

Syllabus – Summer 2015

Excluding materials for purchase, syllabus information may be subject to change. The most up-to-date syllabus is located within the course in HuskyCT.

Course and Instructor Information

Course Title: Introduction to Human Rights

Credits: 3

Format: Online via HuskyCT

Professor: Nicole Coleman

Email: nicole.coleman@uconn.edu (After the first day of classes, students registered in the course should send messages to the instructor via HuskyCT Messages.)

Office Hours/Availability: Unless otherwise noted, I will check into the course at least five days a week to monitor discussions and respond to HuskyCT Messages. If I expect to be away due to illness, travel or family obligations, I will make every attempt to notify you in advance. Office hours by appointment.

Additional Information: The developers of this course are Nicole Coleman, UConn Human Rights Institute Graduate Assistant and Glenn Mitoma, Director of the Thomas J. Dodd Research Center at UConn.

Course Materials

Required course materials must be obtained before the first day of class.

Texts are available through a local or online bookstore. The [UConn Co-op](#) carries many materials that can be shipped via its online [Textbooks To Go](#) service. For more information, see Textbooks and Materials on our [Enrolled Students](#) page.

Required Materials:

Amnesty International (2011). *Freedom: Stories Celebrating the Universal Declaration of Human Rights*.

Broadway Books.

Paperback ISBN: 978-0307588838 (also available for Kindle).

Other Required Materials:

Microphone (for recording a presentation)

Speakers (for listening to presentations)

Additional required course readings and media are available within HuskyCT, through either an Internet link or Library Resources

Course Description

In recent years, “human rights” has become among the most powerful ways of thinking about and fighting for a more just world. This course provides an introduction to the interdisciplinary study of human rights as a concept, a set of laws and institutions, and as a set of political and cultural practices. We begin by considering definitions, historical and institutional foundations of human rights. We then focus on several particular human rights issues, groups of human rights and human rights of certain groups of people. Along the way, we will take different disciplinary approaches – legal, philosophical, literary etc. – to our subject. By the end of the class, we will have developed an understanding of the institutions and processes related to human rights and familiarity with key intellectual debates as well as differing policy and advocacy strategies.

Course Objectives

By the end of the semester, students should be able to:

1. Recognize key terms and major institutions in the Human Rights field.
2. Critically interpret news and scholarly articles on Human Rights issues by questioning assumptions and theses.
3. Analyze Human Rights issues from different disciplinary perspectives.
4. Justify personal Human Rights standpoints with supporting evidence from course readings and materials.
5. Analyze a political situation, or cultural product, in terms of human rights.
6. Create a collaborative and research-based presentation to inform the class about a specific case of group rights.

Course Outline

Module 1: International System of Human Rights
Module 2: Civil and Political Rights
Module 3: Economic and Social Rights
Module 4: Rights of Groups – Minority and Indigenous Rights
Module 5: Rights of Groups – Women's Rights
Module 6: Crimes against Humanity

Course Requirements and Grading

Summary of Course Grading:

Course Components	Weight
Discussions	30%
Quizzes	10%
Blog	20%
Group Project	20%
Papers	20%

Discussions

In each module, there are one or two small group discussions. For each discussion, you are to compose an original and thoughtful response. Your response should clearly draw on the module's readings, using APA or MLA format to cite all references. You may also reference additional sources from reliable articles, books or book chapters, media outlets, sites etc. After you complete your original response, you are to engage with the responses of your peers by posting at least two comments which enhance or expand the discussion for the group. Discussions are graded out of 100 points. For more details on the criteria used to assess the quality of your contribution to each discussion, see the Discussion Rubric linked in HuskyCT.

Quizzes

Each module will have one or two short quizzes covering the assigned readings. Quizzes are individual exercises that should be completed without the assistance of others. During the quiz, you may refer to your readings. You may take each quiz twice before its close date. If you achieve a score of 80% or higher on a quiz, you will earn full credit, or 100 points. If you score below 80%, you will receive zero points.

