



**Political Science 2219E (Huron University College)  
The Politics of Human Rights  
Course Outline**

**Prerequisites:** Pol.Sci.1020E

**Type: Intersession** (Essay) May 10/21 to June 17/21 (final exam period June 21-22)

**Place: Online: Synchronous/Asynchronous**

**Instructor: Dr. Robert F. Jonasson**

**Office Hour: no formal hours at Huron (please e-mail) but Wednesday Zoom time will have an opportunity for you to speak with me (3pm-4pm)**

E-mail address: rjonasso@uwo.ca (please e-mail anytime)

**COURSE DESCRIPTION:** Political Science 2219E, the Politics of Human Rights, is a course which examines the theoretical underpinnings, political dimensions and real-world applications of human rights. The course combines a focus on the political dimension associated with human rights, the background, meaning and interpretation of human rights, with a focus on the claims of cultural relativism and the special 'problem' of women and children's rights. Part of the course will focus on human rights through a comparative analysis of particular countries' human rights records, with an emphasis on the international actors and governance structures such as the United Nations (and related human rights treaties) and the International Criminal Court.

**COURSE LEARNING OBJECTIVES**

Students should have definitional knowledge and understanding of elements of political theory, comparative politics and international relations as this applies to the topic of human rights and its political manifestations. By the end of this course, students will be able to identify the key components of the politics of human rights and examine several historical and current states' human rights records. Students will have an appreciation of the strengths and weaknesses of the human rights concept.

**GRADE BREAKDOWN: (more info on these items is in the outline)**

**1) ESSAY: 8-10 page paper due Tuesday, June 8/21 by 4pm in OWL -Assignments – Essay - worth 50%**

**2) FINAL EXAM (TBA online, take-home, open-book essay – on whole course): worth 30%**

**3) 5 ON-LINE FORUM POSTS: worth 5% (1% each) These are online in OWL - Forums.**

**4/ ASSIGNMENT: Your own view of human rights. 4-6 double-paced pages due Thursday, May 27/21 by 4pm in OWL – Assignments – Assignment: worth 15%**

**RECOMMENDED READING:**

Tremblay, Kelly, Lipson and Mayer. 2009. *Understanding Human rights*. This is not available at UWO Bookstore any longer. If you cannot get it, follow the course notes instead.

**REQUIRED READINGS:**

All required readings will be on OWL. All readings are given below and are subject to change.

*Week #1:* week beginning May 10 - **The Genealogy of the Human Rights Discourse** -- course introduction, expectations; Human Rights - a basic intro; sources of Western Human Rights and non-Western traditions: Judeo-Christian revelation; the natural law tradition in the West; Islamic views; Critical traditions: Orthodox Marxism; utilitarianism; National Socialism

**Readings** – Rerum Novarum pdf (Leo XIII, 1891); Declaration of the Rights of Man and the Citizen pdf (France, 1789); The Cairo Declaration on the Human Rights in Islam pdf (Organization of the Islamic Conference, 1990); Marx’s critique of human rights pdf (author unknown, 2010); utilitarianism pdf

*Week #2:* week beginning May 17 - **Beyond Negative Rights** - Human Rights as individual rights: negative and positive liberty; group rights – are they human rights?

**Reading** – textbook Ch.1

*Week #3:* week beginning May 25 (24 is a holiday) - **Are Human Rights consistent with multiple meanings of them?** – women’s rights and children’s rights; Human Rights and cultural relativism;

**Reading** – textbook Chs.4,7

Thursday, May 27 – **Assignment due by 4m**

*Week #4:* - week beginning May 31 - **Human Rights Instruments and Enforcement Mechanisms** – Human Rights treaties; International forums for justice; compliance and the difficulty of enforcement

**Readings** – Universal Declaration of Human Rights pdf (U.N., 1948); International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights pdf (U.N., 1966); International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights pdf (U.N., 1966); International Criminal Court pdf (Rosenthal, 2001) + textbook Chs.2,3

*Week #5:* week beginning June 7 - **The abuse of Human Rights: Case Studies** - Nazi Germany and the USSR ; North Korea and Russia (Chechnya)

