

# Human Rights | GOVT 445

Fall Semester 2022

Course Syllabus

*(Draft updated as of August 22, 2022)*

**Professor:** Sarah Dorman, J.D.

**Email:** sdorman4@gmu.edu

**Course online platform:** Blackboard (Bb)

**Office hours:** After Tuesday classes in-person  
or by appointment on Zoom

**Class meetings:** Tu/Th 3:00 pm – 4:15 pm (ET)

**Class location:** ARLVM 210

**Class modality:** Tu: In-person (ARLVM 210)

Th: Instructor will normally join via video-conference; students meet in ARLVM 210

## Course Description & Objectives

**Welcome to the Global Politics Fellows Program and to your GOVT 445 course on human rights!**

The area of human rights has emerged since the Second World War as a primary global language and framework for conceptualizing, protecting, and promoting human dignity and well-being. Grounded in international law, human rights impose legal and ethical duties on states, with ramifications for both domestic and foreign policy. At the same time, human rights have far-reaching implications for other social actors, from grassroots civil society groups to intergovernmental organizations such as the United Nations, and from multinational corporations to development finance institutions such as the World Bank. As such, the study of human rights is relevant for students who are preparing to enter a wide range of fields, and it is particularly crucial for those who aspire to engage in work with significant international and/or policy dimensions.

**By participating actively and thoughtfully in this course, students will achieve the following objectives:**

- ◇ Students will be able to demonstrate foundational knowledge of the sources of human rights, their historical contexts and ongoing development, and various mechanisms for their protection.
- ◇ Students will be able to articulate and analyze the relationships between human rights and past/current events, policy challenges, and historic/ongoing injustices.
- ◇ Students will be able to identify and explain the roles and obligations of governments and other social actors vis-à-vis human rights, as well as to apply this knowledge to real world situations.
- ◇ Students will be able to articulate the importance of the role played by human rights defenders (HRDs), as well as the significance of the challenges that HRDs face. Students will gain firsthand experience interacting with HRDs with varied areas of focus and from diverse backgrounds.
- ◇ Students will be able to describe the right to remedy and examine different forms of reparations that could (or should) be applied in response to specific violations / injustices.
- ◇ Students will be able to discuss critiques of human rights, consider alternative approaches, and evaluate human rights as a framework for promoting human dignity and well-being.
- ◇ Students will be able to discuss initiatives and strategies to expand the scope of human rights in response to contemporary challenges.

## Course Materials

### Required Books:

- ◇ **Jack Donnelly & Daniel J. Whelan, *International Human Rights*, 6<sup>th</sup> edition (2020)**  
*Note: Earlier editions of this textbook are available through the library, including an e-book version of the 5<sup>th</sup> edition ([https://wrlc-gm.primo.exlibrisgroup.com/permalink/01WRLC\\_GML/19u1omk/cdi\\_askewsholts\\_vlebooks\\_9781317233855](https://wrlc-gm.primo.exlibrisgroup.com/permalink/01WRLC_GML/19u1omk/cdi_askewsholts_vlebooks_9781317233855)). You may use an earlier edition if you manage differences yourself, including in relation to the case studies and other materials that students will present and discuss in class.*
- ◇ **Nadia Bernaz, *Business & Human Rights: History, law and policy – Bridging the accountability gap* (2017)**  
*Note: This textbook is available through the library, including an e-book version ([https://wrlc-gm.primo.exlibrisgroup.com/permalink/01WRLC\\_GML/19u1omk/cdi\\_askewsholts\\_vlebooks\\_9781317233855](https://wrlc-gm.primo.exlibrisgroup.com/permalink/01WRLC_GML/19u1omk/cdi_askewsholts_vlebooks_9781317233855)).*
- ◇ **Sally Roesch Wagner, *Sisters In Spirit: Haudenosaunee (Iroquois) Influence on Early American Feminists* (2001)**
- ◇ **Robin Broad & John Cavanagh, *The Water Defenders: How Ordinary People Saved a Country from Corporate Greed* (2021)**

**Supplementary Readings:** Additional readings, podcasts, videos, and/or other resources for each class will be posted on Blackboard, along with instructions to access them.

**Additional Resources:** Student reflections and class discussions will be enriched by making connections between the course materials and current events, and students are strongly encouraged to follow relevant developments from around the world. For this reason, please sign up online for the following free newsletters related to human rights:

- ◇ Human Rights Watch's newsletter *The Week In Rights*, here: <https://action.hrw.org/page/36450/subscribe/1?locale=en-US>
- ◇ Business and Human Rights Resource Centre's newsletter *Weekly Update on Global Issues*, here: <https://www.business-humanrights.org/en/subscribe/>

**Technology Requirements:** Computer with a camera and microphone, as well as access to Blackboard (via <https://mymasonportal.gmu.edu>).

