

## Human Rights and World Politics

GOV 365N (38010)/WGS 340 (46105)

Spring 2016

### COURSE INFORMATION

**Instructor:** Rhonda L. Evans, J.D., Ph.D.  
**Class Meeting:** T/TH 3:30-5:00 pm @ MEZ B0.306  
**Email:** [revans@austin.utexas.edu](mailto:revans@austin.utexas.edu)  
**Office Hours:** T/TH 3:00-3:30 pm & 4:45-5:45 pm or by appointment  
**Office Location:** BAT 4.150

### COURSE DESCRIPTION

Human rights feature prominently in contemporary world politics. The decades since World War II have witnessed the construction of a large and complex international human rights regime that consists of the United Nations and several regionally based human rights systems. This course, focusing primarily on the UN, introduces you to the legal, political, and policy dimensions of international human rights. After briefly exploring the philosophical and moral foundations of these rights, it surveys the legal and institutional infrastructure and processes that exist at domestic and international levels for their promotion. In so doing, the course examines the main actors involved in human rights advocacy, including states, international organizations, tribunals, and nongovernmental organizations. It emphasizes the important role played by law and quasi-judicial institutions in the international human rights regime.

The following set of questions animate the substance of this course. What exactly are international human rights? Where do these rights come from? And, how are they enforced, if at all? In other words, do international human rights work? And if so, how and under what conditions do they work? These are very important questions considering the resources, efforts, and funds that are devoted to international human rights institutions and advocacy each year. And yet, you may be surprised to learn that we actually know relatively little about the efficacy of international human rights. In exploring why this is so, we will consider the various challenges to studying international human rights from an *empirical* (as opposed to a *normative*) perspective. This will require us to cover the basic mechanics of political science research. You should thus emerge from this course with an enhanced understanding of international human rights *and* an improved ability to pose viable research questions and devise plausible ways of answering them.

### REQUIRED READING

The following books [B] are required:

- Ann Marie Clark, *Diplomacy of Conscience: Amnesty International and Changing Human Rights Norms* (Princeton University Press, 2001).
- Heather Smith-Cannoy, *Insincere Commitments: Human Rights Treaties, Abusive States, and Citizen Activism* (Georgetown University Press, 2012).

A course packet will also be available for purchase at the UT Co-op. Its readings are designated on the course schedule as [CP]. Required readings that appear on Canvas are designated on the course schedule as [C], and online resources are designated as [O]. Be aware that additional readings may be added as the semester proceeds.

## COURSE REQUIREMENTS

**Exams:** Course grades will be based on student performance on three exams. All three exams will be administered in class. The first two exams will consist mainly of short-answer, multiple-choice, and true-or-false questions. The final exam will be cumulative. It will include short-answer, multiple-choice, and true-or-false questions based on a study guide that will be provided to students in advance. The final will also contain a major essay component. Students will be given a list of potential essay questions in advance. The instructor will select a question or questions from that list. Failure to take any of the exams without a University-approved excuse will automatically result in a failing grade.

<i>Course Requirement</i>	<i>Percentage of Final Grade</i>	<i>Date</i>
Exam One	25%	Thursday, February 25
Exam Two	25%	Tuesday, April 5
Writing Assignment	15%	Thursday, April 14
Final Exam	35%	Thursday, May 12 @ 9:00 am

**Writing Assignment:** You will be required to write an abstract of an article assigned by the instructor. Detailed instructions on how to write an abstract will be made available on Canvas, and we will frequently discuss the assignment during class, especially during the period of March 3-24. Your paper must be five pages long, stapled, in black ink, on white paper, double-spaced, without extra returns between paragraphs, and in Times New Roman 12-point font. Only hard-copy submissions will be accepted. Papers that do not meet these threshold requirements will be immediately returned to their authors and five points will be deducted from the assignment's grade. Students in this self-made predicament will be given 24 hours to rectify the problems and resubmit their papers. Missing this deadline will cost an additional five points. Thereafter, five points will continue to be deducted for each additional day that the paper is late. A paper must be submitted in order to receive credit for the course.

