UNIVERSITY OF MARYLAND

From Declaration to Action: The United Nations and Human Rights (GVPT309R)

Term: *Summer II 2024*   **Office Hours:** by appointment
Professor: Sloan Lansdale
Pronouns: She/Her
Office Phone: Contact by email
Email: slansdal@umd.edu
Credits: 3
Course Dates: July 8 2024 - August 16 2024
Course Times: asynchronous
Classroom: online

Course Description

This course aims to teach students about the history and development of human rights through the lens of the United Nations as an institution. The course will track how the UN formalizes and promotes human rights through treaties and bodies under the UN umbrella. The course will also discuss how these norms disperse informally between states as well as domestically. Students will leave the course with the ability to identify and assess the efficacy of current international efforts to promote human rights through international organizations.

Learning Outcomes

- See Course Outline for weekly Learning Outcomes

Required Resources

There are no required textbooks for the course. All course reading material will be made available through the course website on elms.umd.edu. I have worked hard to select informative readings that are both comprehensive and cost-effective considering the time available during the short semester. In return, I expect students to read the required readings on the days prescribed in the course schedule at the end of this syllabus.

Accessibility to a computer with an internet connection will be required to watch video lectures, retrieve course material, and engage in course related work.

Course Structure

This course is fully asynchronous and will have no mandatory live in-person sessions nor online sessions. Your work for this course is also asynchronous, and consists mostly of reading, short assignments, and watching online lecture recordings or other media. The flexible framework does not require you to be in a specific location to participate; however, you must have access to a full-screen computer or tablet in order to view course lecture presentations.

Video lectures will be made available on the course website throughout the progression of the course either as Panopto Recordings or as downloadable video files (see below for the tentative schedule of video lectures). Course announcements, adjustments, and general information will be communicated through the course website on elms.umd.edu.

The asynchronous nature of the course means that the video presentations, course reading, and assignments will be essential to understanding the course content.

Information and details about assignments will be given through the lecture recordings and also communicated through the Announcements tab on ELMs. That being said, success within this course rests on your comprehension of the assigned reading material. The lecture presentation will also be recorded under the assumption that all students have read through the assigned readings up to that point in the schedule. If something is not clear, or confusing, or hard to understand within either the reading material or recorded lectures, do not hesitate to ask for clarification or further explanation.

I am also available for office hours (through Zoom) by appointment.

Tips for Success in an Online Course

1. **Participate.** I invite you to engage deeply, ask questions, and talk about the course content with your classmates. You can learn a great deal from discussing ideas and perspectives with your peers and professor. Participation can also help you articulate your thoughts and develop critical thinking skills.
2. **Manage your time.** Students are often very busy, and I understand that you have obligations outside of this class. However, students do best when they plan adequate time that is devoted to course work. Block your schedule and set aside plenty of time to complete assignments including extra time to handle any technology related problems.
3. **Login regularly.** I recommend that you log in to ELMS-Canvas several times a week to view announcements, discussion posts and replies to your posts. You may need to log in multiple times a day when group submissions are due.
4. **Do not fall behind.** This class moves at a quick pace and each week builds on the previous content. If you feel you are starting to fall behind, check in with the instructor as soon as possible so we can troubleshoot together. It will be hard to keep up with the course content if you fall behind in the pre-work or post-work.
5. **Use ELMS-Canvas notification settings.** Canvas ELMS-Canvas can ensure you receive timely notifications in your email or via text. Be sure to enable announcements to be sent instantly or daily.
6. **Ask for help if needed.** If you need help with ELMS-Canvas or other technology, IT Support. If you are struggling with a course concept, reach out to me and your classmates for support.

Policies and Resources for Undergraduate Courses

It is our shared responsibility to know and abide by the University of Maryland's policies that relate to all courses, which include topics like:

- Academic integrity
- Student and instructor conduct
- Accessibility and accommodations
- Attendance and excused absences
- Grades and appeals
- Copyright and intellectual property

Please visit www.ugst.umd.edu/courserelatedpolicies.html for the Office of Undergraduate Studies' full list of campus-wide policies and follow up with me if you have questions.

Course Guidelines
Names/Pronouns and Self-Identifications:
The University of Maryland recognizes the importance of a diverse student body, and we are committed to fostering inclusive and equitable classroom environments. I invite you, if you wish, to tell us how you want to be referred to in this class, both in terms of your name and your pronouns (he/him, she/her, they/them, etc.). Keep in mind that the pronouns someone uses are not necessarily indicative of their gender identity. Visit trans.umd.edu to learn more.

