

POLI 498 – Capstone Seminar: Human Rights
Fall 2018
Tuesdays & Thursdays, 5:00-6:15 PM, ALB 318

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**Office Hours: Tues. 10-11 am & Weds. noon-1pm
& by appointment**

Course Description

The idea of human rights is both ancient and quintessentially modern. It has implications for all levels of human society from the individual to global politics. This capstone course for political science majors will examine the question of human rights from various angles. We will begin by interrogating the concept of human rights, considering its various philosophical origins and historical development. We will then turn to the making of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR), considered by many to be the foundational document of the modern human rights era. For the remainder of the course we will examine various human rights issues and cases, as well as attempts at both the international and domestic levels to protect and guarantee human rights. At the international level we will study the case of genocide in Rwanda and how the international community failed to prevent that tragedy. We will consider domestic and international efforts at justice and reconciliation in the wake of these horrific crimes, including the establishment of the International Criminal Court (ICC). We will look at torture as a violation of human rights and debate the consequences of its use by the U.S. in the Global War on Terror (GWOT). Given the magnitude of today's global refugee and migrant crisis, we will consider this unfolding human drama and state responses to it from a human rights perspective. In the final section of the course we will look at contemporary human rights issues in the U.S., including the question of socio-economic rights, racism, and sexism.

Course Learning Objectives

Students will...

- Gain an understanding of the concept of human rights, as well as historical precedents and events that laid the foundations for our modern understanding of this idea.
- Explore and become familiar with a variety of contemporary human rights issues
- Develop their own positions on key human rights issues and be able to support them with reasoned arguments and evidence.
- Employ advanced-level analytical skills to analyze, interpret, and critique important work on this topic. Students will be expected to identify central arguments in the assigned readings, raise questions about the texts, and consider the strengths and weaknesses of arguments and proposals based on evidence and logic.
- Integrate knowledge, skills, and experiences from political science to come up with an interesting research question on this topic and then explore that question in an extended paper and oral presentation.
- Create a classroom community that allows for creative, respectful, and wide-ranging discussion of complex ideas and problems, thereby developing skills in democratic discourse, debate, and analytical reasoning.

Communication in the Major Learning Objectives

This course is one of two in the Political Science major that together meet a student's GEP requirement for Communication in the Major. As such, this course also seeks to meet the following learning objectives:

- Apply discipline-specific standards of oral and written communication to compose an articulate, grammatically correct, and organized presentation/piece of writing with properly documented and supported ideas, evidence, and information suitable to the topic, purpose, and audience.
- Critique their own and others' writing/oral presentations to provide effective and useful feedback to improve their communication skills.

Assigned Texts

Required Texts Available for Purchase at the UWSP Bookstore

- Andrew Clapham. *Human Rights: A Very Short Introduction*. Oxford University Press, 2015.
- Mary Ann Glendon. *A World Made New: Eleanor Roosevelt and the Universal Declaration of Human Rights*. Random House, 2002.
- Reece Jones. *Violent Borders: Refugees and the Right to Move*. Verso, 2017.

E-reserves

- All other readings are available on D2L e-Reserves.

Course Requirements and Grading

Your grade will be based on your performance in the following areas:

Attendance and Participation	30%
Current Event Presentation (1)	2%
Leading Class Discussion (1)	8%
Reading Annotations (3)	12%
First Draft of Research Paper & Peer Editing	8%
Research Paper	30%
Research Paper Presentation	<u>10%</u>
TOTAL	100%

Attendance and Participation

As a capstone senior seminar, this course assumes that students are well versed in various aspects of political science and have developed the requisite skills of theoretical and empirical analysis to engage with sophisticated material without an inordinate amount of guidance or orientation from the professor. As a capstone experience, this course will function similarly to a graduate-level seminar. This means that instead of the professor lecturing, most class time will be spent discussing the assigned materials for that day. All students are expected to contribute to these discussions. Consequently, it is vitally important that students come to class having completed the assigned readings or watched any films assigned for that day. Previous to coming to class, students should reflect on the topic for that day and jot down comments and questions to contribute to the day's discussion. There are various ways to contribute to class discussion, including answering questions, posing questions, listening attentively to others, and taking notes. Additionally, each student will take responsibility for leading a class once during the semester.