**Class Participation:** Attendance and participation do not constitute a formal component of the course grade. Therefore, I do not need to know when and why you won't be or weren't in class. Consider, however, that in my decade-plus experience as an instructor I have found that exam and final course grades generally correlate to consistent student engagement with the course. Attendance and participation are important components of meaningful engagement. So, I urge you to attend and participate throughout the semester.

At the start of each course, I will collect questions (either orally or in written form) from students about any aspect of the assigned reading. Student may also wish to email these questions to me before class. I will endeavor to address these questions during the ensuing lecture, or where appropriate, at another class meeting.

**Grading Scale:** Final grades will be determined on the basis of the following rubric. Please note: to ensure fairness, all numbers are absolute, and will not be rounded up or down at any stage. Thus a B- will be inclusive of all scores of 80.000 through 83.999. The University does not recognize the grade of A+.

A = 94-100  
A- = 90-93  
B+ = 87-89  
B = 84-86  
B- = 80-83  
C+ = 77-79  
C = 74-76  
C- = 70-73  
D+ = 67-69  
D = 64-66  
D- = 60-63  
F = 0-60

**Extra Credit:** Don't ask; there will be none.

## **ADMINISTRATIVE POLICIES & REQUIRED UNIVERSITY NOTICES & POLICIES**

**Electronic Device Policy:** All electronic devices, including laptop computers, are strictly forbidden absent documentation of need by an appropriate university official. If I see your cell phone during class, five points will be deducted from the next exam grade. Touching your phone during an exam will result in a failing grade. Students are not permitted to record class lectures without first securing written permission from the professor. Students who do so without permission will have their final course grades dropped by one full letter, and they may face legal action in a court of law.

**Grade Complaint Policy:** A Teaching Assistant (TA) will grade the exams in consultation with the instructor. Complaints about the way in which an exam has been graded must first be lodged in writing (e.g. by email) with the TA within seven days of exams being returned to students for their review. The TA will consider a complaint's merits. Students who are dissatisfied with the course of action proposed by the TA may submit their exams for re-grading in their entirety by the professor, who may assign a higher or lower exam grade than that assigned by the TA. Students who remain dissatisfied with a final course grade may elect to pursue action at the College-level: [http://www.utexas.edu/cola/student-affairs/files/pdf/grade\\_appeals\\_form\\_student\\_version.pdf](http://www.utexas.edu/cola/student-affairs/files/pdf/grade_appeals_form_student_version.pdf).

**Academic Integrity:** The University of Texas maintains an Honor Code. Its core values are learning, discovery, freedom, leadership, individual opportunity, and responsibility. Each member of the university is expected to uphold these values through integrity, honesty, trust, fairness, and respect toward peers and community. Because academic integrity is a fundamental value of higher education at UT, I will not tolerate acts of cheating, plagiarism, falsification or

attempts to cheat, plagiarize, or falsify. Should I determine that an academic integrity violation has taken place, I will follow the University's formal process for dealing with such matters. You are expected to be familiar with the UT Honor Code: <http://registrar.utexas.edu/catalogs/gi09-10/ch01/index.html>. I am a former Assistant Prosecuting Attorney in the State of Ohio. Do not give me a reason to slip back into prosecutorial mode.

**The Professional Environment:** Do not share with me explanations for your poor performance. You either come to class or you don't; you either do the work as outlined herein or you don't. Any reasons why you fail to come to class or fail to perform the required work at an acceptable level are irrelevant. You will receive the grade that *you earn*. If you need credit for this course in order to graduate, it is YOUR responsibility to ensure that you pass it. Spare me the details of your lives. I will extend the same professional courtesy to you.

