# **INTS 362-002 – Social Justice and Human Rights – Fall 2019**

Instructor: Amy Zhang (Xinyi Zhang)

Office Hours: Th 4:30 pm – 6:30 pm, by appointment, in Enterprise Hall 4th floor

Email: xzhang16@gmu.edu

Classroom: Robinson B 105

Class times: F: 10:30am-1:10pm

Teaching Assistant: Chelsea Bouldin

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## **Course Description**

In this course, we will consider the philosophical foundations of human rights, explore the interpretive difficulties relating to identifying what constitutes human rights abuses, and evaluate regional perspectives on human rights. Based on understanding components of global human rights discourses, students will analyze institutions that strive to promote and enforce human rights standards including the United Nations system, regional human rights bodies, and domestic courts. We will also study various human rights issues such as genocide, torture, indigenous rights, the rights of persons with disabilities, labor rights, and women’s rights.

## **Learning Objectives**

This course is structured so that students develop competency in four areas: Global Understanding, Critical Thinking, Communication, and Civic Engagement. Learning objectives include:

* Developing an understanding of foundational terms and concepts in the field of international human rights
* Understanding the positions in major debates in human rights theory and appreciating the significance of those positions
* Gaining knowledge about key actors and institutions in the field of international human rights at the local, national and international levels, and to critically evaluate major instruments and provisions of international human rights law
* Developing research skills through collecting, analyzing, and interpreting sources on international topics
* Gaining experience communicating arguments and findings in writing and an oral presentation
* Learning strategies for civic engagement and social change related to contemporary international issues

## **Required Texts**

All reading assignments are be available on Blackboard under “Course Texts.”

## **Course Schedule**

Course schedule is subject to change. Any changes will be announced in writing.

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| 0BWeek 1 | |
| F 09/30 | **Course Goals and Expectations; History of Human Rights**  The United Nations, Universal Declaration of Human Rights |
| 1BWeek 2 | |
| F 10/06 | **Philosophy of International Human Rights**  Jack Donnelly, Human Rights and Human Dignity: An Analytic Critique of Non-Western Conceptions of Human Rights.  R. Panikkar, Is the Notion of Human Rights A Western Concept?  Use your .edu address to create free accounts for [nytimes.com](http://www.nytimes.com) and [washingtonpost.com](http://www.washingtonpost.com).  Download a PDF reader that can highlight and annotate (ex. Adobe Acrobat) |
| 2BWeek 3 | |
| F 10/13 | **Human Rights Mechanisms**  Richard Pierre Claude, The Case of Joelito Filartiga and the Clinic of Hope  Judgement – In Re Pinochet (1998/1999).  Doe v. Unocal Case Brief (2005) |
| 3BWeek 4 | |
| F 10/20 | **Human Rights in Extremis: Genocide**  Scott Straus, Rwanda and Darfur: A Comparative Analysis  Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide, 9 December 1948 |
| 4BWeek 5 | |
| F 10/27 | **Human Rights in Extremis: Torture**  Manfred Nowak, What Practices Constitute Torture? US and UN Standards  Four Geneva Conventions |
| 5BWeek 6 | |
| *Sun 11/06*  *Due: Holocaust Memorial Museum Paper* | **Self-Directed Field Trip to US Holocaust Memorial Museum**  Watch: *Genocide: Worse Than War* |
| 6BWeek 7 | |
| F 10/11  *Due: Group Presentations 1 and 2* | **The Issue of The Death Penalty**  Manfred Nowak, Is the Death Penalty an Inhuman Punishment?  Soering v. United Kingdom (1989)  Roper v. Simmons Case Brief (2005) |
| 7BWeek 8 | |
| F 10/18  *Due: Group Presentation 3* | **Indigenous Rights; Annotated Bibliography Workshop I**  S. James Anaya, International Human Rights and Indigenous Peoples: The Move Toward the Multicultural State  S. James Anaya, Gaining Legal Recognition of Indigenous Land Rights: The Story of the Awas Tingni Case in Nicaragua  The Yanomami Case  We will use laptops in class |
| 8BWeek 9 | |
| F 10/25 | **In-Class Midterm** |
| 9BWeek 10 | |
| F 11/01  *Due: Group Presentation 4* | **Disability and Human Rights; Annotated Bibliography Workshop II**  Alison Dundes Renteln, “Cross-Cultural Perceptions of Disability: Policy Implications of Divergent Views” from *Different But Equal*  We will use laptops in class |
| 10BWeek 11 | |
| F 11/08  *Due: Group Presentation 5*  *Sun 11/10*  *Due: Annotated Bibliography* | **Gender and Human Rights**  International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination  Rebecca Cook, State Responsibility for Violations of Women’s Human Rights  Sandra D. Lane and Robert A. Rubenstein, Judging the Other: Responding to Traditional Female Genital Surgeries |
| 11BWeek 12 | |
| F 11/15  *Due: Group Presentation 6* | **Labor Rights**  Philip Alston, ‘Core Labor Standards’ and the Transformation of the International Labor Rights Regime  Brian A. Langille, Core Labor Standards- The True Story (Reply to Alston)  Saadia Toor, Child Labor in Pakistan: Coming of Age in the New World Order |
| 12BWeek 13 | |
| F 11/22  *Due: Group Presentation 7 and 8* | **Relating Human Rights and Social Justice**  Samuel Moyn, Human Rights and the Age of Inequality  Doutje Lettinga and Lars van Troost, Justice Over Rights? |
| 13BWeek 14 | |
| F 12/06  *Sun 12/08*  *Due: Final Research Paper and Reflective Essay* | **Concept Review; Contemporary Issue of Human Rights and Social Justice**  Reading: TBD |