**Readings** – The Soviet Union and Stalin pdf; Nazi Germany pdf; North Korea and human rights pdf (Human Rights Watch, 2011); Chechnya and human rights pdf (Human Rights Watch, 2007)

Tuesday, June 8: - **Essay due by 4pm**

*Week #6:*- week beginning June 14 - **Con't** - China, the United States

**Readings** -- China and human rights pdf (Lum, 2008); The American death penalty and human rights pdf (Dieter, date unknown)

The late penalty is 2% per working day (Fridays and weekends do not count). **In all cases, the date when submitted to OWL is the date which will be considered definitive when assigning late penalties. For both the assignment and the essay, a grade of zero will be assigned if more than 2 weeks past the due date. This late penalty does not apply to forum posts.**

**ESSAY TOPICS POL.SCI. 2219E**  
**PROF. JONASSON**

*Topic suggestions: (create your own thesis statement out of the below)*

- 1/ The sources of human rights thinking – why should human rights exist and what makes us worthy of them?
- 2/ Which rights should be considered human rights and why?
- 3/ Is the current Western human rights discourse an imposition on non-Western peoples?
- 4/ Can any of the international institutions/treaties that we now have consistently and realistically help to realize human rights?
- 5/ Does the enforcement of human rights require a sovereign world state?
- 6/ Look at any 2 current nation-states and compare their main human rights records. NOTE: Use the rights in the ‘International Bill of Rights’ to compare.

**NOTE: You may do your own topic but it must be approved by the instructor. Questions must be similar in scope and nature to the ones above. Failure to get approval will result in grade of 0.**

**Due Date:** Tuesday, June 8/21 in OWL-Assignments-Essay by 4pm (**do not wait until the last minute – lates will be strictly enforced; if you submit the wrong file, you must e-mail me the correct one before the deadline**). Turnitin will be used.

**Length:** 8-10 pages double-spaced. You must have a bibliography and papers must be properly cited.

**Files:** the e-files must be in Word or PDF format and must have your last name as the start of the file name

**Lost Assignments:** It is your responsibility to have other copies of your paper.

**Bibliography:** You must include a bibliography

**Citations and other items:** See Essay Instructions document on OWL.

**PLEASE SEE ESSAY INSTRUCTIONS DOCUMENT IN OWL – RESOURCES**

### **2219E ASSIGNMENT**

**Length:** 4-6 pages double-spaced minimum (but 10 maximum)

**Due date: Thursday, May 27/21 by 4pm in OWL – Assignments - Assignment (do not wait to the last minute – lates will be strictly enforced; if you submit the wrong file, you must e-mail me the correct one before the deadline)**

**Lost Assignments:** It is your responsibility to have other copies of your paper (e-file)

**Bibliography:** not needed

**Citations:** not needed

You are simply to outline your own view of human rights answering the following (in any way you want):

1/ Do humans have human rights? If yes, which rights are paramount?

2/ If yes, why should they have rights (what are their sources)? If no, why not?

Write in complete sentences and paragraphs.

NOTE: The Essay Instructions document may give you some help here, so consult it, but remember this assignment is not an essay.

This assignment is pass/fail: if you do the above properly, you will get 15/15. If it is not done correctly, you will get 0/15. **I will not comment on or return these assignments.** I will post

the grades to OWL by the end of May. The regular late penalty applies for late assignments (see above) ,

### **2219E ON-LINE FORUM QUESTIONS AND RESPONSES**

On **OWL – Forums** – you will be answering 5 questions in 6 weeks (see times in outline below) which you will access by going to OWL- Forums on various Tuesdays and Thursdays between 1-4pm (you must do them in these time frames)

The question will be straightforward and short. You must then post an answer in Forums close to 1 double-spaced page long (you may go over this, but try to keep it near 1 page). These are opinion questions no formal research is required. *It is your post, not a response to another post that counts.* If I cannot see your post, it is not valid. Make sure you have posted it correctly.

