

International Human Rights

POLS 288
Spring 2020

Instructor:	Christine Sylvester SCHU 14D Christine.sylvester@oneonta.edu (607) 436-3055 Office Hours: Tues 10:30-11:30AM, 2:15-3:15PM, or by appointment	Class:	Tues. & Thurs. 1:00-2:15PM Schumacher 110 SUNY Oneonta Spring 2020 3 s.h.
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Course Description

This course will examine critical questions and debates related to human rights, discrimination, and political representation (specifically, discrimination based upon ethnicity or culture, gender, religion, sexual orientation, handicap or disease, and age). Building on foundational work in political representation and human rights, this course will study the impact discrimination in its many forms has on representation and using comparative politics cases to examine what steps have been taken to correct past histories of discrimination. Students will learn from both canonical and contemporary works in the field of comparative politics then apply this knowledge to form their own policy responses.

The course begins with a study of the concept of discrimination and how it is impacted by our understanding of citizenship and group membership. Subsequent topics include electoral politics, institutional controls, segregation and discrimination, social movements, immigration and assimilation, campaigns and media, representation, and competition within and among minority groups. Finally, selected contemporary policy issues will be discussed and evaluated. The course goals are 1) to familiarize students with both the theoretical underpinnings of discrimination, human rights, and political representation, 2) identify, explain, and apply the major sources of international human rights law and their defining features, 3) identify, explain, and analyze the major international enforcement mechanisms for international human rights, 4) identify, explain, and analyze the nature and legal characteristics of human rights (individual vs collective; negative vs positive rights; civil and political vs economic and social), 5) identify, explain, and critically analyze the application of human rights law and norms to address human rights violations and abuses, and 6) aid students in developing critical reasoning and presentation skills through real-world policy formation and debates.

Course Requirements

This seminar is grounded in core reading materials. All students are expected to come to class each week having completed all the assigned readings. Final grades for the course will be tabulated from a distribution of the following components:

Participation (30%): You will be expected to have completed your reading assignments each week and to actively join in class discussions of them. Attendance is mandatory. Participation cannot be made up, if you don't show up or arrive late your participation for that day will be zero. Mere attendance (showing up but not contributing to discussion) is not enough. You will be graded on the depth and thoughtfulness of your comments not the volume. The two best rules to consider in discussions are "*Will this comment further substantive and supportive discussion amongst my classmates?*" and "*Does this*

comment provide insight into this or prior week's material?" At the end of each class, if you think you have substantively contributed to the class, hand your instructor a piece of paper with your name, the date, and a detailed note on how you believe you contributed that day. Your instructor will either accept it or decline it. If you have 18 of these by the end of the semester, you get full credit. Less than 18 will result in partial credit. All discussion weeks where slips/participation will be accepted are denoted with (P).

Weekly Assignments and Quizzes (30%): Throughout the course students will complete short assignments or quizzes that relate to the topic of the week. Students will have several quizzes and short written assignments over the course of the semester, either during class or as homework. The quizzes will not be announced in advance. Written assignments will be either announced in class or on Blackboard and must be submitted prior to class on Blackboard (the submission links will close at 1PM on the due date). No assignments will be accepted late or in hard copy (unless otherwise noted). At the end of the semester, the lowest score will be dropped.

Reaction Papers: Reaction papers are brief responses to the assigned material (2-3 pages). These are opportunities for you to critically and deeply reflect on the readings and ensure you are prepared to discuss them in class. Reaction papers should follow the formatting guidelines for the course and be submitted at the start of class.

Preliminary, Final Briefing Memo and Presentation (40%): Students will draft a policy memo on a topic that relates to the material addressed in this course. The memo should be both descriptive and analytical, meaning the best papers will provide a brief summary of a case/real-world example with sources before applying the theoretical literature. Memos should be approximately 8-10 pages in length and double-spaced. They must also use 12-point Times New Roman font, normal (one-inch) margins, and employ a proper method of citation (both in-text and bibliography). Failure to abide by these formatting requirements will result in a grade deduction (for example, a paper receiving an A will be reduced to an A- etc.). Failure to employ a proper method of citation may be construed as plagiarism and result in disciplinary action. More detailed instructions on memo requirements will be discussed throughout the semester. The best rule of thumb is to pick your case and get writing early.