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| **A** | 93.33+ |
| **A-** | 90 |
| **B+** | 86.67 |
| **B** | 83.33 |
| **B-** | 80 |
| **C+** | 76.67 |
| **C** | 73.33 |
| **C-** | 70 |
| **D** | 60 |
| **F** | Below 60 |

## **Grading and Requirements**

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| **Class Participation** | 15% |
| **Human Rights Advocacy Presentation** | 15% |
| **Holocaust Memorial Museum Paper** | 15% |
| **Midterm** | 20% |
| **Research Project**  Annotated Bibliography (10%)  Final Research Paper (25%) | 35% |
| **Reflective Essay (+2%)** |  |
|  |  |
| TOTAL | 100% |

### Class Participation

As this is an upper level course, it is essential that you come to class on time and prepared to engage in with the material, ask pertinent questions, and participate in classroom discussions. As a mark of respect for our collective learning experience, be judicious about your remarks. Think about what is relevant and constructive for our shared conversation. Participation requires honoring the electronics policy. Regular attendance is required to successfully complete this class and you are responsible for material covered in class when you are absent.

### Human Rights Advocacy Presentation

As a group of 3-4 students, you of will explore a contemporary human rights issue. You will then present an analysis on that issue in the form of a 15 min presentation. You are asked to reach out to an NGO or governmental body that is concerned with this issue and report back to our class with suggestions for engaging with this issue. Each group member submits a 200-300 word summary of a source they consulted.

### Holocaust Memorial Museum Assignment

In week 6 you will take a self-directed field trip to The U.S. Holocaust Memorial Museum in Washington D.C. You will complete an assignment with short-answer questions and a short essay prompt based on your observations of the museum.

### Research Project

Your final research project asks you to make an argument about one of three contemporary human rights issues using case studies from at least two countries.

1. **Annotated Bibliography (10%)**

In your annotated bibliography, you will present your preliminary observations about the   
perspectives or “sides” of the issue you are encountering. You will then present three annotations of relevant scholarly sources.

1. **Final Research Paper (25%)**

Your final paper will synthesize your learning about the contemporary human rights issue you have explored and make a case for your original analysis about the issue. You will make an argument based on your knowledge of relevant cases and your understanding of the various positions on this issue and their practical implications. The final research paper will reference at least five scholarly sources.

### In-Class Midterm

There will be an in-class midterm exam. This exam will consist of multiple choice and short answer questions and will reflect the material we have covered during the first half of the course. It will be an open-note and open-book exam.

