

politics. The point of human rights has historically been to criticize legal authorities and laws that violate human rights.

But where do human rights come from? The idea of the “source” of human rights contains an important and confusing ambiguity: it can refer to the *social origins* or the *ethical justification* of human rights. This distinction suggests two different questions, respectively, why *do* we have human rights and why *should* we have human rights?

Is the history of the concept of human rights irrelevant to its validity? What problems arise when we attempt to universalize a historically Western concept like human rights? What is the historical relationship between human rights, natural rights and civil rights? Utilitarian and neo-Aristotelian philosophers argued successfully for a “de-naturalized” understanding of individual rights; but what were the implications of their doing so?

How do different cultures view human rights? To what extent do cultural differences in the conception of human rights affect the universality of those rights as philosophical values or legal obligations? How have groups (such as women, ethnic minorities, and indigenous peoples) tried to obtain access to human rights, and with what degrees of success? Who gains, and what are the motives, for framing particular issues as human rights issues? Does Globalization produce a new notion of human rights? At what point should our moral obligations affect economic policy, or should we view our moral and economic action as operating in separate spheres of decision-making? If there is an obligation to help those in need, how are the costs of such help to be distributed?

Are there other important values aside from human rights (for example, “national security,” “national sovereignty,” “good governance” or “economically sustainable growth”), and if so, how are human rights related to them? In other words, what are the *limits* and well as the *value* of human rights? Understanding human rights requires conceptual analysis, moral judgment, and social scientific knowledge. The concept of human rights is an *interdisciplinary* concept.

This course examines connections between inequality, conflict, social justice, and human rights in an age of globalization. At the start of the twenty-first century, inequality is becoming an urgent issue of global politics. Drawing upon case studies from around the world, we examine institutional and structural violence and inequality as it relates to state, corporate, and military power; international law and order; welfare and social policy; global justice; regionalism, multilateralism, and transnationalism; environmental protection; gender inequality; ethnic conflict; resource wars; and national security policy (before and after World War II, the Cold War, and September 11, 2001).

In addition, some of the transnational phenomena and issues emerging in these areas that we discuss include: contemporary slavery; genocide; rape as a *jus cogens*

human rights violation; the transnational politics of exclusion (e.g., indigenous conceptions of justice, as well as that of an entire Islamic civilization); the United States' practices of extraordinary rendition and refoulement, and the creation of "human-rights-free zones;" transnational social movements; transnational networks of governance; transnational business partnerships between corporations of developed, democratic states with authoritarian military-state enterprises; extreme environmental degradation; the privatization of access to water and the transnational organization of its provision; transnational conflicts over freedom of expression; and the governance of global financial institutions and the United Nations Security Council; the politics of transnational citizenship; and the human rights cities movement.

Throughout the course, we will focus on the implications of these issues for the ongoing development of human rights. After explaining how the concept of human rights has a history marked by philosophical controversies, and how understanding those controversies within an interdisciplinary framework helps us to illuminate the state of human rights today, we track the development of a liberal and secular perspective on human rights during the Enlightenment, a socialist perspective on human rights during the Industrial Age, and the institutionalization of human rights and the right of cultural self-determination following the two world wars. We also survey various theories of human rights (giving special attention to contemporary sociological theories of human rights), and highlight their many unresolved tensions to explain why the practice, and not just the theory, of human rights matters. We then discuss the role of the social sciences in understanding human rights, and explain why we cannot reduce human rights to legal analysis. We also discuss the relationship between culture and human rights – including the problems of cultural imperialism and cultural relativism, and the relationship between human rights and minority rights, the rights of indigenous people, women's rights and the right to self-determination. Another important area of focus in this course is the politics of human rights, and the influence of human rights on politics. We examine not only nation-state centered paradigms but also those that give greater attention to transnational networks of actors, including social movements, NGOs, corporations, and state actors themselves. We also examine the rise of corporate rights from legal personhood (starting in the second-half of the nineteenth century) to the contemporary human rights that courts have determined corporations possess. Ultimately, we attempt to assess how globalization and development is impacting human rights today, and the power (if any) that human rights have to shape the unfolding process of globalization and the institutions sustaining it.

(3 Semester Credits).