## Course Requirements and Evaluation

The course requirements are as follows:

### 1. Class Preparation & Participation (20% of final grade).

Preparation and participation include:

- **Completing assigned readings** for each class. This includes **carefully reviewing reading materials** that will be periodically distributed to different sets of students for a given class period (e.g. 4 case studies may be distributed among 4 groups of students for a particular class) and **coming to class prepared to share the main points from your assigned reading** with other students and engage in discussion regarding those readings.
- **Engaging meaningfully in class**, defined as:
  - listening actively during in-class discussions (listening to understand other perspectives; sharing the floor with others; avoiding distractions, e.g. due to electronic devices)
  - contributing thoughtfully to in-class discussions (raising informed discussion points; asking questions; connecting the discussion to assigned materials, current events, and relevant experiences)
  - engaging constructively in group activities
  - listening actively and engaging thoughtfully in question-and-answer sessions or open discussions with guest speakers
- **Displaying mutual support for and among classmates.** We will be creating a shared learning community together as a class, and students are expected to engage each other constructively and respectfully in all spaces related to this class. (Please see below section on creating an inclusive and respectful community.)

### 2. Contributions to class discussion boards (20% of final grade).

*[Note: This assignment is adapted from Professor Srikantia's GOVT 445 syllabus from 2021.]*

The Discussion Board on the Blackboard platform will be used as a space for students to engage in dialogue and begin to synthesize the readings and other materials in advance of each class.

**Students will be expected to submit one brief contribution prior to each class session, based on the readings or other assigned materials for that class.** Contributions (or questions to guest speakers) are due on the day before each class in question (11:59pm on Monday for Tuesday classes / 11:59pm on Wednesday for Thursday classes). Students should strive to complete the readings and submit their contributions earlier in the week if possible, in order to allow time for everyone to engage in a dialogue in the discussion board prior to class.

The expectations for discussion board contributions are as follows:

- **For normal class sessions:** For full credit, please include the following in your contribution to the discussion board ahead of each class:
  - Describe what you see as the author's/creator's main points for each assigned material (can be one sentence per article/chapter/podcast/video);
  - Articulate at least one new insight or inspiration that you have gained from the readings/materials for this class and/or any challenges, questions, or issues that have arisen for you in reviewing this material (can be one sentence); **and**

- Identify and explain at least one connection between the materials for the class and other materials already covered in the course and/or a current event or issue (can be one sentence).
  - Optional: Pose a question or discussion topic and invite your classmates into a conversation (not required).
- **For classes with guest speakers:** For full credit, each student should submit 3 questions via Blackboard ahead of the day of the class with the guest speaker. At least 2 of these questions should refer to the assigned readings; the remaining question may also be based on the readings, or it may relate to the speaker's work, experience, or career path. *Come prepared to pose your questions to the speaker, to the extent that time allows.*

Please note: This exercise is intended as a tool to help students engage with assigned materials individually and collectively before class. For this reason, they will be graded on a check/check plus/check minus (or incomplete) basis.

Each student is entitled to two "free passes" that can be used throughout the course for missing a discussion board contribution without a penalty.

**3. 4 short synthesis papers (10% each = 40% of final grade).**

Four short reflection papers (½ - 1 page in length) will be due following units 2, 3, 4, and 5 of the course. (Please note: During units 6 and 7, students should be focused on finalizing their short research paper – see point 4 below.) Students will use these periodic short papers to synthesize the readings and other materials from each unit. Further instructions for each short reflection paper will be made available at the outset of the relevant unit.

**4. 1 short research/response paper ("final paper") (20% of final grade).**

Students will develop a short research / response paper, in which they will have the opportunity to explore a topic or movement related to human rights and to synthesize the content of the course. Additional instructions and guidelines will be provided on Blackboard and in class.

Paper topic proposals should be submitted to me by week 6 of the course (end of September); outlines based on initial research and reflection will be due by week 10 (end of October). If these due dates do not work well for you (individually or collectively as a class), please let me know in advance in order to work to find a mutually workable alternative.

**5. OPTIONAL — Students who are interested may receive extra credit for completing either or both of the following activities (2 points each). These activities may be completed individually or in a group of 2 or 3 students, as long as each student demonstrates active engagement.**

- **Option 1:** Preparing a short (3 to 5-minute) presentation for the class about a current or past event, a particular human rights defender or movement, or a topic of special interest related to human rights.

*Please notify me in advance via email if you intend to make a presentation so that we can schedule an appropriate time. Depending on student interest, it may not be possible to accommodate requests received after fall break (Oct. 11); all requests must be received before the end of Unit 5 (Nov. 11). Limit: once per semester per student.*

- **Option 2:** Conducting an informational interview with a human rights defender or another person who engages in work related to human rights on a regular basis, and submitting a written or video-recorded summary (prepared by the student) to the discussion board on Blackboard.

*Please notify me in advance via email if you intend to conduct such an informational interview, including the name, position/role, and affiliation (if applicable) of the person you propose to interview, as well as your proposed list of the questions to conduct the interview. Limit: once per student for extra credit. Note: You must ask for the interviewee's consent to share a summary of her/his responses to the interview questions with the class; if the interviewee is not comfortable with this, the summary may be submitted to me.*

**Letter grades will be determined based on the following scale:**

98-100: A+	87-89: B+	77-79: C+	60-69: D
93-97: A	83-86: B	73-76: C	59 or below: F
90-92: A-	80-82: B-	70-72: C-	

**A reminder on quality of assignments & participation:**

*[The below reminders are adapted from Professor Srikantia's GOVT 445 syllabus from 2021.]*

The following factors are assumed and will detract from your grade if not fulfilled:

- ◇ **Writing quality:** Your writing should be at a quality appropriate to higher education, so please leave enough time for multiple rounds of drafting and editing. Please proof-read all of your submissions and make liberal use of GMU's Writing Center. I reserve the right to return papers unread if they do not meet appropriate standards of writing and editing quality.
  - I would encourage you to make use of the Writing Center while you're at GMU—regardless of how well you write—since getting feedback on writing is often a great learning opportunity and one that's harder to come by once you leave school. The Writing Center info can be found online at: <http://writingcenter.gmu.edu/>.
- ◇ **Citing sources:** Be sure to cite all of your sources appropriately. Please read the sections on plagiarism (below and on the GMU website), and if you are at all unclear or uncertain about what constitutes plagiarism, please talk with me.
- ◇ **Timeliness:** Please respect deadlines for assignments; late submissions may impact your grade. If you anticipate needing more time for a given assignment, please discuss with me as soon as possible.
- ◇ **Attendance:** Full attendance and participation in class sessions are vital, and missing multiple class sessions will impact your final grade. I recognize that some of us may have special needs and circumstances that can make synchronous attendance challenging; please communicate with me in advance or as soon as possible if you will miss a class. Additional essays based on course materials will be used to make up for absences when more than 2 classes are missed.
- ◇ **Thoughtfulness and accuracy:** The following qualities should characterize your assignments and participation in class: Accurate and thoughtful use of course readings and concepts; accuracy and relevance of evidence to demonstrate or support your main points; conceptual coherence and clarity regarding posited relationships.

## Course Roadmap

Course Introduction & Unit 1 — Grounding: Historical & Theoretical Origins		
Week 1	<b>Tuesday, August 23</b> <i>Course overview &amp; community introductions</i>	<b>Thursday, August 25</b> <i>What do humans need to live well?</i>
Week 2	<b>Tuesday, August 30:</b> <i>History of modern human rights</i>	<b>Thursday, September 1:</b> <i>Precursors to modern human rights</i>
Unit 2 — Setting Up a Framework: Sources of Human Rights & Mechanisms for Their Protection		
Week 3	<b>Tuesday, September 6:</b> <i>Core covenants &amp; international institutions</i>	<b>Thursday, September 8:</b> <i>Regional treaties &amp; mechanisms</i>
Week 4	<b>Tuesday, September 13:</b> <i>Guest speaker: Inter-American System</i>	<b>Thursday, September 15:</b> <i>Human rights in foreign policy &amp; domestic laws</i>
Unit 3 — Diving In: Core Concepts & A Sampling of Substantive Human Rights		
Week 5	<b>Tuesday, September 20:</b> <i>Universality; Civil &amp; Political Rights</i>	<b>Thursday, September 22:</b> <i>Unity; Economic, Social &amp; Cultural Rights</i>
Week 6	<b>Tuesday, September 27:</b> <i>Rights of Indigenous Peoples</i>	<b>Thursday, September 29:</b> <i>Guest speaker: Indigenous perspectives</i>
Week 7	<b>Tuesday, October 4:</b> <i>Women's rights / Honoring women</i>	<b>Thursday, October 6:</b> <i>The right to reparation</i>
Unit 4 — Taking a Closer Look: Who are Human Rights Defenders?		
Week 8	<b>Tuesday, October 11</b> <i>Fall break/no Tuesday classes</i>	<b>Thursday, October 13:</b> <i>Human Rights Defenders</i>
Week 9	<b>Tuesday, October 18:</b> <i>Reprisals &amp; closing civic space</i>	<b>Thursday, October 20</b> <i>Guest speaker: Frontline defenders</i>
Unit 5 — Grappling with Hard Questions: Challenges for the Implementation of Human Rights		
Week 10	<b>Tuesday, October 25:</b> <i>Human rights in the US domestic context</i>	<b>Thursday, October 27:</b> <i>Human rights in the US foreign policy context</i>
Week 11	<b>Tuesday, November 1:</b> <i>Business &amp; human rights</i>	<b>Thursday, November 3:</b> <i>Guest speaker: Holding MNCs accountable</i>
Week 12	<b>Tuesday, November 8:</b> <i>Counter-terrorism</i>	<b>Thursday, November 10:</b> <i>Humanitarian intervention</i>
Unit 6 — Fit for Purpose? Ongoing Evolution of Human Rights		
Week 13	<b>Tuesday, November 15:</b> <i>Human Right to Development</i> <i>Human Rights &amp; Inequality</i>	<b>Thursday, November 17:</b> <i>Human Right to Water</i> <i>Climate Change &amp; Human Rights</i>
Week 14	<b>Tuesday, November 22</b> <i>Guest speaker: Right to a Healthy Environment</i>	<b>Thursday, November 24</b> <i>No class: Thanksgiving break</i>
Unit 7 — Concluding: Putting It All Together		
Week 15	<b>Tuesday, November 30</b> <i>Final case study: The Water Defenders</i>	<b>Thursday, December 1</b> <i>Course Review &amp; Final Reflections</i>

## Detailed Course Overview

Please note the following caveats regarding the below detailed outline of the course:

1. **Course readings may be subject to changes or adjustments.** A folder will be created in Blackboard for each class period (organized by unit) at least two weeks in advance. Please consult these folders and the syllabus updates on Blackboard for the final reading assignments for each unit and necessary links for accessing supplementary reading materials.
2. **Our class will be welcoming several guest speakers, and some flexibility may be required to accommodate their scheduling needs.**

