**Freshman Seminar Proposal**

***Human Rights for Beginners***

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**Course Description:**

From global activism against modern day slavery to the Black Lives Matter movement, human rights continue to be a central social and political concern.  In this seminar we will learn about the historical roots of the idea of “human rights”, question how human rights are recognized and protected, and consider several examples of contemporary claims for human rights. We will read, watch, and reflect on multiple forms of information including primary legal documents, philosophy, personal accounts, visual art, activist strategies, journalism, and academic scholarship.

**Course Goals:**

* To provide a basic understanding of the history of human rights.
* To introduce the controversial legal and cultural dimensions to human rights claims.
* To facilitate reflection on contemporary national and international human rights problems.
* To engage students in multiple forms of intellectual inquiry including critical thinking, self-reflection, concise writing, and visualizations.

**Course Access & Accommodation:**

We all learn and process information in different ways and I would like to make this course as accessible as possible.  If there is something I can do to facilitate your learning in this class, please communicate this to me.  I will do my best to address your needs.  If you have documentation from the Office for Disability Services (614-292-3307; Pomerene Hall 150) for specific accommodations, please let me know in advance of your needs.  With or without documentation, we can also meet in person or communicate via email about how to improve your access to the course.

**Grading and Assignments:**

Students will be graded on a S/U basis.  Criteria for satisfactory performance include: weekly attendance (only one excused absence allowed without penalty); engagement in course discussions and activities; and completion of assignments. Class time will include a combination of mini lectures, group discussion, peer dialogue, writing bursts, and idea visualizations.

*Evaluation:*

Attendance & Participation 25%

This class is a bonus! I assume that everyone signed-up because they want to learn more about human rights, to be a part of an intimate class setting, and to have some fun. I come to class ready to be a part of our collective and expect students to have read and be ready to jump in to our discussion. Attendance refers to the presence of your warm body in class. Participation refers to your active presence in the class through verbal communication, group work, and attentive listening. Life happens, and so I allow for **one** excused absence during the semester.

Assignments 50%

Each section of the class has one assignment. I will provide details in class about what each assignment entails and when they are due.

Human Rights Case Study 25%

Students can work individually or in pairs to conduct a short project on a current human rights concern.  In your work, you should address some of the main issues raised during the semester, including the problem of defining and protecting human rights, the question of universality, different ways to adjudicate human rights violations, the difference between absolute and relative rights, among others. You will post your project on our Canvas site before class so that everyone can view/read them before class. More details regarding this assignment will be provided.

***\*\* All readings will be available on our Canvas course site.***

**Academic Misconduct**

Academic misconduct includes plagiarism and dishonest practices in connection with examinations. Any source (e.g., book, article, or website) that you use in your reviews, paper, and oral presentation must be properly mentioned, even if you are paraphrasing rather than quoting directly. University policy requires instructors to report all instances of alleged academic misconduct to the Committee on Academic Misconduct for investigation. For additional information, see the Code of Student Conduct: <http://studentlife.osu.edu/edu/csc/>

**Course Plan:**

(15 weeks/one meeting per week)

*Weeks 1-3: What are human rights?*

* Assignment: Self-reflection on what makes you human
* Readings:

-- Bartolomé de las Casas, “In Defense of the Indians,” from *The Peru Reader*, pp. 119-122.

-- Lynn Hunt (2007). *Inventing Human Rights*. (skim chapter 1)

-- Andrew Clapham (2015). *Human Rights: A Very Brief Introduction*. Chapter 1

and Annex

*Weeks 4-6: Human Rights Machinery*

* Assignment: Locating human rights critical thinking and concise writing assignment
* Readings:.

-- <http://www.ijrcenter.org/courts-monitoring-bodies/>

-- <https://www.hrw.org>

-- <https://www.newtactics.org>

-- <http://www.ohchr.org/EN/Pages/Home.aspx>

-- Andrew Clapham (2015). *Human Rights: A Very Brief Introduction*. Chapter 3

Weeks 7-8: Are human rights universal?

* Assignment: Where are human rights in Columbus and Ohio?
* Readings:

-- Walter Mignolo (2013), “Who Speaks for the ‘Human’ in Human Rights?”, from *Human Rights from a Third World Perspective*, pp.44-64.

-- Zamani, Farinaz and Gerber, Paula (2014), “Burqa: Human Right or Human

Wrong?” *Alternative Law Journal*, 39(4):231-235.

-- <http://www.pdhre.org/projects/hrcommun.html>

Weeks 9-11: Case Study on Modern Day Slavery

* Assignment: Visualizing our connections to slavery
* Readings:

-- <http://polarisproject.org>

-- *Dreamcatcher* (2014)

-- <http://slaveryfootprint.org>

-- U.S. Trafficking in Persons (TIP) Report. 2015.

<http://www.state.gov/documents/organization/243557.pdf>

Weeks 12-14: Case Study on Black Lives Matter

* Assignment: Human rights critical thinking and concise writing
* Readings:

-- *3 ½ Minutes Ten Bullets* (2015). [view before class]

-- Michelle Alexander (2010). *The New Jim Crow: Mass Incarceration in the age of Colorblindness*. [select pages]

-- Alicia Garza,  [RadTalk.#LawForBlackLives Conference.](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cniRNj6m0-A) August 1, 2015

<https://youtu.be/cniRNj6m0-A>

-- Umi Selah. [RadTalk. #LawForBlackLives Conference.](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rchmWq1S0o0) August 1, 2015.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rchmWq1S0o0>

-- #BlackLivesMatter timeline <https://storify.com/MorganNemec/mizzou-protests>

Week 15: Human Rights Case Study Discussion