**Email Policy:** Email is recognized as an official mode of university correspondence; therefore, you are responsible for reading your email for university and course-related information and announcements. It is your responsibility to keep the University informed about changes to your e-mail address. You should check your e-mail regularly and frequently—I recommend daily, but at minimum twice a week—to stay current with university-related communications, some of which may be time-critical. You can find UT Austin's policies and instructions for updating your e-mail address at <http://www.utexas.edu/its/policies/emailnotify.php>. All email correspondence concerning this class will occur through Canvas, which means that my emails to you will be automatically sent to your official UT email address.

The text of your email should be professional in its tone and composition. This means that you do not begin with "Hey Dr. Evans," nor should you use slang acronyms like "TTYL" or "OMG." (Yes, this unfortunately does occur). Your email should clearly state the nature of your inquiry and contain your name as it appears on the course roster. I have endeavored to make this syllabus as thorough and clear as possible. Before emailing with questions about the course, review the syllabus. It will likely contain the answer that you seek. Substantive questions about the course material will only be answered in class (where they are especially welcomed) or during office hours.

**Make-Up Exams:** Just get yourself to the exams, and save us both the hassle. Make-up exams will be considered only under exceptional circumstances and will require written documentation of the excuse proffered. All make-up exams will be scheduled for a single date and time; at the professor's discretion, they may not follow the same format as the exam administered to the class. There will be no departure from the printed schedule of final examinations. Changes for individual emergencies of a serious nature will be made only with the approval of the instructor, the chair of the department or dean of the school involved, and the dean of undergraduate studies. The department chair or school dean will, if a serious emergency is believed to exist, forward a written request to the assistant vice chancellor for academic advising setting forth the nature of the emergency. A student who is absent from an examination without excuse will be given a grade of zero. An incomplete (I) will be given in the case of a student absent from the final examination who has presented a satisfactory excuse to the instructor or an official university excuse.

**Classroom Behavior:** It's important that we have a classroom atmosphere that optimizes teaching and learning, and we all share the responsibility for creating a civil and non-disruptive forum. Students are expected to conduct themselves at all times in a manner that does not disrupt teaching or learning. Just in case you were raised by wolves, here are some guidelines for classroom behavior: (1) be on time to class; (2) packing up your things early is disruptive to others around you and most especially to the instructor; (3) classroom discussion should be open and free-flowing but this can be accomplished using civilized and respectful language; and (4) any discussion from class that continues on any listserv or class discussion list should meet these same expectations.

**Accommodations for Religious Holidays and Students with Disabilities:** By UT Austin policy, you must notify me of your pending absence at least 14 days prior to the date of observance of a religious holy day. Notification is only necessary if you will miss an examination. If you must be absent for this reason, you will be given an opportunity to complete the missed work within a reasonable time after the absence. If you require special accommodations, you must obtain a letter that documents your disability from the Services for Students with Disabilities area of the Division of Diversity and Community Engagement 471-6259 voice or 471-4641 TTY for users who are deaf or hard of hearing). Present the letter to me at the beginning of the semester so we can discuss the accommodations you need. No later than five business days before an exam, you should remind me of any testing accommodations you will need. See <http://ddce.utexas.edu/disability/>.

**Behavior Concerns Advice Line (BCAL):** If you are worried about someone who is acting differently, you may use the Behavior Concerns Advice Line to discuss by phone your concerns about another individual's behavior. This service is provided through a partnership among the Office of the Dean of Students, the Counseling and Mental Health Center (CMHC), the Employee Assistance Program (EAP), and The University of Texas Police Department (UTPD). Call 512-232-5050 or visit <http://www.utexas.edu/safety/bcal>.

**Emergency Evacuation Policy:** Occupants of buildings on the UT Austin campus are required to evacuate and assemble outside when a fire alarm is activated or an announcement is made. Please be aware of the following policies regarding evacuation: (1) familiarize yourself with all exit doors of the classroom and the building. Remember that the nearest exit door may not be the one you used when you entered the building; (2) if you require assistance to evacuate, inform me in writing during the first week of class; (3) in the event of an evacuation, follow my instructions or those of class instructors; and (4) do not re-enter a building unless you're given instructions by the Austin Fire Department, the UT Austin Police Department, or the Fire Prevention Services office.

