University of Montana
Department of Political Science

PSCI 330-International Human Rights   **Solomon M. Gofie, PhD.**
Spring Semester 2016/17   **Office: Corbin 332**
MWF 1:00-1:50; LA 337   **Off.Hrs. MWF-10:00-11:00**

Course description and objectives

International human rights have become an important area of academic study for about three decades now. Human rights remained one of the major points of reference in public policy discourse at local, regional and global levels. Nevertheless, the question of human rights remains central to the quest for freedom, peace and justice in different parts of the world. The course will examine the conceptual underpinnings of international human rights.It will help identify and discuss the various perspectives on human rights, instruments, institutions, mechanisms and procedures. While pursuing the objectives, the course enables students in exploring the most recent developments in the field and suggests approaches towards a better protection of human rights.

By the end of the course it is expected that the course participants will be able to

1. understand the concept of international human rights- institutions, mechanisms and procedures
2. be aware of the practices and the gaps in the protection of human rights in different contexts
3. identify challenges to the protection of human rights worldwide, explore forms of responses to human rights violations, and
4. Evaluate and refelect on the efficacy of the discourses of international human rights.

Required Reading

Rona K.M. Smith, 2017, Text Book on International Human Rights (Oxford University Press, 7th Ed.)

Course requirement, evaluation and grading

Assessement of learning outcomes will be based on the applicable University rules and regualtions. Regular class attendance, active participation in class, doing individual assignments and sumbitting them per the deadlines, adequate contribution to group assignments and presentations, regular reading of course materials and the final examination are the key required activities. While the University's system/scale will be used as a guideline to convert students' results into grades, the overall evaluation will

take into consideration the standings of individual results as well as the overall performance of the class. Individual assignments-term papers are assessed on the basis of adequate discussion of the issue or the question the topic raises, originality in analysis, organization of ideas and clarity of presentation of the written submssion, use of sources including citations and referencing. The values of each of the items of evaluation are as follow:

Class participation and presentations (30%) Includes group presentations
Individual Assignments (20%) Term paper

Final Exam (50%) End of Semester

It is expected students attend classes regularly and benefit from active class participation. Students should submit assignments on the designated dates and delays may lead to reduction of points. Course evaluation and final grades will be based on the successful completion of the activities outlined. Students are also encouraged to use consultation hours for additional questions and discussions.

Disabilities

In case of disability adversely affecting your academic performance**,** we will work to ensure access to the course materials and I will provide full support and make amendments per the applicbale rules.

Course outline and activity schedules

1. **Discussion of items in the syllabus and course introduction**
2. **Introduction to international human rights/IHR, concepts and definition(s)**

   *Alison Dundes Renteln, 1988, 'the Concept of Human Rights' in **Anthropos**, Vol. 4, No. 6, pp. 343-364, http://www.jstor.org/stable/pdfplus/40463371.pdf*

3. **Historical development of the discourse of international human rights, emphasis on period since 1945; * Presentations[1]**

   Read Nona Smith pp 5-23.

   *Thomas Pogge,2000, 'the International Significance of Human Rights' in **the Journal of Ethics**, Vol. 4, No. 1, pp. 45-69. http://www.jstor.org/stable/25115635?*

4. **Theories of human rights; *presentations**

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[1] refers to a group presentation of assignments

Jack Donnelly, 1998 (2nd Ed), **International Human Rights: Dilemmas in World Politics**, Westview Press, pp 18-32 (printed version of chapter will be provided)

Kenneth Bayens, 2009, 'Discourse Ethics and the Political Conception of Human Rights' in Ethics and Global Politics, Vol. 2 No. 1, pp 1-21

http://www.ethicsandglobalpolitics.net/index.php/egp/article/viewFile/1938/2189

5. **The concept of sources and categories of rights (21 & 23 Feb) & *presentations**

Rona Smith pp 38-49

International Bill of Human Rights-UDHR, ICCPR, ICESCR, and CAT etc

http://www.ohchr.org

6. **Institutions, procedures, mechanisms, UN (13 March) & *presentations**

Rona Smith pp 52-82

Thomas Buergental, 'The UN Human Rights Committee pp 341-398'

http://www.mpil.de/files/pdf1/mpunyb_buergenthal_5.pdf

7. **Institutions, procedures, mechanisms- AU, OAS, Council of Europe;* presentations**

