

International Human Rights

Tue 6:30-9:30
Spring 2022
Hawthorne 100

Schedule a meeting with me on [Calendly](#)

Instructor: Dr. Bi Zhao
Office Hours: T/Th 10-11:30, W 1-4

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Course Description

This course offers an introduction to the theory and practice of human rights. It introduces you to the conceptual foundations of human rights and key theoretical debates about the field with a focus on recurring questions regarding legitimacy, justice, compliance, and efficacy. We will critically examine the international and domestic laws, actors, and institutions that play a role in the protection (or violation) of human rights. We will survey major international human rights treaties and the multilateral mechanisms that produces them, such as the United Nations Human Rights Council, as well as international, regional, and national courts and tribunals; and quasi-judicial treaty bodies (for example, the U.N. Committee Against Torture). We then discuss the role of various political actors in honoring or violating human rights. These actors include both nation-states and non-state actors, such as international human rights advocacy groups like Amnesty International, and multinational corporations. In addition, we will explore issues relating to selected rights movements from a comparative perspective. The class will be highly participatory and will encourage diversity of opinion and respect for differing views. I also encourage a faith-based approach to think about practical ways to protect human rights.

Student Learning Outcomes (SLOs)

This course seeks to help students to:

- gain the substantive **knowledge** of international law and politics concerning human rights; Students will learn about and critique the universality and indivisibility principles of human rights. They will also familiarize with the governing architecture of human rights issues at the international and transnational levels.
- develop **research skills** for social science inquiry; Students will develop an independent research project through research design, data analysis, and writing.

- articulate a **worldview or religious commitments** relate to human rights protection;
We will tie in the discussion of faith and religion when considering the protection of human rights. Our goal is to articulate, as individuals, how our broader worldview informs our understanding of different types of rights and how we can promote and protect human rights from a faith-based perspective.

Textbooks and Readings

In this class, we will primarily use Donnelly and Whelan (2020) textbook, listed as "required" below. The required textbook offers the conceptual and theoretical foundation of human rights. Suggested readings are also listed below. Additional readings and lab handouts will be made available through Blackboard.

- Donnelly, Jack, and Daniel J. Whelan. 2020. *International Human Rights*. Routledge. (required)
- Haglund, LaDawn, and Robin Stryker eds. 2015. *Closing the Rights Gap: from Human Rights to Social Transformation*. University of California Press. (recommended, available on Blackboard)
- Hertel, Shereen, and Kathryn Libal. 2011. *Human Rights in the United States: Beyond Exceptionalism*. Cambridge University Press. (recommended, available through Whitworth library)

How should I focus my attention on the readings? It is easy to get lost when reading a long chapter of the textbook. But course readings are an important part of our learning experience. Your goal in reading is not to memorize all of the details of the chapter or article, but instead to be able to do the following:

1. **Identify and define key concepts and terms:** what new concepts, theories, and phenomena are important to know in order to understand this chapter/reading?
2. **Articulate the main question(s) and the argument the author makes:** what is this chapter/reading about? What is the topic? What is the puzzle the author trying to explain?
3. **Describe the evidence the author uses:** what real world examples does the author use to support the argument(s)? Is it convincing?
4. **Be critical:** Interrogate the logic-what are the assumptions the author makes? Are the assumptions problematic? Are there real world events or phenomena that the theory/argument fail to explain?

To keep with up with the human rights news around the world, here are some additional resources:

- [United Nations Human Rights Council](#)
- [European Court of Human Rights](#)

- [Inter-American Court of Human Rights](#)
- [African Court on Human and Peoples' Rights](#)
- [Amnesty International](#)
- [Human Rights Watch](#)
- [US State Department's Human Rights Reports](#)

How to succeed in this course

1. Always try your best. Be self-motivated and disciplined. "Speak up" when questions arise. I am here to help you!
2. Know your syllabus. If there are any changes to the syllabus, I will notify you as soon as possible. It is your responsibility to be informed about the content and any changes in this syllabus.
3. Class attendance and active participation in class discussion. Students are expected to attend every class session according to the schedule and to participate in classroom discussions of the assigned readings. Active participation is crucial to your success in this class.
4. Read the assigned readings prior to each class meeting. It is your responsibility to be prepared for the class. Significant input from class members, with thoughts and questions about the readings and issues is, a large component of the entire classroom learning experience. So come to class prepared!