#### **DO NOT COMMENT ON THE OTHER STUDENT POSTS OR POST LINKS OR CUT AND PASTE OTHER WRITINGS**

**Due date:** By 4pm on the dates below. **Do not wait until the last minute – even one minute late means I will delete your answer.**

**Marks: 5% of total grades (1% for each of 5).** You must do 5 of the sessions offered (any 5) and they not graded. I will lock sessions once they are finished. **NOTE: There are no make-ups.**

**Weeks:** Tuesdays – May 18; May 25; June 1; June 15; Thursdays – May 13; May 20; June 3; June 10; June 17

### **GENERAL COURSE RULES AND SUGGESTIONS**

The following rules are to be taken very seriously. They will be strictly enforced. Every student must be treated fairly; the rules below will ensure that all students will be treated in a just manner. If you follow the rules and suggestions laid out here, you will have a much better chance of doing well in the course. If you break the rules, you will suffer certain consequences.

1/ Do not be disruptive in class. After one warning, you will be asked to leave. Continual behavioral problems may lead to more severe consequences (eg. removal from the course).

2/ Come to class on time.

3/ Ask questions intelligently. The prof will let you know when questions can be asked (i.e. later in the lecture). Do not ask questions for the sake of asking them (i.e. to show ‘interest’, to ‘stick out’ etc.). Questions should contribute to the lecture. Questions about course material can usually be answered in this course outline.

4/ All grade values in the course outline are ‘set in stone’. There will be no re-weighting or bell-curve. No extra assignments will be given. No items will be omitted from the final grade.

5/ All due dates (eg. essays, assignments, tests, exams) in the course outline are ‘set in stone’, unless they are moved to a later date by the instructor. Under no condition will due dates be made *earlier* than the dates indicated in the course outline.

6/ Do not assume your past (eg. past grades, experience level, age) is the key to your future performance. Profs assume everyone wishes high grades. Please do not indicate to the prof that you need or expect a certain grade in the course.

7/ All essays must be handed to the instructor in-class and/or online on the due date.

8/ As indicated in the policy of the dept., there are some legitimate excuses which may allow students to get limited extensions for essays, tests and exams. **MOST MAJOR ITEMS IN THE COURSE MUST BE ACCOMPANIED BY AN OFFICIAL NOTE (eg. doctor’s note) which is shown to Academic Counselling.** Dates must be present to indicate the time period the student was affected. **Academic Counselling must approve your request before I will.**

9/ If an extension is warranted, the prof and the student will negotiate a time frame for submission. This time frame cannot be just what the student wants.

10/ I take all marking very seriously and I am unwilling to change a grade unless I have made a real error (eg. marked you down for a statement which is not wrong; marked you down for a grammatical error which is not wrong). Subjective feelings are not a valid basis for an appeal (eg. “I think you are too hard on me”; “I have never had a mark this low”). An appeal must go to me first. Your grade may go up, stay the same or go down (I would give then you an average of the old grade and the new grade). You may go down if I discover critical things I missed the first time.

**All appeals must be put into writing. I may take a day or more to make my decision. I do not discuss with students about their papers on the day I hand them back.**

11/ If you are a student with a serious concern, whether valid or not, and you are unable to keep up with the course for a long period of time, the prof strongly advises that you drop the course. Students who get too far behind generally do not finish in any case or receive an uncharacteristically low grade. Sometimes unfortunate events occur in our lives; try to persevere, but if you cannot, it is no shame to reduce your course load in certain situations.

12/ Please do not ask the instructor for final grades (or final exam grades). These must be released by the Registrar’s Office first.

13/ I will give students basic references (for jobs, student exchange programs etc.) if their grade is above 75% in a class in which I have taught them (final grade). **For all post-graduate references (law school, grad school, teachers' college etc.) and scholarships, students must have completed at least 3 courses (half or full) with me beyond 1020E and have a grade of 80% or better (as an average in the courses). If students took 1020E with me, they may or may not factor the grade in this class into their average, but they will need 3 more classes (half or full).** However, good character is an important consideration for promotion as well. I do not promote opportunists (eg. those who ask for higher grades without merit) or those with 'entitlement' attitudes. Make sure you give me at least 3 weeks notice for any deadlines and always give me all forms and postage. **I will do a maximum of 4 paper/online references for a student in a term.**

### **ADDITIONAL COURSE PROCEDURES (ESPECIALLY FOR ON-LINE INSTRUCTION)**

1/ **E-Mail:** You may e-mail me at [rjonasso@uwo.ca](mailto:rjonasso@uwo.ca) anytime. I will check e-mail several times a day Monday to Saturday (not including any holidays) – from 10am to 7pm. I will endeavour to answer your e-mails within several hours during the above period (from 7pm to 10am, you may e-mail, but I will take longer to respond). There may be some exceptions to the above, but I will try to stick to this schedule. Please always be courteous.