REQUIRED TEXTS

Freeman, Michael. 2002. *Human Rights: An Interdisciplinary Approach*. Cambridge, U.K.: Polity, ISBN: 9780745623566. **2008 reprinted paperback edition, \$24.25**

Weiss, Thomas G. 2007. *Humanitarian Intervention*. Polity Press, ISBN: 9780745640228. **Paperback Edition, \$17.97**

Kurasawa, Fujuki. 2007. *The Work of Global Justice: Human Rights as Practices*. Cambridge University Press, ISBN: 9780521673914. **Paperback Edition, \$29.99**

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

The course format mixes lectures, group discussion, and film/video presentations. Students should take notes, both on lectures and on the reading, and films, with the intention of addressing the key themes of the course.

Class Participation (10% of your final grade)

Class attendance is required. It is your responsibility to sign the class roster which I will circulate at the beginning of each class. Unexcused absences will lower your participation grade. If you must miss class, be sure to let the instructor know (in advance, if possible), because you may be eligible for an excused absence. Regardless of whether or not your absence is excused, it is your responsibility to arrange to have a classmate brief you on the material in class that you missed. Please do not ask the instructor if you “missed anything important” in your absence.

NOTE: You should bring with you to **every** class meeting one news article or op-ed (published within the past week) that speaks to a human rights issue. You may be randomly called upon in class to briefly discuss this article. This will affect your participation grade. Every student will be called upon **at least** once during the semester to present an article. In addition to fostering a habit of critically applying the concepts from class to your consumption of current events, this exercise will also serve as part of a brainstorming exercise for generating a topic for your paper.

I will post a full schedule of assignments for the semester on the course website. The course requires a healthy dose of reading, and you should keep pace with the scheduled assignments. Class participation starts before you come to class, with having done the readings and thought about what seems useful and illuminating, what seems wrong or unclear. A good practice would be to take brief notes on your day’s reading – indicating what issues you found most interesting or most problematic – and therefore most worth attention during class meetings. Doing so will facilitate not only your comprehension of the lectures, but also regular class discussion, which is a central aspect of the course. Ten percent of your final grade will be based on class participation, measured not only in terms of how often, but how well, you contribute to class discussion and activities.

Active, effective contribution means being attentive to the flow of the class’ discussion, and being able to distinguish an apt intervention in an ongoing argument

from an attempt to redirect the discussion to a new topic. Students are expected to actively engage with issues raised in classroom discussions and in homework assignments.

The readings are demanding and require intensive examination of a broad variety of issues and modes of thought. We will be discussing contentious cultural and political issues relating to human rights in this course. Students are encouraged to express diverse perspectives. You are likely to encounter strong opinions and it is inevitable that at least some of these opinions will make you or your colleagues uncomfortable. You will be expected to strike a healthy balance between arguing your own position on these issues, listening to others, and helping the class as a collectivity to explore how the authors that you read defend their approaches. Students and the instructors should interact with each other in a mutually respectful manner. They should articulate their ideas, concerns, arguments, critical questions and responses without alienating, marginalizing, or humiliating anyone. (For example, please avoid disrespectful *ad hominem* arguments, slanderous statements, hurtful stereotyping, or intentionally offensive non-verbal gesturing.) I am not requiring you to be “PC” (politically correct), but rather “BC” (basically civil).

Reflection Papers (20% of your final grade)

You will write two reflection papers during the semester. Each is worth 10% of your grade. Each of these papers should be 2-3 pages in length, and should be well-written. Avoid spelling and grammatical errors. Each paper should have a clear thesis statement articulated within the first paragraph. The reflection paper will be based on your response to a news article or op-ed piece that I provide. Your reflection should incorporate critical thinking that is based on the key theme for that week (and previous weeks as well, if you choose). You should draw upon aspects of that week’s reading assignment and class discussion, in addition to your independent thoughts on the topic.

The first reflection paper is due on **Tuesday, September 22nd**, and the second reflection paper is due on **Tuesday, October 27th**. (See the “Schedule of Assignments” for more details.)

Defining Features Matrices (20% of your final grade)

You will have two assignments in which you must construct one matrix (or more, “matrices”) that clarify the defining features of key concepts in the week’s reading. This exercise forces you to read carefully and ensures that you are thinking about the differences between related concepts. Each assignment is worth 10% of your grade.