Assessment and Grading Policy

- **Attendance and participation, 10%.** Class attendance will be graded both by the percentage of classes attended and the degree of active participation during class. The basic attendance grade will be the percentage of classes a student attends (not counting exams): for example, a student who comes to 28 out of 30 classes would get a grade of 93%, or an A. This percentage will then be adjusted upwards by as much as 10% based on active, constructive class participation. For this system, there are no excused or unexcused absences, except for students with documented reasons requiring them to miss class for official extra-curricular activities.

What is class participation? Participation does not simply mean talking a lot in class, although joining in discussion is strongly encouraged. Participation also involves coming to class prepared (having done the reading), thinking and listening carefully, and contributing to an open classroom environment where thought and discussion are possible. In addition, students are welcome and encouraged to visit the instructor individually during office hours or by appointment.

What if I am sick or in quarantine? Please alert me via email if you are ill or isolating, and are not able to come to class in-person. This is your responsibility. You are expected to virtually participate through Zoom during isolation, as long as illness does not prevent it. Please communicate with me at your earliest convenience.

- Quizzes, 10%.** There will be **four** quizzes throughout the semester, covering *only the reading material for that day*. Most quiz days, we will take the quiz at the beginning of class. The dates of the quizzes will *not* be announced in advance. Quizzes are designed to provide a quick evaluation of how well you keep up with readings and understand the contents. Each quiz is worth 10 points. The average of the four quiz scores will be calculated into the final score.

If you know that you will miss class because of a school-sponsored activity or a doctor-excused medical condition, then you may make up the quiz. You must tell me in advance about your excused absence (other than a medical emergency) and I will arrange a time to complete the quiz. If you are too late (if we have already finished the quiz) or miss class, you may not make up the quiz.
- Model UN negotiation: Debating human rights issue in Security Council, 15%.** We will spend approximately two class sessions on a UN Security Council style simulation, focusing on human rights protection in the Russia-Ukraine crisis. You will be assigned roles as a national delegate or representatives from different international and non-governmental organizations. The goal of the negotiation is to reach a resolution to avoid the conflict and protect civilians in an international security crisis. Before we start the negotiation, you will prepare a position paper for your country or organization. Guidance and format will be provided. Position paper (10%) + negotiation (5%).
- Research paper, 30%.** Students will each write a research paper on a self-selected topic related to international human rights. There are four graded steps in writing this research paper. For detailed instructions, see Bb.
- Midterm and final exams, 35%.** There will be one midterm exam and one final exam. Dates of exams TBD.
- Missed or late work.** Late work will be penalized by one letter grade for each day after the deadline. For example, an A- for an assignment turned in one day late will become a B-. Late work would only be accepted without grade-penalty if the student has a university-accepted excuse or is sick/in quarantine. Again, please alert me via email at your earliest convenience about late submission.
- Final grades:**

A	B	C	D	F
A+=97-100	B+=87-89.99	C+=77-79.99	D=60-69.99	F=below 60
A=93-96.99	B=83-86.99	C=73-76.99		
A-=90-92.99	B-=80-82.99	C-=70-72.99		

Academic Integrity and Honesty

Please note that I take extremely seriously the university's policy on the need for academic honesty in all your work. **Please READ CAREFULLY the university's policy on academic honesty (see next page and available in the Whitworth Catalog and the Student Handbook).**

How is plagiarism checked for this class?

