

## **Human Rights and World Politics**

GOV 365N (38785)/WGS 340 (46985)

Spring 2017

### **COURSE INFORMATION**

**Instructor:** Rhonda L. Evans, J.D., Ph.D.  
**Class Meeting:** T/TH 2:00-3:15 pm @ WAG 201  
**Email:** [revans@austin.utexas.edu](mailto:revans@austin.utexas.edu)  
**Office Hours:** T/TH 1:00-2:00 pm & 3:15-3:45 pm or by appointment  
**Office Location:** BAT 4.150

**Teaching Assistant:**  
**Email:**  
**Office Hours:**  
**Office Location:**

### **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. In so doing, it: (1) surveys the legal and institutional infrastructure and processes that exist at domestic and international levels for the promotion of human rights; (2) examines the main actors involved in human rights advocacy, including states, international organizations, tribunals, activists, nongovernmental organizations, and national human rights institutions; and (3) emphasizes the role of activists, law, and quasi-judicial institutions in international human rights advocacy; and (4) exposes students to the basic mechanics of political science research.

The following questions animate this course. What is international human rights law? How does it matter, if at all? In other words, does human rights law work? And if so, under what conditions does it work? These are very important questions considering the significant resources and efforts that are devoted to international human rights institutions and advocacy each year. And yet, you may be surprised to learn that we much remains to be learned about the efficacy of international human rights law. In exploring why this is so, we will consider the various challenges to studying international human rights law from an empirical (as opposed to a normative) perspective. You should emerge from this course with an enhanced understanding of the mechanics of human rights advocacy *and* an improved ability to evaluate its effectiveness.

### **REQUIRED READING**

A course packet is available for purchase at the University Coop, 2246 Guadalupe St. 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 materials that are available online are designated there as [O].

## 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 23
Exam Two	25%	Thursday, April 6
Writing Assignment	15%	Thursday, March 23
Final Exam	35%	Friday, 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. Your paper must be 750 words long, stapled, in black ink, on white paper, and double-spaced in Times New Roman 12-point font. Points will be deducted from papers that do not meet these threshold requirements. You must submit your paper as a Word document via email to the TA and in hard-copy form at the start of class on the assigned date. Compliance with this deadline will be determined by submission of the hard copy. Missing this deadline will cost an additional five points; an additional five points will be deducted for each 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.

**But, what if I'm struggling? Here's what to do:** The TA and I are here to help you. Visit our office hours as soon as you realize that you're having difficulty. Show us your lecture notes. Bring us your questions. Discuss the material with us. Visit us before the exam with questions. Show us rough drafts of your writing assignments well in advance of their due dates. Promptly review with us exams and/or writing assignments on which you performed poorly. **Here's what not to do:** Wait until it's too late for you to improve your performance on exams and writing assignments and thereby improve your grade; offer excuses; demand the grade that you need/want to receive for the course and expect that we will simply give it to you; or request special treatment. In the end, you will receive the grade that *you earn*. If you need credit for this course in order to graduate or if you need a particular grade in order to maintain or achieve a certain GPA, it is YOUR responsibility to ensure that you earn that grade.

## **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. If you have questions about what constitutes plagiarism, visit this website: <http://www.lib.utexas.edu/services/instruction/learningmodules/plagiarism/>. If you're still confused, talk to the TA or the instructor. I am a former Assistant Prosecuting Attorney for the State of Ohio. Do not give me a reason to slip back into prosecutorial mode.

**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 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.

### **Jan. 17 Introduction to the Course**

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

[O] Video: Human Rights Advocacy at Work: An Introduction, Part 1 of 7, available at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XXkyQa7t0hk>.

### **Jan. 19 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] Todd Landmann, *Studying Human Rights* (New York: Routledge, 2006), pp. 8-18.

### **Jan. 24 What is International Human Rights Law?**

[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.

[C] UN, *Declaration on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women* (1967)

[C] UN *Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women* (CEDAW) (1979).

[C] UN, *International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights* (ICCPR) (1976).

[C] UN, *First Optional Protocol to the ICCPR* (1976).

### **Jan. 26 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.

### **Jan. 31 Key Institutions and Actors: The United Nations**

[CP] Gerd Oberleitner, *Global Human Rights Institutions: Between Remedy and Ritual*, (Polity Press, 2007), pp. 41-102.

[C] Chart on Human Rights Mechanisms (2014).

**Feb. 2 International Law at Work: 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. 649-55.
- [C] Model Complaint Form for Communications to the UN Human Rights Committee.
- [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 pp.).