 Additionally, it is your choice whether to disclose how you identify in terms of your gender, race, class, sexuality, religion, and dis/ability, among all aspects of your identity (e.g., should it come up in classroom conversation about our experiences and perspectives) and should be self-identified, not presumed or imposed. I will do my best to address and refer to all students accordingly, and I ask you to do the same for all of your fellow Terps.

Communication with Instructor:
Email: If you need to reach out and communicate with me, please email me at slansdal@umd.edu. Please DO NOT email me with questions that are easily found in the syllabus or on ELMS (i.e. When is this assignment due? How much is it worth? etc.) but please DO reach out about personal, academic, and intellectual concerns/questions. While I will do my best to respond to emails within 24 hours, you will more likely receive email responses from me on Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays from 8:00am-10:00am EST

ELMS: I will send IMPORTANT announcements via ELMS messaging. You must make sure that your email & announcement notifications (including changes in assignments and/or due dates) are enabled in ELMS so you do not miss any messages. You are responsible for checking your email and Canvas/ELMS inbox with regular frequency.

Communication with Peers:
With a diversity of perspectives and experience, we may find ourselves in disagreement and/or debate with one another. As such, it is important that we agree to conduct ourselves in a professional manner and that we work together to foster and preserve a virtual classroom environment in which we can respectfully discuss and deliberate controversial questions. I encourage you to confidently exercise your right to free speech—bearing in mind, of course, that you will be expected to craft and defend arguments that support your position. Keep in mind, that free speech has its limit and this course is NOT the space for hate speech, harassment, and derogatory language. I will make every reasonable attempt to create an atmosphere in which each student feels comfortable voicing their argument without fear of being personally attacked, mocked, demeaned, or devalued.

Any behavior (including harassment, sexual harassment, and racially and/or culturally derogatory language) that threatens this atmosphere will not be tolerated. Please alert me immediately if you feel threatened, dismissed, or silenced at any point during our semester together and/or if your engagement in discussion has been in some way hindered by the learning environment.

Major Assignments
Quizzes
A syllabus quiz will be due on **Wednesday July 10th, at 11:59 PM (2359)**
Students will also take 5 content related quizzes throughout the semester. These quizzes will be due each **Friday** of the course **at 11:59 PM (2359)** and will cover basic definitions and concepts covered by the week's reading. The quizzes will be untimed and students are allowed to access course materials. The quizzes will be multiple choice.

During the final week of the course (August 12th - 16th) no quiz will be given to give students more time to work on their final paper.

Discussion Posts

Students will engage in weekly discussion posts (5 total) on the course ELMS page. Students must both respond to the prompt given with their own comment as well as respond to at least two peer comments. Student responses should meaningfully engage the question and reference relevant class readings to support their opinion. Responses to peer comments should meaningfully add to the discussion. Responses to peers such as "I agree with you", "You make a great point" or "I like how you engaged this reading" as the main contribution of the response will not be counted towards the minimum two responses to peer comments. These discussion posts will be closed for grading on the respective **Friday at 11:59 PM (2359)**

During the final week of the course (August 12th - 16th) no discussion post will be given to give students more time to work on their final paper.

It is in your best interest to begin engaging in these discussions before Friday evening to give yourself time to meaningfully engage in the discussion with your peers.

Final Essay

Students will submit a final essay that demonstrates comprehension of the course content to satisfy the course learning outcomes in response to a prompt provided by the instructor. The essay will span between 8-10 pages in length, but no less than 8 pages in length (excluding references/work cited pages). The paper format must adhere to the following; 12pt font size, Times New Roman font, double-spaced, and strictly in PDF. MLA or APA citation style may be used. The final essay must be submitted on the ELMS course page by **Friday August 16th, at 11:59 PM (2359)**

Honors Course Extension

Students taking this course as an honors course will submit an additional paper that demonstrates deeper engagement with a topic covered in the course of the student's selection and the instructor's approval. Students must email the instructor with the topic the student selected by **Friday August 2nd, at 11:59 PM (2359).** The essay will span between 7-10 pages in length, but no less than 7 pages in length (excluding references/work cited pages). The paper format must adhere to the following; 12pt font size, Times New Roman font, double-spaced, and strictly in PDF. MLA or APA citation style may be used. The extension essay must be submitted on the ELMS course page by **Friday August 16th, at 11:59 PM (2359)**

For these students, the extension paper will represent 10% of their final grade and the final essay will represent 30% of their final grade.

