**Human Rights and Justice: Fall 2018**

George Mason University

CRIM 308.002, Innovation Hall #132

Mondays, 10:30 am to 11:45 am

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 am available Mondays and Wednesdays from 12:00 pm to 1:00 pm. Check with me about other times. Office: Enterprise Hall, Room 345

**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). It also satisfies an elective credit for the new Social Justice and Human Rights concentration in the Department of Integrative Studies.

**Required Materials**

There are two required textbooks for this course:

* Jo Becker, *Campaigning for Justice: Human Rights Advocacy in Practice* (Stanford University Press, 2013)
* Stephen Hopgood, *Endtimes of Human Rights* (Cornell 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 enough classes.

**50% Assignments**

15% issue/position paper on elder rights (2-3 pages)

15% research paper on Human Rights Cities (2-3 pages)

20% video on Human Rights Cities assignment

This course does not have a final exam. Instead, it will have a final project 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 ten classes in addition to the introductory class. You must attend **FIVE** 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 **EIGHT** of the ten classes (not including the introductory class), I will drop your second-lowest quiz grade. I will drop the lowest quiz grade for everyone.

I consider this to be a lenient policy. Therefore, **I ONLY COUNT ATTENDANCES, NOT ABSENCES. THERE IS NO SUCH THING AS AN “EXCUSED ABSENCE.”** No attendance credit is given for doctor’s notes or other emergencies, no matter how serious. However, I may waive a late paper penalty with appropriate documentation (explained below).

**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 human rights and other global justice topics. I will begin each class with a rundown of current events. Please tweet relevant articles at the account, and I can retweet them to the class.

If you follow the class Twitter account (tagging the Twitter handle for the course, so I can retweet it), you will receive ONE FREE ATTENDANCE. I will ask for this information later in the semester. This is intended to be a kind of participation credit.

**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 good reason should alert me before I reveal the answers in class. Typically, answers are released about three days after the quiz ends, so let me know within that time period. 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 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**

**Monday, January 28**

*Topic*: Introduction to the course and the topic

*Workshop* (**in class**): Introduction to the Universal Declaration of Human Rights; Pass out introductory survey

**Monday, February 4**

*Topic*: United Nations I

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

*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?

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

**[February 12: Add-Drop (Partial Penalty) Deadline]**

**[February 13 – February 25: Student Self-Withdrawal Period]**

**Monday, February 11**

*Topic*: United Nations II

*Required Reading* (to be completed **before class**): Becker, Chapter 4 (Rapporteurs); Hopgood, Chapter 1 (Moral Authority in a Godless World)

*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

**Monday, February 18**

**CLASS CANCELLED because I am at the beach 😊 (but you still have work to do!)**

*Topic*: European Human Rights System

*Required Reading* (to be completed **before 10:30 am**): Becker, Chapter 8 (Sri Lanka); Hopgood, Chapter 2 (The Church of Human Rights)

*Online videos* (to be completed **before 10:30 am**): (1) Council of Europe and (2) European Union

*Quiz* (to be completed online **before 10:30 am**): On the videos and reading

**Monday, February 25**

*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**): Workshop on European Court of Human Rights and cases + discussion on 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

**Monday, March 4**

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

*Required Reading* (to be completed **before class**): Becker, Chapter 10 (LGBTI rights); Hopgood, Chapter 3 (The Holocaust Metanarrative)

*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**): European Court of Human Rights case law on affirmative action and equality + continued discussion of rights of older persons

**Monday, March 11**

**CLASS CANCELLED: SPRING BREAK (no work is due!)**

**Monday, March 18**

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

*Required Reading* (to be completed **before class**): Becker, Chapter 11 (JLWOP); Hopgood, Chapter 4 (Moral Architecture of Human Rights)

*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?

**Monday, March 25**

*Topic*: Economic, Social, and Cultural Rights

*Required Reading* (to be completed **before class**): Becker, Chapter 5 (violence against children); Hopgood, Chapter 5 (Human Rights and American Power)

*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

**Monday, April 1**

*Topic*: Business and Human Rights

*Required Readings* (to be completed **before class**): Becker, Chapter 2 (ILO and domestic workers convention); Hopgood, Chapter 6 (Human Rights Empire)

*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

**Monday, April 8**

*Topic*: Human Rights Forensics; Hopgood, Chapter 7 (Of Gods and Nations)

*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**): Forensic science workshop on the Holocaust

**Monday, April 15**

*Topic*: Armed Conflict

*Required Reading* (to be completed **before class**): Becker, Chapter 1 (child soldiers); Hopgood, Chapter 8 (The Neo-Westphalian World)

*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**): Discussion on Hopgood book (discussion questions and some excerpts from reviews on the book will also be distributed)

**Monday, April 22**

CLASS CANCELLED: EASTER MONDAY 😊 (but you still have work to do!)

