Course Description and Purpose

This course serves as an introduction to the origins (theoretical and institutional) and practice of human rights. While the concept of natural rights, such as life, liberty, the pursuit of happiness, maybe well understood and expected in some contexts, it is certainly not a global reality and often less recognized outside of Western democratic societies. From the outset of this course, we will examine the theoretical underpinnings of the field as well as some of the most significant events driving the development of human rights law and the institutionalization of human rights protection globally. Beyond the foundational introduction to the theoretical underpinnings, juridical developments and institutional developments, the course applies a microlens to further examine and contextualize local perspectives and the conditions that have emerged in suboptimal conditions. While the theoretical underpinnings of human rights reach back through time immemorial, the jumping-off point for this course is set in the postwar era – with the founding of the United Nations and the ratification of the United Nations Universal Declaration of Human Rights (1948). Growing from the watershed moment, the course provides a path to explore and analyze the development of human rights from both institutional and empirical perspectives (international, regional and local).

Global Learning Course Outcomes

- **Global Awareness:** Students will be able to articulate the interrelation of cultural, historical and political forces that determine the evolving discourse on human dignity.
- **Global Perspective:** Students will be able to analyze major debates within the field of human rights from the perspective of different local, national, international and global actors/groups involved.
- **Global Engagement:** Students will be able to evaluate current events from a human rights perspective and engage in advocacy/policy prescriptions.

Important Information

Before starting this course, please review the following pages:

- Policies
- Technical Requirements and Skills
- Accessibility and Accommodation
Course Prerequisites

There are no prerequisites for this course.

Proctored Exam Policy

Please note that the information contained in this section applies only if your course requires a proctored exam.

There are no proctored exams for this course.

Through a careful examination of this syllabus, it is the student’s responsibility to determine whether this online course requires proctored exams. Please visit our Student Proctored Exam Instructions webpage for important information concerning proctored exams, proctoring centers, and important forms.

Textbook and Course Materials

A textbook is not required for this course. All required and optional readings will be available on Canvas at the start of each week. YouTube lectures are also provided. Though, these are optional. The purpose they serve is to help contextualize ideas and provide empirical examples of the realities and challenges incumbent upon international human rights protection.

Weekly Lectures

Weekly pre-recorded lectures will be provided and become available by every Wednesday evening EST.

Affordability Counts

This course has been awarded the Affordability Counts Medallion. The Affordability Counts initiative at FIU seeks to make learning more affordable by reducing the cost of course materials to $60 or less. Find out more by visiting the Affordability Counts website at lowcost.fiu.edu.

Expectations of this Course
Do not copy without the express written consent of the instructor.

This is an online course, which means most (if not all) of the course work will be conducted online. Expectations for performance in an online course are the same for a traditional course. In fact, online courses require a degree of self-motivation, self-discipline, and technology skills which can make these courses more demanding for some students.

- **Course Communication - how to contact your professor**
  - Communication in this course will take place via the Inbox. Check out the Canvas Conversations Tutorial to learn how to communicate with your instructor and peers using Announcements, Discussions, and the Inbox.

- **Medical Emergencies:** A doctor’s note will NOT automatically excuse students from assignments, discussion posts, examinations, and class archives. Students must have a true medical emergency before the excuse will be considered. Colds, coughs, and bellyaches are generally NOT medical emergencies. The instructor must be contacted as soon as possible regarding the situation. Additionally, the acceptance of the medical excuse is at the complete discretion of the instructor.

- **Class Cancellation for Weather and Other Emergencies:** At some point during the semester, it may be necessary for the University to cancel all or some classes due to poor weather, power failures, or other emergencies. Because of the very nature of an online class in which students are participating from all over the world, a University class cancellation or closure will not automatically apply in this course. The FIU eCampus will still be operational in times of a University shutdown. In times of a power outage or system wide failure, the instructor will make an announcement in the FIU eCampus classroom as soon as information becomes available. Assignment due dates are firm and will not automatically change if the University is closed. Always check the FIU Online classroom for updates and announcements concerning the class.

- **Student Evaluation of Instruction:** Effective teaching is a primary mission of Florida International University. Student evaluation of instruction provides the university and the instructor with feedback about the student's experience in the course for review and course improvement. Student participation in the evaluation of course instruction is both strongly encouraged and highly valued. Results are strictly confidential, anonymous, and not available to the instructor until after final grades are released by Admissions and Records. Information about the evaluation will be provided towards the end of the semester.

**Notes:**

1. The instructor reserves the right to modify this syllabus should the need arise.

2. Any student having a prior commitment any time during the semester should notify the instructor by the first week of class to make any necessary arrangements.

3. Any student requiring accommodations of any sort should notify the instructor by the first week of class to make any necessary arrangements.