2/ **Questions:** Ask questions intelligently. Do not ask questions for the sake of asking them (i.e. to show 'interest', to 'stick out' etc.). Please ask specific questions about the topics; questions like 'can you explain this topic to me?' are too broad. I cannot tutor each student obviously. Questions about course material can usually be answered in this course outline or on other documents. Of course, ask away! I'm especially glad to answer thoughtful questions.

3/ **Lecture Notes:** These are on OWL in Resources. They are partially replacing my lectures while the course is online and are now the most detailed ever. They are crucial to what I want you to know. The readings are excellent but use them to illuminate the material in the notes (you must read them though!). Material in the readings not covered in the notes will not be tested (even if I still hope you will read it!). If the notes and readings disagree, go with me. I have placed all the notes together by topics (generally in order). How you go about learning them is up to you, but the outline is suggesting a certain weekly breakdown.

4/ **Lecture files:** These will be posted in OWL –Resources before the class and are more like my normal lectures and so are partially replacing them. Some may be posted during the course.

5/ **Zoom meetings:** These will be held every Monday (except May 24) and Wednesday through Zoom-OWL at 1pm sharp and will be used to discuss course outline expectations, items, i.e. the essay and give students a chance to ask questions about the weekly topics. Please read the weekly topic materials in OWL to ask questions. They are not lectures but I will attempt to fill in some blanks if need be. I realize some of you are in different time zones etc., so I understand if the synchronous meetings will be difficult for some of you.

**Attendance is strongly encouraged but no formal attendance will be taken. The Zoom link will be in OWL - Zoom.**

**6/ Grading scheme:**

The University of Western Ontario Senate has adopted a set of grade descriptors which explain the meaning of grades assigned in all university courses:

- A+ 90-100% One could scarcely expect better from a student at this level
- A 80-89% Superior work which is clearly above average
- B 70-79% Good work, meeting all requirements, and eminently satisfactory
- C 60-69% Competent work, meeting requirements
- D 50-59% Fair work, minimally acceptable
- F below 50% Fail

**7/ Problems with OWL/Internet:** If OWL is officially down for all students generally for a period of more than 12 hours on the day something is due, I will permit an extension to all students – generally, the next day. However, short problems cannot justify this, even to the deadline itself. My advice is do not wait to submit work at the last minute on due days!  
*Personal computer/internet/OWL issues are not valid grounds for an excuse.*



## **Appendix to Course Outlines: Academic Policies & Regulations 2021 - 2022**

### **Prerequisite and Antirequisite Information**

Students are responsible for ensuring that they have successfully completed all course prerequisites and that they have not completed any course antirequisites. Unless you have either the requisites for this course or written special permission from your Dean to enroll in it, you may be removed from this course and it will be deleted from your record. This decision may not be appealed. You will receive no adjustment to your fees in the event that you are dropped from a course for failing to have the necessary prerequisites.

### **Student Code of Conduct**

Membership in the community of Huron University College and Western University implies acceptance by every student of the principle of respect for the rights, responsibilities, dignity and well-being of others and a readiness to support an environment conducive to the intellectual and personal growth of all who study, work and live within it. Upon registration, students assume the responsibilities that such registration entails. While in the physical or online classroom, students are expected to behave in a manner that supports the learning environment of others. Please review the Student Code of Conduct at: <https://huronatwestern.ca/sites/default/files/Res%20Life/Student%20Code%20of%20Conduct%20-%20Revised%20September%202019.pdf>.

### **Attendance Regulations for Examinations**

A student is entitled to be examined in courses in which registration is maintained, subject to the following limitations:

- 1) A student may be debarred from writing the final examination for failure to maintain satisfactory academic standing throughout the year.
- 2) Any student who, in the opinion of the instructor, is absent too frequently from class or laboratory periods in any course will be reported to the Dean of the Faculty offering the course (after due warning has been given). On the recommendation of the Department concerned, and with the permission of the Dean of that Faculty, the student will be debarred from taking the regular examination in the course. The Dean of the Faculty offering the course will communicate that decision to the Dean of the Faculty of registration.