The first defining features matrix assignment is due on **Tuesday, September 29th**. You will read Thomas Weiss’ chapter on “Conceptual Building Blocks” and construct one matrix that distinguishes between “humanitarian intervention,” traditional

peacekeeping,” and “war fighting”. You should be able to explain within your matrix the different objectives (“peace enforcement” vs. “coercive protection’ vs. defeating a clearly defined enemy”) of each type of action, and provide historical examples of each. The second matrix for this same assignment will require you to distinguish between the changing meanings of the relationship between “sovereignty” and “security”, accounting for the factors and conditions that have contributed to these changing meanings over time.

The second defining features matrix assignment is due on **Tuesday, October 13th**. You will read the debates between Bryan Turner and Malcolm Waters on a sociological theory of human rights and construct a matrix that clarifies the key points distinguishing their positions. Try to identify points of agreement as well as disagreement.

Final Paper (50% of your final grade)

By the end of the semester (**Thursday, December 10th**), each student will produce a 15-20 page research paper that focuses on a contemporary human rights campaign. Before submitting your final draft, you will be completing a series of exercises during the semester that will help you to prepare this paper, and avoid having to do all of the research and analytic work at the end of the semester. These exercises will comprise half of the final paper grade. I will provide you in class with more details on these exercises and the requirements for the final paper, but following is a checklist of requirements with deadline dates:

- a. 1-2 page topic proposal [**Deadline: Tuesday, October 20th**]
- b. 3-page analysis of campaign actors’ (and their targets’) relations, organization, collective action, scale(s) of action, politics of representation and collective identities [**Deadline: Tuesday, November 3rd**]
- c. 3 page analysis of HR (and intersecting and/or changing) framings, issues, discourses, and information politics, symbolic politics, leverage politics, and accountability politics relating to the campaign [**Deadline: Tuesday, November 17th**]
- d. 3 page *critical analysis* of campaign promoters’ strategies and practices, and opposition’s counter-campaign strategies and practices, as well as any extra-campaign practices for promoting global justice relating to the campaign. Also assessment of the campaign’s “success” and the impact of the campaign on human rights [**Deadline: Tuesday, December 1st**]
- e. 1-2 page statement of findings and 5-minute presentation [**Deadline: Tuesday December 8th or Thursday, December 10th, depending the date your presentation is scheduled**]

f. Final draft [**Deadline: Thursday, December 10th**]

The other half of this grade will be determined on the basis of the final draft itself. I will be grading your final papers based on how well you integrate into your final paper a critical assessment of the campaign's impact on human rights.

During the final week of class, each student will prepare short, five-minute presentation of the human rights campaign that he or she has been researching, and a clear statement of the paper's findings regarding the impact of the campaign on human rights. Additionally, each student will prepare in advance a typed 1-2 page statement summarizing your point(s), and submit this to the professor at the conclusion of the presentation.

NOTE: There will be no exams in this course.

GRADING

Course Grades and Relative Weighting of Assignments

Your overall course grades will be determined according to the following point scheme:

Class Participation:	10%	
Reflection Papers:	20%	
Defining Features Matrices:	20%	
Final Paper:	50% [see breakdown of this grade below]	
a.	1-2 page topic proposal	5%
b.	3-page analysis of campaign actors, targets, relations, organization, scale(s) of action, politics of representation and identity	5%
c.	3 page analysis of HR (and intersecting and/or changing) framings, issues, and discourses	5%
d.	3 page analysis of campaign practices, oppositional practices, and human rights or other practices for promoting global justice outside the campaign	5%
e.	1-2 page statement of findings and 5-minute presentation	5%
f.	Final draft	25%

Course Grade: The sum of the grades for class participation, the reflection papers, the defining features matrices, and the final paper (and grades associated with preparing and presenting it) will be translated into a letter grade according to the corresponding ranges below.

<u>Letter Grade</u>	<u>Range of Number Grades</u>
A	100-94
A-	93-90
B+	89-87
B	86-84
B-	83-80
C+	79-77
C	76-74
C-	73-70
D	69-60
F	Below 60

Late Assignments

Late assignments will not be accepted for a grade unless authorized by the instructor prior to the due date.