### Reflective Essay (Extra Credit)

For this extra credit assignment, you will submit an essay reflecting on the topics and concepts discussed in our course, attempting to connect them to some aspect of your current or future life or work.

**Course Policies**

*Classroom Environment*

Discussion and debate are encouraged in this course, with the firm expectation that all aspects of the class will be conducted with civility and respect for differing ideas, perspectives, and traditions. When in doubt (of any kind) please ask for guidance and clarification. It is okay for us to disagree with one another in class discussion, but let’s do so in the spirit of dialogue to keep the conversation as open and informative for everyone as possible. If you feel our classroom is not meeting your needs in these regards, please let me know.

*Assignment Procedures*

Submit all assignments on Blackboard. Save assignments as .doc or .docx documents **only**, using 12 pt. font and single spaced. All assignments must be cited in accordance with either the Chicago, APA, or MLA style manuals. All assignments are due at midnight of the due date. Late assignments are not accepted unless previous arrangements have been made. If you anticipate not being able to complete your assignment on time for a well-documented exceptional circumstance, communicate with me before the assignment is due to request an extension.

*Email*

GMU faculty and students are required to use GMU email accounts to communicate. You must regularly check your GMU email address, as important updates will be sent that way. I will respond to emails within 24 hours on weekdays. After that period, you are encouraged to send me a “following up” message.

*Electronics*

Cell phone use is not allowed in the classroom. You are welcome to bring a laptop to class and use it for class-related purposes. During class you are asked to refrain from using your laptop for purposes not related to class.

**University Policies**

*Academic Integrity:*

George Mason University has an Honor Code with clear guidelines regarding academic integrity. Please see <http://honorcode.gmu.edu/> to ensure that you abide by it. If you are uncertain about citation rules or assignment guidelines, ask me for clarification. No grade is important enough to justify academic misconduct. If you feel unusual pressure or anxiety about your grade in this or any other course, please let me know and also seek help from University resources. The University provides a range of services to help with test anxiety, writing skills, study skills, personal issues, and related concerns.

*Disability Services:*

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 | Phone: (703) 993-2474

*Diversity and Inclusion:*

The School of Integrative Studies, 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.

*Sexual Harassment, Sexual Misconduct, and Interpersonal Violence:*

As a faculty member and designated “Responsible Employee,” I am required to report all disclosures of sexual assault, interpersonal violence, and stalking to Mason’s Title IX Coordinator per university policy 1412. If you wish to speak with someone confidentially, please contact the Student Support and Advocacy Center (703-380-1434) or Counseling and Psychological Services (703-993-2380). You may also seek assistance from Mason’s Title IX Coordinator (703-993-8730; titleix@gmu.edu).

**College Resources**

**Writing Resources:** Tutors at the Writing Center are available to assist with assignments: Robinson A, room 114, 703-993-1824, <http://writingcenter.gmu.edu>

**Disability Resource Center:** The staff members of the DRC assist students with learning differences or any other conditions that may impact academic performance: SUB I, room 222, 703-993-2474, <http://www.gmu.edu/student/drc>

**Counseling Services:** Professional counselors provide individual and group sessions for personal development and assistance with a range of emotional and relational issues: SUB I, room 364, 703-993-2380, <http://www.gmu.edu/departments/csdc>

**Learning Services:** George Mason University’s Learning Services assigns tutors upon request, at no charge, that can help you develop ideas, study, and revise papers. Please visit Robinson A 114, Main Office, Enterprise 076, or call 703-993-1824.

**Division of Instructional and Technology Support Services (DolT):** If you have any

difficulties with accessing the campus network or on campus computers, please contact the help

desk. DoIT is located in Innovations Hall, Rm.416; 703-993-3178; <http://www.doit.gmu.edu>

**Student Technology Assistance and Resource Center (STAR):** The STAR Center is available to help students with technology needs, such as video, multimedia, desktop publishing, and web skills. The STAR Center is located in Johnson Center, Rm.229; 703-993-8990; <http://media.gmu.edu>