

PSC 430: Human Rights

University at Buffalo, SUNY

Spring 2022

Days and Times: Tuesday and Thursday 2:00-3:20 PM

Location: Franczak 454

Instructor: Chris Newton

Email: cnewton2@buffalo.edu

Office Hours: Monday and Thursday, 11:00AM-12:30 P.M.

Zoom by appointment.

Course Description: This class seeks to address what human rights are, what causes actors to violate human rights, and what can be done to end, reduce, or prevent further human rights violations. Using a positivist approach it will address what we have learned thus far in the field of peace science about what causes different actors to engage in violence and repression against civilians. By the end of the class, students should be able to investigate a specific case of a human rights violation, explain why it occurred, and provide an evidence-based strategy to address the violation.

Student Learning Outcomes:

- Develop an understanding of what human rights are, and how they were established.
- Become familiar with the scientific literature on the study of what causes different human rights violations.
- Become familiar with the scientific literature on the study of what can end, reduce, or prevent human rights violations.
- Develop the ability to analyze a specific case of the violation of a human right.
- Develop the ability to create evidence-based strategies to address human rights violations.

Course Requirements:

Students are expected to complete the assigned readings and lectures each week. In addition, there will be:

Weekly Quizzes: You must complete a short quiz on UBLearn most weeks before midnight on Friday of that week. Each quiz will cover the main themes of that week's assigned readings and lectures. There is no time limit and you can work on the quiz as you work through the material, however you can only take each quiz once, so double-check your answers before submitting each week. **There are no quizzes on weeks when there is an assignment due.**

Participation: It is necessary to practice the analytical skills and pick apart the research presented and discussed in class. I expect all students to be active participants in the discussions of each class.

Cases of Interest: You will choose three general cases (not legal cases) that have occurred within the past 25 years that you would like to study in depth for the final project. For each case, you should write when and where the case occurred (or is occurring), which section of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights you believe was violated, and who committed the violation. This assignment should only be a few sentences long for each of the three cases.

Drafts: You will be submitting three drafts throughout the semester that will end up being the three main sections of your final project. The three sections reflect the structure of the class, focusing first on the substantive knowledge of human rights, second on the causes of human rights violations, and third on what can be done about it. Each draft should be 2-3 pages long. **Part 1:** The first draft will describe your chosen case from the

Cases of Interest assignment, indicating whose rights were violated, which part(s) of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights were violated, and who committed the violation(s). **Part 2:** The second draft will use the scientific literature to explain why the violation(s) occurred. As this is still a quickly developing field, there may be competing explanations. All explanations that are covered in the readings and lectures should be covered in this part. **Part 3:** Using the literature covered in the assigned readings, lectures, and other research you have encountered, you will identify an evidence-based strategy for ending current violations and preventing future violations. This can be action taken by a government, the UN, an NGO, an IGO, an organization of protest, a grass-roots campaign, or any other action that you deem to be an effective strategy. You must go into detail about what the action specifically entails, and how the literature indicates how and when the strategy will and will not be effective.

Final Project: You will complete a solo-authored project that examines a specific case of a recent violation of human rights. This will be a culmination of the previous assignments resulting in a single project that (1) introduces the case being examined, (2) describes the relevant substantive information of the case, (3) indicates what section(s) of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights was violated and by whom, (4) explains why this violation occurred according to the relevant scientific literature, (5) and proscribes actions to be taken to end the violation(s) and/or prevent further violations. Feedback from the earlier assignments should be incorporated into the final project. All sources must be referenced parenthetically, should primarily come from major peer-reviewed publications, and should include readings both from the syllabus and the lectures, as well as any other relevant and quality sources that you find in the course of researching this project.

Late Work: Quizzes submitted after the end of the day Friday will still be accepted over the weekend for 1/2 credit. Quizzes not completed by the end of the following Monday will be given a 0. All other assignments will have 1/3 of a letter grade deducted (A becomes A-) for every 24 hours past the deadline.

Course Materials: There is no required textbook for this class. All materials can be accessed online through UBLearn and the UB online library system at <https://library.buffalo.edu/>

Course Outline: This course is organized into three main sections:

What are human rights? weeks 1-3

This section begins with building a base of substantive knowledge about the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and recent examples of how rights have been violated.

Why are human rights violated? weeks 4-9

This part of the semester is dedicated to the scientific study of why states and non-state actors engage in the violation of human rights.

How can human rights be protected? weeks 10-15

The final section of this class will examine effective actions and strategies for the protection of human rights and the ending of abuses.