Grading Structure

Assignment	Percentage %
Syllabus Quiz	10%
Content Quizzes (5 total)	20% (4% Each)
Discussion Posts (5 total)	30% (6% Each)
Final Essay	40%
Total	100%

Academic Integrity

For this course, some of your assignments will be collected via Turnitin on our course ELMS page. I have chosen to use this tool because it can help you improve your scholarly writing and help me verify the integrity of student work. For information about Turnitin, how it works, and the feedback reports you may have access to, visit Turnitin Originality Checker for Students

The University's Code of Academic Integrity is designed to ensure that the principles of academic honesty and integrity are upheld. In accordance with this code, the University of Maryland does not tolerate academic dishonesty. Please ensure that you fully understand this code and its implications because all acts of academic dishonesty will be dealt with in accordance with the provisions of this code. All students are expected to adhere to this Code. It is your responsibility to read it and know what it says, so you can start your professional life on the right path. **As future professionals, your commitment to high ethical standards and honesty begins with your time at the University of Maryland.**

AI assistance (ChatGPT, Copilot, DALL-E, etc.) is not permitted for coding, research, writing, editing, or any other part of the assignment process. Material taken or copied from these sites can be deemed unauthorized material and a violation of academic integrity. These sites offer information that might be inaccurate or biased and most importantly, relying on restricted sources will hamper your learning process, particularly the critical thinking steps necessary for college-level assignments. Even though I expect you will use these tools in the future, this approach will help you build a solid understanding of the subject matter, which will benefit your future career. If you have questions or suggestions for potential exceptions, please email me at [instructor email] and I would be happy to talk more.

Additionally, students may naturally choose to use online forums for course-wide discussions (e.g., Group lists or chats) to discuss concepts in the course. However, collaboration on graded assignments is strictly prohibited unless otherwise stated. Examples of prohibited collaboration include: asking classmates for answers on quizzes or exams, asking for access codes to clicker polls, etc. Please visit the **Office of Undergraduate Studies' full list of campus-wide policies** and reach out if you have questions.

Finally, on each exam or assignment you must write out and sign the following pledge: *"I pledge on my honor that I have not given or received any unauthorized assistance on this exam/assignment."* If you ever feel pressured to comply with someone else's academic integrity violation, please reach out to me straight away. Also, *if you are ever unclear* about acceptable levels of collaboration, *please ask*! To help you avoid unintentional violations, *the following table* lists levels of collaboration that are acceptable for each graded exercise. Each assignment will contain more specific information regarding acceptable levels of collaboration.

	OPEN NOTES	USE BOOK	LEARN ONLINE	GATHER CONTENT With AI	ASK FRIENDS	WORK IN GROUPS
Quizzes	✔	✔	—	---	---	---

Discussion Posts	✔	✔	✔	---	---	---
Final Essay	✔	✔	✔	---	---	---

Grades

All assessment scores will be posted on the course ELMS page. If you would like to review any of your grades (including the exams), or have questions about how something was scored, please email me to schedule a time for us to meet and discuss.

Late work will not be accepted for course credit so please plan to have it submitted well before the scheduled deadline. I am happy to discuss any of your grades with you, and if I have made a mistake I will immediately correct it. Any formal grade disputes must be submitted in writing and within one week of receiving the grade.
Final letter grades are assigned based on the percentage of total assessment points earned. To be fair to everyone I have to establish clear standards and apply them consistently, so please understand that being close to a cutoff is not the same as making the cut (89.99 ≠ 90.00). It would be unethical to make exceptions for some and not others.

It is essential that you articulate in your syllabus how final letter grades will be assigned. There is no campus policy on percentages and letter grades, nor is there a requirement that you utilize a points-based scheme. Here is one sample, which you are welcome to use or edit to reflect your grading policies:

Final Grade Cutoffs									
+	97.00%	+	87.00%	+	77.00%	+	67.00%	+	
A	94.00%	B	84.00%	C	74.00%	D	64.00%	F	<60.0%
-	90.00%	-	80.00%	-	70.00%	-	60.00%	-	

