

POS 6934.003
Summer 2019, 3CH
Meeting Time: T, R, 6:00–8:50pm
Meeting Place: SO 377

Professor: Angela D. Nichols
Office: SO384D
Office Hours: R, 1:00–3:00pm
Email: nicholsa@fau.edu

The Politics of Human Rights

Course Description and Objectives

This course is designed to introduce students to the state of the discipline on human rights. We will address canonical and current research on personal integrity (genocide/politicide, torture, disappearances, mass atrocities, detention) as well as civil liberties (restrictions on speech, association, assembly and religion). We will go through the available work rigorously, and attempt to develop it further. Topics covered will include conceptualization and measurement, explanations for variation in abuse, attempts to limit that abuse, and the aftereffects of repression. The literature is inherently interdisciplinary; we will focus primarily on political science, but will also draw from sociology, history, psychology, and economics. Familiarity with empirics is not essential, but would be helpful.

Course Materials

There are no books required for this class:

Reading assignments come from academic and policy journals and are available from two 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. Additionally, you can access the FAU electronic journal library via <http://www.fau.edu/library/ecollect/ejournals.php>.

Student Assignments & Responsibilities

Exams: Thirty percent of your grade will be determined by an exam. The exam will be essay format. See the schedule for the exam date. The exam is worth 30% of your final grade.

Make-up Exams: If you cannot attend the exam, you need to notify me as soon as possible by email and in person. Make-up exams will only be given to students who have been unable to sit for the examination as a consequence of illness requiring medical care, required university activities, or a personal emergency of a serious nature. To be excused without penalty, documentation and/or prior permission is required. Additionally, an alternative exam may be provided.

Reaction Papers/Critical Essays: Beyond regular class attendance and active participation in class discussion, each student is expected to make 1-2 presentations to the rest of the class on the weekly topics (with the total depending on the number of students taking the course). The presentations should involve identifying one or more important questions related to the week's topic that have been left unanswered or answered incompletely by the readings (and offering tentative suggestions on how such gaps might be filled in future research), and/or proposing some extension of the weeks readings to a new question or area. These presentations are meant to help focus the class discussion on new directions from the weeks readings, and to help identify interesting directions for future research (perhaps even for this courses research paper). They should be written from a research-oriented, academic perspective, rather than a literature review or a Siskel-and-Ebert-style review (I liked/hated this article), and should be constructive; criticisms of assigned readings should be accompanied by one or more suggestions about how to overcome the problems, with appropriate discussion of the implications of these suggestions for the body of research. Each presentation should be described in a roughly 2-to-3-page paper to be handed in for evaluation by 6pm the day presenting via canvas. These writing assignments are worth 20% of your final grade.

Region Report: Students will select a region of the world (e.g., West Africa, Central America, Southeast Asia) to write a short essay about for the final assignment for the course. Students are encouraged to examine this region and its human rights practices, as well as how they relate to each weeks readings throughout the semester. Students will write and submit a 1,500 to 2,500 word essay about the region selected. The essay should describe the region's history, geography, and political situation, as well as evaluate the region's human right's practices. Which countries' practices are better? Which are worse? Why? What have we read that makes you think this? What concepts regarding human rights apply to this region? Are some abuses worse than others? How does this compare to the rest of the world? Students must cite at least 12 academic sources, but more is always better. Other sources are also acceptable and encouraged, but in addition, not in substitution of the 12 academic sources required. Students may also consider the following questions: What are the similarities across countries in the region? Which features are different? Why do you think this might be? Does this impact human rights performance? How much of the violence is government perpetrated? Please base as much reasoning in evidence as possible. This essay is due the last day of class via canvas. This project is worth a total of 30% of your final grade.

Attendance & Participation: The quality of a graduate seminar depends to a large extent on your efforts. I expect you to come to class each week prepared to discuss the required readings. When reading the assigned material, I encourage you to consider the following: What is the research question? What is the researchers theoretical argument? What methods/approach does the author use to try to answer the question? Is the approach suitable for the question or theory? If the author provides empirical tests, are the operational measures of the concept appropriate? What are the most significant research findings, and how do these relate to other course readings? To what degree, in your opinion, has the researcher answered her research question(s)? Does the material reveal potential new directions for future research? Finally, note that coming to class late, or missing class without a very pressing concern, is simply unacceptable and will be penalized accordingly. To this end, attendance and participation is worth 20% of your final grade. If you do miss a class, an additional reaction paper for the class missed will be required within one week of the missed class. Please email this to me via email without prompting.

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-	

Other Policies

- Lecture notes and slides will not be posted online or otherwise handed out to students under any circumstances.
- Materials handed out in class by the instructor (e.g., review sheets, simulation materials, etc.) will under no circumstances be distributed electronically or outside of class.
- Allow a reasonable amount of time for a response when you send me an email. Do not email me an hour before an exam and expect me to respond or receive the email before class. I will not answer questions that can be answered by reading the syllabus or accessing blackboard via email. I encourage students to utilize office hours to answer their questions whenever possible.
- Grades will not be released to any student via email, phone, or other electronic means. If you wish to discuss your grades, report to the appropriate office hours or make an appointment, and come prepared with your university identification.
- You can expect to be graded solely on your academic performance. This includes clarity of thought, knowledge of the material, composition, spelling, and grammar.

