

**University of Illinois at Chicago**  
**INTERNATIONAL HUMAN RIGHTS**  
**Political Science 494– Fall 2013**  
**M 12:00-2:45pm, BSB 1115**  
**Office Hours: by appointment**  
**Prof. Sarah Dávila-Ruhaak**  
**Office – Room 1110**  
**sdavila@uic.edu**

**Course Overview**

This course will explore international human rights topics and seek to promote a greater understanding of what it means to protect and promote human rights world globally. The Universal Declaration of Human Rights emphasizes that “recognition of the inherent dignity and of the equal and inalienable rights of all members of the human family is the foundation of freedom, justice and peace in the world.”

**Course Materials**

The required text is: *Human Rights Advocacy Stories*, edited by Deena R. Hurwitz, Margaret L. Satterthwaite and Doug Ford, Foundation Press, 2009. The book is available at the UIC bookstore or online sellers. Further required readings will be provided in electronic format via blackboard. All students will be responsible for keeping up with the required supplemental readings.

**Course Requirements and Grading**

The course prerequisites are POLS 190 and 200. Given the interactive nature of the course, attendance and meaningful participation takes a central role in the learning process. All students will be required to read all materials before attending class, participate in the individual and group exercises, and discussions. It will be assumed that students will have thoroughly completed the readings, taken notes, prepared the assignments, and will contribute meaningfully to the daily discussion.

Class discussion will center around the course topics and outside relevant materials and sources. It is also important to note that we will be discussing some potentially controversial topics. It is expected that all students will be respectful of others, and that the discussions will be based on the legal and political arguments discussed within the particular topic(s). As part of our need to have an engaged class, there will be no cell phone usage or surfing the internet during class. Attendance to this course is required.

All written submissions must be original thought and all sources used must be clearly cited and referenced. It is therefore unacceptable to submit any work that is in part or in full, plagiarized. Any student who plagiarizes will be subject to the UIC Student Disciplinary Policy.

All papers are required to have 1-inch margins, 12-point and Times New Roman font. All papers are to be submitted electronically via blackboard. Short papers are also to be submitted in paper form in class. Tardy papers will not be accepted, except for a medical or otherwise justified and documented reason.

The course grading will be as follows: the daily participation (class discussion) and in class group exercises will represent 15%, six reaction papers will represent 45% (total), and the final paper will represent 40%, all totaling 100%.

Reaction papers for undergraduate students must be 3-4 pages and graduate students 6-7 pages (unless otherwise indicated), Times New Roman, 12-font point, and double-spaced. All sources must be cited with footnotes.

#### Grade percentages and letter grades

100% - 97% = A+

96% - 94% = A

93% - 90% = A-

89% - 87% = B+

86% - 84% = B

83% - 80% = B-

79% - 77% = C+

76% - 74% = C

73% - 70% = C-

69% - 67% = D+

66% - 60% = D

59% - 0% = F

Students with disabilities who require accommodations for full access and participation, please contact me or speak with me and we will make the appropriate arrangements.

#### **Week 1: August 25, 2014**

- I. Introductory remarks about the course
  - i. What will students learn from the course, the course objectives and the methods employed.
- II. Review of the syllabus, assignments, in class exercises, presentations and grading policy.
- III. Discussion of reaction papers and final research paper.

#### **Week 2: September 1, 2014 – No class – Labor Day**

#### **Week 3: September 8, 2014**

- I. *Readings:* “International human rights law and notions of human rights: foundations, achievements and challenges,” *International Human Rights Law and Practice*, pp. 9-49, available in Blackboard.
- II. *Discussion:*
  - a. Development of human rights and international human rights law.
  - b. Introduction to international human rights law and instruments.
  - c. Responsibility of actors (state-actors and non-state actors)
  - d. Enforcement mechanisms (monitoring and implementation)
  - e. Universal Human Rights?

- III. *Assignment:*
- a. Research the legal instrument given in class (treaty, declaration, etc.), and discuss the purpose of the instrument and the most important provision that you found. We will discuss your findings in class.

**Week 4: September 15, 2014**

- I. *Readings:*
- a. Ch. 2: “The Story of the *TAC* Case: The Potential and Limits of Socio-Economic Rights Litigation in South Africa.”
- II. *Assignment:*
- a. Reaction Paper: include a synthesis of the reading with its main points, why this topic is important in international human rights, and relate the Ebola crisis to the case study. Consider the following issues: African struggle with HIV, accessibility and affordability to treatment and medicine, testing of the African human subject, and the role of the State in the full and effective enjoyment of human rights.

