jack Snyder, and Leslie Vinjamuri. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. 213-236.

[Waites, Matthew](#). 2009. "Critique of 'Sexual Orientation' and 'Gender Identity' in Human Rights Discourse: Global Queer Politics beyond the Yogyakarta Principles." *Contemporary Politics* 15 (1): 137-156.

### **Week 10: Slavery: is it still with us?**

[Davidson, Julia O'Connell](#). 2010. "New Slavery, Old Binaries: Human Trafficking and the Borders of 'Freedom.'" *Global Networks* 10 (2): 244-261.

[Tyldum, Guri and Anette Brunovskis](#). 2005. "Describing the Unobserved: Methodological Challenges in Empirical Studies on Human Trafficking." *International Migration* 43 (1/2): 17-34.

*Recommended:* [Kaufmann, Chaim D. and Robert A. Pape](#). 1999. "Explaining Costly Moral Action: Britain's Sixty-Year Campaign Against the Atlantic Slave Trade." *International Organization* 53 (4): 631-668.

**Week 11: Rough draft reviews**

**Week 12: Discussion**

What have we learned?