Incomplete Grades

The instructor discourages incomplete grades and will give them only in unusual circumstances and, even then, only when formally arranged in advance between the student and the instructor.

PERCENTAGE RANGE LETTER GRADE COMMENTS

100 - 94 A

Given for work that meets all expectations, and also goes beyond an analysis of course material to develop new, creative, and unique ideas. An A is rarely given.

93 - 90 A-

Given for work that meets all expectations, and also contains some unique elements of insight and effort. You will have to work very hard to receive an A-.

89 - 87 B+

Given for very good to excellent work that analyzes material explored in class and is a reasonable attempt to synthesize material.

86 - 84 B

Given for work that meets most expectations, but contains some problems.

83 - 80 B-

Given for work that meets some expectations, but contains numerous problems.

79 - 77 C+

Given for adequate work that satisfies the assignment, but offers a more limited analysis of material explored in class.

76 - 74 C

Given for work that is of average quality.

73 - 70 C-

Given for work that does not meet basic expectations.

69 - 67 D+

Given for unsatisfactory work; but which nevertheless reflects a high degree of participation and effort.

66 - 60 D

Given for unsatisfactory work; and reflects a low degree of participation and effort

59 - 0 F

Given for unsatisfactory work; and reflects unsatisfactory participation and effort.

CONTESTING GRADES

I strongly encourage you to talk to me about any grade I give you in this course. The best time for this is during my office hours or by appointment. While there is no guarantee that I will change your grade, at the very least you will get a better sense of what my expectations are - and this may help you on future assignments.

GETTING ASSISTANCE DURING THE COURSE

I strongly encourage you to contact me if you want to discuss or clarify any course material. I check my email regularly, and am also willing to chat any time I am in my campus office. Please do not hesitate to let me know if there is anything I can do to make your experience in this course more positive for you.

ENROLLMENT STATEMENT

Students are responsible for verifying their enrollment in this class. Schedule adjustments should be made by the deadlines published in the Schedule of Classes.

Last Day to Add/Drop (without tuition penalty): September 15, 2009

Last Day to Drop (with 50% tuition penalty): October 2, 2009

Selective Withdrawal Period: October 5 - 30, 2009

After the last day to drop a class, withdrawing from this class requires the approval of the dean and is only allowed for nonacademic reasons.

MASON EMERGENCY INFORMATION!!!

To provide by e-mail and/or text message all members of the University community with emergency information relating to our safety and security, you are encouraged to sign up for the Mason Alert System, available at <https://alert.gmu.edu>.

Also, every classroom on campus has an emergency poster explaining what to do in the event of crises, and further information exists about emergency procedures at <http://www.gmu.edu/service/cert>.

The Mason Safety Bulletins page at <http://respond.gmu.edu/> provides ongoing information for students, faculty, and staff concerning the H1N1virus and provides links to other health related resources. We will continue to monitor any new developments and keep you informed.

ARRANGING SPECIAL ACCOMMODATIONS

I am very happy to work with students in need of special accommodations in order to ensure that everyone is able to learn and participate fully in the course. If you need disability-related accommodations in this class, or if you have emergency medical information, or if you need special arrangements in case the building must be evacuated, please see me privately after class or at my office. The Disability Resource Center is the campus office responsible for verifying that students have disability-related needs for academic accommodations, and for planning appropriate accommodations in cooperation with the students themselves and their instructors. The Disability Resource Center is located in SUB I, Room 222, where you can make an appointment, or call 703-993-2474 or 703-993-2476 (TDD/TTY). A web page describing the Center's resources and policies regarding accommodations is available at <http://www.gmu.edu/student/drc/>.

HONOR CODE POLICY ON ACADEMIC INTEGRITY

I expect you to understand and abide by the University's policy regarding the Honor Code, which may be found at <http://www.gmu.edu/catalog/apolicies/#Anchor12>. In short, the University's policy regarding the Honor Code prohibits any form of cheating on exams or written assignments. It also prohibits plagiarism, so be certain to properly cite all information that you use in your papers. Also, make extensive, very specific references to our course materials in your papers. Cheating and plagiarism are very serious infractions, and I deal with them severely in this course. If I receive a paper that has few specific references to our course materials, I will be inclined to assume that you have downloaded it off the Internet. If I determine that the paper has been plagiarized, then I will give you a failing grade. I will also likely report this alleged violation to the Honor Committee, who will consider further

