



uOttawa

HIS3301: History Across Borders: A History of 20th Century Human Rights



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Course Hours

Wednesday 13:00 - 14:15

Friday 11:30 - 12:45

Course Description

The theme of this HIS3301 is **A HISTORY OF 20th CENTURY HUMAN RIGHTS**

This semester we will subject the concept of universal human rights to historical inquiry. We will consider how human rights emerged before the Universal Declaration of Human Rights was adopted at the General Assembly of the United Nations on 10 December 1948. And we will consider what became of human rights in the decades after the Declaration. We will think historically through the perplexities of the very concept of universal human rights.

At the time of its conception in 1948, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights carried the promise of a New World Order within which the rights of all peoples,

regardless of location, citizenship status, or identity, would trump those of sovereign states. Yet, the Declaration was nonbinding and its advocates spent the first two decades after its creation trying – and largely failing – to make it implementable for the people who most needed its protections. Fearing UN interference in domestic affairs, many states, including the great powers of the age -- the U.S. and the U.S.S.R. -- refused to sign and ratify the rights conventions that would have rendered the Universal Declaration enforceable. Despite obstacles at the UN, rights claimants, rights activists, and various state and non-state actors sought ways to define and implement the concepts laid out in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. Using specific case studies and primary documents, and with particular emphasis on transnational activism linking the Global North and South, students will probe the mechanisms and strategies that various postwar activists employed to make human rights protections matter despite the strictures of national sovereignty and non-interference characteristic of the Cold War era. Students will also consider what lasting effects this period had on the human rights movement as a whole.

Our focus throughout the semester is the PRACTICE over the THEORY of human rights, while recognizing that the two are interlinked in ways we will seek to understand. The four broad points orienting the course are these:

1. We will challenge the conventional sequential causality assumed in much of the human rights scholarship today. Human rights scholars largely assume that human rights first had to become a recognized “international language,” and then become legally binding standards in international law, before they could be broadcasted through activism, institutional infrastructure, and policy. Our historical approach will challenge this assumption.
2. We will learn that everywhere they have been discussed or acted upon, human rights have figured as historically contingent--meaning they are linked inextricably to particular time, place, and context--so much so that the study of human rights enables us to truly understand historical contingency as a principle guiding human behavior and, particularly, human interaction with change over time. Furthermore we will consider whether "human rights as historically contingent" can or should be reconciled with "human rights as universal."
3. Our approach to understanding the emergence and evolution of human rights as a practice will privilege rights claimants and their advocates over policy-makers, statesmen, jurists and thinkers who conceived of human rights as universal principles in the abstract.

4. The course has as final, and arguably most important objective to teach the skills of research, interpretation, critical analysis, and communication that enable historical thinking. Crucially, we will undertake course activities that will require students to leverage their knowledge of the past to present-day issues and concerns related to human rights.

Required Material

Required readings are available on the course Brightspace site, where you will also find other required course materials including links to websites. Worksheets are also available on Brightspace, arranged by week.

Assigned tasks to assess learning (evaluations)

Task, Due Date, Grade Percentage	Breakdown of Task	Evaluation Criteria	Skills Learned and Assessed
<p>Expert:</p> <p>Each student will serve as an "expert" on assigned readings/primary sources related to the week's topic.</p> <p>Due date: Various = 48 hours before discussion will take place; and oral presentation on day of discussion in class.</p> <p>15% of Final Grade</p>	<p>1. Select the week you would like to serve as expert and sign up for it on the Groups page on Brightspace. The word "Expert" highlighted in yellow on the syllabus designates the available opportunities throughout the semester.</p> <p>2. Prepare a blogpost on an assigned reading and post it to our WordPress blog 48 hours before the class meeting at which it will be discussed. Your post should have a title and an image relevant to the topic. It should identify the author, explain the main argument of the reading, provide insights into how the reading enhances the understanding of human rights, and ask questions designed to spark debate. Experts must post these on the class blog by 11:59 pm two days before the discussion. (If the discussion takes place on a Wednesday, the blogpost must appear by 11:59 pm on the Monday before; if the discussion takes place on Friday, the blogpost must appear by 11:59 pm on the Wednesday before).</p>	<p>Students will be evaluated for the quality of their blogpost, title, image, and questions; for their ability to identify author and argument; for their presentation style and ability to moderate discussion; for their responses to peers.</p>	<p>Develops a deeper understanding of your selected reading; helps you learn to identify the main argument (thesis); and to contextualize author. It will also develop the skills of communicating your knowledge and ideas in the blog format as well as orally. It is great preparation for 4+ year courses and seminars.</p>

3. Lead class discussion: The expert will give a brief oral presentation, touching on the main points, and then ask questions to the class, and moderate the class comments/debate.

4. Respond to peers' comments/questions on the blogpost: The expert should answer any questions posed in the comments section of the blogpost.