4. Grade disputes must be brought to the instructor’s attention no later than one (1) week after the grades are returned. This includes grades on the outline, annotated bibliography, research paper, exams, discussion questions, and attendance roll calls.

5. All short answer responses and papers are **submitted as a Turnitin Assignment.**
6. By the middle of the term, I will come up with possible extra credit opportunities for any of you in need.

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**Discussion Forums**

Discussions serve as an assessment of your global awareness. The fundamental intention of these is not merely to have a weekly assignment, but more so to allow you to engage with your classmates and be exposed to a litany of different perspectives as they pertain to human rights in the multitude of settings put forth throughout the course of this term. Having a greater understanding of the literature and the field are certainly expected outcomes for this course, but an overarching goal is to enhance each individual’s global awareness, to be more mindful of the daily decisions, such as how you consume goods and services and ultimately engage with the society outside of the confines of university.

Weekly discussion prompts will be provided by the middle of each week. Please review and re-review the questions as you go through the weekly readings. This will ensure that you are contextualizing your response as you reflect upon the material. It is expected that each student provides at least one critical short-response per week (at least three-four sentences). You may either reply directly to the prompt itself, or questions or statements posted by other students. Importantly, there is no RIGHT answer. The sole purpose of the discussion board is to provide a space for us to openly discuss the challenges of human rights in a well-educated manner.

Keep in mind that your discussion forum postings will likely be seen by other members of the course. Care should be taken when determining what to post.

All discussion responses are due by Sunday by 11:59 pm. Discussions submitted after the deadline will have an automatic one-point reduction.

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**Assignments**

For assignment availability, detailed instructions, grading criteria and feedback response time, please review the important information about the assignments page.

Late Assignments submitted 24 hours after the deadline, will result in an automatic one-point reduction for discussions or 10 percent reduction for the midterm and final, respectively.

If you absolutely need an extension, please do not hesitate to contact me, thank you!

**Global Learning Objectives for Midterm and Final**

The midterm and final encompass all three aspects of global learning. The midterm is more guided and designed with the intention that each student will display a critical understanding of the fundamental underpinnings pertaining to the theoretical and institutional developments surrounding human rights. This exercise increases global awareness and perspective, setting the stage for the latter half of the term when the course takes a more empirical turn.
For the final, each student selects a case study to examine further. The assignment is developed for each of you to delve deeper into a particular issue that is of considerable personal or scholarly interest and with the aim that each of you will critically exam current particularities therein as they exist and how they relate to the international system. In other words, given the juridical underpinnings and limited enforceability of international law, to what extent are universal human rights principles (theoretical, legal or otherwise) being achieved in local settings. As with the discussions, the intended hope is to not only increase perspective and awareness but implicitly to drive the next step to be mindful in the way through which one engages with the direct and global community. Thus, your midterm and final will serve as assessments of your global perspective and engagement.

Midterm (Dates are subject to change each term – please adhere to those on Canvas).

- You will be provided with 4 questions, please write on one.
- Readings. Please critically reflect upon the question and bring in the literature. Answers should be between at least 3000 word (excluding bibliography). Please use a minimum of five academic sources plus other media sources.
- Midterm Due: Wednesday February 17, 2021 by 5pm EST (USA)

Final Paper (Dates are subject to change each term – please adhere to those on Canvas).

- Each student is expected to produce one 2500 word (excluding bibliography) paper. As a point of guidance, the paper should set out to address: What is a challenges of international human rights protection and in your opinion, what are some of the greatest challenges we face concerning Human Rights? Explain. Specific questions will be provided.
- The subject of the paper can be taken from any theme discussed throughout the term or if you like, from one of your choosing. As a point of housekeeping, I request that your proposed topic be submitted through Canvas under the assignment tool by March 24 @ 5:30 pm EST (USA) – beginning of week 12. This is to ensure that you have a full month to work on your final. If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact me.
- Final Papers Due Sunday April 18, 2021 by 2pm EST (USA)

Grade Posting

- There are a lot of you in this class and just one of me, but I will do my best to post grades each week by Sunday afternoon (one week after the submission) EST.
Adobe Connect is an online meeting room where you can interact with your professor and fellow students by sharing screens, sharing files, chatting, broadcasting live audio, and taking part in other interactive online activities. We will be utilizing this tool to conduct Recorded Lectures & Office Hours.

Requirements for using Adobe Connect:

- Disable any window pop-up blocker.
- Adobe Flash Player is required to successfully run your Adobe Connect meeting. You can test your computer to make sure your computer and network connections are properly configured to provide you with the best possible Adobe Connect meeting experience.
- Use of a combination headset and microphone with USB connection is recommended to ensure quality sound and reduce technical difficulties.

