

**POLS 329: International Human Rights**  
**Fall 2021**  
**T/Th 9:30-10:45 a.m. (Section 1) and 1:30-2:45pm (Section 2)**  
**McMurrin 260 (Section 1) and McMurrin 210 (Section 2)**

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### **Course Description**

What are human rights? How do we study human rights? This course will examine how states create international human rights, why they participate in human rights regimes, and how human rights are enforced. Throughout the course, you will be exposed to different schools of thought from political science and law as we explore enduring questions related to compliance and effectiveness of the international human rights regime. We will also focus on essential skills for reading and writing academic papers.

### **Course Objectives**

At the end of this course, students who successfully complete the course will be able to:

- Summarize key points of academic articles on human rights, placing arguments in conversation with contrasting views and evaluating the strengths and weaknesses of such arguments
- Advance and defend a coherent argument, building upon course knowledge to ask a novel question related to human rights

### **Required Texts**

All required texts will be posted on the Scholar website for the course. Articles and book chapters that are available through CNU Library will be linked to the appropriate page for downloading (you will need to be logged into your CNU credentials to access these readings). Reading instructions accompany each text.

### **Course Requirements**

- 1. Class Participation (15%)** – Most class periods will consist of a short lecture and then a seminar-style discussion based on the readings of the week. Class will be interactive. Attendance and engaged participation are essential both to your ability to absorb the information and to effective functioning of the classroom environment.
- 2. Three Reaction Papers (15%)** – Throughout the semester, you will be required to submit three short papers to help facilitate class discussion. You can choose which readings, but you may not submit more than one paper per month (i.e., you should submit one for a September reading, one for an October reading, and one for a November reading). The papers should be about 225-250 words, structured as follows:

- **Summary of the reading:** Your summary must answer these three questions. (1) what was the research question, (2) what was the authors' answer/hypothesis, and (3) what evidence did they use to prove it? (100 words)
- **Make a comment about the reading:** The comment can take many forms. For example, you can tie the reading to broader themes of the class (i.e., What did this reading teach you about human rights? How does it relate to what we have read previously?), critique the reading (i.e., What flaws do you see in the argument and how well did the author address those flaws?), assess the strength of the authors' evidence, or make suggestions about what the author could have done better. (100 words)
- **Ask at least one question:** What do you still want to know? What lingering doubts do you have about the authors' argument? (25-50 words)

These reaction papers are due via Scholar submission by 11:59pm the night before the reading is to be discussed in class.

3. **Midterm Exam (25%) – in class on Thursday, October 7.** The midterm will consist of short answer questions. A list of topics will be provided in advance.
4. **Final Paper (45%) –** The final paper will be an ongoing project throughout the semester. The final paper grade consists of five parts:
  - **Paper proposal:** You must submit your research question and thesis in writing for approval. **DUE Tuesday, October 5 (2.5%)**
  - **Annotated bibliography:** A list of 5-10 academic articles related to your topic. Each one should include a summary of the article's question and answer and establish clear relevance to your topic. Although you may cite readings from the class in your paper, this bibliography should consist only of reading not on the course syllabus. **DUE Tuesday, November 9 (7.5%)**
  - **Paper outline:** A detailed outline of the paper that establishes the different sections of the paper and what will appear in each section. If desired, students may submit a first version of their paper for my comments instead of an outline, or a mix of an outline and a paper. **DUE Tuesday, November 23 (5%)**
  - **Presentation:** A brief (5 minute) presentation to peers that highlights your paper's question, argument, and method. Presentations will take place on **Thursday, December 9**, at the time of the final exam set by the Registrar **(5%)**
  - **Final product:** You will submit your final paper via Scholar by **11:59pm on Thursday, December 9 (25%)**

### Course Policies

- I do not plan to take attendance each class period. However, there will be around 25-30 of us in the class, and it will be obvious who is in attendance and who is not. It will be difficult if not impossible to earn full credit for class participation if you are frequently absent from class.

- Because this course is designed to be interactive, it will be much more successful if everyone comes prepared and ready to talk. This is a safe space where no ideas or questions are dumb. I expect each of you to respect the opinions of others, even if you vehemently disagree with them. You all come into this class with different backgrounds and experiences, and while those may color the way that you feel about certain arguments, they should not preclude you from listening to and respecting the views of others.
- You will be penalized for late assignments / missed exams, unless the absence/delay is due to serious illness or otherwise excused in advance. The penalty for late paper components is one full letter grade each day late, e.g. A to B, etc.