Course Outline

Week #	Topic & Learning Outcomes	Deliverable
1	Foundations of UN Human Rights ● Students will be able to define human rights and other related concepts ● Students will be able to summarize the rights enshrined in human rights treaties ● Students will be able to compare and contrast human rights norms in the period prior to and following the end of World War II	● **Syllabus Quiz - July 10th** ● **Content Quiz - July 12th** ● **Discussion Post - July 12th**
2	UN Organs ● Students will be able to identify UN bodies that punish violations of human rights ● Student will be able to discuss the differences in these bodies ● Students will be able to evaluate the efficacy of these bodies	● **Content Quiz - July 19th** ● **Discussion Post - July 19th**
3	Socialization ● Students will be able to identify & explain differing explanations for state compliance with human rights norms ● Students will be able to critique these explanations	● **Content Quiz - July 26th** ● **Discussion Post - July 26th**
4	Impact ● Students will be able to describe the impact of UN Human Rights treaties on domestic politics ● Students will be able to discuss the impact of UN Human Rights treaties on domestic protections for human rights	● **Content Quiz - August 2nd** ● **Discussion Post - August 2nd**
5	Human Rights and Conflict ● Students will be able to explain the impact of UN Human Rights treaties on actions of combatants in conflict ● Students will be able to assess the efficacy of UN Human Rights Treaties on deterring or punishing violations	● **Content Quiz - August 9th** ● **Discussion Post - August 9th**
6	The Future of Human Rights ● Students will be able to stake and argue a claim about the efficacy of the UN Human Rights Regime ● Students will be able to identify future avenues of development for international human rights	● **Final Essay - August 16th**

Note: This is a tentative schedule, and subject to change as necessary – monitor the course ELMS page for current deadlines. In the unlikely event of a prolonged university closing, or an extended absence from the university,

adjustments to the course schedule, deadlines, and assignments will be made based on the duration of the closing and the specific dates missed.

Resources & Accommodations
Accessibility and Disability Services

The University of Maryland is committed to creating and maintaining a welcoming and inclusive educational, working, and living environment for people of all abilities. The University of Maryland is also committed to the principle that no qualified individual with a disability shall, on the basis of disability, be excluded from participation in or be denied the benefits of the services, programs, or activities of the University, or be subjected to discrimination. The **Accessibility & Disability Service (ADS)** provides reasonable accommodations to qualified individuals to provide equal access to services, programs and activities. ADS cannot assist retroactively, so it is generally best to request accommodations several weeks before the semester begins or as soon as a disability becomes known. Any student who needs accommodations should contact me as soon as possible so that I have sufficient time to make arrangements.

For assistance in obtaining an accommodation, contact Accessibility and Disability Service at 301-314-7682, or email them at **adsfrontdesk@umd.edu**. Information about **sharing your accommodations with instructors, note taking assistance** and more is available from the **Counseling Center**.

Student Resources and Services

Taking personal responsibility for your own learning means acknowledging when your performance does not match your goals and doing something about it. I hope you will come talk to me so that I can help you find the right approach to success in this course, and I encourage you to visit **UMD's Student Academic Support Services website** to learn more about the wide range of campus resources available to you.

In particular, everyone can use some help sharpening their communication skills (and improving their grade) by visiting **UMD's Writing Center** and schedule an appointment with the campus Writing Center.

You should also know there are a wide range of resources to support you with whatever you might need (**UMD's Student Resources and Services website** may help). If you feel it would be helpful to have someone to talk to, visit **UMD's Counseling Center** or **one of the many other mental health resources on campus**.

Notice of Mandatory Reporting

Notice of mandatory reporting of sexual assault, sexual harassment, interpersonal violence, and stalking: As a faculty member, I am designated as a "Responsible University Employee," and I must report all disclosures of sexual assault, sexual harassment, interpersonal violence, and stalking to UMD's Title IX Coordinator per University Policy on Sexual Harassment and Other Sexual Misconduct.

If you wish to speak with someone confidentially, please contact one of UMD's confidential resources, such as CARE to Stop Violence (located on the Ground Floor of the Health Center) at 301-741-3442 or the Counseling Center (located at the Shoemaker Building) at 301-314-7651.

You may also seek assistance or supportive measures from UMD's Title IX Coordinator, Angela Nastase, by calling 301-405-1142, or emailing titleIXcoordinator@umd.edu.

To view further information on the above, please visit the Office of Civil Rights and Sexual Misconduct's website at ocrsm.umd.edu**.**

Basic Needs Security

If you have difficulty affording groceries or accessing sufficient food to eat every day, or lack a safe and stable place to live, please visit **UMD's Division of Student Affairs website** for information about resources the campus offers you and let me know if I can help in any way.

Veteran Resources

UMD provides some additional supports to our student veterans. You can access those resources at the office of [Veteran Student life](#) and the [Counseling Center](#). Veterans and active duty military personnel with special circumstances (e.g., upcoming deployments, drill requirements, disabilities) are welcome and encouraged to communicate these, in advance if possible, to the instructor.

