

INTS 362-K02 – SOCIAL JUSTICE AND HUMAN RIGHTS – FALL 2022

Instructor: Amy Zhang (Xinyi Zhang)

Class meetings: G301; Tuesdays 4:30pm-7:10pm

Office Hours: G546; Thursdays 1:00pm-3:00pm, or by appointment

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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 critically 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. Finally, students will research and advocate for a contemporary human rights or social justice issue of their choosing.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

This meets the Mason Core Social/Behavioral Sciences which promote the following learning outcomes:

- Explain how individuals, groups or institutions are influenced by contextual factors;
- Demonstrate awareness of changes in social and cultural constructs;
- Use appropriate methods and resources to apply social and behavioral science concepts, terminology, principles and theories in the analysis of significant human issues, past or present.

In our course, we will also strive to:

- Understand foundational terms, concepts, and major debates in the field of international human rights and human rights theory and developing the ability to grapple with controversial human rights issues by actively assessing one's own thinking
- Gain 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
- Develop research skills through collecting, analyzing, and interpreting sources on international topics
- Gain experience communicating arguments and findings in writing and an oral presentation
- Learn strategies for civic engagement and social change related to contemporary issues

REQUIRED TEXTS

All reading assignments are available on Blackboard under the "Course Texts" tab.

COURSE SCHEDULE

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

WEEK 1	
Tuesday 08/23	Course Goals and Expectations; Defining Human Rights and Social Justice

	<p>Read: Samuel Moyn, "Human Rights and the Age of Inequality"</p> <p>Document: The United Nations, Universal Declaration of Human Rights</p>
WEEK 2	
Tuesday 08/30	<p>Philosophy of International Human Rights</p> <p>Read: Jack Donnelly, "Human Rights and Human Dignity: An Analytic Critique of Non-Western Conceptions of Human Rights. "</p> <p>Read: R. Panikkar, "Is the Notion of Human Rights A Western Concept?"</p> <p>- Create an account for nytimes.com and ft.com through the University Library using your GMU email address.</p> <p>- Download a PDF reader that can highlight and annotate on your device (ex. Adobe Acrobat)</p> <p>- Whitelist donotreply@blackboard.com in your email.</p>
WEEK 3	
Tuesday 09/06	<p>Human Rights Mechanisms; The UN System</p> <p>Read: Mark Mazower, "The End of Civilization and the Rise of Human Rights"</p> <p>Recommended: Excerpt from Steven L.B. Jensen, <i>The Making of International Human Rights: The 1960s, Decolonization, and the Reconstruction of Global Values</i></p> <p>Document: International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights</p> <p>Document: International Covenant on Social, Economic, and Cultural Rights</p>
WEEK 4	
Tuesday 09/13	<p>Human Rights History II; Humanitarianism</p> <p>Read: Philip Gourevitch, "Alms Dealers"</p> <p>Recommended: Fabian Klose, "The Emergence of Humanitarian Intervention, Three Centuries of 'Enforcing Humanity'"</p>
WEEK 5	
Tuesday 09/20	<p>Human Rights in Extremis: Genocide</p> <p>Read: Scott Straus, "What is Genocide? What is Mass Atrocity?"</p> <p>Recommended: Excerpt from Dirk A. Moses, <i>The Problems of Genocide Permanent Security and the Language of Transgression</i></p> <p>Document: Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide, 9 December 1948</p>