### **University Statement on Diversity and Inclusion**

The Christopher Newport University community engages and respects different viewpoints, understands the cultural and structural context in which those viewpoints emerge, and questions the development of our own perspectives and values, as these are among the fundamental tenets of a liberal arts education.

Accordingly, we affirm our commitment to a campus culture that embraces the full spectrum of human attributes, perspectives, and disciplines, and offers every member of the University the opportunity to become their best self.

Understanding and respecting differences can best develop in a community where members learn, live, work, and serve among individuals with diverse worldviews, identities, and values. We are dedicated to upholding the dignity and worth of all members of this academic community such that all may engage effectively and compassionately in a pluralistic society.

If you have specific questions, suggestions or concerns regarding diversity on campus please contact [Diversity.Inclusion@CNU.edu](mailto:Diversity.Inclusion@CNU.edu)

### **Disabilities**

In order for a student to receive an accommodation for a disability, that disability must be on record in the Office of Student Affairs, 3<sup>rd</sup> Floor, David Student Union (DSU). If you believe that you have a disability, please contact Jacquelyn Barnes, Student Disability Support Specialist in Student Affairs (594-7160) to discuss your needs.

Students with documented disabilities are to notify the instructor at least seven days prior to the point at which they require an accommodation (the first day of class is recommended), in private, if accommodation is needed. The instructor will provide students with disabilities with the reasonable accommodations approved and directed by the Office of Student Affairs. Work completed before the student notifies the instructor of his/her disability may be counted toward the final grade at the sole discretion of the instructor.

### **Success**

I want you to succeed in this course and at Christopher Newport. I encourage you to contact me during office hours or to schedule an appointment to discuss course content or to answer questions

you have. During the Coronavirus pandemic, our conversations may need to be via electronic means. If I become concerned about your course performance, attendance, engagement, or well-being, I will contact you first. I also may submit a referral through our Captains Care Program. The referral will be received by the Center for Academic Success as well as other departments when appropriate (Counseling Services, Office of Student Engagement). If you are an athlete, the Athletic Academic Support Coordinator will be notified. Someone will contact you to help determine what will help you succeed. Please remember that this is a means for me to support you and help foster your success at Christopher Newport.

### **Academic Support**

The Center for Academic Success offers free tutoring assistance for Christopher Newport students in several academic areas. Center staff offer individual assistance and/or workshops on various study strategies to help you perform your best in your courses. The center also houses the Alice F. Randall Writing Center. Writing consultants can help you at any stage of the writing process, from invention, to development of ideas, to polishing a final draft. The Center is not a proofreading service, but consultants can help you to recognize and find grammar and punctuation errors in your work as well as provide assistance with global tasks. Contact them as early in the writing process as you can!

You may contact the Center for Academic Success to request a tutor, confer with a writing consultant, obtain a schedule of workshops, or make an appointment to talk with a staff member about study skills and strategies. The Center is located in Christopher Newport Hall, first floor, room 123. You may email [academicsuccess@cnu.edu](mailto:academicsuccess@cnu.edu) or call (757) 594-7684.

### **Safety Protocols Specific to COVID-19 and Academic Instruction**

Offering in-person instruction on campus requires everyone to take individual responsibility for reducing the risk of exposure for all campus community members both inside and outside the classroom. Irresponsible behavior jeopardizes not only your own health, but also that of your fellow students, friends, professors and advisors, and members of our staff. Therefore, you are expected to learn and diligently follow the safety protocols required by the University at all times. The following protocols apply specifically to instructional spaces and academic buildings.

Prior to leaving their residence hall room or home, students should:

- conduct daily health screenings; and
- pack CDC-approved face covering(s)

Students cannot enter instructional spaces or academic buildings if they:

- are experiencing symptoms of any illness, regardless of whether they believe the illness to be COVID-19;
- are in isolation while waiting for COVID-19 test results;
- have been directed to quarantine by a University or health department official; or
- have been diagnosed with COVID-19 and have not been approved to return to campus by a healthcare provider.