## **COURSE SCHEDULE**

This is a guide for the course readings. Learning questions and key terms for all of the readings will be made available on Canvas. Adjustments may be made to this schedule throughout the semester, but exam dates will not be subject to change.

### **I. INTRODUCTION TO THE COURSE**

**Jan. 19 The Puzzle of International Human Rights**

[CP] Beth A. Simmons, "Introduction" from *Mobilizing for Human Rights: International Law in Domestic Politics* (Cambridge University Press, 2009), pp. 3-12.

**II. INTERNATIONAL HUMAN RIGHTS LAW, ACTORS, AND INSTITUTIONS**

**Jan. 21 What are International Human Rights?**

[CP] Michael Goodhart, "Introduction: Human Rights in Politics and Practice" in Michael Goodhart (ed.) *Human Rights: Politics and Practice*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. (Oxford University Press, 2013), pp. 1-7.

[CP] Anthony J. Langlois, "Normative and Theoretical Foundations of Human Rights" in Goodhart (ed.) *Human Rights: Politics and Practice*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed., pp. 11-25.

**\* Jan. 22 Last day of the official add/drop period**

**Jan. 26 What is International Human Rights Law and How is it Made?**

[CP] Rhona K.M. Smith, "Human Rights in International Law" in Goodhart (ed.), *Human Rights: Politics and Practice*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed., pp. 58-74.

[CP] Bertrand G. Ramcharan, "The Law-Making Process: From Declaration to Treaty to Custom to Prevention" in Dinah Shelton (ed.) *The Oxford Handbook of International Human Rights Law* (Oxford University Press), pp. 499-506.

*Skim the following:*

[C] UN, *International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights* (ICCPR)

[C] UN, *First Optional Protocol to the ICCPR*.

[C] UN, *Declaration on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women*.

**Jan. 28 Why International Law?**

[CP] Simmons, "Why International Law? The Development of the International Human Rights Regime in the 20<sup>th</sup> Century" from *Mobilizing for Human Rights: International Law in Domestic Politics*, pp. 23-56.

**Feb. 2 Overview of UN Human Rights Institution, I**

[CP] Miloon Kothari, "From Commission to the Council: Evolution of UN Charter Bodies" in Shelton (ed.) *The Oxford Handbook of International Human Rights Law*, pp. 587-620.

**Feb. 4 An Interlude: Human Rights in Action**

[CP] Nicola Short, “The Role of NGOs in the Ottawa Process to Ban Landmines,” 4 *International Negotiation* 481-500 (1999).

## **Feb. 9 Overview of UN Human Rights Institutions, II**

[CP] Nigel S. Rodley, “The Role and Impact of Treaty Bodies” in Shelton (ed.) *The Oxford Handbook of International Human Rights Law*, pp. 621-48.

[C] Chart on Human Rights Mechanisms.

## **Feb. 11 The UN Human Rights Committee**

[CP] Cecilia Medina, “The Role of International Tribunals: Law-Making or Creative Interpretation?” in Shelton (ed.) *The Oxford Handbook of International Human Rights Law*, pp. 649-61.

[C] *International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights* (ICCPR), Articles 2, 17 & 26.

[C] *Toonen v. Australia*, Communication No. 488/1992, U.N. Doc CCPR/C/50/D/488/1992 (1994) (11 pages).

## **Feb. 16 NGOs and the UN**

[C] “Chapter 3: How Can NGOs Engage with Treaty Bodies?” from International Service for Human Rights, *Simple Guide to the UN Treaty Bodies* (2010), pp. 35-43.

*Skim the following:*

[O] “How to apply for Consultative Status,” UN Department of Economic and Social Affairs, NGO Branch at: <http://csonet.org/?menu=83>.