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 or http://wise.fau.edu/regulations/chapter4/Reg_4.001_5-26-10_FINAL.pdf.

Accommodations (SAS)

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/.

University 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/>.

Classroom Conduct

Classroom courtesy is an essential component of creating an effective learning environment. All students have the right to learn without unnecessary distractions. These distractions include: laptops, cell phones, and the like, talking during lectures (unless recognized by the instructor), reading newspapers, falling asleep, etc. If you use a laptop to take notes during class, turn off the sound and restrain yourself from unnecessary surfing. I reserve the right to suspend the use of laptops if this policy is abused. If you need a phone for *emergency purposes*, leave it on vibrate. Entering and leaving are also significant sources of distraction. It is your responsibility to be on time and to stay for the entire class. In circumstances where you need to leave early, tell the professor beforehand. Repeated disruptions of class will lead to a reduction in your final grade.

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.

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.

Tuesday, 5/14 – Human Rights

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

Thursday, 5/16 – Conceptual and Institutional Origins of Human Rights

- Lauren, Paul Gordon. 1998. “Visions and the Birth of Human Rights,” in *The Evolution of Human Rights*, Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, pp. 4-36.
- Lauren, Paul Gordon. 1998. “The Universal Declaration of Human Rights,” in *The Evolution of Human Rights*, Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, pp. 205-240.

Tuesday, 5/21 – International Human Rights

- Donnelly, Jack. 2007. “The Relative Universality of Human Rights,” *Human Rights Quarterly*, 29(2):281 - 306.
- Moravcsik, Andrew. 2000. “The Origins of Human Rights Regimes,” *International Organization*, 54(2): 217-252.

Thursday, 5/23 – Torture

- Rejali, Darius. 2007. *Torture and Democracy*, Princeton University Press, pp. 35-63 and pp. 8-25.
- Bravin, Jess. 2007. “The Conscience of the Colonel,” *The Wall Street Journal*, 31 March(canvas).
- Bowden, Mark. 2007. “The Point: In Defense of Waterboarding,” *Philadelphia Inquirer*, 26 December (canvas).

Tuesday, 5/28 – Dissent

- *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>
- Moore, Will H. 2000. "The Repression of Dissent: A substitution model of government coercion".
textitJournal of conflict resolution, 44(1), pp.107-127.

Thursday, 5/30 – Norms

- Finnemore, Martha & Kathryn Sikkink. 1998. "International Norm Dynamics and Political Change," *International Organization*, 52(4): 887-917.
- Abbott, Kenneth W. & Duncan Snidal. 2000. "Hard and Soft Law in International Governance," *International Organization*, 54: 421-456.

Tuesday, 6/4–Exam

- Take Home Exam, submit via canvas by midnight

Thursday, 6/6 – Measuring and Studying Human Rights

- Landman, Todd. 2002. "Comparative Politics and Human Rights," *Human Rights Quarterly*, 24(4): 890-923.
- Poe, Steven C., C. Neal Tate, and Linda Camp Keith. 1999. "Repression of the Human Right to Personal Integrity Revisited: A Global Cross-National Study Covering the Years 1976–1993." *International Studies Quarterly* 43(2): 291–313.
- Cordell, R., Clay, K.C., Fariss, C.J., Wood, R.M. and Wright, T.M., "Changing Standards or Political Whim? Evaluating Changes in the Content of the US State Department Human Rights Reports." (canvas).

Tuesday, 6/11 – Enforcement

- Hafner-Burton, Emilie M. 2005. "Trading Human Rights: How Preferential Trade Agreements Influence Government Repression," *International Organization*, 59: 593-629.
Hafner-Burton, Emilie M. 2008. "Sticks and Stones: The Efficacy of Human Rights Naming and Shaming," *International Organization*, 62(4): 689-716.
- Appel, B.J., 2018. In the Shadow of the International Criminal Court: Does the ICC Deter Human Rights Violations?. *Journal of conflict resolution*, 62(1), pp.3-28.

Thursday, 6/13 – Human Trafficking

- 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.
- Weitzer, R., 2015. Human trafficking and contemporary slavery. *Annual review of sociology*, 41, pp.223-242.

Tuesday, 6/18 – 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.
- Mason, T. David and Krane. 1989. “The Political Economy of Death Squads: Toward a Theory of the Impact of State-Sanctioned Terror.” *International Studies Quarterly*, 33(2):175-198.
- Valentino, Benjamin, Paul Huth, and Dylan Balch-Lindsay. 2004. “Draining the Sea: Mass Killing and Guerilla Warfare” *International Organization* 58: 375-407.

Thursday, 6/20 – Region Reports

- Region Reports, submit via canvas by midnight

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