*Topic*: Human Rights Litigation

*Required Reading* (to be completed **before 10:30 am**): *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 10:30 am**): Human rights litigation

*Quiz* (to be completed online **before 10:30 am**): On the video and reading

**Monday, April 29**

*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, Football and Migration

*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; follow-up workshop on human rights litigation from previous week

**Monday, May 6**

NO CLASS: YOU ARE DONE 😊 (unless we need a makeup day)

**FINAL ONLINE PRESENTATIONS AND “HUMAN RIGHTS CITIES” RESEARCH PAPERS DUE AT 11:59 pm** (unless you are doing the embedded program – see below!)

**Wednesday, June 5**

**FINAL PAPERS DUE** for students doing the embedded program (11:59 pm)

**Embedded Program**

This course includes an **OPTIONAL** trip to The Hague and Brussels from May 17 to May 24, 2019. We will visit the International Criminal Court, European Parliament, and other international criminal justice institutions. You must register for UNIV 308 over the summer session for zero or one credit (the one credit version will involve more work, but this is assigned by the study abroad office and is not related to this course). You are welcome to attend even if you are graduating, but you will miss the graduation ceremony. The final price for the trip is forthcoming, but should be about $200 plus an airfare credit. You will need to pay for your own airfare, but accommodation, transportation, and some meals are included in the fee.

If you do the embedded program, you will have a slightly different grade breakdown. Your “human rights cities” research paper and online video presentation will both be due when you return from the trip. **You should choose a city in the Netherlands or in Belgium to complete this assignment** (if you have the opportunity to visit your chosen city, all the better).

5% - on-time **attendance and participation** at all events

5% - posts on the class **Instagram account** at @GMUCRIM485

15% - **research paper** (2-3 pages) on a “human rights city” in Belgium or the Netherlands (note: you may turn this in before your trip)

10% **online video presentation** on your chosen city

If you are doing the embedded program, your final paper and online video are due **Wednesday, June 5, 2019**, at 11:59 pm on Blackboard. You will receive an incomplete in the course until I receive your final paper. I should have grades uploaded before grade audits are done, so the incomplete should not prevent you from registering for summer classes or graduating.

**Paper Guidance**

This course will have two writing assignments plus a “human rights cities” travel brochure 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 papers **should cite a minimum of two 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.

**Introduction to Online Video Presentations**

This course will require an online video presentation, using PowerPoint or a related program. You are required to present for 3 minutes. Presentations that exceed or fall under 3 minutes, give or take 15 seconds, will be subject to a markdown.

The topic of the presentation will be on “human rights cities.” International human rights law binds states, individuals (through international criminal law), and, increasingly, corporations and business entities. One actor is missing: sub-national governments, like states, cities, counties, prefectures, and local governments, which could be a powerful constituency for implementing international human rights. Your job will be to describe one of these *sub*-national governments and discuss its human rights record.

Ideally, the presentation will be submitted as a PowerPoint file with embedded audio files that can be played automatically in slideshow mode, OR exported from Powerpoint as a video file (.mp4) and uploaded to Blackboard. Unfortunately, I cannot accept Keynote or Prezi presentations unless these have been converted to video files. (While it is possible to convert Keynote to PowerPoint, doing this strips out the audio files). Students who wish to upload the presentation to YouTube may do this instead, but this is public.

The grading rubric will include six criteria: (1) bibliography; (2) technical aspects, including length; (3) visual presentation; (4) audio presentation; (5) how well visuals work with audio; and (6) relevant substance of “human rights cities.”

**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.

**Introduction to “Human Rights Cities” Presentations**

This course will require a Pecha Kucha Presentation, which is a style of presentation originally designed by young designers in Tokyo in 2003. The original parameters were to present with 20 slides that automatically advance every 20 seconds (for a total of 6 minutes and 40 seconds). This manner of presentation is intended to be concise and strictly require preparation.

In our version of the Pecha Kucha Presentation, students are required to present for 3 minutes. Markdowns will be taken for presentations that run more than 15 seconds too long or too short.

The topic of the presentation will be to create a travel guide to a “Human Rights City” – that is, cities or municipal or local governments that have embraced international human rights law and adopted the Universal Declaration of Human Rights or international human rights treaties. The presentation should (briefly) address the city’s acceptance of international human rights norms and provide an overview of the city’s human rights record. Students have done this presentation on Eugene, Guangju, Nuremberg, Pittsburgh, Rio de Janeiro, Rosario, Seattle, Utrecht, Washington DC, Winnepeg, and York.

Ideally, the presentation will be submitted as a PowerPoint file with embedded audio files that can be played automatically in slideshow mode, OR exported from Powerpoint as a video file (.mp4) and uploaded to Blackboard. Unfortunately, I cannot accept Keynote or Prezi presentations. While it is possible to convert Keynote to PowerPoint, doing this strips out the audio files. Keynote or Prezi presentations must be exported as video files (.mp4). Students who wish to upload the presentation to YouTube may do this instead, but this is public.

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