

**Georgetown University  
School of Continuing Studies  
Bachelor of Arts in Liberal Studies**

**International Human Rights Law  
BLHV 244  
Summer 2012**

**Professor Kaara Martinez  
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**Class time:** Tuesdays and Thursdays 5:45 - 9:30 p.m.  
June 5 – July 5

**Class location:** TBD

**Office hours:** By appointment

**Course overview:**

This course seeks to help students develop an understanding of the fundamentals of international human rights. It introduces students to the world of human rights generally, and provides students with a foundation upon which to understand the pressing human rights concerns of our time. It is an introduction to international human rights, and applicable hard and soft law instruments will be used to guide this overview. The course will provide a broad survey of the principles of human rights and the spectrum of international standards. It will examine the growth of international humanitarian concern, philosophical issues related to human rights, as well as mechanisms for the implementation of human rights.

**Learning Goals:**

- Students will develop an understanding of international law and its relationship to human rights.
- Students will learn the history and philosophy of human rights and the relationship between human rights and culture. Students will be able to think critically about the interface of culture and human rights and to challenge the notion of universal human rights.
- Students will develop an understanding of both the international and regional institutional framework for promoting and protecting human rights and how human rights work in terms of implementing mechanisms.
- Students will understand the difference between economic, social and cultural rights and how they are enforced, and civil and political rights and how they are enforced. Students

will be encouraged to question whether and why all of these rights as enumerated in the international covenants must be protected.

- Students will learn the principles of equality and non-discrimination with respect to race discrimination and women's rights. Students will be able to look deeply and objectively at cultural practices to critically evaluate human rights concerns and to formulate strategies for protection.
- Students will learn about some of history's massive human rights violations, such as the Holocaust and Rwanda genocide, and how these atrocities led to the protection mechanisms in place today.
- Students will be equipped to analyze new and emerging challenges for human rights, such as protecting against terrorism and the impact of 9/11 on the field of human rights.

### **Required Textbooks:**

*International Human Rights in Context: Law, Politics, Morals* by Philip Aston, Ryan Goodman, and Henry J Steiner (3ed. 2007) **ISBN-10: 019927942X**

Selected International Human Rights Instruments and Bibliography for Research on International Human Rights Law by Weissbrodt, Fitzpatrick and Newman (3ed. 2001)  
**ISBN 0-8205-6327-7**

Additional articles will be posted to Blackboard.

### **Class Participation:**

All students are expected to participate in class. Class participation provides an opportunity for you to demonstrate your understanding of the theories, concepts, and practices learned in the course. Success in this course depends on the preparedness and active engagement of all students, and the readings and assignments listed on this syllabus should therefore be done prior to class. Class participation accounts for 10% of your final grade.

### **Essays:**

You are required to write two essays during the course of the semester, of 4-6 pages in length. Essays must be submitted to turnitin.com by 5pm on the due date. Each essay counts for 25% of your final grade in the course.

### **Final Exam:**

There will be a closed book, comprehensive final exam. You will be required to answer three questions and you will have the entire class time to complete the exam. The final exam constitutes 40% of your final grade in the course.

### Grading System

Class Participation	10 percent
Essays	50 percent
Final Exam	40 percent

The following is provided as a guide used for assessing grades in all areas of the grading system.

<b>A</b>	100-93 percent
<b>A-</b>	92-90
<b>B+</b>	89-87
<b>B</b>	86-83
<b>B-</b>	82-80
<b>C+</b>	79-77
<b>C</b>	76-73
<b>C-</b>	72-70
<b>D+</b>	69-67
<b>D</b>	66-60
<b>F</b>	59 and below

A

- Consistently accurate referencing
- Grammar and spelling accurate
- Fluent academic writing style
- Consistently demonstrates independent, original thought and execution
- Excellent critical reflection on jurisprudence, policy and advocacy strategies
- Has addressed the purpose of the assignment comprehensively and with imagination
- Analytical and clear conclusions well-grounded in literature and evidence
- Confident, convincing expression of argument
- Ability to critically analyze different sides of a complex issue
- Developed and justified conclusions using a comprehensive range of sources that have been thoroughly analyzed, applied and discussed

## B

- Grammar and spelling accurate and writing fluent
- Referencing mainly accurate
- Thoughts and ideas clearly expressed
- Ability to critically analyze the text, literature and other evidence, developing own ideas in the process
- Consistent understanding of facts and issues demonstrated
- Ability to critically analyze many sides of a complex issue/problem
- Has addressed the purpose of the assignment coherently and with some imagination

## C

- Assignments show an attempt to organize in a logical manner
- Meaning apparent, but language not always fluent, grammar and spelling contain a number of errors
- Referencing is mainly accurate
- Evidence and arguments presented in a mainly descriptive manner
- Limited support for conclusions in evidence, literature or texts
- Attempts to demonstrate an understanding of the subject area, but aspects are confused or underdeveloped
- Some areas of the work show an attempt to be critical, but the approach is not consistent and evidentiary conflicts are not addressed or recognized
- The purpose of the assignment is only recognized in part

## D

- Superficial understanding of task
- Referencing mediocre at best
- Evidence and argument are present but wholly inadequate
- Poor presentation of topic
- Minimally acceptable grammar and spelling
- Meets only the minimum standard for analysis