**Feb. 7 Key Institutions and Actors: NGOs**

- [CP] Patrick Kilby, “Accountability for Empowerment: Dilemmas Facing Nongovernmental Organizations” Discussion Paper 04-01, Asia Pacific School of Economics and Government, Australian National University, 2004, (23 pp.).

**Feb. 9 Key Institutions and Actors: 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. 14 Emergence and Codification of International Human Rights Norms: Amnesty International and the Convention against Torture**

- [CP] Ann Marie Clark, *Diplomacy of Conscience: Amnesty International and Changing Human Rights Norms* (Princeton University Press, 2001), pp. 3-20; 37-69.

**Feb. 16 Basic Political Science Research Methods, I**

- [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, 2012), pp. 33-67.

**Feb. 21 Overflow and Exam Review**

**Feb. 23 EXAM 1**

**Feb. 28 Basic Political Science Research Methods, II**

- [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. 2 Social Science Methods and Human Rights**

- [CP] Todd Landmann, *Studying Human Rights*, pp. 58-74.
- [CP] Cingranelli, David L. and David L. Richards, "Measuring the Impact of Human Rights Organizations," in *NGOs and Human Rights: Promise and Performance*, Claude E. Welch, Jr. (ed.) (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2001), pp. 225-37.

**Mar. 7 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.

**Mar. 9 How to Measure Human Rights? (cont'd)**

- [CP] Todd Landman, "Measuring Human Rights" in Goodhart (ed), *Human Rights: Politics and Practice*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed., pp. 45-58.
- [C] Camille Giffard, *The Torture Reporting Handbook* (Human Rights Centre, University of Essex), pp. 29-34; 38-42; 47-51.
- [C] *Freedom House Methodology 2015*. Focus on the sections entitled "Research and Ratings Review Process," "Ratings Process," and "Ratings and Status Characteristics" (3 pp.).
- [C] Freedom House Dataset, Individual Country Ratings and Status, 1973-2015.

**Mar. 13-17 SPRING BREAK—REJOICE!**

**Mar. 21 Why do States Commit to International Human Rights Treaties?**

- [CP] Simmons, *Mobilizing for Human Rights*, pp. 57-111.  
This is an especially dense reading. Give yourself enough time to complete it.

**Mar. 23 Do International Human Rights Treaties Matter?  
WRITING ASSIGNMENT DUE**

- [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. 28 Do International Human Rights Treaties Matter?  
Theorizing the Role of Transnational Advocacy Networks**

- [CP] Margaret E. Keck and Kathryn Sikkink, *Activists Beyond Borders: Advocacy Network in International Politics* (Cornell University Press, 1998), pp. 1-32; 79-103.



**Mar. 30 Do International Human Rights Treaties Matter?  
Theorizing the Role of Transnational Legal Advocacy**

[CP] Simmons, *Mobilizing for Human Rights*, pp. 112-55.

**Apr. 4 Overflow and Exam Review**

**Apr. 6 EXAM 2**

**Apr. 11 Revisiting the *Toonen* Case**

[CP] Tim Tenbenschel, "International Human Rights Conventions and Australian Political Debates: Issues Raised by the 'Toonen Case,'" 31(1) *Australian Journal of Political Science* 7-23.

[CP] Purvis, Alexandra and Joseph Castellino, "A History of Homosexual Law Reform in Tasmania," 16(1) *University of Tasmania Law Review* 12-21.

**Apr. 13 Leveraging UN Institutions to Challenge Racial Discrimination in Slovakia**

[B] Smith-Cannoy, *Insincere Commitments*, pp. 92-115.  
Our discussion in class will focus on pp. 105-115, but the preceding pages provide necessary background information.

**Apr. 18 Leveraging UN Institutions to Challenge Discrimination against Women in Hungary**

[B] Smith-Cannoy, *Insincere Commitments*, pp. 116-38.  
Our discussion in class will focus on pp. 130-37, but the preceding pages provide necessary background information.

**Apr. 20 Evaluating the Effectiveness of National Human Rights Institutions, I**

[CP] Cardenas, *Chains of Justice*, pp. 310-49;  
[C] Evans, TBD.

**Apr. 25 Evaluating the Effectiveness of National Human Rights Institutions, II**

[C] Evans, TBD.

**Apr. 27 A First-Person Perspective on Legal Advocacy: Guest Speaker TBD**

Reading Assignment: TBD

**May 2 Different Approaches to Studying International Human Rights:  
Why the Difference Matters**

[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.

**May 4 Course Wrap-Up, Reflections, Final Exam Review, and Course Evaluations**

**FINAL EXAM**

Friday, May 12 @ 9:00 am-12:00 pm

Meet in our regular classroom.