Course Introduction & Unit 1 — Grounding: Historical & Theoretical Origins	
Week 1	<p><b>Tuesday, August 23: Course overview &amp; community introductions</b> We will be reviewing the syllabus during class; no readings are due today.</p> <p><b>Thursday, August 25: What do humans need to live well?</b></p> <p>Readings:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◇ Donnelly, chapter 2 (Theories of Human Rights)</li> </ul>
Week 2	<p><b>Tuesday, August 30: History of modern human rights</b></p> <p>Readings:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◇ Donnelly, chapter 1 (Human Rights in Global Politics: Historical Perspective)</li> <li>◇ Roberta Cohen, <i>Integrating Human Rights in US Foreign Policy: The History, the Challenges, and the Criteria for an Effective Policy</i>, Brookings Institute (statement made at the Foreign Service Institute in 2008, link on Bb).</li> <li>◇ Sign up in advance to read one of the historical documents listed on Blackboard and share main takeaways with the class (sign-up will be posted on Blackboard).</li> </ul> <p><i>Optional for further exploration:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Bernaz, chapter 4 (Doing business with the Nazis: The criminal prosecution of German industrialists after the Second World War)</li> </ul> <p><b>Thursday, September 1: A sampling of precursors to modern human rights</b></p> <p>Readings:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◇ Jenny S. Martinez, <i>The Slave Trade and the Origins of International Human Rights Law</i>, chapter 1 (Introduction) (available via GMU library, link on Bb)</li> <li>◇ Julia Gaffield, <i>Haiti was the first nation to permanently ban slavery</i> (published in the Washington Post on July 12, 2020, link available via ProQuest to be shared in Bb).</li> <li>◇ Bernaz, chapter 3 (International Labour Law)</li> </ul> <p><i>Optional for further exploration:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Bernaz, chapter 2 (The Atlantic Slave Trade)</li> <li>- The Haitian Declaration of Independence, available as an appendix in: Julia Gaffield, ed., <i>The Haitian Declaration of Independence: Creation, Context, and Legacy</i></li> <li>- History of the International Labour Organization, webpage available at: <a href="https://www.ilo.org/global/about-the-ilo/history/lang--en/index.htm">https://www.ilo.org/global/about-the-ilo/history/lang--en/index.htm</a></li> </ul>

Unit 2 — Setting Up a Framework: Sources of Human Rights & Mechanisms for Their Protection	
<b>Week 3</b>	<p><b>Tuesday, September 6: Core covenants &amp; international institutions</b></p> <p>Readings:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◇ Donnelly, chapter 5 (Global Multilateral Mechanisms)</li> <li>◇ Universal Declaration of Human Rights (see Bb)</li> <li>◇ International Covenants + Conventions (see Bb)</li> <li>◇ <i>Sign up for additional readings in Bb and come prepared to share your learnings with those who read different documents.</i></li> </ul> <p><b>Thursday, September 8: Regional treaties &amp; mechanisms</b></p> <p>Readings:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◇ Donnelly, chapter 6 (Regional Human Rights Regimes)</li> <li>◇ <i>Sign up for additional readings in Bb and come prepared to share your learnings with those who read different documents.</i></li> </ul>
<b>Week 4</b>	<p><b>Tuesday, September 13: Guest Speaker</b></p> <p><b><i>The Inter-American System: Opportunities, challenges, and examples of outcomes</i></b></p> <p>Readings:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◇ IACHR decision in <i>Vicky Hernández et al. v. Honduras</i> (excerpts and link on Bb).</li> <li>◇ IACHR precautionary measures regarding Carmichael Road Detention Center (link on Bb).</li> </ul> <p><b>Thursday, September 15: Human rights in foreign policy &amp; domestic law</b></p> <p>Readings:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◇ Donnelly, chapter 7 (Human Rights &amp; Foreign Policy)</li> <li>◇ <i>Sign up for additional readings in Bb and come prepared to share your learnings with those who read different documents.</i></li> </ul>
<b>Unit 2 reflection paper due Friday, September 16 via Blackboard.</b>	

Unit 3 — Diving In: Core Concepts & A Sampling of Substantive Human Rights	
<b>Week 5</b>	<p><b>Tuesday, September 20: Universality, and a sampling of civil &amp; political rights</b></p> <p>Readings:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◇ Donnelly, chapter 4 (The Relative Universality of Human Rights)</li> <li>◇ <i>Sign up for additional readings in Bb and come prepared to share your learnings with those who read different documents.</i></li> </ul> <p><b>Thursday, September 22: Unity, and a sampling of economic, social &amp; cultural rights</b></p> <p>Readings:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◇ Donnelly, chapter 4 (The Unity of Human Rights)</li> <li>◇ <i>Sign up for additional readings in Bb and come prepared to share your learnings with those who read different documents.</i></li> </ul>