[O] ECOSOC Resolution 1996/31, Consultative relationship between the United Nations and non-governmental organizations. Available at: <http://www.un.org/documents/ecosoc/res/1996/eres1996-31.htm>.

[C] “Increased Criminalization, Arbitrary Detention, and other Deprivations of the Right to Liberty and Security of Person for Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender (LGBT) and Intersex People,” Draft General Comment: Liberty and Security of the Person Article 9 of the ICCPR, Submitted to the UN Human Rights Committee (1 June 2014).

## **Feb. 18 National Human Rights Institutions**

[CP] Sonia Cardenas, *Chain of Justice: The Global Rise of State Institutions for Human Rights* (University of Pennsylvania Press, 2014), pp. 1-15; 33-54.

## **Feb. 23 Overflow, Reflections, and Exam Review**

## **Feb. 25 EXAM 1**

**Mar. 1 Guest Speaker: Ariel E. Dulitzky:** Professor Dulitzky is Clinical Professor of Law, Director of the Human Rights Clinic, and Director of the Latin American Initiative at UT-Austin. He is a leading expert in the inter-American human rights system. In 2010, he was appointed to the UN Working Group on Enforced or Involuntary Disappearances and named its Chair-Rapporteur in 2013. In 2014, he was appointed to the General Assembly of the Inter-American Institute of Human Rights. Before joining UT, he was Assistant Executive Secretary of the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights. He is an honors graduate of the Univ. of Buenos Aires School of Law and holds an LLM from Harvard Law School. Learn more about him at <https://law.utexas.edu/faculty/aed636/>. Learn more about the UN Working Group on Enforced or Involuntary Disappearances at <http://www.ijrcenter.org/un-special-procedures/working-group-on-enforced-or-involuntary-disappearances/>.

### III. ISSUES IN THE STUDY OF INTERNATIONAL HUMAN RIGHTS

#### Mar. 3 Basic Political Science Research Methods

[CP] Janet Buttolph Johnson and H.T. Reynolds, "The Empirical Approach to Political Science," *Political Science Research Methods*, 7<sup>th</sup> ed. (Sage/CQ Press), pp. 33-67.

[CP] Johnson and Reynolds, "The Building Blocks of Social Scientific Research: Hypotheses, Concepts, and Variables," *Political Science Research Methods*, 7<sup>th</sup> ed., pp. 102-115; 119-123.

#### Mar. 8 How to Measure Human Rights?

[CP] Johnson and Reynolds, "The Building Blocks of Social Scientific Research: Measurement," *Political Science Research Methods*, 7<sup>th</sup> ed., pp. 127-134; 136: 149-153.

[CP] Todd Landman, "Measuring Human Rights" in Goodhart (ed), *Human Rights: Politics and Practice*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed., pp. 45-58.

*Skim the following:*

[C] Michael A. Elliott, "The Institutional Expansion of Human Rights, 1863-2003: A Comprehensive Dataset of International Instruments," 48(4) *Journal of Peace Research* 2011: 537-46.

[C] Camille Giffard, *The Torture Reporting Handbook* (Human Rights Centre, University of Essex), pp. 29-51.

[C] Freedom House Methodology 2015.

[C] Freedom House Dataset, Individual Country Ratings and Status, 1973-2015.

#### Mar. 10 Qualitative versus Quantitative Approaches to the Study of International Human Rights



[CP] Emilie M. Hafner-Burton and James Ron, "Seeing Double: Human Rights Impact through Qualitative and Quantitative Eyes," 61(2) *World Politics* (April 2009), pp. 360-394.

**Mar. 14-19 SPRING BREAK—REJOICE!**

**IV. THE STUDY OF INTERNATIONAL HUMAN RIGHTS:  
QUANTITATIVE APPROACH**

**Mar. 22 A Skeptical Perspective**

[CP] Emilie M. Hafner-Burton and Kiyoteru Tsutsui, "Human Rights in a Globalizing World: The Paradox of Empty Promises," 110(5) *American Journal of Sociology* (March, 2005): 1373-1411.