Obviously, a student cannot contribute if they are not present, so regular attendance is essential. Students are expected to attend all class sessions but may be excused if they have a justifiable reason. Excused absences are defined as illness (with a doctor's note), funeral of a family member (with appropriate documentation), a university-related function (with appropriate documentation). More than **two** unexcused absences will result in a lowering of your attendance and participation grade; **if you miss more than six classes during the semester (3 weeks) you will automatically receive an "F" for Attendance and Participation.** This means that you could receive anywhere from 60-0% of the total possible 30 points for Attendance and Participation, and risk failing the course.

Reading Annotations

Over the course of the semester each student will write a total of three (3) Reading Annotations on assigned readings, which will then be posted to the discussion board so that all students can access them. A sign-up sheet will be circulated at the start of the semester. Reading Annotations should be 1 single-spaced page in length and ***must be posted to D2L by noon on the day for which the reading is assigned.*** Together these 3 Annotations will count for 12% of your grade.

Leading Class Discussion

Once during the semester each student will lead the class for that day. In preparation the student will put together an outline of key points from the reading and/or film, identify topics that might have been left hanging from the previous class, and draw up a list of discussion questions on the reading and the topic for that day/week. The student should prepare a handout for class. The student leader for that day will initiate and lead the discussion with the assistance (if need be) of the professor. Students will be graded on their preparation and their skill in helping to guide the discussion.

Current Events Presentations

We will begin most classes by discussing a story in the news related to human rights. Once during the semester each student will make a brief presentation on an article of interest related to this topic. I will pass around a sign-up sheet early in the semester. Current event presentations will not be graded; so long as a student completes the presentation he/she will earn full credit. This presentation counts for 2% of the final grade. Recommended sources include, but are not limited to: *The New York Times*, *The Guardian*, *Slate*, *Harpers*, *The Atlantic*, *The New Yorker*, *Foreign Affairs*.

Paper Project and Presentations

The major written assignment is a 14-18 page-research paper on a topic of the student's choosing. Detailed instructions, guidelines, and topic suggestions will be provided early in the semester. During the first half of the semester students will submit paper proposals, which I will review and give feedback on. We will also hold peer review sessions to provide feedback on first drafts before the final drafts are due.

At the end of the semester all students will be required to formally present their research papers to the class. Student paper presentations will take place during the last week of class and on the designated final exam day.

The Writing Lab

The Writing Lab in the Tutoring-Learning Center (TLC) offers free one-on-one help with papers for any class at any point in the writing process, from outlining to checking a completed paper before submission. The writing tutors are UWSP students who have done well in their classes and who are here to share their successful writing habits to help others succeed. Talking about writing projects always makes them better, and the tutors in the lab are eager to help. Drop in room LRC 018 or call (715) 346-3568 for an appointment.

Writing Lab Schedule

Name	Day	Time	Location	Cost
Writing Lab (Drop-in or by appointment)	Mon. – Thurs.	9:00 a.m. - 8:00 p.m.	Tutoring-Learning Center ALB 018	Free
Writing Lab (Drop-in or by appointment)	Fri.	9:00 a.m. - 1:00 p.m.	Tutoring-Learning Center ALB 018	Free

Academic Integrity and Turnitin.com: All students are expected to abide by the guidelines for academic integrity contained in the UW System Administrative Code. As a student it behooves you to be well acquainted with these guidelines and to understand clearly what constitutes plagiarism, as violations can result in severe consequences. We will use the plagiarism detection program, Turnitin.com, via D2L. You will upload all your written work to the appropriate D2L dropboxes, which are connected to the Turnitin.com database. **Please note that if you fail to upload a paper to D2L you will not receive credit for the assignment.**

Class Schedule and Reading Assignments

Week 1 - Introductions

9/4 – Introduction to course & each other

No assigned readings

9/6 – Historical Development of Rights

Reading: Clapham, Ch. 1 “Looking at Rights” (entire); Ch. 2 “Historical Development and Contemporary Concerns” (pp. 27-38 ending at “Prosecution of International Crimes)

