**The Politics of Human Rights**

**INR 4075.001**

Wednesdays, 1-2:20pm

DW #109 and via Zoom  
Spring 2021, 3 credits

Prof. Angela D. Nichols

Office hours: T, 1-3 online via zoom and by appointment

Email: [nicholsa@fau.edu](mailto:nicholsa@fau.edu)

Personal website: <http://angeladnichols.weebly.com/>

**Course Description and Objectives**

Many of today’s interesting and important political events involve

the violation of human rights and the various attempts by the international community to protect those rights. This class provides an understanding of how and why these violations occur, and of why international attempts to protect human rights succeed or fail. With that in mind, this course is designed to introduce you to the historical foundations and current practice of protecting human rights.

*All students in face-to-face classes are required to wear masks during class, and students must sanitize their own workstations upon entering the classroom. Taking these measures supports the safety and protection of the FAU community. Students who do not adhere to these rules will be asked to leave the classroom and/or be removed from the course. Students experiencing flu-like symptoms (fever, cough, shortness of breath), or students who have come in contact with an infected person should immediately contact FAU Student Health Services (561-297-3512).*

*COVID-19 Statement*

Upon successfully completing this course, you will be familiar with many of the factors that seem to attenuate or aggravate the violation of individual human rights. More importantly, you will be able to apply these factors to real-world scenarios (e.g., studying historical cases of human rights abuse or assessing the prospects for future abuse around the world). I also hope that you will develop skills that will serve you regardless of what you do after leaving FAU. In particular, we will focus on thinking analytically and critically, and on presenting and supporting rigorous, well-developed arguments. You will also have the opportunity to collaborate with your peers to propose policy solutions for the problems we identify throughout the semester.

**Instructional Method**

This is a mixed course with options for meeting both online via zoom and in person. *After two full weeks of face to face instruction with consecutive ‘no show’ of any students in person in the classroom, the modality of this course section may be changed to remote instruction only at the discretion of the university.* You must log into Canvas with your FAU ID and Password to access the materials and assignments in this course. If you do not know your FAU ID or Password, [contact OIT for help](http://www.fau.edu/oit/accounts/index.php).

When we meet in-person, there will always be a synchronous (at the same time as class) online option using zoom. You will receive information, links, and notifications for this course through Canvas.

Please have the necessary equipment to participate if you choose to do so remotely in this course:

* Dependable computer
* Computer speakers
* Headset with microphone
* Webcam
* Recommended: Broadband Internet connection with a speed of 4 Mbps or higher.
* To function properly, Canvas requires a high-speed Internet connection (cable modem, DSL, satellite broadband, T1, etc.). The minimum Internet connection speed to access Canvas is a consistent 1.5 Mbps (megabits per second) or higher.
* [Check your Internet speed here.](http://www.speedtest.net/)

**Technical Support**

In the online environment, technical issues are always possible (e.g., lost connection, hardware or software failure). Many of these can be resolved relatively quickly, but if you wait until the last minute before due dates, the chances of these glitches affecting your success are greatly increased. Please plan appropriately. If a problem occurs, it is essential you take immediate action to document the issue so your instructor can verify and take appropriate action to resolve the problem. Most issues in Canvas can be resolved by clicking on the “Help” tab located on the menu bar.

When a problem occurs, click “Help” to:

* Report a Problem
* Live Chat with Canvas Support
* Search Canvas Guides

**Additional Technical Support**

1. Contact the eLearning Success Advisor for assistance: (561) 297-3590
2. If you can, make a Print Screen of the monitor when the problem occurs. Save the Print Screen as a .jpg file. If you are unfamiliar with creating a Print Screen file, see [Print Screen instructions.](http://www.wikihow.com/Take-a-Screenshot-in-Microsoft-Windows)
3. Complete a [Help Desk ticket](https://helpdesk.fau.edu/TDClient/Home/). Make sure you complete the form entirely and give a full description of your problem so the Help Desk staff will have the pertinent information in order to assist you properly. This includes:
   1. Select “Canvas (Student)” for the Ticket Type.
   2. Input the Course ID.
   3. In the Summary/Additional Details section, include your operating system, Internet browser, and Internet service provider (ISP).
   4. Attach the Print Screen file, if available.
4. Send a message within Canvas to your instructor to notify him/her of the problem. Include all pertinent information of the incident (2b-d above).
5. If you do not have access to Canvas, send an email to your instructor with all pertinent information of the incident (2b-d above).
6. If you do not have access to a computer, call your instructor with all pertinent information of the incident. If he/she is not available, make sure you leave a detailed message.
7. If you do not hear back from the Help Desk or your instructor within a timely manner (48 hours), it is your responsibility to follow up with the appropriate person until you obtain a resolution.