	Document: "We Charge Genocide" 1951
WEEK 6	
Tuesday 09/27	US Holocaust Memorial Museum Virtual Visit Read: the articles and view the media in the USHMM Online Encyclopedia Class meeting time will be open office hours
WEEK 7	
Tuesday 10/11	Human Rights in Extremis: Torture Read: Manfred Nowak, "What Practices Constitute Torture? US and UN Standards" Document: Four Geneva Conventions
WEEK 8	
Tuesday 10/18	In-Class Midterm
WEEK 9	
Tuesday 10/25	Migration; Annotated Bibliography Workshop I Read: Karla Cornejo Villavicencio, "Chapter 1: Staten Island" Recommended: David Miller, "Is There a Human Right to Immigrate?" Recommended: Kieran Oberman, "Immigration as a Human Right" Recommended: Lea Ypi, "Borders of Class, Migration, and Citizenship in the Capitalist State"
WEEK 10	
Tuesday 11/01	Disability and Human Rights; Annotated Bibliography Workshop II Read: Alison Dundes Renteln, "Cross-Cultural Perceptions of Disability: Policy Implications of Divergent Views"
WEEK 11	
Tuesday 11/08	Gender and Human Rights Read: Sandra D. Lane and Robert A. Rubenstein, "Judging the Other: Responding to Traditional Female Genital Surgeries" Recommended: Rebecca Cook, "State Responsibility for Violations of Women's Human Rights" Document: International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination

<i>WEEK 12</i>	
Tuesday 11/15	Labor Rights Read: Philip Alston, “‘Core Labor Standards’ and the Transformation of the International Labor Rights Regime” Read: Brian A. Langille, “Core Labor Standards - The True Story (Reply to Alston)” Recommended: Saadia Toor, “Child Labor in Pakistan: Coming of Age in the New World Order”
<i>WEEK 13</i>	
Tuesday 11/22	Individual Research Conferences Hold an individual meeting on Zoom or in G546.
<i>WEEK 14</i>	
11/29	In-Class Advocacy Presentations; Relating Social Justice and Human Rights; Concept Review Read: Excerpts from <i>Can Human Rights Bring Social Justice?</i>

GRADING AND REQUIREMENTS

Class Participation	20%
Holocaust Memorial Museum Assignment	15%
Midterm	20%
Human Rights Advocacy Project	45%
Annotation I (5%)	
Annotated Bibliography (20%)	
Presentation (20%)	
Reflective Essay (Extra Credit +2%)	
TOTAL	100%

A+	97+
A	93 to 97
A-	90 to 93
B+	87 to 90
B	83 to 87
B-	80 to 83
C+	77 to 80
C	73 to 77
C-	70 to 73
D	60 to 70
F	<60

CLASS PARTICIPATION

It is essential that you come to class on time and prepared to engage in with the material and participate constructively in class. You can participate by listening attentively; raising informed discussion points; asking pertinent questions; connecting discussion to reading material and relevant experiences; listening to others’ perspectives; sharing the floor with others; and soliciting input from your peers in group activities. Constructive participation requires honoring the electronics policy.

Each week, a Journal activity on Blackboard will be open to students who attend and engage in class as a record of Class Participation. Journals are due at the start of next Tuesday’s class (4:30pm) and are not accepted late.

HOLOCAUST MEMORIAL MUSEUM ASSIGNMENT

In week 6, you are asked to visit the Holocaust Encyclopedia created by the U.S. Holocaust Memorial Museum. You will complete an assignment based on your observations from the Holocaust Encyclopedia and our course content on genocide.

IN-CLASS MIDTERM

The midterm exam consists of multiple choice and short answer questions and will reflect the material we have covered during the first half of the course. It is an open-note and open-book exam.

HUMAN RIGHTS ADVOCACY PROJECT

Explore a contemporary human rights or social justice issue of your choice.

A. Annotation I (5%)

This assignment asks you to practice finding and annotating a substantive and authoritative source that will help to inform you about your topic.

B. Annotated Bibliography (20%)

In your annotated bibliography, you will present your preliminary observations about the issue you are researching. You will then annotate three additional relevant sources.

C. Presentation (20%)

Based on your research, present a brief analysis of that issue, deliver three talking points, and provide tools for digital activism in a 5-8 minute presentation to the class.

REFLECTIVE ESSAY (EXTRA CREDIT)

For this extra credit assignment, you will submit an essay reflecting on your experience learning about social justice and human rights topics and concepts through in our course.