Students are expected to prepare both a preliminary and final version of their policy memos. Both versions should be complete documents; however, while the preliminary will receive substantial peer and instructor review, the final version is expected to incorporate and apply these reviewer comments with the end product being a thoroughly excellent memo. Electronic copies of both the preliminary and final memo are due prior to class on April 16th and April 30th respectively. Late papers will be penalized by one grade each calendar day they are late including those submitted after class has begun (for example, a paper receiving an A that is submitted 1 day late will receive an A-, 2 days late will receive a B+, etc.).

On April 30th and May 5th, 2020 students will be responsible for presenting their final briefing memo. The format of the presentation is up to each student (for example, PowerPoint, Video, or Prezi) and should be 6-8 minutes in length. For the presentation, you are the expert on your paper topic and should ensure your presentation does a thorough job of explaining your case, its significance, your analysis, policy proposal(s), and conclusions. Presentations will count towards the student's overall final memo grade.

A Note on Missed Presentations. Presentations missed without a valid and prearranged excuse cannot be made up, effectively resulting in a zero. Missing presentation day will greatly reduce your chances of receiving a passing grade for the semester. Please plan accordingly.

General Course Policies and Additional Resources

1. **Announcements.** Course announcements will be posted to the classes Blackboard page. Each student should ensure they have access to Blackboard and check it regularly for updates.
2. **Attendance and comportment.** Arriving after class has commenced is disruptive to both the instructor and other students, especially in such a small class space, please be mindful of this. Further, this class is an encouraging and supportive environment and as such students should refrain from disruptive behavior such as side conversations, whispering, or offensive remarks. I reserve the right to ask students to leave if they are disruptive.
3. **Rules governing late submission of assignments.** Late weekly assignments will not be accepted. Late briefing memos will be severely penalized. It is your responsibility to ensure that I receive your assignments on time. Excuses, including computer problems, printing troubles, a cold, will not be accepted. The date of presentations is outlined in this syllabus and owing to time limitations cannot be rescheduled.
4. **Grading Scale:** Your semester grade will be computed on a 100-point scale as follows: 95-100 = A; 91-94 = A-; 88-90 = B+; 84-87 = B; 81-83 = B-; 78-80 = C+; 74-77 = C; 71-73 = C-; 65-70 = D; 0-64 = F. You will receive a letter grade on your research paper which corresponds to numeric grades as follows: A = 100; A- = 94; B+ = 89; B = 85; B- = 82; C+ = 79; C = 75; C- = 72; D = 67; F = 50. You will receive a numeric grade on participation, quizzes, assignments and presentations.
5. **Grade appeals must be submitted in writing.** If you have a concern regarding your grade on an assignment you may write a one-page letter explaining your specific concerns and request your assignment be regraded. This letter should be submitted to me in hard-copy along with the original graded assignment within one week of the assignment having been returned to the class. Once I have reviewed and considered your request I will respond in writing. The revised grade may be higher, lower, or the same as your original grade. Under no circumstances will I discuss your grade with you in person.
6. **Electronic policy.** Cell phone use in class is disruptive and discourteous to others, as such, cell phones should be silenced and stored so they are not visible. Students using their cell phones during class will be asked to leave and will be marked as absent for that day. Laptops will be used to aid collaborative work and may only be used when you have been instructed. Students using laptops or tablets outside of these designated times or for purposes other than the task at hand will be asked to leave and marked as absent for that day. No other electronic devices may be used in the classroom and class sessions may not be recorded.
7. **Extreme Content.** Material in this course may at times cover subject matter of a violent nature. These materials are used to meet clear course objectives and I will do my best to warn students prior to upsetting material.
8. **Disability-Related Equal Access Accommodations.** "All individuals who are diagnosed with a disability are protected under the Americans with Disabilities Act, and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973. As such, you may be entitled to certain accommodations within this class. If you are diagnosed with a disability, please make an appointment to meet with Accessibility Resources, 133 Milne Library, ext. 2137. All students with the necessary supporting documentation will be provided appropriate accommodations as determined by the Accessibility Resources Office. It is your responsibility to contact Accessibility Resources and concurrently supply me with your accommodation plan, which will inform me exactly what accommodations you are entitled to. You

will only receive accommodations once you provide me with an Accessibility Resources accommodation plan. Any previously recorded grades will not be changed.”