<b>Week 6</b>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Tuesday, September 27: <i>Rights of Indigenous Peoples</i></b></p> <p>Readings:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◇ Children of the Jaguar (documentary by the Indigenous Kichwa People of Sarayaku and Amnesty International, link on Bb)</li> <li>◇ UN Department of Economic and Social Affairs, <i>State of the World's Indigenous Peoples</i> (2009) (excerpts and link on Bb).</li> <li>◇ UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (link on Bb)</li> </ul> <p><i>Optional for further exploration:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Claire Charters and Rodolfo Stavenhagen, eds., <u>Making the Declaration Work: The United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples</u> (link on Bb).</li> <li>- International Labour Organization, Indigenous and Tribal populations Convention (No. 169) (link on Bb).</li> <li>- American Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (link on Bb)</li> <li>- Website of the UN Special Rapporteur on the rights of Indigenous peoples (link on Bb)</li> <li>- Website of the UN Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues (link on Bb)</li> <li>- Website of the UN Expert Mechanism on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (link on Bb)</li> </ul> <p style="text-align: center;"><b>Thursday, September 29: Guest Speaker — <i>An Indigenous Perspective</i></b></p> <p>Readings: [Readings for this class will be confirmed and posted on Bb in advance.]</p>
<b>Proposed topic for final paper due Friday, September 30 via Blackboard.</b>	
<b>Week 7</b>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Tuesday, October 4: <i>Women's rights / Honoring women</i></b></p> <p><i>[Note: This class session is based on Professor Srikantia's GOVT 445 2021 course syllabus.]</i></p> <p>Readings:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◇ Convention on the Political Rights of Women (1953)</li> <li>◇ UN Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (1979)</li> <li>◇ Wagner (Sisters in Spirit, full book due today)</li> </ul> <p style="text-align: center;"><b>Thursday, October 6: <i>The right to remedy &amp; reparation</i></b></p> <p>Readings:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◇ UN Basic Principles and Guidelines on the Right to a Remedy and Reparation for Victims of Gross Violations of International Human Rights Law and Serious Violations of International Humanitarian Law (on Bb)</li> <li>◇ Review International Center for Transitional Justice's webpage dedicated to reparations: <a href="https://www.ictj.org/reparations">https://www.ictj.org/reparations</a> (and feel free to explore the website further).</li> <li>◇ Jacqueline Bhabha, et al., eds., <u>Time for Reparations: A Global Perspective</u> (available online via GMU libraries): <i>Please sign up in advance for one of the chapters listed in Bb and come prepared to share your learnings with those who read a different chapter.</i></li> </ul> <p><i>Optional for further exploration:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Lisa Magarrell and Joya Wesley, <u>Learning from Greensboro: Truth and Reconciliation in the United States</u> (available through GMU libraries)</li> <li>- Elazar Barkan and Alexander Karn, <u>Taking Wrongs Seriously: Apologies and Reconciliation</u> (available through GMU libraries)</li> </ul>
<b>Unit 3 reflection paper due Friday, October 7 via Blackboard.</b>	

Unit 4 — Taking a Closer Look: Who are Human Rights Defenders?	
Week 8	<p><b>[Tuesday, October 11: Fall Break / No Tuesday Classes]</b></p> <p><b>Thursday, October 13: <i>Human Rights Defenders</i></b></p> <p>Readings:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◇ Donnelly, chapter 9 (Transnational Human Rights Advocacy)</li> <li>◇ Makau Mutua, <i>Savages, Victims, and Saviors: The Metaphor of Human Rights</i> (excerpt, linked via Bb).</li> <li>◇ UN Declaration on Human Rights Defenders (1998) (linked on Bb)</li> <li>◇ Human Rights Council Resolution recognizing the contribution of environmental human rights defenders (2019) (linked on Bb)</li> <li>◇ <i>Sign up to watch one of the videos about social movements listed in Bb and come prepared to share your learnings with those who watched a different video.</i></li> </ul>
Week 9	<p><b>Tuesday, October 18: <i>Reprisals &amp; closing civic space</i></b></p> <p>Readings:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◇ Broad, chapters 1-4.</li> <li>◇ Please explore CIVICUS's resources related to tracking civic space, available at the following links: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Description of civic space: <a href="https://monitor.civicus.org/whatis-civicspace/">https://monitor.civicus.org/whatis-civicspace/</a></li> <li>- Tracking civic space monitor: <a href="https://monitor.civicus.org/">https://monitor.civicus.org/</a></li> <li>- 2021 report "People Power Under Attack": <a href="https://findings2021.monitor.civicus.org/">https://findings2021.monitor.civicus.org/</a></li> </ul> </li> <li>◇ Please explore OHCHR's website on civic space: <a href="https://www.ohchr.org/en/civic-space">https://www.ohchr.org/en/civic-space</a></li> <li>◇ International Center for Not-For-Profit Law (ICNL), <i>New Restrictions on Civic Mobilization in the United States</i>, available at: <a href="https://www.icnl.org/post/features/new-restrictions-on-civic-mobilization-in-the-united-states">https://www.icnl.org/post/features/new-restrictions-on-civic-mobilization-in-the-united-states</a></li> <li>◇ Global Witness report 2021 (forthcoming; if not available by mid-October, refer to GW's report "Last Line of Defence" from 2020; please check Bb for appropriate link.)</li> </ul> <p><i>Optional for further exploration:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- UN Special Rapporteur on Human Rights Defenders' thematic reports (linked on Bb), including on the topics of: The situation of women human rights defenders; HRDs operating in conflict and post-conflict situations; Impunity for violations committed against HRDs; HRDs working on business and human rights; Good practices in the protection of HRDs; Global trends in risks &amp; threats facing HRDs.</li> <li>- US State Department's Report to Congress on Protection of Civil Society Activists and Journalists (link on Bb)</li> <li>- ICNL's US Protest Law Tracker, available at: <a href="https://www.icnl.org/usprotestlawtracker/">https://www.icnl.org/usprotestlawtracker/</a></li> <li>- ICNL's Civic Freedom Monitor (with reports on over 50 countries), available at: <a href="https://www.icnl.org/resources/civic-freedom-monitor">https://www.icnl.org/resources/civic-freedom-monitor</a></li> </ul> <p><b>Thursday, October 20: Guest Speaker — <i>Perspective of a frontline defender</i></b></p> <p>Readings: [Readings for this class will be confirmed and posted on Bb in advance.]</p>
<b>Unit 4 reflection paper due Friday, October 21 via Blackboard.</b>	

