

COURSE SPECIFICATION DOCUMENT

Academic School / Department: Social Sciences and Humanities
Programme: MA International Relations
FHEQ Level: 7
Course Title: Human Rights and Global Politics
Course Code: INR 7428

Student Engagement Hours: 200
Lectures: 39
Seminar / Tutorials: 6
Independent / Guided Learning: 155

Credits: 20 UK CATS credits
10 ECTS credits
4 US credits

Course Description:

This course offers an in-depth examination of the concept and practice of human rights through the lens of global politics. The course explores theoretical and historical assessments of the origins and theoretical foundations of the concept of human rights across a range of traditions, from liberalism to Marxism and post-colonialism. It further examines and evaluates the legacy of ideals of human rights within Western and non Western contexts and the problem of universalism in particular. The course will chart the expansion of liberal conceptions of right and will interrogate tensions between state sovereignty and principles of universal right. The course will closely examine a number of international rights regimes and students will have an opportunity to assess the work of international organisations, nongovernmental organisations, states and other actors in the enforcement and promotion of human rights. This course may be co-taught with INR6405 International Human Rights.

Prerequisites:

MA International Relations and MA International Development students only

Aims and Objectives:

To cultivate a sophisticated understanding of some of the central debates, themes and contestations within the general framework of International Human Rights

- To promote an abstract and critical space for thinking about a wide and intellectually demanding range of literature, and develop the ability to articulate this thought clearly and concisely in both the written and spoken form.
- To provide a conceptual and empirical understanding of a range of debates relating to the promotion and enforcement of international human rights.
- To introduce students to the principal concerns in the realm of theories of human rights and universalism in the context of global politics.
- To examine the debate over the usefulness and effectiveness of these instruments in addressing international human rights regimes.

Programme Outcomes:

A; B; C; D; E; F; G

A detailed list of the programme outcomes are found in the Programme Specification. This is maintained by Registry and located: <https://www.richmond.ac.uk/programme-and-course-specifications/>

Learning Outcomes:

By the end of this course, successful students should be able to:

- Demonstrates the ability to develop critical responses to, and a systematic and historical understanding of, theoretical approaches to international human rights
- Demonstrates a systematic and critical understanding of key debates in international human rights, and the reflexive relationship between these and practical developments in the realm international human rights politics
- Demonstrates a systematic and critical understanding of the formal and informal actors and institutions that exercise power and influence over international human rights regimes
- Demonstrates an ability to design and undertake substantial investigations of theory and practice in the broad area of international human rights
- Demonstrate the ability to exercise initiative in organising and pursuing projects and assignments
- Exercises initiative in the design and implementation of substantial investigations of themes and debate in human rights
- Demonstrate the ability to gather, organise and effectively communicate complex and abstract ideas and diverse information in the context of the theory and practice of human rights

Indicative Content:

- Historical foundations of international human rights
- Theoretical foundations of human rights
- Critical theories of human rights
- Fundamental tensions – state sovereignty, universalism, cultural relativism
- International instruments and institutions for the protection of human rights
- The role of state and non-state actors (for-profit and not-for-profit) in the creation and implementation of human rights standards

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:

The course will consist of weekly postgraduate seminars, which will follow the structure set out within the course syllabus and will serve a number of functions: seminars provide a framework for the course; address critically the relevant literature in specific areas, examine concepts, theories and case studies, and enable students to engage in group discussion and dialogue, and autonomous learning. Seminars rely upon active student participation, mediated by the Course instructor. By examining and discussing issues and problems in a seminar setting, students as junior research colleagues will be able to learn from each other and resolve questions that arise in the course of the lectures and readings. Seminars will only be useful to the extent that they are prepared for and participation in discussions and debates is an essential aspect of this. All students will be required to participate. Tutorial opportunities will also be available for research supervision and other academic support.

Indicative Text(s):

- Forsythe, David P. *Human Rights in International Relations*. 3rd ed. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012.
- Alston, Philip, and Ryan Goodman. *International Human Rights in Context: Law, Politics, Morals*. Edited by Henry J. Steiner. 3rd ed. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007.
- An-Na'im, Abdullahi Ahmed, ed. *Human Rights in Cross-cultural Perspectives: A Quest for Consensus*. Philadelphia, PA: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1992.
- Donnelly, J. (2006). *International Human Rights: Dilemmas in World Politics*, Westview Press

Journals

Web Sites

See syllabus for complete reading list.

Change Log for this CSD:

Nature of Change	Date Approved & Approval Body (School or AB)	Change Actioned by Registry Services
Revision – annual update	May 2023	