9. **Emergency Evacuation/Shelter-in-Place Procedures.** In the event of an emergency requiring evacuation from Schumacher, please evacuate to the IRC Lobby so that College officials can account for you. All students are encourage to review the College’s Emergency Evacuation Procedures and Shelter-in-Place Procedures at the following link:
(<http://www.oneonta.edu/security/documents/EmergencyEvacuationProcedures.pdf>). All students are also encouraged to register for NY Alert at <http://www.oneonta.edu/security> for immediate notification of campus emergencies on or near the campus.
10. **Academic Integrity.** The College provides explicit guidelines in the SUNY College of Oneonta’s Student Code of Conduct (<https://suny.oneonta.edu/policy-library/policies/code-student-conduct#article2>). I expect the work you submit for grading to be yours and yours alone. Not acknowledging another's work with proper references, taking credit for someone else's work, letting your work appear in another student's paper, or fabricating "results" are grounds for failing the assignment and/or the course in addition to any penalty imposed by the college. If you have any questions about what constitutes plagiarism or cheating, please ask me. You may also find the library’s tutorials on avoiding plagiarism and integrating sources useful to review (http://lgapi.libapps.com/widgets.php?config_id=1434381445673&enable_navigation=1&guide_id=300602&output_format=1&page_id=0&site_id=376&widget_embed_type=2&widget_type=9).
11. **Resources for Students in Distress.** If you are experiencing undue personal or academic stress at any time during the semester or need to talk with someone about a personal problem or situation, I encourage you to seek support. I am available to talk with you about stresses related to your work in my class. However, problems with relationships, family worries, loss, or a personal struggle or crisis may require additional professional support. The College provides a variety of support resources:

Health & Wellness Center: (607) 436-3573
College Police: On campus emergency, 911
Counseling Center: (607) 436-3368
24-Hour Crisis Hotline: (844) 732-6228
Interpersonal Violence Prevention: (607) 436-3540
Academic Advisement: (607) 436-3390

12. **Student Learning Center.** SLC offers free tutoring for undergraduate students. All SLC tutoring appointments must be scheduled online at <https://suny.oneonta.edu/student-learning-center/tutoring>. If you have any questions about SLC, call 607-436-3010, email slc@oneonta.edu, or visit their website.

Course Schedule

Below is a tentative schedule of topics, readings, and assignments that will be covered in this course. I reserve the right to make changes to the schedule, including dates, and it is the student’s responsibility to be aware of these changes. Date changes will be announced well in advance during class or on Blackboard. Readings denoted as (B) will be posted on Blackboard by the instructor, and those denoted as (S) will be the responsibility of the student to locate. Students are encouraged to use Library resources to locate these readings well in advance. **All items listed under readings are required (and should be completed before the Tuesday class of the week listed).**

16 January

Introductions & Course Overview

21 – 23 January **What are Human Rights and Political Representation?**

28 - 30 January **Models of Party Competition I (P)**

Readings:

- Burke, Edmund (1774) "Speech to the Electors of Bristol at the Conclusion of the Poll 3 Nov 1774." <http://press-pubs.uchicago.edu/founders/documents/v1ch13s7.html> (S)
- Pitkin, Hannah. 1967. *The Concept of Representation*. University of California Press. Chapters 3-6. (B)
- Shapiro, Ian, Susan C. Stokes, Elisabeth Jean Wood, and Alexander S. Kirshner, eds. 2009. *Political Representation*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. Chapter 3 (B)

Assignment: LTD of Pitkin Chapters 3-6 (submit on Blackboard prior to 1/28 class)

4 - 6 February **Models of Party Competition II (P)**

Readings:

- Pitkin, Hannah. 1967. *The Concept of Representation*. University of California Press. Chapters 8 & 9. (B)
- Shapiro, Ian, Susan C. Stokes, Elisabeth Jean Wood, and Alexander S. Kirshner, eds. 2009. *Political Representation*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. Chapter 4 & 5 (B)
- Mansbridge, Jane. 2003. "Rethinking Representation." *American Political Science Review*. 97(4): 515-528. (B)
- Mansbridge, Jane. "Clarifying the Concept of Representation." *American Political Science Review* 105, 03 (2011): 621-630. (B)

Assignment: LTD of Pitkin chapters OR Shapiro et al chapters (pick either book but ensure your LTD covers all the assigned chapters from that book (submit on Blackboard prior to 2/4 class)

11 - 13 February **Forms of Discrimination - Ethnicity & Culture (P)**

Readings:

- Putnam, Robert. 2007. "E Pluribus Unum: Diversity and Community in the Twenty-first Century." *Scandinavian Political Studies*. 30(2) 137-174. (S)
- Posner, Daniel. 2004. "The Political Salience of Cultural Difference: Why Chewas and Tumkukas are allies in Zambia and adversaries in Malawi." *American Political Science Review* 98(4): 529-545. (S)
- "Behind Frances's Burka Ban." *The New Yorker* <https://www.newyorker.com/news/news-desk/behind-frances-burka-ban?verso=true> (S)
- Diallo, Rokhaya (2018) "Hijab: a very French obsession." *Al-Jazeera* <https://www.aljazeera.com/indepth/opinion/hijab-french-obsession-180402135257398.html> (S)

Assignment: See Redacted Poetry assignment on Blackboard (submit on Blackboard prior to 2/11 class)

18 - 20 February Forms of Discrimination – Race (P)

Readings:

- Read and Watch: White Woman at Wal-Mart Tells Latina to Leave Country, Calls Shopper N-Word. <https://heavy.com/news/2017/05/white-woman-walmart-racist-video-latina-mexican-leave-country-n-word-arkansas/>. (S)
- Watch: "Because I'm Latino, I can't have money?" Kids on Race - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=C6xSyRJqle8>. (S)
- Project Implicit – Take the Race test, Religion test, Disability test, and at least one other of your choosing: <https://implicit.harvard.edu/implicit/takeatest.html> (S)

Assignments:

- Write a reaction paper for each of the quizzes you completed (a minimum of four reaction papers). What did you learn about yourself from taking each test? Was your result expected/unexpected? Explain. Why do you think you received the result you did? What role might implicit biases or socialization have on your results? (submit on Blackboard prior to 2/18 class)

25 - 27 February Legal Framework for International Human Rights

Readings:

- United Nations General Assembly. 1948. *Universal Declaration of Human Rights*. (S)
- United Nations General Assembly. 1966. *International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights*. (S)
- **SKIM** - Maslow, Abraham. *Hierarchy of Human Needs*. <http://www.edpsycinteractive.org/topics/conation/maslow.html> (S)

Assignment: For both the UDHR and ICCPR categorize the right(s) each article is seeking to protect. In essence, this task is asking you to (in your own words) outline in brief all the rights the United Nations feels states' have an obligation to protect (Due 2/25)

3 - 5 March Forms of Discrimination – Gender (P)

Readings:

- "Straight White Male: The Lowest Difficulty Setting There Is" 15 May 2012. <https://whatever.scalzi.com/2012/05/15/straight-white-male-the-lowest-difficulty-setting-there-is/> (S)
- **Watch:** Handmaid's Tale (finish complete first season of the tv show by this class—available on DVD or Hulu). (S)

Assignment: Write a reaction paper on Season 1 of a Handmaid's Tale: How is the society divided? What are the roles of women? Find a contemporary example of a similar society and discuss how it relates/differs (submit on Blackboard prior to 3/3 class)

10 - 12 March **NO CLASS – Spring Break**

17 - 19 March **Forms of Discrimination – Religion (P)**

Readings:

- Foner, Nancy and Richard Alba. 2008. "Immigrant Religion in the U.S. and Western Europe: Bridge or Barrier to Inclusion?" *International Migration Review* 42(2): 360-392. **(S)**
- Chaucer, Jeffrey. "Prioresses Tale." *The Canterbury Tales*.
<https://www.gradesaver.com/the-canterbury-tales/study-guide/summary-the-prioress-tale>. **(S)**
- Miller, James. 2011. "If Hitler Won." <http://immigration-globalization.blogspot.com/2011/10/if-hitler-won-world-war-ii-we-would.html> **(S)**

