

COURSE SPECIFICATION DOCUMENT

Academic School/Department: Social Sciences and Humanities

Programme: International Relations
American Studies
Political Science

FHEQ Level: 5

Course Title: International Human Rights

Course Code: INR 5105

Total Hours: 120

Timetabled Hours: 45

Guided Learning Hours: 0

Independent Learning: 75

Credits: 12 UK CATS credits
6 ECTS credits
3 US credits

Course Description:

This course will cover the evolution of international human rights and of the various regional and international treaties and institutions designed for their protection. It will interrogate the fundamental tension between state sovereignty and individual rights, and explore examples and case studies from around the world for the causes for human rights violations and the responses to them. It will further examine the meaning of human rights in various western and non-western political and cultural contexts, and examine their impact on people living in these contexts. Students will have an opportunity to critically evaluate a number of specific human rights and explore the motivations and barriers for their protection, and the role of a range of actors who promote or push back against the idea of international human rights.

Pre-requisites:

GEP 4180 Research and Writing 2

Aims and Objectives:

- To acquaint students with the nature, scope, and key concepts in the realm of human rights, as well as the international framework for the implementation of such rights
- To explore the way in which actors and institutions in international relations promote and limit the meaning and scope of human rights in the light of, for instance, global inequalities or cultural differences
- To provide a background for eventual careers in fields (including work in government, international organisations, business, and the media) which require articulate, clear-thinking individuals with a grasp of the politics of international human rights
- To provide a framework to assist concerned citizens to think critically about issues that are of increasing importance in the 21st century
- To promote critical engagement with a wide range of literature, and the development of both a succinct writing style, and the ability to present complex arguments orally

Programme Outcomes:

International Relations: A5(i); B5(i); C5(ii); C5(iii); D5(i)

American Studies: B5i, C5ii, C5iii, D5i

Political Studies: A5i, B5i, C5ii, C5iii, D5i, D5ii

A detailed list of the programme outcomes is found in the Programme Specification. This is maintained by Registry and located at:

<https://www.richmond.ac.uk/programme-and-course-specifications/>

Learning Outcomes:

- At the end of this course, the students will have achieved the following learning outcomes.
- Demonstrates a critical engagement with key thinkers and theoretical approaches to international human rights
- Demonstrates a detailed understanding of the formal and informal actors and institutions that exercise power and influence over the international human rights regime
- Demonstrates a critical and theoretical engagement with core problems of international human rights in practical settings
- Takes responsibility for their own learning, and completes assigned work with a degree of clarity, contextualisation, critical thinking, and reflexive normative understanding appropriate for a 5000-level course
- Demonstrates flexible writing and analytical skills that translate directly into the workplace in producing analyses of international human rights issues, including the ability to adapt work to different contexts, audiences, and levels of complexity

Indicative Content:

- Concept, scope and nature of international human rights
- Historical foundations of international human rights
- Fundamental tensions – state sovereignty, universalism, cultural relativism
- International instruments and institutions for the protection of human rights
- Regional instruments and institutions for the protection of human rights
- The role of non-state actors (for-profit and not-for-profit) in the creation and implementation of human rights standards
- Special regimes for the protection of human rights

Assessment:

This course conforms to the University Assessment Norms approved at Academic Board and located at: <https://www.richmond.ac.uk/university-policies/>

Teaching Methodology:

This course will be taught through a combination of lectures and seminar-type activities, including group work, sub-group activities, classroom discussion, and the showing of documentaries. The general approach to classes is informal, and discussion is viewed as an essential part of an interactive and participatory learning program. Audio-visual aids, study materials and electronic learning resources will be used as appropriate.

Lectures provide a framework for the course, and are designed to ensure students have an overview of main issues and concerns on a particular topic, receive clarification on the major points of debate understand the broad dimensions of core problems, and are aware of relevant literature in the specific area of concern. It is essential that lectures are supplemented with assigned readings; together, the readings and the lectures are designed to provide guidance for seminar discussion.

Seminar classes are based on the principle of active and student-directed learning, and are designed to be Safe, Enjoyable, Managed, Inclusive, Necessary, Academic, Respectful & Stimulating. The seminars provide an opportunity for discussion of contentious issues, addressing questions and exploring academic debates in more depth, group and sub-group discussion. They are encouraged to share their opinions freely, but must also maintain respect for the opinions of others. It is expected that students will participate regularly in discussions in a creative, competent and critical way, as the formulation of their own thoughts and clarification of their assumptions, often in contradiction to other students' thoughts and assumptions, form a crucial part of the learning process. Students are expected to come to seminar classes prepared.

Indicative Texts:

Forsythe, David P. (2012) *Human Rights in International Relations*. 3rd ed. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Steiner H. (Ed.) (2007). *International Human Rights in Context: Law, Politics, Morals*. 3rd ed. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Smith, Rhona K.M. (2007). *Textbook on International Human Rights*. 3rd ed. Oxford: OUP Oxford.

Donnelly, J. (2006). *International Human Rights: Dilemmas in World Politics*. Westview Press.

An-Na'im, Abdullahi Ahmed (Ed.) (1992). *Human Rights in Cross-cultural Perspectives: A Quest for Consensus*. Philadelphia, PA: University of Pennsylvania Press.

See syllabus for complete reading list.

Change Log for this CSD:

Nature of Change	Date Approved & Approval Body (School or LTPC)	Change Actioned by Academic Registry
Various updates as part of the UG programme review	AB Jan 2022	
Revision – annual update	May 2023	
Total Hours Updated	April 2024	