Blog

Each module starts with a blog activity asking for you to write your initial thoughts about the module's topic without referencing outside resources. This initial entry is graded for completion only. If you complete the initial blog entry on time, you earn full credit, or 100 points. If you do not complete the entry, you receive no credit, or zero points.

Some modules include a discussion about blog entries. You are to read a few blog entries of your peers about a certain topic and engage in a discussion with them. These discussions are graded for completion only. If you comment on blog posts and respond to comments to your own blog posts, you receive full credit, or 100 points. If you do not complete the entry or do not respond to entries on your own blog, you receive no credit, or zero points.

Some modules will have you revisit your initial blog entry and critically reflect on how the module has changed, or not changed your opinion(s) on the topic. This entry should draw on the module's readings and discussions to substantiate your views. The reflection blog is graded out of 100 points. For more details on the criteria used to assess the quality of your journal reflections, see the Blog Reflection Rubric linked in HuskyCT

Group Project

For the group project, you will work in small groups of 3-5 students to research a specific case of group rights. Your group should find information on the history of rights for the particular group, political and public discussions about rights for this group (representation in the media), as well as the convention for the group (if there is any). You collaboratively present your findings during week 5. You will also engage with the presentations from the other groups in the class. Part of the group project is for you to evaluate your own presentation, the work of each of your team members and the presentation of one other group. More information on the specifics and due dates of each step, are detailed in HuskyCT. You can receive a maximum of 115 points for the group project. For further information on the criteria used to assess the project, see the Group Project Rubric linked in HuskyCT.

Papers

At the end of module 2, 3 and 6, you will submit short papers (2-3 pages) in which you relate the module content to a popular film, book, or current events. Concrete information as well as sample essays will be given during the modules. Your paper should demonstrate an analysis of a (political) situation or a cultural product in terms of human rights. It should incorporate three secondary sources; you may draw on our course readings and additional reliable sources. You are to cite your references properly in either APA or MLA format. The final paper is graded out of 100 points. For more details on the criteria used to assess your papers, see the Paper Rubric linked in HuskyCT.

Grading Scale:

The final course grading scale is as follows (**Note: Final Grades will not be rounded.**):

Grade	Letter Grade	GPA
93-100	A	4.0
90-92	A-	3.7
87-89	B+	3.3
83-86	B	3.0
80-82	B-	2.7
77-79	C+	2.3
73-76	C	2.0
70-72	C-	1.7
67-69	D+	1.3
63-66	D	1.0
60-62	D-	0.7
<60	F	0.0

Due Dates and Late Policy

All course due dates are identified in the *Course Schedule* in HuskyCT. Deadlines are based on Eastern Standard Time; if you are in a different time zone, please adjust your submittal times accordingly. *The instructor reserves the right to change dates accordingly as the semester progresses. All changes will be communicated in an appropriate manner.*

Late discussion entries cannot be made up since they would not contribute to the discussion anymore. Discussion without entries on time, therefore, automatically receive zero points.

If you submit papers or blog entries late, you will lose 3 points per day that the submission is late.

Feedback and Grades

I will make every effort to provide feedback and grades within two days of submission. To keep track of your performance in the course, refer to *My Grades* in HuskyCT.

Student Responsibilities and Resources

As a member of the University of Connecticut student community, you are held to certain standards and academic policies. In addition, there are numerous resources available to help you succeed in your academic work. This section provides a brief overview to important standards, policies and resources.

Student Code

You are responsible for acting in accordance with the [University of Connecticut's Student Code](#). Review and become familiar with these expectations. In particular, make sure you have read the section that applies to you on Academic Integrity:

- [Academic Integrity in Undergraduate Education and Research](#)
- [Academic Integrity in Graduate Education and Research](#)

Cheating and plagiarism are taken very seriously at the University of Connecticut. As a student, it is your responsibility to avoid plagiarism. If you need more information about the subject of plagiarism, use the following resources:

- [Plagiarism: How to Recognize it and How to Avoid It](#)
- [University of Connecticut Libraries' Student Instruction](#) (includes research, citing and writing resources)

Copyright

Copyrighted materials within the course are only for the use of students enrolled in the course for purposes associated with this course and may not be retained or further disseminated.

