Course description
Human rights are universal; and yet they are under threat everywhere. The international consensus of 1948 seems to be fading rapidly as more people show less and less empathy toward other human beings. In spite of the ever expanding UN activities throughout the world, the steady development of an international human rights regime characterized by new treaties, regional human rights organizations, and recent activities regarding humanitarian assistance, peacekeeping, and refugee protection human rights themselves still face resistance and/or outright opposition. Whether through State’s actions or group’s or collective’s rights demands, or exaggerated individualism, an international human rights culture based on the recognition of universalism is now being eroded.

The course’s aim is to discuss the more recent historical and political developments that seem to be the cause of the deterioration of natural, equal, and universal human rights. In the first part of the course, discussion will center on the debate on the universality of human rights, the role of UN organizations, civil wars and conflicts, emergence of right-wing populist movements, and post-conflict resolution mechanisms. The second part of the course will focus on a number of case studies that may illustrate the decline of the human rights culture.

Course expectations
Students will have the opportunity to openly discuss what ails human rights at the national and international levels both through weekly discussions of readings and through carefully organized class presentations.

Course requirements
Marking for this course is determined by the following assignments:

1. An end-of-term examination worth 25 percent of the course grade, held in class on 29 November 2016. Format of this examination appears at the end of this course outline.

2. A research paper worth 20 percent of the course grade, due on Tuesday 15 November 2016 at the beginning of the regular class. Topics and instructions for the paper appear at the end of this course outline.
3. A research paper worth 25 percent of the course grade, due on Tuesday 21 March 2017 at the beginning of the regular class. Topics and instructions for the paper appear at the end of this course outline.

4. Class participation, worth 10 percent of the final mark (at the instructor’s discretion). A student’s participation involves regular attendance and the active engagement in the discussion of required readings and class presentations.

5. A class presentation in the second term and worth 20 percent of the course mark.

**Accommodation**

Students who require academic accommodation must contact Student Accessibility Services (SAS) to make arrangements with a Program Coordinator. Academic accommodations must be arranged for each term of study. Student Accessibility Services can be contacted by phone at 905-525-9140 ext. 28652 or e-mail at sas@mcmaster.ca. For further information, consult McMaster University Policy for Academic Accommodation of Students with Disabilities.

**Academic Integrity**

Students are expected to exhibit honesty and use ethical behaviour in all aspects of the learning process. Academic credentials students earn are rooted in principles of honesty and academic integrity. Academic dishonesty is to knowingly act or fail to act in a way that results or could result in unearned academic credit or advantage. This behaviour can result in serious consequences, e.g., the grade of Zero on an assignment, loss of credit with a notation on the transcript (notation reads: “Grade of F assigned for academic dishonesty”) and/or suspension or expulsion from the University.

It is the student’s responsibility to understand what constitutes academic dishonesty. For information on the various kinds of academic dishonesty refer to the Academic Integrity Policy located at www.mcmaster.ca/academicintegrity. The following illustrates only three forms of academic dishonesty:

1. Plagiarism, e.g., the submission of work that is not one’s own or for which other credit has been obtained.
2. Improper collaboration in group-work.
3. Copying or using unauthorized aids in tests and examinations.

**NB:** In addition to a hard copy, students must submit assigned work electronically at gallegui@mcmaster.ca. Each written submission and assignment must include a statement signed by the student that the work is original and no plagiarism has been committed in its development and production.
**Turnitin.Com**
In this course a web-based service (Turnitin.com) might be used to reveal plagiarism. Students will be expected to submit their work electronically to Turnitin.com and in hard copy so that it can be checked for academic dishonesty. Students who do not wish to submit their work to Turnitin.com must still submit a hard and electronic copy to the instructor on the due dates. No penalty will be assigned to a student who does not submit work to Turnitin.com. All submitted work is subject to normal verification that standards of academic integrity have been upheld (e.g., on-line search, etc.). To see the Turnitin.com Policy, go to www.mcmaster.ca/academicintegrity

**Communication**
Students who communicate electronically with the instructor must at all times use their McMaster University email address, as other email addresses will not be acknowledged. Students are encouraged to visit the instructor during scheduled office hours. Students must regularly check Avenue to Learn for updates on the course (Power Point class presentations, messages, announcements, etc.)

**Unexpected Circumstances**
The instructor and university reserve the right to modify elements of the course during the academic term. The university may change the dates and deadlines for any or all courses in extreme circumstances. If either type of modification becomes necessary, reasonable notice and communication with the students will be given with explanation and the opportunity to comment on changes. It is the responsibility of the student to check his/her McMaster email and course websites weekly during the term and to note any changes.

**McMaster Student Absence Form (MSAF)**
This is an online, self-reporting tool for students to report absences that last up to three (3) days, and to request accommodation for any missed academic work that is worth less than 25 percent of the final grade. This tool cannot be used during any final examination period. It is the prerogative of the instructor to determine the appropriate relief for missed term work. Students may submit a maximum of one request per term. The form should be filled out immediately when the student is about to return to class after an absence. It is the student’s responsibility to follow up in person with the instructor immediately (within two working days) about the nature of the accommodation. Students who have been absent for more than three (3) days, have missed academic work worth 30 percent, or more, or exceed one request per term must see their Faculty Academic Advisor. Students will be required to provide supporting documentation.
Religious accommodations
Students who require academic accommodation due to religious reasons, indigenous, and spiritual observances need to familiarize themselves with the University Policy on Academic Accommodation for Religious, Indigenous, and Spiritual Observances and discuss it as well with the instructor.

