**HRT/ PLS 105**

**Introduction to Human Rights**

Fall 2018

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**Office Hours**: Wed. 4:30-5:30pm, Fri. 9:30-10:30am and by appt.

*Where…do universal human rights begin? In small places, close to home. . . . [T]hey are the world of the individual person; the neighborhood he lives in; the school or college he attends; the factory, farm, or office where he works. Such are the places where every man, woman, and child seeks equal justice, equal opportunity, equal dignity without discrimination. . . . Without concerted citizen action to uphold them close to home, we shall look in vain for progress in the larger world.*

Eleanor Roosevelt

**Course Description:**

The language of human rights pervades our global politics as never before and is becoming increasingly important in the realm of US politics. But what are human rights? Where do they come from? And what do they do or what do we hope that they do? As we will see in this course, human rights have many faces: they are a philosophical concept that is contested, a legal tool used to advance equality and justice, and a moral and political language that can be empowering but also disappointing. This course will introduce students to the historical and conceptual development of human rights as moral ideals, legal realities, and cultural norms that shape our relationship to each other and with governments. Analysis is theoretical, exploring philosophical arguments surrounding the historical development of human rights and their current role in legal, cultural, literary, and political products. Emphasis will be placed on ethical reasoning and written communication

**General Education Student Learning Objectives:**

This course meets the Philosophy and Literature requirement of the General Education Foundations curriculum. Phil & Lit GEs are designed to engage students in conversations about the fundamental ideas and values that shape cultures and civilization. They introduce students to texts central to that conversation. In this course, the conversation is about the meaning, history, and political and cultural import of human rights. At the end of the course, students will be able to:

1) Explore philosophical aspects of human rights;

2) Identify and contrast schools of thought that defend and criticize human rights;

3) Develop ethical reasoning faculties to evaluate schools of thought on human rights;

4) Compare human rights approaches to contemporary political, social, and economic issues;

5) Illustrate the impact of human rights in contemporary culture;

6) Defend human rights as a moral, political and legal approach to solving world problems;

7) Explore the impact of human rights protections, violations, and interactions on one’s own life and in relationship to one’s future plans.

**Required Texts:**

Goodhart, ed., *Human Rights: Politics and Practice* (3rd Edition)

Hayden, ed., *The Philosophy of Human Rights* (Ha)

Kidder, *Mountains Beyond Mountains* (MBM)

\*\*\*Additional readings available on Blackboard (B) or as Class Handouts (H)

**Course Grading and Requirements**

Class Attendance 5%

Class Participation 5%

Quizzes 20%

Exam #1 20%

Final Exam 35%

Short Paper 15%

\*\*\*See Blackboard for grading scale

**Class Attendance (5%):** I will take attendance or send around a sign-in sheet at the beginning of each class session. *If you are absent for a regular class, you do not have to contact me*.(If there is a larger problem preventing you from attending class on a regular basis, you should come speak to me.)

*Class attendance is mandatory but each student can be absent for two class sessions without penalty, except on days there are quizzes or assignments are due.* Each additional absence will incrementally lower the attendance portion of the course grade. I calculate the attendance as follows: For this MWF course, there are **38 class days** (excluding the first week and an optional meeting day). If you were to attend 36 times (plus your two excused absences = 38), then your attendance grade would be 100%. If you were to miss 33 times, your attendance grade would be 92%. Multiply by .05 (as attendance is worth 5%, or .05, of your course grade) to calculate what your attendance points are out of the 100 points for your total course grade.

**If you miss class,** it is YOUR responsibility toacquire notesfrom another student since any of the material covered in class may appear on an exam. In addition, you are responsible for finding out about announcements made in class, including changes to the syllabus, schedule, or due dates for assignments. Before contacting me, be sure that you **1)** check with another student in the class, **2)** check Blackboard for updates, and **3)** review the assigned readings. Do not simply email and ask what you missed.

