

## Human Rights POLS 390

### Course Information:

Spring 2015  
Classroom: FGM 202  
Meeting Time: 1-2:15 MW  
Course Website: Moodle

### Contact Information:

Instructor: Elizabeth Nyman  
Email: enyman@louisiana.edu  
Office: Mouton Hall 229  
Office Hours: MW 11-1, T 9-12 or by appt.

### Course Description and Objectives

This course is designed as an introduction to the concept of human rights and the steps taken to protect human rights under international law. As such, the course will cover the concept of human rights, and how under the human rights framework, people are to experience certain freedoms and protections. The concept of human rights is a difficult and controversial one, and the steps taken by various states to protect what they consider inviolable human rights are likewise controversial. We will cover many of the main international legal treaties, and discuss the role of states, international organizations, and international courts in protecting the human rights of people around the world.

### Required Texts

There are two required texts for this class:

Michael Freeman. 2011. *Human Rights: An Interdisciplinary Approach*. United States: Polity.

Mary Ann Glendon. 2001. *A World Made New: Eleanor Roosevelt and the Universal Declaration of Human Rights*. New York: Random House

### Course Requirements

(1) **Exam Papers:** There will be 3 exam papers due in this course, each worth 25% of the course grade. I will provide a paper topic over which students will write a 6-8 page exam response. These papers are open book, open notes, but the usual rules on plagiarism apply and students are not allowed to work together.

(2) **Court Paper:** Students will have to write one short paper (3-4 pages) on an international human rights case. This paper is worth 10% of the course grade, and will be used as preparation for a class discussion about the case.

(3) **Participation:** Students are required to attend class regularly and participate actively in class discussion. Students will be graded on their participation in class discussion, and this will make up 15% of the course grade. Active participation is necessary to garner full credit, and this means that students are expected to have done the required reading in advance, to have considered the topic under discussion as they read, and to come to class with an active interest in the material.

## Course Letter Grades

Final course letter grades will be assigned based on the following scale:

- A: 90-100
- B: 80-89
- C: 70-79
- D: 60-69
- F: 59 and below

I will not respond to end of semester emails requesting a grade change.

## Course Policies

**Absences from Exams and Late Work:** Makeup exams will be allowed when students are participating in formally sanctioned University events if proper documentation is provided to the instructor prior to the exam. Makeup exams will also be allowed in the case of an extraordinary circumstance if accompanied by sufficient documentation within two days after the exam. The instructor reserves the right to determine what constitutes an extraordinary circumstance.

**Academic Honor Policy:** Cheating and plagiarism will not be tolerated. Students committing these violations will be punished according to University policy. Be familiar with what constitutes plagiarism; ignorance is not an excuse. Consult Section V in the UL Lafayette Undergraduate Bulletin for the university definitions of plagiarism for more information about what constitutes an offense.

**Courtesy in the Classroom:** Attention to classroom courtesy is necessary to ensure that all students have the opportunity to learn without distraction. As such, please silence and put away all cell phones and other electronic devices during class time. Please be on time to class and remain in class until you are dismissed. If you must arrive late or leave early, please take the seat nearest an exit, and enter or leave as quietly as possible. Please show respect for your fellow students by refraining from talking during lectures, as well as when other students are speaking. Similarly, please respect the opinions of your fellow students, even if you are in disagreement with them. Repeated disruption of class will lead to a reduction of your final grade.

**Nondiscrimination Policy:** UL Lafayette does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, age, religion, sex, sexual orientation or disability. This classroom is intended to be a positive learning environment based upon open communication and mutual respect. If you have any suggestions as to how I can improve the learning environment in this course, please let me know. I will give all such suggestions serious consideration.

**Health Issues and Disabilities:** Students are encouraged to address any special needs or accommodations with me at the beginning of the semester or as soon as you become aware of your needs. Those seeking accommodations based on disabilities should speak with the Office of Disability Services at 337-482-5252 or [ods@louisiana.edu](mailto:ods@louisiana.edu) and receive documentation. You can also visit the ODS website (<http://disability.louisiana.edu>) for information on ODS services and on eligibility requirements. Furthermore, if you are concerned about your physical and/or mental

well-being, I strongly encourage you to visit the UL Counseling and Testing Center, Saucier Wellness Center, OK Allen Hall, or call them at 337-482-6480. After hours help can be found by calling University Police at 337-482-6447 and asking to speak with the counselor on call.

**Emergency Evacuation Procedure:** Students with any sort of condition that may place them at risk during an emergency evacuation are responsible for preplanning their own evacuation strategies. You are also responsible for identifying yourself to your professor at the beginning of the semester and sharing information on your particular needs and your evacuation plan.

### **Course Outline\*\***

#### *Overview of Human Rights Issues*

|  |  |
|--|--|
| Week 1 (Jan 14-16)                     | Introduction to Course                     |
| Week 2 (Jan 19-23)                     | What are Human Rights (Freeman, Ch 1)      |
| <b>Martin Luther King Day: Jan. 19</b> |  |
| Week 3 (Jan. 26-30)                    | Theories of Human Rights (Freeman, Ch. 4)  |
| Week 4 (Feb. 2-6)                      | Culture and Human Rights (Freeman, Ch. 6)  |
| Week 5 (Feb. 9-13)                     | Politics and Human Rights (Freeman, Ch. 7) |
| <b>Exam Paper 1 Due:</b> Feb. 11       |  |

#### *Protecting Freedoms*

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|---|---|
| Week 6 (Feb. 16-20)   | <b>NO CLASS</b>   |
| <b>Mardi Gras:</b> Feb. 16-18 ( <b>Read the Glendon book!</b> ) |   |
| Week 7 (Feb. 23-27)   | The Beginning of Human Rights Law: the UDHR (Glendon, all; UDHR will be distributed in class) |
| Week 8 (March 2-6)  | Political and Civil Rights  |
| Week 9 (March 9-13)   | Economic Rights (Freeman, Ch. 8)  |
| Week 10 (March 16-20)   | Women and Children's Rights (CEDAW & Rights of the Child, Moodle)                             |
| <b>Exam Paper 2 Due:</b> March 18                               |   |

#### *Preventing Atrocities*

|                                  |  |
|----------------------------------|--|
| Week 11 (March 23-27)            | Crimes against Humanity/Genocide Convention (Schabas 2008 & Genocide Convention, Moodle) |
| Week 12 (March 30-April 3)       | Role of International Organizations: Movie   |
| <b>Spring Break: April 3-12</b>  |  |
| Week 13 (April 13-17)            | Role of International Organizations continued  |
| Week 14 (April 20-24)            | The Role of International Courts   |
| <b>Court Paper Due:</b> April 20 |  |
| Week 15 (April 27-May 1)         | Future of Human Rights (Freeman, Ch. 9)  |

**Final Exam Paper: May 4, 11 a.m. to 1:30 p.m.**

**\*\* The syllabus is a guide for the course and is subject to change if necessary.**