All students must comply with safety protocols established by the university while inside instructional spaces, common areas, and offices. These protocols are subject to change, but as of 16 August 2021 include:

- attend only the classes and sections in which they are officially enrolled;
- sit in their assigned seats or work at their assigned stations every class period;
- wear a CDC approved face covering at all times\* (face coverings should cover the nose and mouth, be secured under the chin, and fit snugly against the sides of the face);
- use additional personal protective equipment as required for specific classes;
- refrain from sharing personal materials, such as pens, textbooks, etc., with others;
- follow all directional signs; and
- follow directives regarding office hours and advising appointments.

*\*Students who have received an exemption from the face covering requirement for health reasons must present the proof of the exemption provided by the Office of Student Affairs to the instructor upon entering the instructional space.*

Because non-compliance potentially endangers others, faculty members:

- are authorized to instruct anyone in non-compliance with safety protocols to correct the non-compliance or immediately leave the instructional space; and
- may submit referrals to CHECS to report non-compliance with safety protocols.

Faculty members may submit referrals through the Captain's Care Program to report absences as a way of identifying students who may have become ill. It would be appropriate to do so when students have not attended class or communicated with the faculty member in any way for a period of one week or longer.

### **Course Materials**

All content created and assembled by the faculty member and used in this course is to be considered intellectual property owned by the faculty member and Christopher Newport University. It is provided solely for the private use of the students currently enrolled in this course. To ensure the free and open discussion of ideas, students may not make available any of the original course content, including but not limited to lectures, discussions, videos, handouts, and/or activities, to anyone not currently enrolled in the course without the advance written permission of the instructor. This means that students may not record, download, screenshot, or in any way copy original course material for the purpose of distribution beyond this course. A violation may be considered theft. It is the student's responsibility to protect course material when accessing it outside of the physical classroom space.

### **Academic Integrity**

The work that students submit must be their own, and students must follow CNU's Honor Code (which can be found on pgs. 58-64 of the student handbook). All sources in all students' written work must be properly cited. Plagiarism and cheating will not be tolerated. Academic dishonesty will result in students receiving a failing grade on the assignment and will be reported to the university.

## Class Schedule

### I. INTRODUCTION

#### **Tuesday, August 24**

- Class introduction (no reading)

#### **Thursday, August 26**

- Johns, Leslie. 2021. "Creating Human Rights." From *Politics and International Law: Making, Breaking, and Upholding Global Rules* (under contract with Cambridge University Press), pgs. 5-12.
- Andersen, Elizabeth, and Jaya Khetarpal. 2020. "As Protests Surge Globally, the UN Human Rights Committee Provides Timely Guidance." *Asil Insights* 24(29).

### II. PROMOTION

#### *UN institutions*

#### **Tuesday, August 31**

- Gaer, Felice. 2007. "A Voice Not an Echo: Universal Periodic Review and the UN Treaty Body System." *Human Rights Law Review* 7(1): 109-139.

#### **Thursday, September 2**

- Creamer, Cosette D., and Beth A. Simmons. 2015. "Ratification, Reporting, and Rights: Quality of Participation in the Convention against Torture." *Human Rights Quarterly* 37: 579-608.

#### **Tuesday, September 7**

- Terman, Rochelle, and Eric Voeten. 2018. "The Relational Politics of Shame: Evidence from the Universal Periodic Review." *The Review of International Organizations* 13: 1-23.

#### *Treaties, Part 1: Who commits and why?*

#### **Thursday, September 9**

- Simmons, Beth. 2009. "Theories of Commitment." From *Mobilizing for Human Rights*, Cambridge University Press, pgs. 57-80.

#### **Tuesday, September 14**

- Hathaway, Oona. 2007. "Why Do Countries Commit to Human Rights Treaties?" *Journal of Conflict Resolution* 51(4): 588-621.

### **Thursday, September 16**

- Moravcsik, Andrew. 2000. "The Origins of International Human Rights Regimes: Democratic Delegation in Postwar Europe." *International Organization* 54: 217-252.

### ***Treaties, Part 2: Do they work? How would we know?***

### **Tuesday, September 21**

- Hill, Jr., Daniel W. 2010. "Estimating the Effects of Human Rights Treaties on State Behavior." *Journal of Politics* 72(4): 1161-1174.

### **Thursday, September 23**

- Hafner-Burton, Emilie M., and Kiyoteru Tsutsui. 2007. "Justice Lost! The Failure of International Human Rights Law to Matter Where Needed Most." *Journal of Peace Research* 44(4): 407-425.