Rona Smith Chapters 7, 8, 9

*France Viljoen & Lirette Louw, 2007, 'State Compliance with the Recommendations of the African Commission of Human Rights 1994-2004', in **the American Journal of International Law**, Vol. 101, No.1, pp 1-3.*

www.jstor.org/stable/4149821

8. **Human rights and domestic legal systems (Examples from the US & Ethiopia); *presentations**

*Takele Soboka Bulto, 2009, 'the Monist-Dualist Divide and the Supremacy Clause: Revisiting the Status of Human Rights Treaties in Ethiopia' in **Journal of Ethiopian Law**, Vol. 23, No. 1, http://ssrn.com/abstract=1408842*

Noel T. Dowling, 1946, 'Protection of Human Rights under the United States Constitution' in the Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science, Vol. 243, pp. 96-100, http://www.jstor.org/stable/pdfplus/1025061.pdf

9. Human rights and foreign policies of states *presentations

Jack Donnelly, 1998 (2nd Ed), **International Human Rights: Dilemmas in World Politics,** Westview Press, and pp 86-110.

Richard Youngs, 2003, 'European Approaches to democracy assistance' in Third World Quarterly, Vol.24, No.1 127-138, at, http://www.jstor.org/pss/3993634?

10. Forms of responses to human rights violations;*presentations

Mark Gibney and Erik Roxstrom, 2001, 'the Status of State Apologie' in Human Rights Quarterly, Vol. 23, No. 4 pp. 911-939

http://www.jstor.org/stable/4489366

James H. Lebovic, Erik Voeten,2006, 'The Politics of Shame: The Condemnation of Country Human Rights Practices in the UNCHR' in International Studies Quarterly, Vol. 50, No. 4, pp. 861-888, http://www.jstor.org/stable/4092783?

11. New institutions & mechanisms: the UN Human Rights Council and the ICC; *presentations

Rosa Freedman, 2011, 'New Mechanisms of the UN Human Rights Council' in Netherlands Quarterly of Human Rights, Vol. 29/3, 289–323

http://www.corteidh.or.cr/tablas/r26991.pdf

Leslie Finjamuri, 2016, 'The International Criminal Court and the Paradox of Authority'

http://scholarship.law.duke.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=4774&context=lcp

12. Beyond the responsibility to protect: human dignity, freedom and solidarity;* Presentations

Carsten Stahn, 2007, 'Responsibility to Protect: Political Rhetoric or Emerging Legal Norm' in the American Journal of International Law, Vol. 101, No.1, pp. 99-120, http://www.jstor.org/stable/10.2307/4149826

Eric Neumayer, 2005, 'Do International Human Rights Treaties Improve Respect for Human Rights' in **Conflict Resolution***, Vol. 49, No. 6, pp. 925-953, http://www.jstor.org/stable/pdfplus/30045143.pdf*

Useful Links for additional information

1. *Office of the Higher Commissioner for Human Rights (http://www.ohchr.org/)*
2. *Inter-American Commission of Human Rights (http://www.oas.org/en)*
3. *The Council of Europe (http://www.coe.int)*
4. *European Court of Human Rights (http://www.echr.coe.int/ECHR/homepage_en)*
5. *African Court on Human and Peoples Rights (www.african-court.org/en/)*
6. *Human Rights Library University of Minnesota (http://www1.umn.edu/humanrts/)*
7. *U.S. Department of State (Human Rights Reports) (http://www.state.gov/g/drl/rls/hrrpt/)*
8. *Amnesty International (www.amnesty.org.uk)*
9. *Human Rights Watch (www.hrw.org)*
10. *International Labor Organization (Labor Standards) (www.ilo.org/global/standards/lang--en/index.htm)*

Academic Honesty

Adhering to rules of academic honesty and familiarty with the University's Student Conduct Code is expected from all students. Plagerism-presenting other person's work as ones own- is a serious academic offence resulting in the nullification or reducation of the results of the assignment and may lead to disciplinary measures by by the University.

Note: The reading materials are selected in a way they help students become familiar with the various literatures on international human rights. Presentation and topics for individual papers will be assigned in consultation with the students. This syllabus provides information and guidance about the course and may be subject to some modifications.