Text requirements

Course readings are available ‘On Reserve’ at the McMaster University Library: Galleguillos, Nibaldo. 2016. PS 4D06 Human Rights and International Politics. Readings labeled as “Available Online” can be directly downloaded through the University Library system.

Schedule of classes and required readings

This is a seminar course and attending classes is an important part of the learning process. While required readings provide a general background to the issues discussed in class, additional and complementary perspectives are presented and discussed in greater depth by the instructor. Assignments, especially the examination and the research papers must reflect familiarity with all the readings and class discussions. Relevant films may be also shown throughout the term.


Required readings


Recommended reading


Required readings


**September 27.** The State and the Human Rights Paradox.
**Required readings**


**October 4.** Right-wing Populism and its Attack on Human Rights.
**Required readings**


**October 10-16. University Mid-term Recess. No class this week.**

**October 18.** Human Rights and Development (and globalization).
**Required readings**


**October 25.** UN International Human Rights Institutional Regime. Successes and Failures.
**Required readings**

**November 1.** Torture and Human Rights

**Required readings**


**Recommended Reading**


**November 8.** Human Rights Justice and Truth and Reconciliation Commissions.

**Required readings**


**November 15. Case study:** Chile’s Military Government and Human Rights Violations. General Pinochet and the case for Universal Jurisdiction.

**Required Readings**


**November 22.** Assessing the International Criminal Court’s Performance.

**Required readings**


**November 29.** End-of-term in-class examination worth 25 percent of course mark
**December 7. Case Study.** The Democracy-Human Rights Trade-Off: Egypt’s 'short-lived democratic spring'.

**Required readings**


**Second term**

The following topics have been tentatively selected for the second term. Students are required to choose one of them for individual/group presentation. That choice will need to be made half-way the first term, i.e. by early November, in order to prepare the corresponding readings and/or order relevant supporting materials (documentaries, films, etc.).

- **January 10.** Indigenous Peoples’ Human Rights
- **January 17.** Children’s Human Rights
- **January 24.** Economic Sanctions Regime and their Impact on Human Rights
- **January 31.** Globalization and Human Rights
- **February 7.** Counterdrug Wars
- **February 14.** Case study: The International Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia
- **February 20-26. University Mid-term Recess. No class this week.**
- **February 28.** Case study: The South African Truth and Reconciliation Commission.
- **March 7.** The Rwandan Genocide.
- **March 14.** Better late than never: Argentina’s prosecution of human rights abusers.
- **March 21.** Right to Make the International Criminal Court more accountable and transparent.
- **March 28.** Reforming the National Security State and Respect for Human Rights.
- **April 4. Wrap up.** A New Human Rights Culture…Wither extreme claims of Individualism?
ASSIGNMENTS & PENALTIES

Penalty for late papers will be one sub-letter grade deduction for each working day of delay, up to a maximum of one week. After one week, the instructor may refuse to accept this assignment, unless proper medical certification stating a prolonged inability to fulfill academic responsibilities is provided. Marks for papers accepted by the instructor after one week of lateness will be lowered by one letter grade. Students must talk to the instructor with anticipation if they believe they have a legitimate reason for an extension. Other courses' assignments and work responsibilities do not qualify as legitimate excuses. The instructor assumes no responsibility for assignments left under his office door, faxed, or texted (none of which is advised).

Make-up examinations will be granted only in exceptional circumstances, and entirely at the instructor’s discretion.

The format for the in-class examination is as follows: The examination has three parts: Part I asks to identify the background, explain the meaning, and discuss the significance of concepts and definitions discussed in class. It is worth 30% of the examination. Part II asks to answer an essay question, and is worth 40% of the examination. Part III ask students to choose one from several posed essay questions. It is worth 30% of the examination.

Class participation includes regular attendance, involvement in the discussion of the readings, and active questioning of the issues raised by the instructor’s in class as well as fellow students’ class presentations. The instructor will let students know their participation mark at the end of each term.

Class presentation involves (1) choosing one of the topics indicated in the course outline (second term); (2) selecting at least two academic readings for the rest of the class and instructor to prepare in advance; (3) use of films and documentaries (optional) that illustrate the subject matter; (4) delivering a well-organized presentation with pertinent research questions, evidence, argument, and conclusion; and (5) presenting the class with a set of questions for follow-up discussion.

The research paper for the first term should focus on an issue that addresses the persistent criticisms of the United Nations’ failure to (1) either prevent conflict and war (failure of humanitarian intervention and/or peacekeeping operations), (2) bring about real and sustained development for three-fourths of humanity; (3) support democratically elected governments (Egypt, Venezuela, Turkey, others); (4) adjudicate justice in an impartial and systematic manner (i.e. the shortcomings of the International Criminal Court), and (5) address the need for democratic reform within the United Nations itself by addressing the veto power
of the five permanent members of the Security Council.

The research paper for the second term should address how current developments in the areas of globalization, democratic transition, social media, and militarization facilitate or obfuscate the consolidation of a worldwide human rights culture.

Each term paper should be between 12-to-15 pages long, not including Title Page and Bibliography. It should be typed, double spaced, with standard margins, properly paginated, and carefully edited. In addition to the hard copy, students also must send an electronic copy to gallegui@mcmaster.ca on the same day they submit the printed version of the paper.