



**Georgetown University
School of Continuing Studies
Bachelor of Arts in Liberal Studies**

**International Human Rights Law
BLHV 244-140
Summer 2017**

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Class time: Online

Class location: Online

Office hours: By appointment

Course overview:

This course seeks to help students develop an introductory understanding of the fundamentals of international human rights law, and to examine the interface of culture and human rights. It introduces students to the world of human rights generally, and provides students with a foundation upon which to understand and analyze the pressing human rights concerns of our time. Topics under consideration include economic, social and cultural rights, genocide, and torture. The course is an introduction to international human rights, and applicable hard and soft law instruments will be used to guide this overview. It will provide a broad survey of the principles of human rights and the spectrum of international standards. It will examine the growth of international humanitarian concern, philosophical issues related to human rights, and mechanisms for the implementation of human rights.

Learning Goals:

- Students will begin to develop an understanding of international law and its relationship to human rights.
- Students will learn the history and philosophy of human rights and will explore the relationship between human rights and culture. Students will be able to think critically

about the interface of culture and human rights and to challenge the notion of universal human rights by reviewing human rights critiques.

- Students will develop an understanding of both the international and regional institutional framework for promoting and protecting human rights and how human rights work in terms of implementing mechanisms.
- Students will understand the difference between economic, social and cultural rights and how they are enforced, and civil and political rights and how they are enforced. Students will be encouraged to question whether and why all of these rights as enumerated in the international covenants must be protected.
- Students will learn the principles of equality and non-discrimination with respect to race discrimination and women's rights. Students will be able to look deeply and objectively at cultural practices to critically evaluate human rights concerns and to formulate strategies for protection.
- Students will learn about some of history's massive human rights violations, such as the Holocaust and Rwanda genocide, and how these atrocities influenced the protection mechanisms in place today.
- Students will be equipped to analyze new and emerging challenges for human rights, such as protecting against terrorism and non-state actors.

Required Textbooks:

International Human Rights: The Successor Text to International Human Rights in Context by Philip Aston & Ryan Goodman (2012) ISBN-978-0-19-957872-6

Selected International Human Rights Instruments and Bibliography for Research on International Human Rights Law by Weissbrodt, Fitzpatrick and Newman (4ed. 2009)
ISBN-13:-978-1422411742

Additional articles will be posted to Blackboard.

Class Participation:

All students are expected to participate in class. This is absolutely critical in an online course. Class participation provides an opportunity for you to demonstrate your understanding of the theories, concepts, and practices learned in the course, and Blackboard is the principal way we will interact for the semester. Success in this course depends on the preparedness and active engagement of all students, and the readings and assignments listed on this syllabus should therefore be done prior to class. Class participation accounts for 10% of your final grade.

Reflection:

Your first assignment will be to write a 500-word reflection on the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR). To prepare for this short essay, you should review the UDHR and reflect upon the rights enumerated in this foundational human rights document. You should then think of a human rights issue of some relevance or resonance to you, and prepare a reflection accordingly. This could be a current affairs issue or a personal experience, for example. This assignment is due in Week 2 and is worth 10% of your final grade.

Essays:

You are required to write two essays during the course of the semester, of 4-5 pages in length. Please use APA formatting in your written work. Essays must be submitted to Blackboard by 6pm on the due date. Each essay accounts for 20% of your final grade in the course.

Final Exam:

There will be a comprehensive, “take-home” final exam. You will be required to answer three essay questions and you will be given a recommended time period to complete the exam. The final exam constitutes 40% of your final grade in the course.

Grading System

Class Participation	10 percent
Reflection	10 percent
Essays	40 percent
Final Exam	40 percent

The following is provided as a guide used for assessing grades in all areas of the grading system.