**Mar. 24 A More Optimistic Perspective**

[CP] Simmons, "Equality for Women: Education, Work and Reproductive Rights" from *Mobilizing for Human Rights: International Law in Domestic Politics*, pp. 202-55.

**IV. THE STUDY OF INTERNATIONAL HUMAN RIGHTS:  
QUALITATIVE APPROACHES**

**Mar. 29 Transnational Advocacy Networks: Introduction**

[CP] Margaret E. Keck and Kathryn Sikkink, *Activists Beyond Borders: Advocacy Network in International Politics* (Cornell University Press, 1998), pp. 1-37.

**\* Apr. 4 Last day an undergraduate student may, with dean's approval, withdraw from the University or drop a class except for urgent and substantiated, nonacademic reasons. And, last day an undergraduate student may change registration in a class to or from the pass/fail basis.**

**Mar. 31 Transnational Advocacy Networks:  
Analyzing Human Rights Advocacy Networks in Latin America**

[CP] Keck and Sikkink, *Activists Beyond Borders: Advocacy Network in International Politics*, pp. 79-120.

**Apr. 5 EXAM 2**

**Apr. 7 The Emergence and Codification of International Human Rights Norms:  
The Theoretical Foundation**

[B] Ann Marie Clark, *Diplomacy of Conscience: Amnesty International and Changing Human Rights Norms* (Princeton University Press, 2001), pp. 3-36.

**Apr. 12 The Emergence and Codification of International Human Rights Norms:  
The Cases of Torture and Disappearances**

[B] Clark, *Diplomacy of Conscience: Amnesty International and Changing Human Rights Norms*, pp. 37-100.

**Apr. 14 WRITING ASSIGNMENT DUE**

**The Emergence and Codification of International Human Rights Norms:  
The Case of Extra-Judicial Executions and Conclusions**

[B] Clark, *Diplomacy of Conscience: Amnesty International and Changing Human Rights Norms*, pp. 101-141.

**V. THE STUDY OF INTERNATIONAL HUMAN RIGHTS:  
A MIXED APPROACH**

**Apr. 19 Why Do States Accept International Human Rights Obligations, I?**

[B] Heather Smith-Cannoy, *Insincere Commitments: Human Rights Treaties, Abusive States, and Citizen Activism* (Georgetown University Press, 2012), pp. 1-40.

**Apr. 21 Why Do States Accept International Human Rights Obligations, II?**

[B] Smith-Cannoy, *Insincere Commitments: Human Rights Treaties, Abusive States, and Citizen Activism*, pp. 41-91.

**Apr. 26 Fighting Discrimination in Slovakia and Hungary**

[B] Smith-Cannoy, *Insincere Commitments: Human Rights Treaties, Abusive States, and Citizen Activism*, pp. 92-138.

**Apr. 28 Promoting Human Rights in Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan**

[B] Smith-Cannoy, *Insincere Commitments: Human Rights Treaties, Abusive States, and Citizen Activism*, pp. 139-78.

**May 3 Guest Speaker: William Hayden:** Mr. Hayden has extensive experience working in the human rights field, including for the International Helsinki Federation for Human Rights; National Democratic Institute for International Affairs; US Institute of Peace; Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe; and Norwegian Refugee Council. His work has taken him around the world to places such as Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Chechnya, Croatia, Kosovo, and Serbia. He currently serves as Director of International Programs at Austin Community College. Learn more about the positions that he has held by reviewing his resume that is available on Canvas.

**VI. CONCLUDING THOUGHTS**

**May 5 Course Wrap-Up, Reflections, Exam Review, and Course Evaluations**

**FINAL EXAM**

Thursday, May 12 @ 9:00 am-12:00 pm  
in our regular classroom