POU44062 – Human Rights

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Module Code: POU44062
Module Name: Autocracy 2019-2020
ECTS Weighting: 5
Semester/Term Taught: Hilary Term

Contact Hours:
Monday, 4-6 PM (TBC)
Office 6.01*, 3 College Green
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*Follow the signs towards the Secretary Conference Room. The office is located above the admin office of the Department of Political Science.

This course examines the politics of human rights and repression. It aims to provide students with a greater understanding of the concept of human rights. The first part of Hilary term approaches the concept of human rights in a comparative perspective, discussing universal and cultural conceptualizations of human rights, their importance in international politics, ways to measure and quantify human rights. The second part of the term explores explanations of human rights violations and repression, the actors who engage in this process and ways to improve human rights practices in countries around the world. At the end of this class, students should be able to answer the following questions: What are human rights and where do they come from? Why do governments protect or violate them? How do we improve human rights? Besides a substantive understanding of the topic of human rights and repression, students will develop an ability to engage in informed debates about human rights and have an improved ability to make logical, convincing oral and written arguments.

Learning Outcomes
On successful completion of this module students should be able to:

- Understand the origin of human rights and debate their universality and specificity for various cultural backgrounds
- Examine the role of international institutions and norms in promoting human rights
- Explore various approaches in quantifying human rights
- Analyse the determinants of repression and the actors involved in human rights violations
- Understand mechanisms to improve human rights practices around the world
- Be able to critique readings, analyse evidence and construct informed arguments.
Module Learning Aims

The module aims to introduce students to the fundamental concepts and prominent approaches in the empirical human rights. Students will gain a thorough understanding of the main theoretical and empirical debates in the discipline, and be able to discuss and evaluate theoretically and empirically explanations of human rights performance.

Assessment Details

The grade for this course will be calculated as follows:

1. Class participation (10%) – students will receive points based on their class participation. The class participation is based on doing the reading and engaging in the discussion of the weekly subjects.

2. Analytical essay (30%): Students will be provided with several subjects on human rights. Each student will select one topic and will engage in a critical and analysis review of the empirical literature on the topic. Students need to summarize the main arguments and findings in the literature, and engage in a critical analysis of the literature. The essay are NOT a mere summary of the literature, but rather the student needs to offer a critique of the literature and (ideally) a way forward/solution to the problem(s) identified in the literature. Examples of such would be a critical evaluation of research design and suggestions to overcoming limitations, discussion of the assumptions of a theoretical approach and possible extensions of a theory, and/or critical evaluation of an empirical analysis.

Important note: The word count of the essay is 2,000 words (including title, footnotes and references). The essay is due on 8th March 2019 at 6 PM. The 10% +/- rule on word count does NOT apply. Essays exceeding the word count will be penalized.

3. Final exam (60%): Students will sit a 90 minutes examination during which they will need to answer two essay style questions.

Readings:

The reading list is divided between three different types of readings:

1. Required readings – these readings are mandatory to all students participating in class. They will form the starting point for the class discussion, it will build on the main arguments from the reading(s) and all exam questions will find their logic in these reading(s).

2. Selected readings – these readings will add more nuance and substance to the class discussion. Every week, 2-3 students, will do one of these readings and they will be responsible for summarizing and explaining to their peers how the selected reading complements the required reading. Students will be assigned the required readings at least a week in advance so that they can prepare accordingly.
(3) **Additional readings** – these readings will be an extension of the required and selected readings. These reading are all within the topic of the week and will provide further avenues for students looking to gain a more in-depth understanding of the subject.

**Key Readings:**


**Week 1- Introduction**


**Week 2 – What are human rights? Where do they come from?**

**Required reading:**


**Selected readings:**


**Additional readings:**

Donnelly 2013, Chapter 1.
Glendon 2001, Chapters 3-5.
Carey, Gibney, Poe (2010) Ch.3, and Ch.4


**Week 3 – Human Rights and International Law**

**Required reading:**


**Selected readings:**

Donnelly 2013, Chapters 2.

**Additional readings:**
Donnelly 2013, Chapters 4
Optional Protocol to the ICCPR: [http://www.ohchr.org/EN/ProfessionalInterest/Pages/OPCCPR1.aspx](http://www.ohchr.org/EN/ProfessionalInterest/Pages/OPCCPR1.aspx)
Second Optional Protocol to the ICCPR: [http://www.ohchr.org/EN/ProfessionalInterest/Pages/2ndOPCCPR.aspx](http://www.ohchr.org/EN/ProfessionalInterest/Pages/2ndOPCCPR.aspx)
International Covenant on Economic, Social, & Cultural Rights (ICESCR): [http://www.ohchr.org/EN/ProfessionalInterest/Pages/CESCR.aspx](http://www.ohchr.org/EN/ProfessionalInterest/Pages/CESCR.aspx)
Optional Protocol to the ICESCR: [http://www.ohchr.org/EN/ProfessionalInterest/Pages/OPCESCR.aspx](http://www.ohchr.org/EN/ProfessionalInterest/Pages/OPCESCR.aspx)

**Week 4 – Universalism and Relativism**

**Required reading:**

**Selected readings:**

**Additional readings:**
Donnelly 2013, Chapters 6 and 7.
Week 5 – Conceptualization and measurement of HR

Required reading:

Selected readings:

Additional readings:

Week 6 – The Political Science of Human Rights

Required reading:

Selected readings:

Recommended readings:

*(Reading Week 2-9th March 2019)*

**Week 7 – Dissent and Repression**

**Required reading:**

**Selected readings:**

**Additional readings:**

**Week 8 – Institutional Explanations of repression**

**Required reading:**

**Selected readings:**

**Additional readings:**


**Week 9 – Principals and agents of repression**

**Required reading:**

**Selected readings:**


**Additional readings:**


**Week 10 – International intervention and Human Rights**

**Required reading:**

**Selected readings:**


**Additional readings:**
Carey, Gibney, Poe (2010). Chapter 6


**Week 11 – NGOs and Human Rights**

**Required reading:**


**Selected Readings:**


**Additional readings:**