Week 2 – Conceptualizing Human Rights

9/11 – The Concept of Human Rights

Reading: Jack Donnelly. *Universal Human Rights in Theory and Practice, Third Edition.* Cornell University Press, 2013. Ch. 1, “The Concept of Human Rights”. (D2L e-Reserves)

9/13 – Universal Declaration of Human Rights

Readings: Glendon, Preface (xv-xxi); Ch. 1 “The Longing for Freedom” (pp. 3-20); & Ch. 2 “Madam Chairman” (pp. 21-34)

Week 3 – How the Universal Declaration of Human Rights Came to Be

9/18 – Universal Declaration of Human Rights

Reading: Glendon, Chs. 3-6 (pp. 35-98)

9/20 - Universal Declaration of Human Rights

Reading: Glendon, Ch. 7 “In the Eye of the Hurricane” (pp. 99-121), & Ch. 9 “The Nations Have Their Say” (pp. 143-171).

Week 4 – Universality

9/25 – Examining the Document itself

Readings:

- Glendon, Ch. 10 “The Declaration of Interdependence” (pp. 173-191)
- Jack Donnelly. *Universal Human Rights in Theory and Practice, Third Edition.* Cornell University Press, 2013. Ch. 2 “The Universal Declaration Model” (pp. 24-39) (D2L e-Reserves)

9/27 – The Question of Universality

Readings:

- Glendon, Ch. 12, “Universality Under Siege” (pp. 221-233)
- Jack Donnelly. *Universal Human Rights in Theory and Practice, Third Edition.* Cornell University Press, 2013. Ch. 6, “The Relative Universality of Human Rights” (pp. 93-105) (D2L e-Reserves)

9/28 – DUE RESEARCH PAPER TOPIC PROPOSAL – Upload to D2L dropbox by 5PM

Week 5 – Human Rights and International Politics

10/2 – Foreign Policy & Human Rights

Readings:

- Glendon, Ch. 11, “Deep Freeze” (pp. 193-219)
- Clapham, Ch. 3 “Human rights foreign policy and the role of the United Nations” (pp. 63-82).

Links to Human Rights Council webpages:

- <http://www.ohchr.org/EN/HRBodies/HRC/Pages/AboutCouncil.aspx>
- <http://www.ohchr.org/EN/HRBodies/HRC/Pages/MembersByGroup.aspx>

10/4 – Torture

Readings:

- Clapham, Ch. 4 “Torture” (pp.83-97)
- Sanford Levinson, ed. *Torture: A Collection*. Oxford University Press, 2004. Chapters by Elaine Scarry, “Five Errors in the Reasoning of Alan Dershowitz”, and Richard A. Posner, “Torture, Terrorism, and Interrogation.” (pp. 281-298) (D2L e-Reserves)

Link to: Convention against Torture <http://www.hrweb.org/legal/cat.html>

Week 6 – The Global Migration Crisis

10/8 – *Guest Lecture, “The Impact of Migration on Germany and the EU” by German Consulate General Herbert Quelle. 6-8pm, NFAC. Attendance is mandatory.*

10/9 – Migration and the EU

Reading: Reece Jones. *Violent Borders*, Introduction and Ch. 1 “The European Union: The World’s Deadliest Border” (pp. 1-28)

10/11 – Crisis at the U.S.-Mexican Border

Reading: Reece Jones. *Violent Borders*, Ch. 2 “The U.S.-Mexico Border: The Rise of a Militarized Zone”; and Ch. 3 “The Global Border Regime” (pp. 29-69)

Highly Recommended: Human Flow, 2017 documentary by Ai Weiwei on global migration crisis.

Week 7 - Migration as a Human Right

10/16 – Global Economy and Migration

Reading: Reece Jones. *Violent Borders*, Ch. 4 “The Global Poor” (pp. 70-88); and Ch. 6 “Bounding Wages Goods and Workers” (pp. 119-139)

10/18 – The Future of Migration and Human Rights

Reading: Reece Jones. *Violent Borders*, Ch. 7 “Borders, Climate Change, and the Environment”; and Conclusion (pp. 140-180)

Week 8 – Genocide & the International Community

10/23 – Defining Genocide & Case Study of Rwanda

Reading: A. Jones. *Genocide: A Comprehensive Introduction*. Routledge, 2017. Ch. 1 “The Origins of Genocide” (pp. 3-22); & Ch. 9 “Genocide in Africa’s Great Lakes Region” (pp. 470-87). (D2L e-R)

Highly Recommended: Hotel Rwanda, 2005 feature film about the Rwandan genocide.