1. During the first two weeks of the class, I will conduct plagiarism checks on the assignment each one of you turns in. I will provide a plagiarism score and feed-backs if necessary. If the overall risk is shown as *high* (meaning overall text matching with existing sources exceeds 40%), you will receive a warning, then you will rewrite and resubmit it. If your overall risk is medium (meaning the text matching is between 15 and 40%), you are required to review your writing and references, but rewrite-and-resubmit is optional. I can also help you think through the steps for your research and writing together, to avoid plagiarism.
2. Plagiarism scores. I will use a number of different procedures to evaluate plagiarism. This includes using the SafeAssign function in Blackboard to check for plagiarism. SafeAssign provides an overall risk score and specific matching scores for blocks of texts that the software identifies as matching existing sources. More information on how to interpret the scores can be found [here](#).
3. After the first two assignment, I will run random checks on the assignments and exams for the rest of the semester. If plagiarism is found or if "high risk" is reported by SafeAssign, there will be no more warnings. The assignment will be failed and written reports will be submitted to political science department chair and Whitworth academic affairs office. (For detailed consequences, see next page or the Student Handbook.)

Whitworth Student Handbook on Academic Honesty

Just as the faculty, staff and administration at Whitworth strive to be forthright, direct and honest, and to value integrity in all their dealings, the university expects all students to function in like manner. Students are expected to adhere to the highest standards of academic honesty and to refrain from any dishonest or unethical action.

In all academic exercises, examinations, papers and reports, students are expected to submit their own work. The use of the words or ideas of others is always to be indicated through an acceptable form of citation. This policy will be specified in the syllabus for each course.

- **Violations of the Policy on Academic Honesty**

1. **Definition of Plagiarism**

Plagiarism occurs whenever a person attempts to pass off as his or her own work, either verbally or in writing, the words and ideas of others. Plagiarism most often occurs in projects that require independent preparation (outside of class); although it can occur in essay examinations, this is not generally the case. Plagiarism can be either inadvertent (a failure to understand the responsibility for acknowledgment or the means by which acknowledgment should be made) or willful (with a conscious intent to deceive).

2. **Definition of Cheating and Dry-Labbing**

Cheating is any academic activity in which the student submits for a grade or credit work that is not their own and/or that has not been done within the structure and context established by the assignment. Students may plagiarize in a variety of ways: copying another student's test, bringing unauthorized notes or materials to an exam, copying another student's lab notes, or making up fictitious lab results (also known as "dry-labbing"). All cheating is regarded as willful deception.

- **Consequences of Violations of the Policy on Academic Honesty**

1. The faculty member will confront the student(s) in cases of suspected violations of the policy on academic honesty and will keep a written record of the incident.
2. The faculty member will assess the gravity of the violation and will determine the consequences, which may range from a failing grade on the specific assignment to a failing grade in the course.
3. The faculty member will submit a written report of policy violations, with their consequences, to the academic affairs office.
4. The student has a right to appeal any faculty member's decision by submitting a written appeal to the associate provost.
5. The associate provost may then review the appeal in consultation with the Academic Policies Appeal Committee, if such review is deemed necessary. All decisions of the associate provost and the Academic Policies Appeals Committee will be final.
6. All violations of the academic honesty policy become part of a student's educational record. More than one violation may result in suspension for the remainder of the current term, or for a longer period, depending on the nature of the violations.

Schedule and weekly learning goals

The schedule is tentative and subject to change. The learning goals below should be viewed as the key concepts you should grasp after each week.

There is a "Weekly learning components" section on Blackboard. There you will find readings and assignments organized into weekly folders. Please familiarize yourself with the contents on Blackboard. Reserve enough time before each class to check the required readings and preparation.

Week 01, 01/31 - 02/04: No class, but there are readings you need to complete before class on 2/8.

Week 02, 02/07 - 02/11: Introduction and course overview, the fundamentals of human rights

- Donnelly and Whelan, pp. 3-4 and pp. 25-42 (Ch2).
- A [reading guide](#).

Week 03, 02/14 - 02/18: Relative universality and indivisibility

- Donnelly and Whelan Chapter 3, sections 1-4, 6, and 8. Then "Problem 2: Hate Speech" from page 63-65 (in the grey box).
- [reading guide](#)
- An [article](#) from American Bar Association explaining why US did not hold up to the standards set by International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination (ICERD)
- An [article](#) from Washington Post linking the 2nd impeachment trial of Donald Trump and the First Amendment.