Assignment: Draft a Reaction Paper responding to the points made in all three assigned readings (submit on Blackboard prior to 3/17 class)

24 - 26 March **Forms of Discrimination - Sexual Orientation (P)**

Readings:

- "LGBTQ Rights Milestones Fast Facts. *CNN News*. 4 December 2019.
<https://www.cnn.com/2015/06/19/us/lgbt-rights-milestones-fast-facts/index.html>. **(S)**
- Morris, Bonnie. "History of Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender Social Movements." *American Psychological Association*. <https://www.apa.org/pi/lgbt/resources/history>. **(S)**
- Asal, Victor, Udi Sommer, & Paul Harwood. "Original Sin: A Cross-National Study of the Legality of Homosexual Acts." *Comparative Political Studies*.
https://www.albany.edu/rockefeller/rock_images/faculty/asal/legality%20of%20homosexual%20acts%20for%20review.pdf. **(S)**
- de Ru, H. 2013. "A Historical Perspective on the Recognition of same-sex unions in South Africa." *Fundamina* 19(2): 221-250. **(B)**

Assignment: See assignment 'Persuasive Policy Writing' on Blackboard (Due 3/24)

31 Mar - 2 Apr **Forms of Discrimination - Handicap or Disease (P)**

Readings:

- UN General Assembly. 2008 "*Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities*." <https://www.un.org/disabilities/documents/convention/convoptprot-e.pdf> **(S)**
- Carlson, Tiffany. 6 Dec 2017. "6 Instances of Discrimination People with Disabilities Face Every Day." *Huffington Post* <https://www.huffpost.com/entry/discrimination-people-disabilities-b-4509393> **(S)**
- "Dealing with Stigma and Discrimination." *Centers for Disease Control and Prevention*.
<https://www.cdc.gov/hiv/basics/livingwithhiv/stigma-discrimination.html> **(S)**

Assignment: Draft a Reaction Paper responding to the three assigned readings (submit on Blackboard prior to 3/31 class)

7 - 9 April **Forms of Discrimination – Age (P)**

Readings:

- Lipnic, Victoria. June 2018. “The State of Age Discrimination and Older Workers in the U.S.” *U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission*.
<https://www.eeoc.gov/eeoc/history/adea50th/report.cfm>. (S)
- Hannon Kerry. 2 Aug 2015. “Is It Time to Abolish Mandatory Retirement?” *Forbes*.
<https://www.forbes.com/sites/nextavenue/2015/08/02/is-it-time-to-abolish-mandatory-retirement/#45fac0fb40db>. (S)
- Barnes, Patricia. 9 Jan 2019. “Similarities Between the French ‘Institutional Harassment’ Case and IBM Age Discrimination Litigation?” *Forbes*.
<https://www.forbes.com/sites/patriciagbarnes/2020/01/09/similarities-between-the-french-institutional-harassment-case-and-ibm-age-discrimination-litigation/#3ac54cb5e514>. (S)
- John K. Love et al. v Australia, Communication No. 983/2001. 2003.
<http://hrlibrary.umn.edu/undocs/983-2001.html>. (S)

Assignment: Preliminary Briefing Memo DUE (4/7)

14 - 16 April **Contemporary Violations of Human Rights**

Readings:

- Roser, Max. “Human Rights.” *Our World in Data – University of Oxford*.
<https://ourworldindata.org/human-rights> (S)
- Oltermann, Philip (2019) “Austria approves headscarf ban in primary schools”. *The Guardian*. <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2019/may/16/austria-approves-headscarf-ban-in-primary-schools> (S)
- “Female genital mutilation.” *World Health Organization Factsheet*. 31 Jan 2018
<https://www.who.int/news-room/fact-sheets/detail/female-genital-mutilation> (S)

Assignment: Completed Peer Review of one colleague’s preliminary memo (see Blackboard)(Due 4/14)

21 April **Paper Presentations & Final Briefing Memo Due**

23 April **Paper Presentations**

5 May **Course Wrap-Up**