Unit 5 — Grappling with Hard Questions: Challenges for the Implementation of Human Rights	
<b>Week 10</b>	<p><b>Tuesday, October 25: Human rights in the US domestic context</b></p> <p>Readings:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◇ Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., <i>Letter from a Birmingham Jail</i> (on Bb)</li> <li>◇ <i>The Tulsa Race Massacre</i>, short video available through GMU libraries (on Bb)</li> <li>◇ Human Rights Watch / ACLU Joint 2022 Submission regarding the US's Record under ICERD (linked on Bb)</li> <li>◇ International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination (1965) (linked on Bb)</li> <li>◇ UN Basic Principles on the Use of Force and Firearms by Law Enforcement Officials (1990) (linked on Bb)</li> </ul> <p><i>Optional for further exploration:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Report of the UN Working Group of Experts on People of African Descent on its mission to the United States of America (2016), available at: <a href="https://documents-dds-ny.un.org/doc/UNDOC/GEN/G16/183/30/PDF/G1618330.pdf?OpenElement">https://documents-dds-ny.un.org/doc/UNDOC/GEN/G16/183/30/PDF/G1618330.pdf?OpenElement</a></li> <li>- Michelle Alexander, <i>The New Jim Crow: Mass Incarceration in the Age of Colorblindness</i> (Introduction) (available through GMU libraries)</li> <li>- Final Report of the Oklahoma Commission to Study the Tulsa Race Riot of 1921, available at: <a href="https://www.okhistory.org/research/forms/freport.pdf">https://www.okhistory.org/research/forms/freport.pdf</a></li> <li>- Eric Miller, <i>Republican, Rebellious Reparations</i> in Howard Law Journal (link on Bb)</li> </ul> <p><b>Thursday, October 27: Human rights in the US foreign policy context</b></p> <p>Readings:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◇ Donnelly, chapter 8 (Human Rights in American Foreign Policy) <i>Please choose one of the three case studies in this chapter to focus on, in order to share your learnings with other students during class.</i></li> <li>◇ Sarah B. Snyder, <i>From Selma to Moscow: How Human Rights Activists Transformed U.S. Foreign Policy</i> (available via GMU libraries, link in Bb): <i>Please sign up in advance for one of the chapters listed in Bb and come prepared to share your learnings with those who read a different chapter.</i></li> </ul>
<b>Rough outline of final paper based on initial research and reflections due Friday, October 28 via Blackboard.</b>	
<b>Week 11</b>	<p><b>Tuesday, November 1: Business &amp; human rights</b></p> <p>Readings:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◇ Bernaz, chapter 5 (Business, international human rights law and international criminal law: Shifting boundaries)</li> <li>◇ Bernaz, chapter 7 (International soft law initiatives on business and human rights)</li> <li>◇ UN Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights (linked on Bb)</li> <li>◇ Broad, chapters 5-6</li> </ul> <p><i>Optional for further exploration:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Bernaz, chapter 6 (Human rights and international economic law: Connecting the dots)</li> </ul>

	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Thursday, November 3: Guest Speaker — <i>Holding MNCs accountable</i></b></p> <p>Readings:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◇ Bernaz, chapter 9 (Shaping law and public policies to address corporate human rights impact)</li> <li>◇ Bernaz, chapter 10 (Business and human rights litigation before domestic courts: Progress and remaining obstacles)</li> <li>◇ More Perfect podcast episode “Enemy of Mankind” (link to be shared in Bb)</li> <li>◇ Marti Flacks, <i>European Union Releases Draft Mandatory Human Rights and Environmental Due Diligence Directive</i>, Center for Strategic &amp; International studies (March 11, 2022) (link on Bb).</li> </ul> <p><i>Optional for further exploration:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Ken Saro-Wiwa, <i>A Detention Diary</i></li> </ul>
<b>Week 12</b>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Tuesday, November 8: <i>Counter-terrorism</i></b></p> <p>Readings:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◇ Donnelly, chapter 13 ((Counter-)Terrorism and Human Rights)</li> <li>◇ Report of the Senate Select Committee on Intelligence regarding the CIA’s Detention and Interrogation Program (2014), Findings and Conclusions (link on Bb)</li> <li>◇ Seymour M. Hersh, <i>Torture at Abu Ghraib</i> (published in The New Yorker in 2004) (article available through GMU libraries and linked on Bb).</li> <li>◇ Elazar Barkan, <i>The worst is yet to come: Abu Ghraib and the politics of not apologizing</i>, (book chapter on Bb).</li> </ul> <p style="text-align: center;"><b>Thursday, November 10: <i>Humanitarian Intervention</i></b></p> <p>Readings:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◇ Donnelly, chapter 10 (Humanitarian Intervention)</li> </ul> <p><i>Please choose one of the case studies and come prepared to share your learnings.</i></p>
<b>Unit 5 reflection paper due Friday, November 11 via Blackboard.</b>	