### **Tuesday, September 28**

- Avdeyeva, Olga. 2007. "When Do States Comply with International Treaties? Policies on Violence against Women in Post-Communist Countries." *International Studies Quarterly* 51: 877-900.

### **Thursday, September 30 – NO CLASS**

### **Tuesday, October 5**

- Paper proposal DUE
- Review day for midterm

### **Thursday, October 7: MIDTERM EXAM**

### **Tuesday, October 12 – NO CLASS (Fall Break)**

## **III. (")ENFORCEMENT(")**

### **Thursday, October 14**

- Cole, Wade M. 2012. "Accounting for the (In)Effectiveness of Human Rights Treaties" (pgs. 1134-1137) from "Human Rights as Myth and Ceremony? Reevaluating the Effectiveness of Human Rights Treaties, 1981-2007." *American Journal of Sociology* 117(4): 1131-1171.

### ***Instrumental theories and coercion***

#### **Tuesday, October 19**

- **CNU Library Instruction (in class)**
- Hafner-Burton, Emilie M. 2005. "Trading Human Rights: How Preferential Trade Agreements Influence Government Repression." *International Organization* 59: 593-629.

#### **Thursday, October 21**

- Peksen, Dursan. 2009. "Better or Worse? The Effect of Economic Sanctions on Human Rights." *Journal of Peace Research* 46(1): 59-77.

#### **Tuesday, October 26**

- Nielsen, Richard A., and Beth A. Simmons. 2015. "Rewards for Ratification: Payoffs for Participating in the International Human Rights Regime?" *International Studies Quarterly* 59: 197-209.

### ***Persuasion, socialization, naming and shaming***

#### **Thursday, October 28**

- Hendrix, Cullen S., and Wong, Wendy H. 2013. "When Is the Pen Truly Mighty? Regime Type and the Efficacy of Naming and Shaming in Curbing Human Rights Abuses." *British Journal of Political Science* 43(3): 651-672.

#### **Tuesday, November 2**

- Jordan, Pamela A. 2003. "Does Membership Have Its Privileges? Entrance into the Council of Europe and Compliance with Human Rights Norms." *Human Rights Quarterly* 25(3): 660-688.

#### **Thursday, November 4**

- Greenhill, Brian. 2010. "The Company You Keep: International Socialization and the Diffusion of Human Rights Norms." *International Studies Quarterly* 54: 127-145.

## **IV. BACKLASH**

#### **Tuesday, November 9**

- Annotated bibliography DUE
- Sandholtz, Wayne, Yining Bei, and Kayla Caldwell. 2019. "Backlash and International Human Rights Courts." From *Contracting Human Rights: Crisis, Accountability, and Opportunity*." Edward Elgar Publishing, pgs. 159-178.



### **Thursday, November 11**

- Hillebrecht, Courtney. 2021. "Progress and Pushback in the Judicialization of Human Rights." From *Saving the International Justice Regime: Beyond Backlash against International Courts*.

### **Tuesday, November 16**

- Búzás, Zoltán. 2018. "Is the Good News About Law Compliance Good News About Norm Compliance? The Case of Racial Equality." *International Organization* 72(2): 351-385.

### **Thursday, November 18**

- Vilán, Andrea. 2021. "When Treaty Beneficiaries Resist: Working Children and Opposition to Human Rights Norms."

## **V. NEW CHALLENGES: RIGHT TO A HEALTHY ENVIRONMENT**

### **Tuesday, November 23**

- Paper outline DUE
- Tigre, Maria Antonia. 2020. "Inter-American Court of Human Rights Recognizes the Right to a Healthy Environment." *Asil Insights* 24(14).

### **Thursday, November 25 – NO CLASS (THANKSGIVING)**

### **Tuesday, November 30**

- Atapattu, Sumudu, and Andrea Schapper. 2019. "Substantive Rights." From *Human Rights and the Environment*. Routledge, pgs. 109-128.

### **Thursday, December 2**

- Atapattu, Sumudu, and Andrea Schapper. 2019. "Vulnerability and Climate Change." From *Human Rights and the Environment*. Routledge, pgs. 249-266.

**FINAL PAPER DUE 11:59PM ON THURSDAY, DECEMBER 9**