**Class Participation (5%):** Students are expected to attend class sessions having done the reading and ready to discuss or raise questions about it. Participation is required and it is determined by a combination of quality and quantity of engagement in class discussion. See Blackboard for participation grading standards.

**Ungraded Assignments:** To facilitate participation, I have designed several assignments that you will submit during the semester. These are required though not graded and count for 1 point each towards your participation grade. Each student will be responsible for talking about their response once during the semester. More details to come.

**Quizzes (20%):** I will give three graded quizzes during the course of the semester and will count your two best grades. Each quiz is worth 10%. These quizzes will include several short answer questions based on the readings. If you have done the reading for the day, these should not be too difficult.

**Exam #1 (20%) and Final Exam (35%):** These in-class exams will combine short answer questions with short essay questions. The final will be cumulative and review sheets will be distributed a week prior to the exam. More details to come.

**Short Paper (15%):** All students will write a short paper on one of the chapters in the Hayden or the Goodhart book that we have not discussed and provide an annotated bibliography of at least two additional sources. More details to come.

**Additional Important Information:**

* This is a NO DEVICES CLASSROOM. Use of phones, ipads, computers, etc. during class is prohibited, except with permission of the instructor.
* Any student who requires accommodation because of a physical or learning disability must contact Disability Support Resources (http://www.gvsu.edu/dsr) at 616-331-2490. After you have documented your disability, please make an appointment to see me during the first two weeks of the semester. I will gladly work with students to provide the appropriate accommodations. All discussions will remain confidential.
* If you have a question about course requirements or due dates, check the syllabus.
* If you lose your syllabus, a copy can be found on Blackboard.
* The topics and reading schedule are subject to change at the instructor’s discretion.

**Class Schedule:**

All readings assigned for a particular day must be read before class on that date.

**Make-ups and Late Work:**

Only those with a documented excused absence are entitled to make up missed work. A half grade deduction will be assessed for each day an assignment is late. No work will be accepted more than three days past the due date.

**Plagiarism:**

Plagiarism is a serious academic offence. It involves using the work of another person and presenting it as one’s own. It is generally defined as the submission of material authored by another person but represented as the student’s own work, whether that material is paraphrased or copied in verbatim or near-verbatim form. Though using someone else’s words or ideas is absolutely acceptable and expected, improper acknowledgment of sources (including websites) in written work will be counted as plagiarism.

**Email Etiquette:**

Should you need to get in touch with the instructor by email, be sure that your message includes the following:

- Subject line

- Formal Salutation (e.g., Dear Professor Zivi)

- Full sentences and correct punctuation

- Closing (e.g., Sincerely, X or Thank you, X)

Emails that have no proper salutation or are written as if they were text messages, will go unanswered. Treat communication with professors as you would communication with a boss at a job you are interested in keeping. DO NOT SEND EMAILS WITH ATTACHMENTS ONLY.

**Recordings:**

No recording is permitted in class without permission of the instructor.

**Class Schedule:**

**Due Date: Readings Ungraded Assignments Due**

**I. Introduction to the Course**

**M 8.27**  Read: Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR) (H)

**II. Philosophical Foundations of Human Rights**

**W 8.29** Read: Goodhart: pp. 2 to top of 6, pp.12 to top of 14, pp. 16-17

***Assignment:***

Reading question responses

***\*F 8.31* No Class – *Take On-line Pass/ Fail Quiz*** (before 8am Sat. 9.1)

Reread: Goodhart: pp. 2- top of 6, 12-top of 14

Read: Goodhart: pp. 14-17

**M 9.3 No Class – Labor Day Holiday**

**III. The Revolutionary Character of Rights**

**W 9.5** Reread Goodhart

Read: Hunt, pp. 26-31 (B)

**F 9.7**Read: Locke (Ha, ch. 7)

*\*****M 9.10 Quiz #1***

Reread: Locke, (Ha, Ch. 7)

Read: Locke, Ch. 19 (H)

Read: The Declaration of Independence (Ha, ch. 30)