Discussion:

This is an interactive course and students will have ample opportunity to participate in discussion and debate of the concepts we cover. Five discussions will be formally evaluated. The dates of graded discussions are (highlighted in pink on the syllabus):

13 September

18 September

23 October

20 November

27 November

15% of Final Grade

Discussion online and/or in class.

Online discussions are structured as blog entries and comments on others' blogs. Your contribution to these discussions is vital to foster a sense of community in our class and to facilitate engagement with the topic. Try to contribute your own ideas about the readings, how they relate to present day human rights issues, and critically engage your peers' comments and questions.

If you don't comment online, you have another chance to contribute in class.

You are welcome to do both.

Contributions will be assessed for their quality as well as quantity. Be sure to show your familiarity with the assigned readings in your comments to get full credit.

Develops the skills of communicating your knowledge and ideas orally. Great preparation for 4th year courses/seminars, and for learning how to make points persuasively in professional settings.

Primary Source Analysis:

Students will select one of the primary sources highlighted in blue on the syllabus and analyse it historically to understand how the concepts and practices

Your purpose is to use the primary source to think critically and historically about human rights.

Your analysis should be approximately 7 paragraphs (a good paragraph length is about half a page, double-spaced, 12 point font, 2 cm margins). A title page is not required. The essay should begin with an introductory

The marking criteria are as follows:

- general content and style (20%) = whether all elements indicated in the instructions are included
- the existence of a

Teaches extrapolation from incomplete data, aided by contextualization. Teaches how to use primary sources to think historically and critically about the past, and to link these insights to the present-

<p>of universal human rights evolved over time.</p> <p>Due dates = various (to be turned in no later than one week after the class meeting related to the primary source you select)</p> <p>20% of Final Grade</p> <p>Give yourself time to reread and redraft your essay. Submit hard copy in class.</p>	<p>paragraph that describes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> the historical context in which the document or recording was produced; the author(s) who produced it; the processes by which it was diffused; the identification of the human rights issue(s) being contested or solved. <p>The contextual information in the first paragraph should serve as the springboard for your main argument. Drawing on your primary source analysis, make an argument for how the past human rights solution might be applied to a particular human rights issue today. Support your argument with at least three specific points. You will find it useful to draw on the secondary source material from class.</p> <p>Once you have identified context, argument, and relevant secondary material, redraft your essay to include smooth transitions between each section. Write a concluding paragraph. You may reference readings we have prepared in class or you may do your own additional research. You may follow the referencing/citation style of your choice, but it is up to you to make sure you are doing it correctly and consistently throughout the paper. Online guides are available for MLA, Chicago Manual of Style or Uniform Legal Citation.</p>	<p>historical argument (20%)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> organization and structure of the paper (20%) = does the introduction provide an overview of the main points to be discussed, do paragraphs flow logically and sequentially, does the conclusion wrap up and drive home your points ? use of source material, skill at analysis and synthesis, interpretation and contextualization (20%) = does your essay effectively use historical data to make your points? quality of references and formatting (20%) = This is the easiest place to pick up points: follow your selected style guide to a T. Every comma, period, and quotation mark counts here. 	<p>day.</p>
<p><u>Occasional Worksheets:</u></p> <p>Due dates:</p> <p>6 September</p> <p>13 September</p> <p>25 September</p>	<p>Complete the worksheets in the content area. Answers to the worksheets must be typed and submitted on the day the readings are listed. For example, on the syllabus, under September 6, you have an assigned reading by Kenneth Cmiel. The readings must be prepared in advance of Sept 6 and the worksheet submitted on that date (in class or</p>	<p>You may answer concisely (quality counts over quantity), but ensure that your answer precisely addresses the question. As you read, get in the habit of looking for the author's main argument(s). Try to research the author's</p>	<p>Worksheets are designed to help you absorb the assigned readings, and to critically engage them. They will serve as a review for preparation of the final exam.</p> <p>Make use of the discussion board</p>

<p>23 October</p> <p>30 October</p> <p>15 November</p> <p>30% of Final Grade</p>	<p>they will be marked late). All questions must be answered.</p> <p>LATE WORKSHEET ASSIGNMENTS WILL BE PENALIZED 10% PER BUSINESS DAY.</p>	<p>identity as it may help you to situate him/her in the landscape of human rights scholarship. Be aware of the kind of evidence or persuasive techniques the author is using. Evaluate how the readings fit together and how they address the week's topic. If readings seem to contradict each other, or challenge something you have read in earlier weeks, you should take note of that. Reading with these questions in mind will facilitate your absorption of the material and make the worksheet easier to complete.</p>	<p>during the week before the worksheet is due. Discussing the readings with your peers will help you to absorb the material.</p>
<p>Take Home Written Exam (long answer)</p> <p>Due Date: Final Exam Period</p> <p>20% of Final Grade</p>	<p>Students will respond to two questions. The questions will be phrased in such a way that students must formulate an argument and draw on supporting historical data to support it. Students will reference the works they draw upon to formulate their answers. Sample questions will be discussed on the last day of class.</p>	<p>The marking criteria are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • general content and style (20%) • the existence of a historical argument (20%) • organization and structure of the answers (20%) • use of source material, skill at analysis and synthesis, interpretation and contextualization (20%) = does your answer effectively use historical data to make your points? • quality of references and formatting (20%) = follow your selected style guide to a T. Every comma, period, and quotation mark counts. 	<p>Development of clear arguments; use of historical thinking to answer a question; communicating ideas persuasively in writing; analysis; interpretation; contextualization; synthesis.</p>