sanctions. If you have any questions about this policy I encourage you to come and talk with me about it. For more information or assistance, visit <http://academicintegrity.gmu.edu/>. You can find information and forms pertaining to the Honor Code and Committee at <http://honorcode.gmu.edu>. Also, you can always consult the Student Academic Affairs Ombudsman Dolores Gomez-Moran, who provides students with a neutral, independent, informal, and confidential resource for resolving academic concerns fairly. Her office is located at the Johnson Center, Room 245. Phone: 703-993-3306; E-mail: ombuds@gmu.edu; Web: www.gmu.edu/departments/ombudsman.

GUIDELINES FOR WRITTEN WORK

Always put your name on your paper. Give your paper a title and page numbers. Do not insert double-returns between paragraphs. Unless I request it, do not turn assignments in with report covers. Use 1 inch margins, a normal font size, and double-spacing on each page. Please do not use small fonts or single spacing, as this makes it hard to insert comments.

****KEEP MULTIPLE COPIES OF ALL YOUR WORK****

Always keep a duplicate copy of your paper or any other course work in a safe place, in case the original gets lost or you run into computer problems. Save a copy of your paper on a separate computer diskette, and update frequently as you are writing. Keep extra copies of all your assignments until after the semester ends and you have received your official grades from the Registrar's Office. This is a crucial point: *No credit can be given for papers that are lost (by you or me) or rendered un-retrievable because of computer problems.* There are no exceptions to this rule, so be extremely careful to keep a backup copy of all your work!

THE "THREE ERROR" RULE

I will allow up to three basic grammatical or formatting errors to slide without penalizing you. However, I will deduct one percentage point from your final paper grade for every subsequent basic error of grammar or formatting. In other words, if I was going to give you a 90 percent on your paper, but I identified thirteen basic grammatical errors, you will receive an 80 percent. Basic grammatical errors include: incorrect spelling; incorrect punctuation; incorrect verb agreement; sloppy paragraph construction; run-on sentences; and other basic errors. If you are concerned about your ability to write error-free papers, you can do one or more of the following: 1) turn in an initial draft to me, and I can give it back with suggestions for revision, 2) work with a friend or someone at the writing center on an initial draft, or 3) read Strunk and White's *Elements of Style* -- an invaluable resource for improving your writing, and which is now online at <http://www.bartleby.com/141/>.

TEN POINTS TO KEEP IN MIND WHEN WRITING ESSAYS/PAPERS

- 1) Begin your paper with an engaging introductory paragraph. Make the reader really wants to read your paper.
- 2) In the first or second paragraph of your paper, insert one sentence that clearly states what your paper is about. (Your thesis, if this is an expository paper, would go here.)
- 3) In general, use normal terminology in your papers. Avoid the use of overly-complicated phrases or jargon.
- 4) Avoid relying on over-generalizations. Refer to specific cases and evidence to build your arguments.
- 5) In general, do not begin or end paragraphs with quotations from sources.
- 6) Do not turn in papers that are mostly quotations. Make sure most of the words in your paper are yours.
- 7) Make sure that every sentence in your paper is very straight-forward and clear.
- 8) Make sure that every sentence in your paper builds on the last. Organize your ideas carefully.
- 9) Carefully construct your paragraphs. Make certain all sentences in a paragraph are connected with one another.
- 10) End your paper with a strong conclusion. Leave the reader with something intriguing to think about.

GRADING CRITERIA FOR WRITTEN WORK

- 1) Logical coherence (33%)
 - Organize your thoughts and information in a clear order.
 - State your observations and conclusions clearly.
 - Use evidence to support your conclusions.
- 2) Engagement with course issues and concepts (33%)
 - In every paper, make use of concepts/methods of analysis discussed in class.
 - Unless I give you specific permission, you should be sure to incorporate at least **three** course readings/lectures into any research paper you write. Shorter critical essays must incorporate the key concepts from at least **one** course reading/lecture.
- 3) Quality of your particular analysis (33%)
 - Try to make your paper interesting and unique.
 - Try to go beyond simply re-stating someone else's argument.
 - Always make sure that your paper ends with a clear and interesting conclusion.