COURSE POLICIES

COURSE MODALITY

This course will follow all policies and guidance set by Mason Korea. Should any class sessions need to be adjusted or canceled due to health and safety concerns, students will be notified by email and can continue to check Blackboard for course materials and updates

The Korean Ministry of Education recommends that higher education instruction be conducted in person and as such, this course has been designed for in person instruction and learning. Course sessions will not be recorded to fully engage in an interactive learning environment. PPTs will be available to view for 1 week after each class in a screen recording format (no audio).

PREPARING FOR CLASS

Before each class, check the syllabus to see what the assigned texts are. Read the items marked “read” and bring the text to each class, either in hard copy, or on your laptop. If you are using an electronic device to access our class texts, make sure you are using a PDF reader that can highlight and annotate—all our class texts are OCR scanned so you can easily highlight, underline, and take notes on these documents.

ABSENCES

Absences have a strong correlation to student success, so it is to your benefit to attend class. When you are absent from class, there are several steps to take to ensure the continuity of your learning: (a) review the assigned reading, (b) view the screen recording of the PPT, (c) consult a peer. If you were absent from class and would like to complete the weekly journal, you may appeal for access by communicating with the professor. In your message, confirm that you have completed (a), (b), and (c) independently. If you experience a longer or more serious interruption to your semester, we will discuss how best to accommodate it.

CLASSROOM ENVIRONMENT

We will conduct discussions with civility and respect for differing ideas, perspectives, and traditions. It is expected for us to disagree with one another, and we should feel free to debate. We do so in the spirit of dialogue: to keep the conversation as open and informative for everyone as possible. When in doubt (of any kind) please ask me for guidance and clarification and if you feel our classroom is not meeting your needs in these regards, please let me know.

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 for myself, and you may address me as “Professor Zhang” in email and verbally.

ASSIGNMENTS

All assignment due dates are as indicated on Blackboard. Assume all due dates on blackboard are in Korean Standard Time (KST), not Eastern Time (ET). Weekly Journals are not accepted late. Other assignments may be accepted within three days (72 hours) of the due date. The assignment grade will be reduced one mark (-3.33 or reducing one letter grade) for each day it is late.

ELECTRONICS AND TECHNOLOGY

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 only. Course materials and recordings are not to be distributed, sold, or employed for any other purposes.

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. Emails that I send to our class will also be posted as Blackboard announcements which you can view on the “Home Page” of our course Blackboard. I will respond to emails within 24 hours on weekdays. After that period, you are encouraged to send me a “following up” message.

OFFICE HOURS

Office hours are for you; this time is dedicated to supporting your learning. You are welcome to come to my office (G546) during office hours without making an appointment. You may also request an office hour appointment outside of those times by email.

UNIVERSITY POLICIES AND RESOURCES

SAFE RETURN TO CAMPUS DURING COVID-19:

All in the Mason Korea community play an important role in keeping our classroom environment and one another safe during the current conditions. You are responsible for familiarizing yourself with Mason Korea building safety protocols and local government regulations. Your faculty recognizes that local COVID-19 conditions and individual situations can vary throughout the semester. Should you need academic accommodations, immediately communicate with your faculty and academic advisor for case-by-case arrangements. For counseling, students can contact Jan Lee (jlee227@gmu.edu, 032-626-6142).

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.

ACADEMIC RESOURCE CENTER

The Academic Resource Center offers tutoring and workshops to support your academic progress. To discuss academic support resource available to you, please contact Eunmee Lee, Ph.D., Director of the Academic Resource Center at elee45@gmu.edu. (<https://masonkorea.gmu.edu/resources-and-services/academic-resource-center>)

COUNSELING AND WELLNESS

Counseling and Wellness aims to provide comprehensive support services that promote the personal, social, and academic success of George Mason University Korea students. (<https://masonkorea.gmu.edu/resources-and-services/counseling-and-wellness>)

DISABILITY SERVICES:

Disability Services at George Mason University is committed to providing equitable access to learning opportunities for all students. If you are seeking accommodations for this class, please visit the Disability Services office (<https://masonkorea.gmu.edu/resources-and-services/disability-services>)