**IV. The Gendered Nature of Rights**

**W 9.12** Read: Wollstonecraft (Ha, ch. 11)

Read: The Declaration of Sentiments (B)

**F 9.14** Read: Wollstonecraft (Ha, ch. 11) ***Assignment:***

Reading question responses

**V. Dehumanization, Racialization, & the Birth of Contemporary Human Rights**

**W 9.17** *The Path to Nazi Genocide* (B) (Watch before class!)

Read: UDHR, (Ha, ch. 33) ***Assignment:***

Film Analysis Write Up

**W 9.19** Read: Letter from Birmingham Jail (B)

**VI. Genocide** **and Human Rights**

**F 9.21** Read: Goodhart, ch. 20 (pp. 352-364, 367-368)

Read: Genocide Convention (Ha, Ch. 51)

***\*M 9.24* *QUIZ #2***

Read: Goodhart, ch. 20 (pp. 352-364, 367-368)

Reread: Genocide Convention (Ha, ch. 51)

**W 9.26 In class film:** *Sometimes in April*

**F 9.28 In class film:** *Sometimes in April*

**VII. Humanitarian Intervention**

**M 10.1** Discuss Film

Read: Smith, (Ha, ch. 41) ***Assignment:***

Film Analysis Write-Up

**W 10.3**  Read: Smith (Ha, ch. 41)

**F 10.5** Catch up & Exam Review

***\*M 10.8* *Exam #1***

**VIII. Contemporary Women’s Human Rights**

**W 10.10** Read: Goodhart, Ch. 2 (pp. 33-40)

Read: MacKinnon (Ha, ch. 43)

**F 10.12** Reread: MacKinnon (Ha, ch. 43)

**M 10.15 Brooke Ackerly Visit**

Reread: Goodhart, Ch. 2 ***Assignment:***

Write two questions to ask Dr. Ackerly

*Due via Blackboard by 9pm on Sunday 10.14*

**IX. Human Rights & Forced Migration**

**W 10.17** Read: Goodhart, ch. 18 (pp. 312-320, 328-329)

**F 10.19 In-class Film:** *The Good Lie*

**M 10.22 In class Film:** *The Good Lie*

**W 10.24** Reread: Goodhart, ch. 18 ***Assignment:***

Film Analysis Write Up

**X. Sexual Orientation & Gender Identity (SOGI)**

**F 10.26**  Read: Goodhart, Ch. 11

**M 10.29** Read: Donnelly (Ha, ch. 44)

**W 10.31** Read: Donnelly (Ha, ch. 44)

**F 11.2** Yogyakarta Principles (B)

**XI. Healthcare as a Human Right**

**M 11.5** Read: *Mountains Beyond Mountains*, Part I & II

**W 11.7** Read: *Mountains Beyond Mountains*, Part I & II

**F 11.9** Read: *Mountains Beyond Mountains*, Part III

***\*M 11.12 QUIZ #3***

Read: *Mountains Beyond Mountains*, Part III-IV

**W 11.14** Read: *Mountains Beyond Mountains*, Part IV-V

**F 11.16** Read: *Mountains Beyond Mountains,* Part V

**XII. Working on Papers**

***\*M 11.19* Writing Workshop:** Paper topics and draft short summaries due

**W-F 11.21-25 Thanksgiving Holiday**

***\*M 11.26* No Class: Short Paper Meeting Day** (Optional)

Annotated bibliography of two related sources due by 5pm

**W 11.28 Group Work Day:** Bring rough draft of paper to class

**XIII. Indigenous Rights**

**F 11.30** Read: Goodhart, ch. 19

**M 12.3** Read: Goodhart, ch. 19

***\*W 12.5*** Catch up & Contemporary Politics

***Paper due via Blackboard by midnight.***

**F 12.7** Wrap up & Final Exam Review

**Final Exam:**

11am Class Wednesday Dec. 12 10-11:50am

12pm Class Wednesday Dec. 12 2-3:50pm