10/25 – Right to Protect

Reading: Daniel P.L. Chong. *Debating Human Rights*, Lynne Rienner Publishers, 2014. Ch. 5 “Does the International Community Have a ‘Responsibility to Protect?’” (pp. 65-78). (D2L e-Reserves)

Week 9 – Dealing with the Legacies of Genocide

10/30 – Seeking justice and reconciliation

Reading: Adam Jones. *Genocide: A Comprehensive Introduction, Third Edition*. Routledge, 2017. Ch. 15 “Justice, Truth, and Redress” (pp. 697-737, Note: You can skip the following sections: The Pinochet Case, pp. 718-720, and Box 15.3, pp. 726-730). (D2L e-Reserves)

11/1 - The International Criminal Court

Watch: “The Reckoning: The Battle for the International Criminal Court.” Available streaming on Kanopy. Link is on D2L e-reserves. (Running Time: 100 minutes)

Reading: Daniel P.L. Chong. *Debating Human Rights*, Lynne Rienner Publishers, 2014. Ch. 6 “Should the United States Join the International Criminal Court?” (pp. 81-93) (D2L e-Reserves).

Week 10 - Socio-Economic Rights

11/6 – Election Day!!! VOTE!!! It is a right and a duty.

No class – Free day to work on the first draft of your papers.

11/8 – Socio-economic Rights

Reading: Clapham, Ch. 7 “Food, education, health, housing, and work.” (pp. 122-139)

Week 11 – Socio-Economic Rights; Peer-Editing

11/12 – FIRST DRAFT OF RESEARCH PAPER DUE – Upload to D2L by 5PM

11/13 – Debating Socio-economic rights

Readings:

- Daniel P.L. Chong. *Debating Human Rights*, Lynne Rienner Publishers, 2014. Ch. 12 “Are Food, Housing, and Health Care Valid Human Rights?” (pp. 175-186).
- Jacey Fortin. “‘Access to Literacy’ is not a Constitutional Right, Judge in Detroit Rules”. *The New York Times*, July 4, 2018. (D2L e-Reserves)

11/15 - Peer-editing workshops – regular class meeting cancelled

Week 12 – Peer-editing & Break!

11/20 – Peer-editing workshops – regular class meeting cancelled

11/22-25 – Thanksgiving Break! Enjoy!!!

Week 13 – Discrimination & Racism

11/27 – Discrimination and Equality

Reading: Clapham, Ch. 8 “Discrimination and equality.” (pp. 140-152)

11/29 – Racism in the U.S.

Reading: Eric Bonds. *Social Problems: A Human Rights Perspective*. Routledge, 2015. Ch. IV “Racism and the Human Right to be Treated Equally Before the Law.” (pp. 32-40) (D2L e-Reserves)

Watch: 13th. Documentary by Ava DuVernay. Streaming on Netflix. *Running time: 100 minutes.*

Week 14 – Current Issues in U.S. Society and Conclusions

12/4 – Sexism in the U.S. and on College Campuses

Reading: Eric Bonds. *Social Problems: A Human Rights Perspective*. Routledge, 2015. Ch. V “Sexism and the Right to Bodily Integrity.” (pp. 41-50) (D2L e-Reserves)

12/6 – Conclusions

Readings:

- Clapham, Final Remarks (pp. 161-165).
- Glendon, Epilogue “The Declaration Today” (pp. 235-241).

Week 15 – Student Paper Presentations

12/9 – RESEARCH PAPERS DUE - Upload to D2L Dropbox by 5pm

12/11 – Student Paper Presentations

12/13 – Student Paper Presentations

Finals Week – Wednesday, December 19th, 5pm-7pm, ALB 318 - Student Paper Presentations