Course Calendar

Date of Mtg	Topic	Assignment	In Class Activity
Wed 4 Sept	Introduction		
Fri 6 Sept	Historiography	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Kenneth Cmiel, "The Recent History of Human Rights," <i>American Historical Review</i> 109.1 (2004) 117-35. PRIMARY SOURCE: Universal Declaration of Human Rights 	Lecture Group Discussion
Wed 11 Sept	Interwar Rights: Claims and Institutions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Taina Tuori, "From League of Nations Mandates to Decolonization: A Brief History of Rights," in Pamela Slotte and Miia Halme-Tuomisaari, eds., <i>Revisiting the Origins of Human Rights</i>, Cambridge University Press, 2015, pp. 267-92. PRIMARY SOURCE: Covenant of the League of Nations 	Lecture
Fri 13 Sept	Petitioning; Minorities; Rights Organizations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Susan Pedersen, "Samoa on the World Stage: Petitions and Peoples before the Mandates Commission of the League of Nations." <i>Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History</i> 40.2 (2012): 231-61. PRIMARY SOURCE: Roger N. Baldwin, "The Capital of the Men Without a Country." <i>The Survey</i> (August 1, 1927) 	2 Experts Lecture + Discussion
Wed 18 Sept	Postwar Rights: What did the Holocaust have to do with Human Rights?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> G. Daniel Cohen, "The Holocaust and the 'Human Rights Revolution,'" in Akira Iriye et al, eds. <i>The Human Rights Revolution: An International History</i>, Oxford Univ Press, 2012, pp. 53-71. Samuel Moyn, <i>Human Rights and the Uses of History</i>, Ch. 6 "The intersection with Holocaust Memory," pp. 87-96. 	2 Expert Lecture + Discussion
Fri 20 Sept	Nuremberg	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Philippe Sands, <i>East West Street</i>, "Nuremberg," Vintage Books, 2016, pp. 270-289 	Lecture
Wed 25 Sept	December 1948 at the UN: The Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the Genocide Convention	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Roger Normand and Sarah Zaidi, <i>Human Rights at the UN: The Political History of Universal Justice</i>, Chap. 6, "The Universal Declaration of Human Rights," pp. 177-196 and Chap. 7, "The Human Rights Covenants," pp. 197-242 PRIMARY SOURCE: The Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of Genocide 	
Fri 27 Sept	The Geneva Conventions: Human Rights v. Humanitarianism	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> William I. Hitchcock, "Human Rights and the Laws of War: The Geneva Conventions of 1949," in Akira Iriye et al, eds. <i>The Human Rights Revolution: An International History</i>, Oxford Univ Press, 2012, pp. 93-112. PRIMARY SOURCE: Geneva Conventions of 1949 	