A	100-93 percent
A-	92-90
B+	89-87
B	86-83
B-	82-80
C+	79-77
C	76-73
C-	72-70
D+	69-67
D	66-60
F	59 and below

A

- Consistently accurate referencing
- Grammar and spelling accurate
- Fluent academic writing style
- Consistently demonstrates independent, original thought and execution
- Excellent critical reflection on the relevant issues
- Analytical and clear conclusions well-grounded in research
- Confident, convincing expression of argument
- Ability to critically analyze different sides of a complex issue
- Developed and justified conclusions using a comprehensive range of sources that have been thoroughly analyzed, applied and discussed
- Has addressed the purpose of the assignment comprehensively

B

- Grammar and spelling accurate and writing fluent
- Referencing mainly accurate
- Thoughts and ideas clearly expressed
- Ability to critically analyze the text, literature and other evidence, developing own ideas in the process
- Consistent understanding of facts and issues demonstrated
- Ability to critically analyze many sides of a complex issue/problem
- Has addressed the purpose of the assignment coherently and with some imagination

C

- Assignments show an attempt to organize in a logical manner
- Meaning apparent, but language not always fluent, grammar and spelling contain a number of errors
- Referencing is mainly accurate
- Evidence and arguments presented in a mainly descriptive manner
- Limited support for conclusions in evidence, literature or texts
- Attempts to demonstrate an understanding of the subject area, but aspects are confused or underdeveloped
- Some areas of the work show an attempt to be critical, but the approach is not consistent
- The purpose of the assignment is only recognized in part

D

- Superficial understanding of task
- Referencing mediocre at best
- Evidence and argument are present but wholly inadequate
- Poor presentation of topic
- Minimally acceptable grammar and spelling
- Meets only the minimum standard for analysis

F

- Presentation is disorganized and incoherent
- The meaning of the assignment is unclear with unacceptable grammatical and spelling errors
- Referencing is absent or unsystematic
- Literature and other sources of evidence are either not consulted or are irrelevant to the assignment set
- Unsubstantiated/invalid conclusions based on anecdotes and generalizations
- Understanding of the assignment not apparent, work lacks a coherent framework, or subject is confused and underdeveloped
- No evidence of attempt to be critical or to recognize or address differing viewpoints

Attendance

Students are expected at all meetings of this course. There will be approximately four Zoom conferences for the semester. Additionally, you will be asked to make weekly posts to the Discussion Board. We do understand that from time to time, family, personal or work emergencies may arise. In those circumstances, please contact me immediately. Please note that the BALS attendance policy is strictly adhered to, and more than two absences may result in failure of the course.

Late Papers

Except in rare circumstances, late papers are not accepted. In case of emergency, this rule may be waived with appropriate documentation and cause. Requests for extensions should come prior to the due date of the paper.

Incomplete

Incompletes are given in only the most extraordinary circumstances and with appropriate documentation. Where an incomplete is granted, a grade of “N” shall be granted until the work is handed in and, then, the grade shall be changed accordingly. In no case shall work submitted after the announced date (date will be announced in class) be granted an incomplete. The work shall be delivered no later than 4 p.m. on that day. Failure to adhere to this rule will result in an F.

Disabilities

If you are a student with a documented disability who requires accommodations or if you think you may have a disability and want to inquire about accommodations, please contact the Academic Resource Center at 202-687-8354 or arc@georgetown.edu.

Turnitin.com

Students acknowledge that by taking this course all required papers can be submitted for a Textual Similarity Review to Turnitin.com for the detection of plagiarism. Use of the Turnitin.com service is subject to the terms of use agreement posted on the Turnitin.com site.

Extreme weather, Emergencies, and Instructional Continuity

During inclement weather or other emergencies on a day when we are scheduled to meet face-to-face, check the university's Web site or call (202) 687-7669 for information on whether the university is open. If the university is open, this class will meet. If the university is closed, this class will meet through distance means such as online videoconferencing; check your e-mail for a message from me on how we will proceed in that situation. Due dates for written assignments submitted through Blackboard will not be changed due to campus closings.

