**Human Rights and Justice: Fall 2017**

George Mason University

CRIM 308.002, Robinson Hall, Room B203

Fridays, 1:30 pm to 2:45 pm

Online/classroom hybrid

Instructor: Dr. Andrew Novak

**Objectives of the Course**

* Studies the norms, laws, and systems for the promotion and protection of human rights.

* Provides a foundation for understanding historical, legal, political, economic, and ethical aspects of human rights.
* Examines ideological and cultural perspectives, sources of violations, the United Nations, regional and national mechanisms, special issues (e.g., women, torture, children, minorities), and the role of nongovernmental organizations.

**About the Instructor**

I am a term assistant professor of criminology, law, and society at George Mason University. I have also taught African law at American University, Washington College of Law, and written five books on the death penalty, clemency, and international criminal justice. I have a Master of Science in African Politics from the London School of Oriental and African Studies, a Juris Doctor from Boston University, and a Ph.D. in law from Middlesex University in London. I am licensed to practice law in New York and Washington, DC.

Email: anovak2@gmu.edu

**Office Hours**

I will hold office hours each week, typically Tuesday and Thursday mornings at 10:30 am. For the Spring 2017 semester, I am on campus Tuesdays, Thursdays, and Fridays. I am happy to meet by appointment. During the semester, I may also hold office hours at the Starbucks in the Johnson Center or elsewhere, as announced in class.

Office: Enterprise Hall, Room 334

**Concentrations**

This course qualifies for the criminal justice and law and society concentrations in the Department of Criminology, Law, and Society (CRIM), and for the global governance and global inequality concentrations in the Department of Global Affairs (GLOA).

**Required Materials**

There is one required textbook for this course:

* Jo Becker, *Campaigning for Justice: Human Rights Advocacy in Practice* (Stanford University Press, 2013)

Any other readings will be distributed in class and posted on Blackboard.

**Grading Criteria**

Your grade is based on the following components:

**50% Weekly online quizzes**

12 quizzes in total, but I will drop the lowest grade for everyone. In addition, I will also drop the *second­*-lowest quiz grade if a student has attended three-fourths of the classes.

**50% Writing assignments**

15% issue/position paper on elder rights

35% final paper on human rights organization/campaign

This course does not have a final exam. Instead, it will have a final paper submitted on Blackboard.

Below is the grading scale used for the course. I will not use the grades “D+” or “D-.”

98-100 A+

93-97 A

90-92 A-

88-89 B+

83-87 B

80-82 B-

78-79 C+

73-77 C

70-72 C-

60-69 D

<60 F

In addition, in the event that I must calculate grade fractions, I will always round up to the next highest point if you have a 0.45 or higher.

**Minimum Attendance Policy**

This course has a minimum attendance policy. There are twelve classes in addition to the introductory class. You must attend **SIX** of them, not including the introductory class, or your final grade will be reduced by a flat 5-points (e.g., a 90 to an 85).

If you attend **NINE** of the twelve classes (not including the introductory class), I will drop your second-lowest quiz grade. I will drop the lowest quiz grade for everyone.

**Twitter**

Students are advised that I use a Twitter handle for my courses, **@GMUCRIMglobal**. I will use the Twitter handle to share news articles about current events relating to international and comparative criminal justice, including the death penalty. I will begin each class with a rundown of current events. Feel free to tweet relevant articles at the account, and I can retweet them to the class.

If you follow the class Twitter account, you will receive ONE FREE ATTENDANCE. I will ask for this information later in the semester.

**Late Paper Policy**

A course incomplete may be given to students who have not completed the writing assignments for this course in time for final grades, with excused absences. Late papers will be subject to a grade reduction without an appropriate excuse.

**Make-up Quiz Policy**

Students will have to take a quiz every week on Blackboard. The quizzes are *not timed* and *do not need to be completed at one time*. You will be able to see all questions at the same time. Therefore, **ordinarily no extensions will be given**.

Students who are unable to take a quiz for a very good reason should alert me before I reveal the answers in class. In extraordinary circumstances, I can allow a student to take a quiz late *so long as I have not released the answers to the class*.

If a student is unable to take a quiz for a very good reason and I have already released the answers to the class, I may allow a student to complete a portion of the quiz for partial credit (typically, the short answer portion of the quiz only). This is entirely within my discretion.

**Reading Assignments and Schedule of Classes**

**Friday, September 1**

*Topic*: Introduction to the course and the topic

*Workshop* (**in class**): Introduction to the Universal Declaration of Human Rights

**[September 5: Add-Drop (No Penalty) Deadline]**

**Friday, September 8**

*Topic*: United Nations I

*Required Reading* (to be completed **before class**): Becker, Chapter 3 (Human Rights Council)

*Online videos* (to be completed **before class**): (1) Philosophy of human rights and (2) United Nations organizational structure

*Quiz* (to be completed online **before class**): On the videos and reading

*Workshops* (**in class**): Careers in human rights; Should the United States withdraw from the UN Human Rights Council?