Wed 2 Oct	Europe's Displaced and the 1951 Refugee Convention	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> G. Daniel Cohen, "The 'Human Rights Revolution' at Work: Displaced Persons in Postwar Europe," in Stefan-Ludwig Hoffman, ed. <i>Human Rights in the Twentieth Century</i>, 2011. PRIMARY SOURCE: Hannah Arendt, <i>The Origins of Totalitarianism: The Perplexities of the Rights of Man - Part Two: Imperialism, Section Nine: The Decline of the Nation-State and the End of the Rights of Man</i>, pp. 290-302 	Lecture
Fri 4 Oct	Anticolonialism and Human Rights	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Jan Eckel, "Human Rights and Decolonization: New Perspectives and Open Questions." <i>Humanity</i> 1.1 (2010): 1-35. Meredith Terretta, "Why Then Call it the Declaration of Human Rights? The Failures of Universal Human Rights in Colonial Africa's Internationally Supervised Territories," in L. Wildenthal and J. Quataert, eds. <i>The Routledge History of Human Rights</i>, 2019, pp. 203-21. PRIMARY SOURCE: Civil Rights Congress, "We Charge Genocide." 1951. READ PART I. 	Lecture
Wed 9 Oct	The Bandung Conference and the Third World	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Roland Burke, "'The Compelling Dialogue of Freedom': Human Rights at the Bandung Conference." <i>Human Rights Quarterly</i> 28.4 (2006) 947-65. PRIMARY SOURCE: Richard Wright, <i>The Color Curtain</i> Chapter 4: "Racial Shame at Bandung," 1956, pp. 127-154. 	
Fri 11 Oct	Human Rights, Liberation, and Violence	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Randall Williams, <i>The Divided World: Human Rights and Its Violence</i>, Chap. 1, "Conscience Denied: Amnesty International and the Antirevolution of the 1960s," pp. 1-23 PRIMARY SOURCES: Malcolm X, <i>The Ballot or the Bullet</i> Nelson Mandela, 1964 Rivonia Trial 	
Wed 23 Oct	Discussion		3 Experts
Fri 25 Oct	1968: The Year of Human Rights	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Samuel Moyn, <i>Human Rights and the Uses of History</i>, Ch. 5, "Human Rights in History," pp. 69-86. PRIMARY SOURCE: Morris Abram, "The UN and Human Rights," <i>Foreign Affairs</i> 1969. 	
Wed 30 Oct	The Rise of the Institutional NGO	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Jan Eckel, "The International League of the Rights of Man, Amnesty International, and the Changing Fate of Human Rights Activism from the 1940s through the 1970s," <i>Humanity</i> 4.2 (2013): 183-214 Aryeh Neier, <i>The International Human Rights Movement</i> (2012), Chap. 1, "The Movement as of September 29, 2011." 	Lecture
Fri 1 Nov	Cold War Détente, CSCE and the Helsinki Network	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sarah Snyder, "The Rise of the Helsinki Network: 'A Sort of Lifeline' for Eastern Europe," in O. A. Westad & P. Villaume, eds., 	Lecture

		<p><i>Perforating the Iron Curtain: European Détente, Transatlantic Relations and the Cold War, 1965-1985</i>, , 2009, pp. 179-193.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Celia Donert, "Charter 77 and the Roma: Human Rights and Dissent in Socialist Czechoslovakia," in Stefan-Ludwig Hoffman, ed. <i>Human Rights in the Twentieth Century</i>, 2011, pp. 191-211. • PRIMARY SOURCE: Charter 77 	
Wed 6 Nov	Torture: The Case of Argentina	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • J. H. Quataert, <i>Advocating Dignity: Human Rights Mobilizations in Global Politics</i>, Chap. 3, "Mothers' Courage and U.N. Monitoring of Disappearance, 1973-83," pp. 109-40. 	
Fri 8 Nov	Development and Freedom	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Amartya Sen, <i>Development as Freedom</i>, 1999. 	
Wed 13 Nov	Are Human Rights Universal?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Chandra Muzaffar, "From Human Rights to Human Dignity," in Peter Van Ness, ed. <i>Debating Human Rights: Critical Essays from the United States and Asia</i>, 1999. • Michael Ignatieff, Tanner Lecture on Human Values, 2000, "Human Rights and Individualism," pp. 327-37. 	
Fri 15 Nov	Human Rights as Women's Right	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Martha Nussbaum, "Women and Cultural Universals," in M. Nussbaum, <i>Sex and Social Justice</i>, Oxford Univ Press, 1999, pp. 29-54. • Sally Engle Merry, "Introduction: Culture and Transnationalism," in S. E. Merry, <i>Human Rights and Gender Violence: Translating International Law into Justice</i>, Univ of Chicago Press, 2005, pp. 1-35. • Laura Belmonte, "The International LGBT Rights Movement: An Introductory History," in L. Wildenthal and J. Quataert, eds. <i>The Routledge History of Human Rights</i>, 2019, pp. 448-466. 	3 Experts
Wed 20 Nov	Discussion		
Fri 22 Nov	NO CLASS		
Wed 27 Nov	Human Rights in Canada	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dominique Clément, <i>Human Rights in Canada: A History</i>, Chaps. 3, & 4. • Peter Kulchyski, "Aboriginal Rights are Not Human Rights," <i>Prairie Forum</i> No. 36 (Fall 2011): 33-53. • Lori Beaman, "Freedom of Religion and the New Diversity: Case Studies from Canada," in L. Wildenthal and J. Quataert, eds. <i>The Routledge History of Human Rights</i>, 2019, pp. 415-431. • PRIMARY SOURCES: • CHARTER OF RIGHTS AND FREEDOM; • UN Declaration of the Rights of Indigenous Peoples 	4 Experts Lecture + Discussion
Fri 29 Nov	Towards a Human Rights Future	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Nils Gilman, "Human Rights and Neoliberalism," <i>LA Review of Books</i>, 8 May 2018 • Kenny Warne, photos by Mathias Svold, "A Voice For Nature," <i>National Geographic</i>, April 2019. 	