Grading Policy:

Weekly Quizzes	35%
Participation	10%
Cases of Interest	5%
Part 1 Draft	10%
Part 2 Draft	10%
Part 3 Draft	10%
Final Project	20%

Grade	Percentage	Grade Points
A	93-100%	4.0
A-	90-92%	3.67
B+	87-89%	3.33
B	83-86%	3.0
B-	80-82%	2.67
C+	77-79%	2.33
C	73-76%	2.0
C-	70-72%	1.67
D+	67-79%	1.33
D	63-66%	1.0
F	0-63%	0.0

Learning Outcomes:

Learning outcome	Assessment measure
Gain a familiarity with international human rights law and a substantive knowledge of recent, relevant cases.	Weekly quizzes; participation; cases of interest; part 1 draft; final project
Build and understanding of the causal mechanisms identified and tested in the scientific literature for why human rights are violated and protected.	Weekly quizzes; participation; part 2 draft; final project
Develop a familiarity with the scientific literature on what is effective for preventing, ending, and reducing the violation of human rights.	Weekly quizzes; participation; part 3 draft; final project
Apply analytical skills to policy recommendations for a specific case of human rights violations	Participation; part 3 draft; final project

Incomplete Grades:

A grade of incomplete (“I”) indicates that additional course work is required to fulfill the requirements of a given course. Students may only be given an “I” grade if they have a passing average in coursework that has been completed and have well-defined parameters to complete the course requirements that could result in a grade better than the default grade. An “I” grade may not be assigned to a student who did not attend the course.

Prior to the end of the semester, students must initiate the request for an “I” grade and receive the instructor’s approval. Assignment of an “I” grade is at the discretion of the instructor.

The instructor must specify a default letter grade at the time the “I” grade is submitted. A default grade is the letter grade the student will receive if no additional coursework is completed and/or a grade change request is not submitted by the instructor. “I” grades must be completed within 12 months*. Individual instructors may set shorter time limits for removing an incomplete than the 12-month time limit. Upon assigning an “I” grade, the instructor shall provide the student specification, in writing or by electronic mail, of the requirements to be fulfilled, and shall file a copy with the appropriate departmental office.

Students must not re-register for courses for which they have received an “I” grade

Important Dates:

Cases of Interest due	February 18
Part 1 Draft due	March 11
Part 2 Draft due	April 14
Part 3 Draft due	May 13
Final Project due	May 20

Academic Integrity: All students should be aware of and follow the university Academic Integrity Policy <https://catalog.buffalo.edu/policies/integrity.html>. Cases of academic dishonesty will not be tolerated.

Counseling Services (Mental Health): As a student you may experience a range of issues that can cause barriers to learning or reduce your ability to participate in daily activities. These might include strained relationships, anxiety, high levels of stress, alcohol/drug problems, feeling down, health concerns, or unwanted sexual experiences. Counseling, Health Services, and Health Promotion are here to help with these or other concerns. You learn can more about these programs and services by contacting:

Counseling Services: 120 Richmond Quad (North Campus), phone 716-645-2720
 202 Michael Hall (South Campus), phone: 716-829-5800
 Health Services: Michael Hall (South Campus), phone: 716- 829-3316
 Health Promotion: 114 Student Union (North Campus), phone: 716- 645-2837

Sexual Violence: UB is committed to providing a safe learning environment free of all forms of discrimination and sexual harassment, including sexual assault, domestic and dating violence and stalking. If you have experienced gender-based violence (intimate partner violence, attempted or completed sexual assault, harassment, coercion, stalking, etc.), UB has resources to help. This includes academic accommodations, health and counseling services, housing accommodations, helping with legal protective orders, and assistance with reporting the incident to police or other UB officials if you so choose. Please contact UB's Title IX Coordinator at 716-645-2266 for more information. For confidential assistance, you may also contact a Crisis Services Campus Advocate at 716-796-4399.

Useful Resources:

- Journals for Human Rights Research
 - Journal of Conflict Resolution
 - Journal of Peace Research
 - Peace Science and Conflict Management
- More General Political Science Journals

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – American Journal of Political Science – American Political Science Review – Journal of Politics – British Journal of Political Science 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Annual Review of Political Science – International Organization – International Studies Quarterly
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- Human Rights Organizations
 - United Nations Human Rights Office of the High Commissioner <https://www.ohchr.org/EN/pages/home.aspx>
 - Amnesty International <https://www.amnesty.org/en/>
 - Anti-Slavery International <https://www.antislavery.org/>
 - Human Rights Watch <https://www.hrw.org/>
- Data
 - Minorities at Risk <http://www.mar.umd.edu/>
 - Uppsala Conflict Data Program <https://ucdp.uu.se/>

Readings:

Part I: What are human rights?

Feb 01 - Feb 03: United Nations and the Universal Declaration

Universal Declaration of Human Rights

UN Human Rights Report 2020 p. 12-76

No quiz this week

Feb 08 - Feb 10: Group rights

UN Convention on the Political Rights of Women

Discrimination: <https://www.amnesty.org/en/what-we-do/discrimination/>

Indigenous Peoples: <https://www.amnesty.org/en/what-we-do/indigenous-peoples/>

Feb 15 - Feb 17: Individual rights

Global Estimates of Modern Slavery: Forced Labor and Forced Marriage p. 5-12

Smith, Rhona K. M. 2014. "The right to liberty of person." in *Textbook on International Human Rights 6th Edition*. Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press, p. 250-64.

Cases of Interest due before midnight on **Friday Feb 18**

No quiz this week

Recommended Reading: Development of human rights globally

Smith, Rhona K. M. 2014. "Historical background." in *Textbook on International Human Rights 6th Edition*. Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press, p. 5-26.