Netiquette Policy

Netiquette is the social code of online classes. Students share a responsibility for the course's learning environment. Creating a cohesive online learning community requires learners to support and assist each other. To craft an open and interactive online learning environment, communication has to be conducted in a professional and courteous manner at all times, guided by common sense, collegiality and basic rules of etiquette.

Course Evaluation

Please submit a course evaluation through Student Feedback on Course Experiences in order to help faculty and administrators improve teaching and learning at Maryland. All information submitted to Course Experiences is confidential. Campus will notify you when Student Feedback on Course Experiences is open for you to complete your evaluations at the end of the semester. Please go directly to the **Student Feedback on Course Experiences** to complete your evaluations. By completing all of your evaluations each semester, you will have the privilege of accessing through Testudo the evaluation reports for the thousands of courses for which 70% or more students submitted their evaluations.

Copyright Notice

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Assigned Readings

Week 1 Foundations of United Nations Human Rights

Posner, Eric (2014) The Twilight of Human Rights Law - Chapter 1

Universal Declaration of Human Rights

International Convention on Civil and Political Rights

International Convention on Economic and Social Rights

Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide

Recommended Reading

Responsibility to Protect, 2005 World Summit Outcome

Week 2 UN Organs

Hafner-Burton, E. M. (2013). Making human rights a reality. Princeton University Press. - Chapter 4

Terman, R., & Voeten, E. (2018). The relational politics of shame: Evidence from the universal periodic review. The Review of International Organizations, 13, 1-23.

Jo, H., & Simmons, B. A. (2016). Can the international criminal court deter atrocity?. International Organization, 70(3), 443-475.

Recommended Reading

ICJ South Africa V. Israel

ICJ Ukraine V. Russia

Week 3 Socialization

Greenhill, B. (2015). Transmitting rights: International organizations and the diffusion of human rights practices. Oxford university press. - Chapter 2

Simmons, B. A. (2009). Mobilizing for human rights: international law in domestic politics. In Leading Works in International Law (pp. 177-188). Routledge. Chapter 3

Jo, H. (2015). Compliant rebels. Cambridge University Press. Chapter 3

Hafner-Burton, E. M. (2005). Trading human rights: How preferential trade agreements influence government repression. International Organization, 59(3), 593-629.

Vreeland, J. R. (2008). Political institutions and human rights: Why dictatorships enter into the United Nations Convention Against Torture. International Organization, 62(1), 65-101.

Week 4 Impact

Hendrix, C. S., & Wong, W. H. (2013). When is the pen truly mighty? Regime type and the efficacy of naming and shaming in curbing human rights abuses. British Journal of Political Science, 43(3), 651-672.

Hafner-Burton, E. M. (2008). Sticks and stones: Naming and shaming the human rights enforcement problem. International organization, 62(4), 689-716.

Simmons, B. A. (2009). Mobilizing for human rights: international law in domestic politics. In Leading Works in International Law (pp. 177-188). Routledge.

Select **TWO** Chapters:

> Chapter 5 - Civil Rights
>
> Chapter 6 - Women's Rights
>
> Chapter 7- Torture
>
> Chapter 8 - Children's Rights

Week 5 Human Rights and Conflict

DeMeritt, J. H. (2012). International organizations and government killing: Does naming and shaming save lives?. International Interactions, 38(5), 597-621.

Prorok, A. K., & Appel, B. J. (2014). Compliance with international humanitarian law: Democratic third parties and civilian targeting in interstate war. Journal of Conflict Resolution, 58(4), 713-740.

Jo, H. (2015). Compliant rebels. Cambridge University Press. Chapter 5

Bell, C., & O'rourke, C. (2010). Peace agreements or pieces of paper? The impact of UNSC Resolution 1325 on peace processes and their agreements. International & Comparative Law Quarterly, 59(4), 941-980.

Week 6 The Future of Human Rights Promotion

Sikkink, K. (2018). Evidence for hope: Making human rights work in the 21st century. Princeton University Press. - Chapters 6 & 7

Benesch, S. (Working Paper). COUNTERING DANGEROUS SPEECH:NEW IDEAS FOR GENOCIDE PREVENTION. United States Holocaust Memorial Museum

Donine, T. (2023). SOCIAL MEDIA PLATFORMS, THE RISKS OF MASS ATROCITIES, AND OPPORTUNITIES FOR ATROCITY PREVENTION. 2023 Sudikoff Interdisciplinary Seminar on Genocide Prevention. United States Holocaust Memorial Museum

Simon-Skjodt Center. (2020). The Role of Civilians in Preventing and Mitigating Mass Atrocities. Simon-Skjodt Center's Research Initiative. United States Holocaust Memorial Museum