Week 04, 02/21 - 02/25: Global Multilateral Mechanism

- Donnelly and Whelan 93-111 (chap 5)
- [reading guide](#)

Week 05, 02/28 - 03/04: Regional Human Rights Regimes

- Donnelly and Wheland 120-129 (the sections on Europe, Americas, and Africa)
- [reading guide](#)

Week 06, 03/07 - 03/11: Human Rights and Foreign Policy

- Donnelly and Whelan, 166-181.
- [reading guide](#)

Week 07, 03/14 - 03/18: Genocides and humanitarian intervention

- Donnelley and Wheland, 235-246 (section 1 Genocide and Crimes Against Humanity, Case Study of Bosnia and Rwanda)
- Donnelley and Wheland, 252-257 (section 7 The Right to Humanitarian Intervention and the Responsibility to Protect)
- Donnelley and Wheland, 259-265 (Case study of Sudan, and section 10 Justifying Humanitarian Intervention)
- [reading guide](#)

Week 08, 03/21 - 03/25: *Midterm exam*, preparation for Human Rights Negotiation

Week 09, 03/28 - 04/01: Spring break, no class

Week 10, 04/04 - 04/08: Human Rights Negotiation [1]

[Position paper due on Monday 4/4 at 5 pm.](#)

Week 11, 04/11 - 04/15: Human Rights Negotiation [2]

Week 12, 04/18 - 04/22: Economic globalization and human rights

- Donnelly and Whelan, Chapter 11 (276-295).
- [reading guide](#)

Week 13, 04/25 - 04/29: Environmental Human Rights and Rights of the Environment

- "The Environment as a Human Rights Issue." Available [here](#).
- In class exercise. Available [here](#).
- [reading guide](#)

Week 14, 05/02 - 05/06: Human rights in a digital age

- "Human rights in the digital age - Can they make a difference?" Speech by Michelle Bachelet, UN High Commissioner for Human Rights in 2019. Available [here](#).
- "Chatbots that resurrect the dead: legal experts weigh in on 'disturbing' technology." from The Conversation. Available [here](#).
- Watch this [TED talk](#) about big data and its impact on human rights.
- [reading guide](#)

Week 15, 05/09 - 05/13: Research paper panels

Week 16, 05/16 - 05/20: *Final exam*

WhitFlex Specific Policies

Attendance policies

Class attendance and active participation are crucial to learning. I expect students to attend each class session, in-person or via Zoom, according to the course schedule. **Please alert me via email if you are not able to come to class in-person. This is your responsibility.** Please **communicate with me at your earliest convenience.**

Face coverings/masks

During restrictions due to Covid-19, strict adherence to safety policies will be followed in this class. This is meant to protect both the students and the professor. With due respect, I expect students to **wear masks in class at all times, sit six feet apart as outlined in the seating chart, use hand sanitizer upon entering the classroom, and sanitize your workspace.** No exceptions will be made regarding masks or face coverings (if a documented medical reason prevents a student from wearing a mask, a face shield will be required).

Audio/visual recording

I may choose to record class sessions in order to serve students who are taking the course remotely. Please note that **for both faculty and students**, the act of recording and the use of any recordings must comply with [Whitworth's policy on recording and livestreaming](#). Students will be notified before recording begins and may request seating that will ensure they are out of the camera's field of view.

In case we need to switch to virtual learning...

Detailed instructions will be available in case we need to shift to virtual learning. In which case, we will comply with University policy. Expect to meet on Zoom during normal class hours. When you join the class through Zoom, I expect you to be proper, professional, and respectful to the learning environment we all share. I expect you to **turn on the video function** during class. It helps to see your reactions and it fosters an engaging environment when you interact with one another. If you do not feel comfortable showcasing the room you are in, use a virtual background, as long as it does not distract others. As a general rule, **wear the kind of clothes you would normally wear to school.** (Well, fingers-crossed this does not happen. But, aren't we all Zoom-gurus now. ^_(')_/\^)

University Policies

Accommodations for Religious Observances

In accord with SSB 5166, Whitworth University accommodates student absences, for up to two days per academic year, for reasons of faith or conscience, or for an organized activity conducted under the auspices of a religious denomination, church, or religious organization. Written notice and request for accommodation must be given within the first two weeks of the beginning of the course and provide specific dates the student requests accommodation. Faculty will work with

such students to reach mutual agreement about the terms of the accommodation. Grievances about a failure to accommodate should be directed to the Associate Provost.