## F

- Presentation is disorganized and incoherent
- The meaning of the assignment is unclear with unacceptable grammatical and spelling errors
- Referencing is absent or unsystematic
- Literature and other sources of evidence are either not consulted or are irrelevant to the assignment set

- Unsubstantiated/invalid conclusions based on anecdotes and generalizations
- Understanding of the assignment not apparent, work lacks a coherent framework, or subject is confused and underdeveloped
- No evidence of attempt to be critical or to recognize or address informational conflicts or differing viewpoints
- Submissions do not address the task set

### **Attendance**

Students are expected at all meetings of this course. We do understand that from time to time, family, personal or work emergencies may arise. In those circumstances, please contact me immediately. Please note that the BALS attendance policy is strictly adhered to, and more than two absences may result in involuntary withdrawal from the course.

### **Late Papers**

Except in rare circumstances, late papers are not accepted. In case of emergency, this rule can be waived with appropriate documentation and cause. Requests for extensions must reach me no later than a week before the paper is due.

### **Incomplete**

Incompletes are given in only the most extraordinary circumstances and with appropriate documentation. Where an incomplete is granted, a grade of “N” shall be granted until the work is handed in and, then, the grade shall be changed accordingly. In no case shall work submitted after the announced date (date will be announced in class) be granted an incomplete. The work shall be delivered no later than 4 p.m. on that day. Failure to adhere to this rule will result in an F.

### **Citation System**

Students may use APA or MLA style in all papers submitted in the course.

### **Students with Disabilities Policy**

- Students with documented disabilities have the right to specific accommodations that do not fundamentally alter the nature of the course. Some accommodations might include note takers, books on tape, extended time on assignments, and interpreter services among others. Students must obtain an official letter from the Academic Resource Center listing the exact accommodations needed.
- Students with disabilities should contact the Academic Resource Center (ARC) (Leavey Center, Suite 335; 202-687-8354; [arc@georgetown.edu](mailto:arc@georgetown.edu); <http://ldss.georgetown.edu/index.cfm>) before the start of classes to allow their office time to review the documentation and make recommendations for appropriate accommodations. If accommodations are recommended, you will be given a letter from ARC to share with your professors. You are personally responsible for completing this

process officially and in a timely manner. Neither accommodations nor exceptions to policies can be permitted to students who have not completed this process in advance.

**Honor System**

All students are expected to follow Georgetown's honor code unconditionally. If you have not done so, please read the honor code material located online at:  
<http://gervaseprograms.georgetown.edu/honor/system/>

**Turnitin.com and Plagiarism**

Students agree that by taking this course all required papers will be subject to submission for Textual Similarity Review to Turnitin.com for detection of plagiarism. If a student is suspected of plagiarism, the student's work will be referred to the University Honor Council for further review and penalty. If a student is found to have plagiarized, they will receive a zero for the assignment.

Date	Class Week/Area of Focus	Readings/activities
June 5, 2012	<p><b><i>Culture and human rights</i></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Introduction to human rights</li> <li>- Universal Declaration of Human Rights</li> <li>- Universalism vs. Cultural Relativism</li> </ul>	<p>Steiner pp. 134-139, 517-540</p> <p>Weissbrodt pp. 24-28</p>
June 7, 2012	<p><b><i>Regional Protections</i></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Regional human rights systems</li> <li>- The role of civil society</li> <li>- Human Rights Defenders</li> </ul>	<p>Steiner pp. 933-946, 1020-1029, 1062-1083</p>
June 12, 2012	<p><b><i>Civil and Political Rights; Social and Cultural Rights</i></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- ICESCR</li> <li>- ICCPR</li> </ul>	<p><b>Essay 1 due</b></p> <p>Steiner pp. 151-160, 263-285</p> <p>Weissbrodt pp. 28-50</p>
June 14, 2012	<p><b><i>Women's Rights</i></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women</li> <li>- Female Genital Mutilation</li> </ul>	<p>Steiner pp. 175-176, 183-196, 546-564</p> <p>Wiessbrodt pp. 68-77</p>
June 19, 2012	<p><b><i>Racial Discrimination</i></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination</li> <li>- Indigenous Peoples</li> </ul>	<p>Weissbrodt pp. 58-68</p>

June 21, 2012	<b><i>Massive Human Rights Tragedies</i></b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Genocide: the crime of crimes</li> </ul>	<b>Essay 2 due</b> In-class video: Hotel Rwanda Weissbrodt pp. 55-58 Steiner pp. 1319-1331
June 26, 2012	<b><i>Massive Human Rights Tragedies</i></b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Crimes Against Humanity</li> <li>- Prosecutions</li> </ul>	Steiner pp.1243-1248, 1275-1288, 1302-1305 Weissbrodt pp. 302-310
June 28, 2012	<b><i>Limitations on Human Rights</i></b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- International humanitarian law</li> <li>- Humanitarian Intervention</li> <li>- War on Terror</li> </ul>	Steiner pp. 375-386, 396-401
July 3, 2012	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- The future of human rights</li> <li>- Review Session</li> </ul>	
July 5 2012	<b>Final Exam</b>	