**Friday, September 15**

*Topic*: United Nations II

*Required Reading* (to be completed **before class**): Becker, Chapter 4 (Rapporteurs)

*Online videos* (to be completed **before class**): (1) UN and human rights enforcement and (2) UN and refugees

*Quiz* (to be completed online **before class**): On the videos and reading

*Workshops* (**in class**): UN sexual orientation and gender identity (SOGI) rapporteur; UN Security Council reform

**[September 19: Drop (33% Tuition Penalty) Deadline]**

**Friday, September 22**

*Topic*: European Human Rights System

*Required Reading* (to be completed **before class**): Becker, Chapter 8 (Sri Lanka)

*Online videos* (to be completed **before class**): (1) Council of Europe and (2) European Union

*Quiz* (to be completed online **before class**): On the videos and reading

*Workshops* (**in class**): European Parliament’s statement on Sri Lanka; Do you agree with the European Court of Human Rights?

**Friday, September 29**

*Topic*: Inter-American and African Human Rights Systems

*Required Reading* (to be completed **before class**): Becker, Chapter 6 (Charles Taylor)

*Online videos* (to be completed **before class**): (1) Inter-American human rights system; (2) African and Asian human rights systems

*Quiz* (to be completed online **before class**): On the videos and reading

*Workshop* (**in class**): Simulation on drafting Convention on the Rights of Older Persons

***Assignment Due***(either submit **on Blackboard before class** or **in** **hard copy in class**): Issue or position paper on rights of older persons

**[September 29: Drop (67% Tuition Penalty) Deadline]**

**Friday, October 6**

*Topic*: Business and Human Rights

*Required Readings* (to be completed **before class**): Becker, Chapter 2 (ILO and domestic workers convention)

*Online videos* (to be completed **before class**): (1) Business and human rights; (2) Labor and human rights

*Quiz* (to be completed online **before class**): On the videos and reading

*Workshop* (**in class**): Doing a human rights impact assessment for Coca-Cola

**Friday, October 13**

*Topic*: Civil and Political Rights I (Equality)

*Required Reading* (to be completed **before class**): Becker, Chapter 10 (LGBTI rights)

*Online videos* (to be completed **before class**): (1) Equality/non-discrimination in international law; (2) Minority rights and affirmative action

*Quiz* (to be completed online **before class**): On the videos and reading

*Workshops* (**in class**): Polling scenarios using Poll Everywhere app; European Court of Human Rights case law on affirmative action and equality

**Friday, October 20**

*Topic*: Civil and Political Rights II (Free Expression)

*Required Reading* (to be completed **before class**): Becker, Chapter 11 (JLWOP)

*Online videos* (to be completed **before class**): (1) Introduction to civil and political rights; (2) Free expression in international law

*Quiz* (to be completed online **before class**): On the videos and reading

*Workshops* (**in class**): Hypotheticals on free expression, including jurisprudence of European Court of Human Rights; Polling scenarios on free expression using Poll Everywhere app; Should ex-felons and prisoners have the right to vote?

**Friday, October 27**

*Topic*: Economic, Social, and Cultural Rights

*Required Reading* (to be completed **before class**): Becker, Chapter 5 (violence against children)

*Online videos* (to be completed **before class**): (1) Introduction to economic, social, and cultural rights; (2) Application of ESC rights in practice

*Quiz* (to be completed online **before class**): On the videos and reading

*Workshops* (**in class**): Do you support ESC rights in practice? (*Economist* article); Constitutional law and the right to health

**Friday, November 3**

*Topic*: Human Rights Forensics

*Required Reading* (to be completed **before class**): Becker, Chapter 7 (Libya)

*Online videos* (to be completed **before class**): (1) Introduction to human rights forensics; (2) Bosnia and Argentina case studies

*Quiz* (to be completed online **before class**): On the videos and reading

*Workshops* (**in class**): Possible guest lecture via Skype; UN Convention on Enforced Disappearances

**Friday, November 10**

*Topic*: Armed Conflict

*Required Reading* (to be completed **before class**): Becker, Chapter 1 (child soldiers)

*Online video* (to be completed **before class**): Laws of war and introduction to humanitarian assistance (combined into one video)

*Quiz* (to be completed online **before class**): On the video and reading

*Workshops* (**in class**): Polling on support for humanitarian intervention using Poll Everywhere app; Moral hazards of humanitarian intervention