<b>Unit 6 — Fit for Purpose? Examples of the Ongoing Evolution of Human Rights</b>	
<b>Week 13</b>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Tuesday, November 15: <i>Human right to development; Human rights and inequality</i></b></p> <p>Readings:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◇ Makau Mutua, <i>Human Rights Standards: Hegemony, Law, and Politics</i>, chapter 6 (available via GMU libraries, excerpts and link to be provided in Bb)</li> <li>◇ Donnelly, chapter 12 (Human Rights &amp; Development)</li> <li>◇ Samuel Moyn, <i>Not Enough: Human Rights in an Unequal World</i>, Introduction (available via GMU libraries, link to be provided on Bb)</li> <li>◇ Coalition for Human Rights in Development, <i>Uncalculated Risks</i> (link to be shared in Bb)</li> </ul> <p><i>Optional for further exploration:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Amartya Sen, <i>Development as Freedom</i> (especially Introduction: Development as Freedom and Chapter 2: The Ends and the Means of Development).</li> <li>- International Accountability Project, <i>Back to Development</i> (link to be shared in Bb).</li> </ul>

	<p><b>Thursday, November 17: <i>Right to water; Climate change &amp; human rights</i></b></p> <p>Readings:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◇ CESCR, General Comment No. 15 on the right to water (link in Bb)</li> <li>◇ Resolution adopted by the UN General Assembly on the human right to water and sanitation (link in Bb)</li> <li>◇ Sébastien Duyck, <i>Integrating human rights in global climate governance</i>, in <u>Routledge Handbook of Human Rights and Climate Governance</u> (available through GMU libraries, link to be posted on Bb).</li> <li>◇ Video: <i>Inhabitants: An Indigenous Perspective</i> (available through GMU libraries, link to be posted on Bb)</li> </ul>
<b>Week 14</b>	<p><b>Tuesday, November 22: Guest Speaker — <i>Human right to a healthy environment</i></b></p> <p>Readings:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◇ John Knox, <i>Human Rights</i> in <u>The Oxford Handbook of International Environmental Law</u> (2<sup>nd</sup> ed.) (available via GMU libraries, link to be posted on Bb).</li> <li>◇ UN Human Rights Council resolution recognizing the human right to a clean, healthy, and sustainable environment (2021) (link in Bb)</li> <li>◇ UN General Assembly resolution declaring access to a clean, healthy, and sustainable environment to be a universal human right (2022) (link in Bb)</li> </ul> <p><i>Optional for further exploration:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Rights of Nature in Ecuador's constitution (Title II, Chapter 7)  <a href="https://pdba.georgetown.edu/Constitutions/Ecuador/english08.html">https://pdba.georgetown.edu/Constitutions/Ecuador/english08.html</a></li> </ul> <p><b>[Thursday, October 20: Thanksgiving Break / No Class]</b>  <b><i>Have a wonderful break!</i></b></p>
<p><b><i>No reflection paper due for unit 6. Please use this time to move toward finalizing &amp; editing final paper.</i></b></p>	

<b>Unit 7 — Concluding: Putting It All Together</b>	
<b>Week 15</b>	<p><b>Tuesday, November 30: <i>Final case study — The Water Defenders</i></b></p> <p>Readings:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◇ Broad, chapter 7 and epilogue</li> <li>◇ Jack Snyder, <i>Why the Human Rights Movement Is Losing and How It Can Start Winning Again</i>, Foreign Affairs, July 2022 (link in Bb).</li> </ul> <p><b>Thursday, December 1: Course Review &amp; Final Reflections</b></p> <p>Readings:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◇ Kathryn Sikkink, <u>Evidence for Hope: Making Human Rights Work in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century</u> (chapter 7) (available via GMU libraries, link to be made available in Bb).</li> </ul>
<p><b>Final short research paper due Friday, December 2.</b></p>	

## Additional Course Information

**Creating an inclusive and respectful community:** *[Adapted from Professor Srikantia's GOVT 445 syllabus from 2021.]* To facilitate a valuable learning community for everyone, let's take care to interact with one another constructively, grounding our words and actions in respect and compassion and helping each other (including helping me!) to learn and improve when we make mistakes.

We can do this by emphasizing inquiry rather than advocacy in class discussions, by listening to understand and holding space for each other even when experiences or perspectives differ, and by building on each other's contributions in class conversations and group activities.

**Diversity, Inclusion, and Anti-Racism:** The Schar School, an intentionally inclusive community, promotes and maintains an equitable and just work and learning environment. We welcome and value individuals and their differences including race, economic status, gender expression and identity, sex, sexual orientation, ethnicity, national origin, first language, religion, age, and disability.