Netiquette and Communication

At all times, course communication with fellow students and the instructor are to be professional and courteous. It is expected that you proofread all your written communication, including discussion posts, assignment submissions, and mail messages. If you are new to online learning or need a netiquette refresher, please look at this guide titled, [The Core Rules of Netiquette](#).

Adding or Dropping a Course

If you should decide to add or drop a course, there are official procedures to follow:

- Matriculated students should add or drop a course through the [Student Administration System](#).
- Non-degree students should refer to [Non-Degree Add/Drop Information](#) located on the registrar's website.

You must officially drop a course to avoid receiving an "F" on your permanent transcript. Simply discontinuing class or informing the instructor you want to drop does not constitute an official drop of the course. For more information, refer to the:

- [Undergraduate Catalog](#)
- [Graduate Catalog](#)

Academic Calendar

The University's [Academic Calendar](#) contains important semester dates.

Academic Support Resources

[Technology and Academic Help](#) provides a guide to technical and academic assistance.

Students with Disabilities

Students needing special accommodations should work with the University's [Center for Students with Disabilities \(CSD\)](#). You may contact CSD by calling (860) 486-2020 or by emailing csd@uconn.edu. If your request for accommodation is approved, CSD will send an accommodation letter directly to your instructor(s) so that special arrangements can be made. (Note: Student requests for accommodation must be filed each semester.)

Blackboard measures and evaluates accessibility using two sets of standards: the WCAG 2.0 standards issued by the World Wide Web Consortium (W3C) and Section 508 of the Rehabilitation Act issued in the United States federal government." (Retrieved March 24, 2013 from [Blackboard's website](#))

Policy against Discrimination, Harassment and Inappropriate Romantic Relationships

The University is committed to maintaining an environment free of discrimination or discriminatory harassment directed toward any person or group within its community – students, employees, or visitors. Academic and professional excellence can flourish only when each member of our community is assured an atmosphere of mutual respect. All members of the University community are responsible for the maintenance of an academic and work environment in which people are free to learn and work without fear of discrimination or discriminatory harassment. In addition, inappropriate Romantic relationships can undermine the University's mission when those in positions of authority abuse or appear to abuse their authority. To that end, and in accordance with federal and state law, the University prohibits discrimination and discriminatory harassment, as well as inappropriate Romantic relationships, and such behavior will be met with appropriate disciplinary action, up to and including dismissal from the University. Refer to the [Policy against Discrimination, Harassment and Inappropriate Romantic Relationships](#) for more information.

Sexual Assault Reporting Policy

To protect the campus community, all non-confidential University employees (including faculty) are required to report assaults they witness or are told about to the [Office of Diversity & Equity](#) under the [Sexual Assault Response Policy](#). The University takes all reports with the utmost seriousness. Please be aware that while the information you provide will remain private, it will not be confidential and will be shared with University officials who can help. Refer to the [Sexual Assault Reporting Policy](#) for more information.

Software Requirements and Technical Help

- Presentation software
- Word processing software
- [Adobe Acrobat Reader](#)
- Internet access

This course is completely facilitated online using the learning management platform, [HuskyCT](#). If you have difficulty accessing HuskyCT, students have access to the in person/live person support options available during regular business hours through [HuskyTech](#). Students also have [24x7 Course Support](#) including access to live chat, phone, and support documents.

Minimum Technical Skills

To be successful in this course, you will need the following technical skills:

- Use presentation programs.
- Use electronic mail with attachments.
- Save files in commonly used word processing program formats.
- Copy and paste text, graphics or hyperlinks.
- Work within two or more browser windows simultaneously.
- Open and access PDF files.

University students are expected to demonstrate competency in Computer Technology. Explore the [Computer Technology Competencies](#) page for more information.

Evaluation of the Course

Students will be provided an opportunity to evaluate instruction in this course using the University's standard procedures, which are administered by the [Office of Institutional Research and Effectiveness](#) (OIRE).

Additional informal formative surveys may also be administered within the course as an optional evaluation tool.