Please review the policy on Attendance Regulations for Examinations here:

[https://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic\\_policies/exam/attendance.pdf](https://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic_policies/exam/attendance.pdf).

### **Statement on Academic Offences**

The statement: "Scholastic offences are taken seriously and students are directed to read the appropriate policy, specifically, the definition of what constitutes a Scholastic Offence, at the following website:

[https://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic\\_policies/appeals/scholastic\\_discipline\\_undergrad.pdf](https://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic_policies/appeals/scholastic_discipline_undergrad.pdf).

### **Academic Integrity: Importance and Impact**

Being at university means engaging with a variety of communities in the pursuit and sharing of knowledge and understanding in ways that are clear, respectful, efficient, and productive. University communities have established norms of academic integrity to ensure responsible, honest, and ethical behavior in the academic work of the university, which is best done when sources of ideas are properly

and fully acknowledged and when responsibility for ideas is fully and accurately represented.

In the academic sphere, unacknowledged use of another's work or ideas is not only an offence against the community of scholars, it is also an obstacle to academic productivity. It may also be understood as fraud and may constitute an infringement of legal copyright.

A university degree is a significant investment of an individual's, and the public's, time, energies, and resources in the future, and habits of academic integrity protect that investment by preserving the university's reputation and ensuring public confidence in higher education.

**Students found guilty of plagiarism will suffer consequences ranging from a grade reduction, to failure in the course, to expulsion from the university. In addition, a formal letter documenting the offence will be filed in the Dean's Office, and this record of the offence will be retained in the Dean's Office for the duration of the student's academic career at Huron University College.**

### **Turnitin.com**

All required papers may be subject to submission for textual similarity review to the commercial plagiarism detection software under license to the University for the detection of plagiarism. All papers submitted for such checking will be included as source documents in the reference database for the purpose of detecting plagiarism of papers subsequently submitted to the system. Use of the service is subject to the licensing agreement, currently between The University of Western Ontario and Turnitin.com (<http://www.turnitin.com>).

### **Statement on Use of Electronic Devices**

It is not appropriate to use electronic devices (such as, but not limited to, laptops, cell phones) in the classroom for non-classroom activities. Such activity is disruptive and distracting to other students and to the instructor, and can inhibit learning. Students are expected to respect the classroom environment and to refrain from inappropriate use of technology and other electronic devices in class.

### **Statement on Use of Personal Response Systems ("Clickers")**

Personal Response Systems ("clickers") may be used in some classes. If clickers are to be used in a class, it is the responsibility of the student to ensure that the device is activated and functional. Students must see their instructor if they have any concerns about whether the clicker is malfunctioning. Students must use only their own clicker. If clicker records are used to compute a portion of the course grade:

- the use of somebody else's clicker in class constitutes a scholastic offence
- the possession of a clicker belonging to another student will be interpreted as an attempt to commit a scholastic offence.

### **Academic Consideration for Missed Work**

Students who are seeking academic consideration for missed work during the semester may submit a self-reported absence form online provided that the absence is **48 hours or less** and the other conditions specified in the Senate policy at

[https://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic\\_policies/appeals/accommodation\\_illness.pdf](https://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic_policies/appeals/accommodation_illness.pdf) are met.

Students whose absences are expected to last **longer than 48 hours**, or where the other conditions detailed in the policy are not met (e.g., work is worth more than 30% of the final grade, the student has already used 2 self-reported absences, the absence is during the final exam period), may receive academic consideration by submitting a Student Medical Certificate (for illness) or other appropriate documentation (for compassionate grounds). The Student Medical Certificate is available online at

[https://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic\\_policies/appeals/medicalform.pdf](https://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic_policies/appeals/medicalform.pdf).