## Course Materials

There is one required book for this class:

Carey, Sabine C., Mark Gibney & Steven C. Poe. 2010. The Politics of Human Rights, Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press.

I will refer to this as CGP for the remainder of this syllabus and the semester.

The remainder of the daily reading assignments typically come from academic and policy journals, and are available from three sources:

* my website
* google scholar
* directly from an online provider (typically JSTOR)

JSTOR is likely your best option to access the assigned material. JSTOR is an academic journal service that FAU provides for us. Access is free from any FAU computer (e.g., in computer labs or dorms, or via FAU wireless networks); you can search for individual articles by author or title, or browse by journal name and issue at [www.jstor.org.](http://www.jstor.org/) Additionally, you can access the FAU electronic journal library via [http://www.fau.edu/library/ecollect/ejournals.](http://www.fau.edu/library/ecollect/ejournals.php)

**Student Assignments & Responsibilities**

Quizzes: *Twenty percent of your grade will be determined by pop quizzes.* The quizzes will be assigned and completed in Canvas. There is no manner by which a quiz can be made up. If you miss a miss, you will not receive credit for that quiz.

Discussion Boards: Prior to each class meeting, you must engage in a conversation about the readings on the corresponding canvas discussion board. Do not simply summarize the readings. Engage with one another and discuss the strengths, weakness, and things you do not understand. Respond to one another. Pose questions. Discuss examples and counterexamples of the concepts from the week’s readings. This will serve as a baseline for our conversation during our class meetings. You are allowed to miss one discussion board without penalty. Missing more than one will result in a reduction of your cumulative discussion board grade. *All the discussion boards together are worth 30% of your grade.*

Editorial Assignment: All students must write an original opinion column on a current event related to international politics. This opinion column should develop a thoughtful critical analysis of the event. The paper should thus be modeled as an opinion column in any major newspaper. It is thus advisable that students engage themselves with current international events and news. Excellent sources of news and examples of op-ed columns can be found through any reputable news outlet; BBC, NYT, WP, etc. This opinion column should be 1250 - 1500 words. This assignment is not optional; you will receive a failing grade for the course if you fail to turn in an acceptable editorial paper. The editorial paper cannot be a paper utilized for another class, nor can it be one used by another student. It must be original, and your own. Failure to meet these requirements; either submitting a paper of your own which is unoriginal or used in a separate class (either in part or whole), or a paper not written by you alone, will result in a failing grade for the assignment (at a minimum), and being reported to university officials. It will be graded based upon how clearly and thoroughly you define the issue, the extent and clarity of your factual understanding of the issue and its context, and how well you state and defend (with evidence) your assessment of what policy should be pursued on this issue, not whether or not the instructor agrees with your position. Do not simply summarize an event. You must develop a thoughtful critical analysis and policy prescription (i.e., what should be done and how it should be approached). *The editorial will constitute 30% of your final grade.* Submit via canvas.

Attendance & Participation: Human rights consist of more than just a series of historical facts and concepts to be memorized; they encompass the study of violent human interactions, behaviors of nation-states and individuals, and broad social phenomena. These can be most clearly understood through discussion and the evaluation of alternative perspectives. In other words, participation increases active learning. While this course will have a substantial lecture component, there will also be opportunities for participation in classroom exercises and discussions. Thus, attending class and participating regularly are key to achieving the course objectives discussed above.

To this end, attendance and participation is worth 20% of your final grade. I will take attendance daily throughout the semester. I will also take note of how regularly you participate in class, both in productive and distractive ways. To maximize this part of your grade, it is highly recommended that you come to class prepared (e.g., having done the assigned readings) and willing to participate. Merely showing up and occupying a seat will not constitute full participation. Other ways to lose participation points include but are not limited to: being a disruption to others (e.g., side conversations with friends, reading for other classes), repeatedly failing to answer a question if called upon, and not participating in classroom discussions and exercises in a productive manner. Further, you are entitled to 2 absences (for any reason) with no direct effect on your grade. You do not need to tell me why you miss class, but if you exceed 2 unexcused absences, I will not be interested in the reasons and your final grade will decline one letter grade with each subsequent absence. Excused absences are rarely given, but will always be allowed for religious accommodations and university approved events.