Accommodations (ADA/504)

Whitworth University is committed to providing its students access to education. If you have a documented physical or mental/psychological impairment that impacts your ability to learn and perform to your potential in the classroom, contact the Office of Educational Support Services (ESS) in Student Life to identify accommodations that can help mitigate barriers to your success. Students must contact ESS each term in order for faculty/staff to be notified of your accommodations. Services are not retroactive.

To request accommodation, fill out an application on the ESS webpage:

<https://www.whitworth.edu/cms/administration/educational-support-services/>

Contact Information

Katie McCray, Coordinator for Educational Support Services

Phone: 509.777.3380

Email: kmccray@whitworth.edu

Title IX

Whitworth University faculty members are committed to the well-being of each student. It is common for students to discuss non-course related issues with faculty and, when possible, faculty will keep such conversations strictly confidential. However, because federal law views faculty members as mandated reporters of any incidents of sexual misconduct, if a student informs a faculty member of an issue of sexual harassment, sexual assault, or discrimination, the faculty member is required by federal law to bring it to the attention of the Title IX Coordinator, Rhosetta Rhodes. The Title IX Coordinator will make the student aware of all options and resources available to them under Whitworth University policies and under the law.

There are Whitworth University employees whom federal law does not view as mandatory reporters, to whom a student could speak without the conversation being reported to the Title IX Coordinator. These include counselors in Counseling Services, health center staff, and any of the university chaplains on the staff of Campus Ministries.

Contact Information

Rhosetta Rhodes, Title IX Coordinator, Vice President for Student Life and Dean of Students

Phone: 509.777.4536; Email: titleixcoordinator@whitworth.edu

Counseling Center: 509-777-3259; Schumacher Hall

Campus Ministries: 509-777-4345; Beeksma Family Theology Center

Health Center: 509-777-3259; Schumacher Hall

Non-discrimination

Whitworth University is committed to delivering a mission-driven educational program that cultivates in students the capacity to engage effectively across myriad dimensions of diversity. Whitworth University is committed to the fair and equal treatment of all students in its educational programs and activities. The University does not discriminate against students based

on race, color, national origin, sex, gender identity, sexual orientation, religion, age, or disability and complies with all applicable federal or state non-discrimination laws in its instructional programs.

Fair and equitable treatment

Whitworth University professors strive to treat all students fairly and equitably, applying the same rigorous standards and expectations to each of our students and working to invite students from all backgrounds into the challenges and rewards of our academic disciplines. Students who have concerns about classroom fairness should contact Associate Provost Brooke Kiener, McEachran Hall 220, 509.777.4657, bkiener@whitworth.edu.

Safety Information

Whitworth University cares about your welfare in the event of an emergency. During the first week of this course, please familiarize yourself with safety information posted in this classroom. Please visit <https://www.whitworth.edu/generalinformation/healthsafety/index.htm> if you have further questions.

Classroom Behavior (from the 2020-2021 catalog)

Students and faculty are expected to demonstrate civility, understanding and mutual respect. Disruptive classroom behavior will not be tolerated. Disruptive behavior may include, but is not limited to, threatening or abusive language or behavior, making unreasonable demands on faculty for time and attention, erratic and/or irrational behavior, continually speaking without being recognized, other verbal or behavioral expressions that interfere with the classroom environment, bringing unregistered persons to class without the permission of the instructor, and persistent disruptions including inappropriate computer use, ringing of electronic devices, etc. If a student exhibits disruptive classroom behavior, the faculty member should confront the student, clearly identify the disruptive behavior, and require that the behavior cease. A faculty member may at any time remove a student from the classroom for disruptive behavior. A faculty member, in consultation with the department chair or program director, may develop a classroom behavioral contract outlining expectations and consequences for a student who does not meet expectations, or may refer a disruptive student to the associate provost for instruction.

The associate provost will meet with any student who is referred, or who continues to disrupt the learning environment. Students may be placed on behavioral probation or suspension based on the nature of the disruption. Behavioral suspension may include suspension from one or more classes for the duration of the current term or for a longer period.