All students pursuing academic consideration, regardless of type, must contact their instructors no less than 24 hours following the end of the period of absence to clarify how they will be expected to fulfill the academic responsibilities missed during their absence. **Students are reminded that they should consider carefully the implications of postponing tests or midterm exams or delaying submission of work, and are encouraged to make appropriate decisions based on their specific circumstances.**

Students who have conditions for which academic accommodation is appropriate, such as disabilities or ongoing or chronic health conditions, should work with Accessible Education Services to determine appropriate forms of accommodation. Further details concerning policies and procedures may be found at: <http://academicsupport.uwo.ca/>

### **Policy on Academic Consideration for a Medical/ Non-Medical Absence**

#### **(a) Consideration on Medical Grounds for assignments worth *less than 10%* of final grade: Consult Instructor Directly**

When seeking consideration on **medical grounds** for assignments worth *less than 10%* of the final course grade, and if the student has exceeded the maximum number of permissible Self-Reported absences, the student should contact the instructor directly. The student need only share broad outlines of the medical situation. The instructor **may** require the student to submit documentation to the academic advisors, in which case she or he will advise the student and inform the academic advisors to expect documentation. The instructor may **not** collect medical documentation. The advisors will contact the instructor when the medical documentation is received, and will outline the severity and duration of the medical challenge as expressed on the Student Medical Certificate and in any other supporting documentation. The student will be informed that the instructor has been notified of the presence of medical documentation, and will be instructed to work as quickly as possible with the instructor on an agreement for accommodation.

#### **(b) Consideration on Non-Medical Grounds: Consult Huron Support Services/Academic Advising, or email [hurionsss@uwo.ca](mailto:hurionsss@uwo.ca).**

Students seeking academic consideration for a **non-medical** absence (e.g. varsity sports, religious, compassionate, or bereavement) will be required to provide appropriate documentation where the conditions for a Self-Reported Absence have not been met, including where the student has exceeded the maximum number of permissible Self-Reported. All consideration requests must include a completed [Consideration Request Form](#). Late penalties may apply at the discretion of the instructor.

Please review the full policy on Academic Consideration for medical and non-medical absence at: [https://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic\\_policies/appeals/accommodation\\_illness.pdf](https://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic_policies/appeals/accommodation_illness.pdf). Consult [Huron Academic Advising](#) at [hurionsss@uwo.ca](mailto:hurionsss@uwo.ca) for any further questions or information.

### **Support Services**

For advice on course selections, degree requirements, and for assistance with requests for medical accommodation, students should email an Academic Advisor in Huron's Student Support Services at [hurionsss@uwo.ca](mailto:hurionsss@uwo.ca). An outline of the range of services offered is found on the Huron website at: <https://huronatwestern.ca/student-life/student-services/>.

Department Chairs, Program Directors and Coordinators are also able to answer questions about individual programs. Contact information can be found on the Huron website at: <https://huronatwestern.ca/contact/faculty-staff-directory/>.

If you think that you are too far behind to catch up or that your workload is not manageable, you should consult your Academic Advisor. If you are considering reducing your workload by dropping one or more courses, this must be done by the appropriate deadlines. Please refer to the Advising website, <https://huronatwestern.ca/student-life/student-services/academic-advising/> or review the list of official Sessional Dates on the Academic Calendar, available here: <http://www.westerncalendar.uwo.ca/SessionalDates.cfm>.

You should consult with the course instructor and the Academic Advisor who can help you consider alternatives to dropping one or more courses. Note that dropping a course may affect OSAP and/or Scholarship/Bursary eligibility.

Office of the Registrar: <https://registrar.uwo.ca/>  
Huron Student Support Services: <https://huronatwestern.ca/student-life/student-services/>  
Accessible Education: <http://academicsupport.uwo.ca/>  
Western USC: <http://westernusc.ca/your-services/#studentservices>

### **Mental Health & Wellness Support at Huron and Western**

University students may encounter setbacks from time to time that can impact academic performance. Huron offers a variety of services that are here to support your success and wellbeing. Please visit <https://huronatwestern.ca/student-life-campus/student-services/wellness-safety> for more information or contact staff directly:

Wellness Services: [huronwellness@huron.uwo.ca](mailto:huronwellness@huron.uwo.ca)  
Community Safety Office: [safety@huron.uwo.ca](mailto:safety@huron.uwo.ca)  
Chaplaincy: [gthorne@huron.uwo.ca](mailto:gthorne@huron.uwo.ca)

Additional supports for Health and Wellness may be found and accessed at Western through, <https://www.uwo.ca/health/>.