**Friday, November 17**

NO CLASS

**Friday, November 24**

NO CLASS

**Friday, December 1**

*Topic*: Human Rights Litigation

*Required Reading* (to be completed **before class**): *Orozco v. Belize* case and summaries of anti-sodomy challenges (copies will be circulated in class and posted on Blackboard)

*Online video* (to be completed **before class**): Human rights litigation

*Quiz* (to be completed online **before class**): On the video and reading

*Workshops* (**in class**): Jamaica’s anti-sodomy law, challenged at Inter-American Human Rights Commission

**Friday, December 8**

*Topic*: Sport and Human Rights

*Required Reading* (to be completed **before class**): Becker, Chapter 9 (Beijing Olympics)

*Online video* (to be completed **before class**): Sport and human rights

*Quiz* (to be completed **before class**): On the video and reading

*Workshops* (**in class**): Disability sport workshop and UN Committee on Rights of Persons with Disabilities

**Friday, December 15**

FINAL PAPERS DUE BY 11:59 PM (submit on Blackboard)

**Final Paper Guidance**

This course will have three writing assignments over the course of the semester. The instructions for these assignments will be circulated shortly. In general, it is best to think of these assignments as *writing tests* rather than research papers. Your grade is based on **how you write**, so **it is essential** to focus on grammar, presentation, conciseness, and clarity of writing. The papers are not long, but I will read every word, so every word should be selected carefully.

The first paper should cite a minimum of two sources, of which one should be scholarly. The second paper should cite a minimum of three sources, of which one should be scholarly. I will provide instructions and conduct a series of in-class writing workshops.

For papers submitted by hard copy, I will make comments directly on the page. For papers submitted on Blackboard, I will track changes on Microsoft Word and upload the paper back to Blackboard. While I can make comments on Adobe Acrobat Reader, I prefer papers submitted in Microsoft Word format rather than papers submitted in PDF form.

**Honor Code Policy**

Available on the web at academicintegrity.gmu.edu. Mason shares in the tradition of an honor system that has existed in Virginia since 1842. The code is an integral part of university life. On the application for admission, students sign a statement agreeing to conform to and uphold the Honor Code. Students are responsible, therefore, for understanding the code’s provisions. In the spirit of the code, a student’s word is a declaration of good faith acceptable as truth in all academic matters. Cheating and attempted cheating, plagiarism, lying, and stealing of academic work and related materials constitute Honor Code violations. To maintain an academic community according to these standards, students and faculty members must report all alleged violations to the Honor Committee. Any student who has knowledge of, but does not report, a violation may be accused of lying under the Honor Code.

The complete Honor Code is as follows: To promote a stronger sense of mutual responsibility, respect, trust, and fairness among all members of the George Mason University community and with the desire for greater academic and personal achievement, we, the student members of the university community, have set forth this honor code: Student members of the George Mason University community pledge not to cheat, plagiarize, steal, or lie in matters related to academic work.

Cheating encompasses the following: 1. The willful giving or receiving of an unauthorized, unfair, dishonest, or unscrupulous advantage in academic work over other students. 2. The above may be accomplished by any means whatsoever, including but not limited to the following: fraud; duress; deception; theft; trick; talking; signs; gestures; copying from another student; and the unauthorized use of study aids, memoranda, books, data, or other information. 3. Attempted cheating.

Plagiarism encompasses the following: 1. Presenting as one's own the words, the work, or the opinions of someone else without proper acknowledgment. (This includes material appearing on the Internet). 2. Borrowing the sequence of ideas, the arrangement of material, or the pattern of thought of someone else without proper acknowledgment.

Lying encompasses the following: The willful and knowledgeable telling of an untruth, as well as any form of deceit, attempted deceit, or fraud in an oral or written statement relating to academic work. This includes but is not limited to: 1. Lying to administration and faculty members. 2. Falsifying any university document by mutilation, addition, or deletion. 3. Lying to Honor Committee members and counsels during investigation and hearing. This may constitute a second charge, with the committee members who acted as judges during that specific hearing acting as accusers.

Stealing encompasses the following: Taking or appropriating without the permission to do so, and with the intent to keep or to make use of wrongfully, property belonging to any member of the GMU community or any property located on the university campus. This includes misuse of university computer resources.

**ALL STUDENTS ARE ON NOTICE THAT I CONSIDER PAPER RECYCLING FROM ANOTHER COURSE TO BE A VIOLATION OF THE HONOR CODE.**

**Disability Accommodations**

If you have a documented learning disability or other condition that may affect academic performance you should (1) make sure this documentation is on file with Office for Disability Services (SUB I, Rm. 4205; 993-2474; http://ods.gmu.edu) to determine the accommodations you need; and (2) talk with me to discuss your accommodation needs. I want to be helpful.