Reference Adobe Connect (Tutorials & Help) to learn about the tool, how to access your meeting rooms and recordings.

### Grading

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### Course Calendar

Below is a partial list of course readings. While some of these change each term (to keep up with trends and events as they emerge), readings were conscientiously selected to come from not only the “giants” in the field but also from a diverse set of localized experts working within these communities, from both non-academics (policymakers and practioners) and more scholarly publications therein.

### Tasks
Week 1
Jan. 7 – Jan. 13
Introduction to Human Rights

Review:
- Syllabus
- Course Overview PowerPoint
- Week 1 PowerPoint

Read:
- “History of UNHCR.”
- “What are Human Rights?” UN Human Rights Office of the High Commissioner

Watch:
- How does the United Nations work? | RMIT University
- Universal Declaration of Human Rights

Participate:
- Week 1 Discussion due Sunday at 11:59pm.

Week 2
Jan. 14 – Jan. 20
Introduction to Human Rights Cont’d

Read:

Watch:
- Hannah Arendt Final Speech: Hannah Arendt Final Speech

Participate:
- Week 2 Discussion due Sunday at 11:59pm.

Week 3
Jan. 21 – Jan. 27
Cultural Relativism Theory

Read:
Watch:

- Schools of Thought in Classical Liberalism, Part 5: Natural Rights - Learn Liberty (Links to an external site.) Links to an external site.

Participate:

- Week 3 Discussion due Sunday at 11:59pm.

Read:

- *Book Review McDougal, Myres S. "International Law and Human Rights."

Watch:

- What are the universal human rights? - Benedetta Berti
- POLITICAL THEORY - John Locke

Participate:

- Week 4 Discussion due Sunday at 11:59pm.

Read:


Watch:

- NGOs As Engines of Human Rights Protection

Participate:

- Week 5 Discussion due Sunday at 11:59pm.
Read:


**Week 6**
Feb. 11 – Feb. 17

**Capabilities**

- How Effective Is The United Nations?

**Participate:**

- Week 6 Discussion due Sunday at 11:59pm.

**Read:**

- Supplemental Reading: TBD

**Watch:**

**Week 7:**
Feb. 18 – Feb. 24

**Capabilities Cont’d**

**Participate:**

- Week 7 Discussion due Sunday at 11:59pm.

**Complete:**

- Midterm Due: Tuesday by 5pm

**Week 8**
Feb. 25 – Mar. 3

**Capabilities Cont’d**

**Participate:**

- Week 8 Discussion due Sunday at 11:59pm.

**Read:**

Regional Human Rights
EU


Watch:

- Refugees in Europe: a crisis of connection | Dace Dzenovska | TEDxRiga

Participate:

- Week 9 Discussion due Sunday at 11:59pm.

Week 10
Mar. 11 – Mar. 17

Regional EU Cont’d

(Spring Break – University Open, no classes--*This Week is Extra Credit--Not Mandatory*)

Read:


Participate:

- Discussion due Sunday at 11:59pm.

Week 11
Mar. 18 – Mar. 24

Regional Human Rights Challenges: Asia

Participate:

- Week 11 Discussion due Sunday at 11:59pm.

Read:


Week 12
Mar. 25 – Mar. 31

Regional Human Rights Challenges: Africa

Participate:

- Academic Source: TBD
- Mudge, Lewis Op Ed. "In the Central African Republic, AU Peacekeepers Carried Out an Egregious Crime"
Week 12 Discussion due Sunday at 11:59pm.

Read:

- Watch: Migration as a universal human right | Alvaro Huerta | TEDxClaremontCollege
- “Forced Migration and Displacement” *IFRC*. October 16, 2012

Participate:

- Week 12 Discussion due Sunday at 11:59pm.

Week 13
Apr. 1 – Apr. 7

*Forced Migration*

Read:


Participate:

- Week 13 Discussion due Sunday at 11:59pm.

Week 14
Apr. 8 – Apr. 14

*MNC’s and Human Rights*

Read:

- Human Trafficking; Slavery; Indentured Servants; Equal Access to Health Care
- Watch: The Secret Slaves of The Middle East

Participate:

- Week 14 Discussion due Sunday at 11:59pm.

Week 15
Apr. 15 – Apr. 21

*The Future of International Human Rights Protection*

Read:

- Human Trafficking; Slavery; Indentured Servants; Equal Access to Health Care
- Watch: The Secret Slaves of The Middle East

Participate:

- Week 15 Discussion due Sunday at 11:59pm.

Week 16
Apr. 22 – Apr. 27

*Finals Week*

Final Papers Due Friday by 5:30pm

*Saturday, December 8th (On-Campus Exams for Online Courses)*
# Course Summary:

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<td>Tue Apr 2, 2019</td>
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<td>Mon Apr 15, 2019</td>
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