## Grading & Evaluation

Grades are assigned in accordance with the following scale:

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| 90 - 100% = A 86 - 89% = B+ | 76 - 79% = C+ | 66 - 69% = D+ below 60% = F |
| 83 - 85% = B | 73 - 75% = C | 63 - 65% = D |
| 80 - 82% = B*−* | 70 - 72% = C*−* | 60 - 62% = D*−* |

**Classroom Etiquette Policy**

Class discussions of political issues can often stimulate strong feelings and heated debate. I ask all of you to respect the opinions of your fellow students, even if you do not agree with them. In simple terms, that means not interrupting other students while they are speaking and not verbally attacking them for their beliefs. While I believe that it is essential to connect theory to current events, I will cut short debates of current events that do not enhance the understanding of course concepts. I expect you to offer substantive comments and questions when appropriate in class. I also expect you not to dominate a discussion, but to allow free discussion and exchange of ideas.

Due to the casual communication common in the online environment, students are sometimes tempted to relax their grammar, spelling, and/or professionalism. Please remember that you are adult students and professionals—your communication should be appropriate.For more in-depth information, please see the [FAU statement on netiquette](http://www.fau.edu/oit/student/netiquette.php).

**Attendance Policy**

*Students are expected to attend all of their scheduled University classes and to satisfy all academic objectives as outlined by the instructor. The effect of absences upon grades is determined by the instructor, and the University reserves the right to deal at any time with individual cases of non-attendance. Students are responsible for arranging to make up work missed because of legitimate class absence, such as illness, family emergencies, military obligation, court-imposed legal obligations or participation in University-approved activities. Examples of University-approved reasons for absences include participating on an athletic or scholastic team, musical and theatrical performances and debate activities. It is the student’s responsibility to give the instructor notice prior to any anticipated absences and within a reasonable amount of time after an unanticipated absence, ordinarily by the next scheduled class meeting. Instructors must allow each student who is absent for a University-approved reason the opportunity to make up work missed without any reduction in the student’s final course grade as a direct result of such absence.*

**Counseling and Psychological Services (CAPS) Center**

*Life as a university student can be challenging physically, mentally and emotionally. Students who find stress negatively affecting their ability to achieve academic or personal goals may wish to consider utilizing FAU’s Counseling and Psychological Services (CAPS) Center. CAPS provides FAU students a range of services – individual counseling, support meetings, and psychiatric services, to name a few – offered to help improve and maintain emotional well-being. For more information, go to* [*http://www.fau.edu/counseling/*](about:blank)

**Disability Policy**

*In compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act Amendments Act (ADAAA), students who require reasonable accommodations due to a disability to properly execute coursework must register with Student Accessibility Services (SAS) and follow all SAS procedures. SAS has offices across three of FAU’s campuses – Boca Raton, Davie and Jupiter – however disability services are available for students on all campuses. For more information, please visit the SAS website at* [*www.fau.edu/sas/*](about:blank)*.*

**Code of Academic Integrity**

*Students at Florida Atlantic University are expected to maintain the highest ethical standards. Academic dishonesty is considered a serious breach of these ethical standards, because it interferes with the university mission to provide a high-quality education in which no student enjoys an unfair advantage over any other. Academic dishonesty is also destructive of the university community, which is grounded in a system of mutual trust and places high value on personal integrity and individual responsibility. Harsh penalties are associated with academic dishonesty. For more information, see* [*University Regulation 4.001*](about:blank)*.*

Classroom Response Time & Feedback

Email/Video Conferencing Policy

Except for weekends and holidays, the instructor will typically respond to email (Canvas inbox or FAU email) within 72 hours.

Course-Related Questions Policy

Except weekends and holidays, the instructor will generally answer questions within 72 hours.

**Electronic Communication Policy**

In addition to the University’s policy, please consider the following:

* Privacy, confidentiality, and security in all electronic communications.
* All electronic communication resources must be used for the course and in alignment with to the University mission.
* Prohibited use of false identity, false identity pseudonyms, or anonymous (sender’s name or electronic identification is hidden).
* Access without consent.
* Disruption of services including introducing computer contaminants (viruses).
* Harassment of any kind.