The university recently has acquired the capability to send text messages and recorded messages about emergencies to cell phones and other mobile devices. Sign up on MyAccess.

Georgetown Honor System

All students are expected to follow Georgetown's honor code unconditionally. We assume you have read the honor code material located at <http://scs.georgetown.edu/academic-affairs/honor-code>, and in particular have read the following documents: Honor Council Pamphlet, What is Plagiarism, Sanctioning Guidelines, and Expedited Sanctioning Process. Papers in this course will all be submitted to turnitin.com for checking.

Submitting material in fulfillment of the requirements of this course means that you have abided by the Georgetown honor pledge:

In the pursuit of the high ideals and rigorous standards of academic life, I commit myself to respect and uphold the Georgetown Honor System: To be honest in any academic endeavor, and to conduct myself honorably, as a responsible member of the Georgetown community, as we live and work together.

Plagiarism

In accord with university policy, all incidents of suspected plagiarism or other Honor Code violations will be reported to the Honor Council without fail.

If the Honor Council finds that a student has plagiarized or has violated the Honor Code in any other way, the student may receive a grade of F for the course.

Policy Accommodating Students’ Religious Observances

The following is university policy:

Georgetown University promotes respect for all religions. Any student who is unable to attend classes or to participate in any examination, presentation, or assignment on a given day because of the observance of a major religious holiday or related travel shall be excused and provided with the opportunity to make up, without unreasonable burden, any work that has been missed for this reason and shall not in any other way be penalized for the absence or rescheduled work. Students will remain responsible for all assigned work. Students should notify professors in writing at the beginning of the semester of religious observances that conflict with their classes.

CLASS SCHEDULE		
Date	Class Week/Area of Focus	Readings/activities
Week 1	<p><i>Overview</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Introduction to human rights - Universal Declaration of Human Rights 	<p>Alston, pp. 139-150</p> <p>Weissbrodt: Universal Declaration of Human Rights</p>
Week 2	<p><i>Culture and human rights</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Universalism and the Critiques 	<p>Alston, pp. 531-557</p> <p>Reflection Essay Due</p>
Week 3	<p><i>Regional Protections</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Regional human rights systems - The role of civil society 	<p>Alston, pp. 889-906, 978-999, 1025-1032</p>

Week 4	Civil and Political Rights; Social and Cultural Rights - ICESCR - ICCPR	Essay 1 due Alston, pp. 157-165, 277-290 Weissbrodt: International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights; International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights
Week 5	Women's Rights - Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women - Female Genital Mutilation	Alston, pp. 166-176, 191-198, 557-577 Weissbrodt: Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women
Week 6	Refugees	Posted to Blackboard.
Week 7	"Cruel and Unusual Punishment" - Torture	Alston, pp. 238-245; 257-276 Weissbrodt: Convention Against Torture
Week 8	Death Penalty	Alston, pp. 17-42
Week 9	Limitations on Human Rights - International humanitarian law - War on Terror Racial Discrimination	Essay 2 due Alston, pp. 383-411 Weissbrodt: International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination

Week 10	Limitations on Human Rights - Humanitarian Intervention	Posted to Blackboard.
Week 11	<i>Massive Human Rights Tragedies</i> - Genocide: 'the crime of crimes'	Film: Hotel Rwanda Alston, pp. 1312-1330 Weissbrodt: Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide
Week 12	<i>Massive Human Rights Tragedies</i> - Genocide cont. - Crimes Against Humanity - Prosecutions - The International Criminal Court	Steiner pp.1281-1307, 1330-1345 Weissbrodt: Rome Statute
Week 13	The Future of Human Rights	Posted to BB.
Week 14	Review Session	Please review all materials.
Week 15	Final Exam	There will be a take-home final exam. You will be given 72 hours to complete the exam. It must be submitted via email by the assigned due date to ktm38@georgetown.edu .