GUIDELINES FOR CITING YOUR SOURCES

In your papers, you must cite all sources of information used in the body of your paper and then include a complete list of references at the end of your paper. Below

I provide examples of the format that is most widely used in the fields of sociology and anthropology, and that I prefer you use. This format is from the Chicago Manual of Style (Documentation Two). For a more complete list of citation examples than those that I provide below, see

<http://library.gmu.edu/resources/sources/citation.htm>.

Remember, you must cite not only direct quotations (which should be identified with quotation marks and page numbers), but also summarized information you got from a text. I expect you to look over these examples carefully, and utilize this format in your written work. Failure to do so will seriously impact your grade.

Here are a couple of examples of easy ways to cite your sources. Let's say you have written a paper on a new kind of energy system, the fuel cell, in which you have collected information from a variety of sources (from books, journal articles, newspapers, organizations or companies, and Internet sources). Within the body of the paper, place in parentheses the author's last name, year, and page where the information comes from. Then, at the end of your paper, list each of the sources in a reference section, called "Works Cited." If the source has been published by an organization, use the organization's name in place of the author name for in-text citations.

TEXT FROM THE BODY OF THE PAPER:

The competitive race to bring fuel cell-powered products to the consumer market has become particularly intense in the automotive industry. The opening phase in this race came in October 1997, when Japanese automobile companies unveiled several fuel cell cars at the Tokyo Motor Show. In January 1998 General Motors, Ford, Chrysler and the German company Daimler-Benz all announced they were intensifying their own efforts to manufacture fuel cell vehicles (Bradsher 1998: 10). By 1999 a number of joint ventures had been formed to work towards the mass-production of fuel cell vehicles. The current leader in this effort is a partnership between the Daimler-Chrysler, Ford, and Ballard Power corporations. This partnership has already entered into an agreement with the state of California to supply fuel cell vehicles beginning in 2000, and the group hopes to market as many as 40,000 fuel cell cars by 2004. Meanwhile, General Motors and Toyota have teamed up to develop their own fuel cell cars. Similar efforts are being undertaken by Honda, BMW, and Mitsubishi Motors (Ball 1999: 2; Everts 1999: 122; Smith 1999).

Fuel cells can be assembled in different sizes, from systems small enough for use in electronic devices to systems large enough to generate electricity in grid-connected power stations. Indeed, a recent survey of the commercial prospects of fuel cell systems conducted by the Electric Power Research Institute concluded that competitively priced fuel cells would be providing electricity in a wide variety of applications within five years in the United States (EPRI 1997). Numerous companies have already begun developing small fuel cells for use in laptop computers, roadside warning signs, and other electronic components. Meanwhile,

firms such as Analytic Power and Plug Power are engaged in a competitive race to mass-produce fuel cell systems for use in residential homes. And finally, corporations such as Siemens have also begun manufacturing large fuel cells designed to generate electricity in commercial buildings and utility plants (Johnson 1999).

WORKS CITED (To be included at the end of your paper)

Ball, Jeffrey. 1999. "Auto Makers are Racing to Market 'Green' Cars Powered by Fuel Cells," *Wall Street Journal*, Mar. 15, p. 2. [This is how to reference a newspaper article.]

Bradsher, Keith. 1998. "US Auto Makers Showing Interest in Fuel Efficiency," *New Energy Systems*, vol 2(1), pp. 10-20. [This is how to reference an article in a journal.]

Evarts, Eric. 1999. "The Refueling of America," *Environmental News Network*, April 22, URL: <http://www.enn.com/99/refuel.html>. [This is how to reference an article from the Internet.]

EPRI. 1997. *The Market Potential of Fuel Cells*. Electric Power Research Institute: Boulder, CO. [This is how to reference a study put out by an organization.]

Johnson, Karl. 1999. "Fuel Cells for a Sustainable Future," pp. 13-26 in: John Smith (ed.). *New Energy Technologies*. Norton Publishers: Westport, CN. [This is how to reference a chapter from an edited volume.]

[Note: In the text you cite the chapter author name, **not** the name of the book editor]

Smith, John. 1999. *Fuel Cells for a Sustainable Future*. W.W. Smith Publishers: Westport: CA. [This is how to reference a book.]

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