Please see the Office of Information Technology’s policies on [Cyber Security Awareness](http://fau.edu/security/policies/).

## Course Content & Schedule

The following is an approximate calendar of class discussions. Every attempt will be made to adhere to this schedule. However, departures from the schedule may occasionally occur. Exam and activity dates should be considered firm, and you should arrange your personal schedule to be present at the appointed dates and times.

*Wednesday, January 13: Introduction*

* Introduction, no required reading, no class meeting. Complete the syllabus quiz on Canvas by midnight on Jan 13th.

*Wednesday, January 20: What are Human Rights?*

* CGP Chapter 1
* Universal Declaration of Human Rights <http://www.un.org/en/universal-declaration-human-rights/>

*Wednesday, January 27 The State and Human Rights*

* *CGP Chapter 2*

*Wednesday, February 3: Rights and Responsibilities*

* *CGP Chapter 3 & 4*

*Wednesday, February 10: Where and Why are Human Rights Violated?*

* *CGP Chapter 5 & 6*

*Wednesday, February 17: Transitional Justice*

* *CGP Chapter 7 & 8*

*Wednesday, February 24: Children and War*

* Breuning, M., Ishiyama, J. 2011. Orphans and Political Instability. Social science quarterly, 92(4), 1002-1020.
* Lasley, T., Thyne, C. 2015. Secession, legitimacy and the use of child soldiers. Conflict Management and Peace Science, 32(3), 289-308.

*Wednesday, March 10: Torture*

* Taxi to the Darkside

*Wednesday, March 17: Torture Cont’d*

* Bravin, Jess. 2007. “The Conscience of the Colonel,” The Wall Street Journal, 31 March, available online at:<http://online.wsj.com/article/SB117529704337355155.html?mod=> Politics-and-Policy.

\*and\*

* Bowden, Mark. 2007. “The Point: In Defense of Waterboarding,” Philadelphia Inquirer, 26 December, was originally available online at: <http://www.philly.com/inquirer/opinion/> 20071223\_The\_Point\_In\_defense\_of\_waterboarding.html, but has been removed. Will

H. Moore managed to piece together much (but not all) of it from various blogs that quoted it. You should read this pieced-together version (canvas).

*Wednesday, March 24: Government Killing*

* Harff, Barbara, and Ted Robert Gurr. 1988. “Toward Empirical Theory of Genocides and Politicides: Identification and Measurement of Cases since 1945” International Studies Quarterly 32(3): 359-371.
* Valentino, Benjamin, Paul Huth, and Dylan Balch-Lindsay. 2004. “Draining the Sea: Mass Killing and Guerilla Warfare” *International Organization* 58: 375-407.

*Wednesday, March 31: Human Trafficking*

* Recommended: Agbu, Osita. 2003. “Corruption and Human Trafficking: The Nigerian Case,” *West Africa Review*, 4(1): 1-12.
* Feingold, David A. 2005. “Human Trafficking,” *Foreign Policy*, 32: 26-30.
* <http://mashable.com/2017/04/13/human-trafficking-survivors-lawyers-india/#BYXrrrKb4Oqf>

*Wednesday, April 7: USA*

* Podcast: *The Silver Dollar. Daryl Davis: Musician Hate Group Connoisseur.* 2014. http:

//loveandradio.org/2014/02/the-silver-dollar/

* Michael Brown’s Parents Testimony at the UN: [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=n9NG8u0N3Ws](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=n9NG8u0N3Ws)
* The Pruitt-Igoe Myth

*Wednesday, April 14: Nationalism and Nonviolence*

* *Letter from Birmingham Jail*. 1963, MLK Jr. <http://kingencyclopedia.stanford.edu/> kingweb/popular\_requests/frequentdocs/birmingham.pdf
* *I am Prepared to Die*. 1964, Nelson Mandela. <http://www.historyplace.com/speeches/> mandela.htm
* Selected audio of the speech available here: [https://www.theguardian.com/world/video/](http://www.theguardian.com/world/video/) 2013/dec/05/nelson-mandela-1964-speech-audio

This syllabus is a guideline and is subject to change at any time.