Furthermore, as a member of the George Mason University community, I will work to create an educational environment that is committed to anti-racism and inclusive excellence. I affirm that in this class, I will work together with students to interrupt cycles of racism against Black individuals, Indigenous people, and other people of color so as to cultivate a more equitable, inclusive, and just learning environment for all participants, regardless of racial background.

**Names and pronouns:** If you wish, please share your name and gender pronouns with me and indicate how best to address you in class and via email. I use she/her/hers for myself, and you may address me as "Sarah Dorman" or "Professor Dorman" in email and verbally.

**COVID-19 information:** Please refer to GMU's Safe Return to Campus page (<https://www.gmu.edu/safe-return-campus>) for information about GMU's COVID Safety Plan and to keep track of any updates.

Students are welcome to wear face masks in the classroom. In addition, to support your safety and the safety of everyone in this class, all students are required to complete the Mason COVID Health Check (<https://www.gmu.edu/mason-covid-health-check>) before each class meeting; I will ask you to show that you have received a "green" notification to participate in class.

If you suspect that you are sick, please stay home and contact me about options for making up the class.

**Campus Closure or Emergency Class Cancellation:** If the campus closes, or if a class meeting needs to be canceled or adjusted due to weather or other concern, students should check Blackboard for updates on how to continue learning and for information about any changes to events or assignments.

**Electronic Devices:** Cell phones are not to be used during class; please keep them stowed away and out of sight. Laptops are only allowed for taking notes and other class-related work. Please be respectful of your peers and your instructor and do not engage in activities that are unrelated to class. Such disruptions show a lack of professionalism and may affect your participation grade.

**Disability Accommodations:** Disability Services at George Mason University is committed to providing equitable access to learning opportunities for all students by upholding the laws that ensure equal treatment of people with disabilities. If you are seeking accommodations for this class, please first visit <http://ds.gmu.edu/> for detailed information about the Disability Services registration process. Then please discuss your approved accommodations with me. Disability Services is located in Student Union Building I (SUB I), Suite 2500. Email: [ods@gmu.edu](mailto:ods@gmu.edu) | Phone: (703) 993-2474

**COVID-19 note:** Students who have a COVID-related disability should contact the Disability Services office; DS will contact faculty using standard protocols about any students who require accommodations. Faculty are not expected to create accommodations for students outside of the DS official guidelines.

**Privacy:** Students must use their Mason email account to receive important University information, including communications related to this class. I will not respond to messages sent from or send messages to a non-Mason email address.

**Sexual Harassment, Sexual Misconduct, and Interpersonal Violence:** George Mason University is committed to providing a learning, living, and working environment that is free from discrimination and a campus that is free of sexual misconduct and other acts of interpersonal violence in order to promote community well-being and student success. We encourage students and employees who believe that they have been sexually harassed, sexually assaulted, or subjected to sexual or interpersonal misconduct to seek assistance and support. [University Policy 1202: Sexual Harassment and Misconduct](#) speaks to the specifics of Mason's process, the resources, and the options available to students and employees.

**Notice of mandatory reporting of sexual assault, sexual harassment, interpersonal violence & stalking:** As a faculty member, I am designated as a "Non-Confidential Employee" and must report all disclosures of sexual assault, sexual harassment, interpersonal violence, and stalking to Mason's Title IX Coordinator per University Policy 1202. If you wish to speak with someone confidentially, please contact one of Mason's confidential resources, such as Student Support and Advocacy Center (SSAC) at 703-993-3686 or Counseling and Psychological Services (CAPS) at 703-993-2380. You may also seek assistance or support measures from Mason's Title IX Coordinator by calling 703-993-8730 or emailing [titleix@gmu.edu](mailto:titleix@gmu.edu).

**Academic integrity:** Faculty in the Schar School have zero tolerance for academic dishonesty and will strictly enforce Mason's honor code, which has clear guidelines regarding academic integrity. Three fundamental principles to follow at all times are that: (1) all work submitted be your own; (2) when using the work or ideas of others, including fellow students, give full credit through accurate citations; and (3) if you are uncertain about the ground rules on a particular assignment, ask for clarification. No grade is important enough to justify academic misconduct. Plagiarism means using the exact words, opinions, or factual information from another person without giving the person credit. Writers give credit through accepted documentation styles, such as parenthetical citation, footnotes, or endnotes. Paraphrased material must also be cited, using the appropriate format for this class. A simple listing of books or articles is not sufficient. See more on the University Honor Code here: <https://oai.gmu.edu/mason-honor-code/>. If you have any doubts about what constitutes plagiarism, please talk with me.

**Additional resources available to students:**

Counseling and Psychological Services: <https://caps.gmu.edu/>

Center for Culture, Equity, and Empowerment (formerly ODIME and LGBTQ+): <https://ccee.gmu.edu/>

Disability Services: <https://ds.gmu.edu/>

Learning Services: <https://learningservices.gmu.edu/>

Mason Student Services Center: <https://mssc.gmu.edu/>

More Student Support Resources on Campus: <https://stearnscenter.gmu.edu/knowledge-center/knowning-mason-students/student-support-resources-on-campus/>

### ***Acknowledgement***

*Special thanks to Dr. Jessica Srikantia, who provided invaluable inputs and ideas that have been incorporated with her permission into a number of elements of this course syllabus.*