Human Rights Watch. 2022. "United States." *World Report 2022: Events of 2021*. p. 711-725.

Part II: Why are human rights violated?

Mitchell. "Guide to Reading Statistical Articles"
<http://www.saramitchell.org/statsguide.pdf>

Feb 22 - Feb 24: Slavery

Bales, Kevin. 2005. "Understanding Slavery Today." in *Understanding Global Slavery: A Reader*. Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, p 1-23.

Bales, Kevin. 2007. "The Challenge: Understanding the World of New Slavery" in *Ending Slavery: How We Free Today's Slaves*. Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, p 5-20.

Mar 01 - Mar 03: Contexts & rationales of abuse

Hafner-Burton, Emilie M. 2013. *Making Human Rights a Reality*. Princeton, PA: Princeton University Press, p. 19-40.

Mar 08 - Mar 10: Regime & human rights violations

Landman, Todd. 2005. "Norms and Rights at the Turn of the Century." in *Protecting Human Rights: A Comparative Study*. Washington, D.C.: Georgetown University Press, p. 1-10.

Davenport, Christian & David A. Armstrong II. 2004. "Democracy and the Violation of Human Rights: A Statistical Analysis from 1976 to 1996." *American Journal of Political Science* 48(3): 538-554.

Part 1 Draft due before midnight on **Friday March 11**

No quiz this week

Mar 15 - Mar 17: Targeting groups

Ross, Michael, L. 2008. "Oil, Islam, & Women." *The American Political Science Review* 102(1): 107-123.

Ye, Fangjin, & Sung Min Han. 2019. "Does Ethnic Inequality Increase State Repression?" *Canadian Journal of Political Science* 53(4): 883-901.

Mar 22 - Mar 24: No Class, Spring Recess

Mar 29 - Mar 31: State-sponsored violence

Mason, David T., & Dale A. Krane. 1989. "The Political Economy of Death Squads: Toward a Theory of the Impact of State-Sanctioned Terror." *International Studies Quarterly* 33(2): 175-98.

Krain, Matthew. 1997. "State-Sponsored Mass Murder: The Onset and Severity of Genocides and Politicides." *Journal of Conflict Resolution* 41(3): 331-60.

April 05 - April 07: Torture & repression

Davenport, Christian. 2007. "State Repression and Political Order." *Annual Review of Political Science*. 10(1) 1-23.

Conrad, Courtney Ryals, & Will H. Moore. 2010. "What Stops Torture?" *American Journal of Political Science* 54(2): 459-76.

Part III: How can human rights be protected?

April 12 - April 14: Civil resistance

198 Methods of Nonviolent Action: <https://www.aeinstein.org/nonviolentaction/198-methods-of-nonviolent-action/>

Giugni, Marco G. 1998. "Was it Worth the Effort? The Outcomes and Consequences of Social Movements." *Annual Review of Sociology* 24(1): 371-93.

Stephan, Maria J., & Erica Chenoweth. 2008. "Why Civil Resistance Works: The Strategic Logic of Nonviolent Conflict." *International Security* 33(1): 7-44.

Part 2 Draft due before midnight on **Friday April 14**

No quiz this week

April 19 - April 21: Civil resistance (cont.)

Davenport, Christian, & Priyamvada Trivedi. 2013. "Activism and awareness: Resistance, cognitive activation, and 'seeing' untouchability among 98,316 Dalits." *Journal of Peace Research* 50(3): 369-383.

Feinberg, Matthew, Robb Willer, & Chloe Kovacheff. 2020. "The Activist's Dilemma: Extreme Protest Actions Reduce Popular Support for Social Movements." *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology* Advance online publication. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1037/pspi0000230>

April 26 - April 28: International NGOs

Keck, Margaret E., & Kathryn Sikkink. 1998. *Activists beyond Borders*. Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, p 1-38.

Loveman, Mara. 1998. "High-Risk Collective Action: Defending Human Rights in Chile, Uruguay, and Argentina." *American Journal of Sociology* 104(2): 477-525.

May 03 - May 05: The UN & peacekeeping

Hultman, Lisa, Jacob Kathman, & Megan Shannon. 2013. "United Nations Peacekeeping and Civilian Protection in Civil War." *American Journal of Political Science* 57(4): 875-91.

Johansson, Karim, & Lisa Hultman. 2019. "UN Peacekeeping and Protection from Sexual Violence." *Journal of Conflict Resolution* 63(7): 1656-81.

May 10 - May 12: International courts

Chung, Christine H. 2010. "The Punishment and Prevention of Genocide: The International Criminal Court is a Benchmark of Progress and Need." in *The Politics of Global Governance: International Organizations in an Interdependent World, Fourth Edition*. Boulder, CO: Lynne Rienner Publishers, p 331-344.

Carrubba, Clifford J., & Matthew Gabel. 2017. "International Courts: A Theoretical Assessment." *Annual Review of Political Science*. 20: 55-73.

Part 3 Draft due before midnight on **Friday, May 13**

No quiz this week

Optional Material

John F. Kennedy School of Government "Policy Memos"

MIT "Writing Effective Policy Memos"

Final project due by midnight, Friday May 20