**Week 5: September 22, 2014**

- I. *Readings:*
- a. Ch. 8: “Universal Jurisdiction and the Dilemmas of International Criminal Justice; The Sabra and Shatila Case in Belgium.”
- II. *Assignments:*
- a. Attend the Dean Fred. F. Herzog Memorial Lecture, “The Future of Human Rights and International Criminal Justice in the Age of Globalism” at The John Marshall Law School, on Monday September 22, 2014, from 12:00-2:00pm. Please register online at [events.jmls.edu/registration/node/599](http://events.jmls.edu/registration/node/599). The event is free of charge. Students must sign-in for their attendance to the event to be counted towards class participation.
  - b. Reaction Paper: include a synthesis of the lecture with its main points and how it related to our reading. What did you find most interesting? The reaction paper must be 3-4 pages. The paper is due by 12:00pm (noon) Friday September 26, 2014 via email at [sdavila@uic.edu](mailto:sdavila@uic.edu).

**Week 6: September 29, 2014**

- I. *Readings*
- a. Ch. 4: “Gaining Legal Recognition of Indigenous Land Rights: The Story of the *Awes Tingni* Case in Nicaragua”
- II. *Assignment:*
- a. Reaction Paper: include a synthesis of the reading with its main points, why this topic is important in international human rights (vulnerable groups), and compare the case study to Latin American indigenous groups and their struggle as indigenous minorities in their respective countries. Consider the following issues: legal

protections for indigenous groups, vulnerability, ties to the land, relationship between the land and other protected rights.

### **Week 7: October 6, 2014**

- I. *Readings:*
  - a. Ch. 5: “The Law of the Republic Versus the ‘Law of the Brothers’: A Story of France’s Law Banning Religious Symbols in Public Schools.”
- II. *Assignment:*
  - a. Reaction Paper: include a synthesis of the reading with its main points, why this topic is important in international human rights (women’s rights v. religious freedom), and compare the case study to Turkish policy on headscarf. Consider the following issues: secularism v. religious freedom, political motivations for prohibition or allowance of headscarves, symbolism of the veil.

### **Week 8: October 13, 2014**

- I. *Readings:*
  - a. Ch. 3: “The Stories of *Dudgeon and Toonen*: Personal Struggles to Legalize Sexual Identities.”
- II. *Assignment:*
  - a. Submit: **Thesis, brief outline, and bibliography** (10 sources min.) of **Final Paper**

### **Week 9: October 20, 2014**

- I. *Readings:*
  - a. Ch. 9: “Arresting Juxtapositions: The Story of *Ropen v. Simmons*”
- II. *Assignment:*
  - a. Reaction Paper: include a synthesis of the reading with its main points, why this topic is important in international human rights, and discuss within the international debate on the death penalty. Consider the following issues: rights of minors (the child) under international human rights law, detention and death penalty of minors, political motivations to maintain the death penalty, rehabilitative v. retributive justice system.

### **Week 10: October 27, 2014**

- I. *Readings:*
  - a. Ch. 11: “The Story of *Sale v. Haitian Centers Council*: Guantánamo and *Refoulement*”
- II. *Assignment:*
  - a. Reaction Paper: include a synthesis of the reading with its main points, why this topic is important in international human rights (immigrant’s rights), and compare the case study to the current humanitarian crisis with minor children at the United States border.

**Week 11: November 3, 2014**

- I. *Readings:*
  - a. Ch. 13: “Inspiring and Inadequate: The *Krstić* Genocide Conviction through the Eyes of a Srebrenica Survivor”
- II. *Assignment:*
  - a. **Draft of Final Paper due.** Submit drafts in paper form and via email. It is required that you submit a draft in order for you to be able to submit a final paper. Significant points will be deducted from final paper for not submitting draft.

**Week 12: November 10, 2014**

- I. *Readings:*
  - a. Ch. 14: “The Story of Hamid Karzai: The Paradoxes of State-building and Human Rights.”
- II. *Assignment*
  - a. Reaction Paper: include a synthesis of the reading with its main points, why this topic is important in international human rights, and compare the case study to the difficulties in state-building in Iraq. Consider the following issues: process of state-building, differences or commonalities between Iraq and Afghanistan in state-building, the role of non-state actors in interfering with state-building.

**Week 13: November 17, 2014 (Last week of In-class lectures)**

- I. *Readings:*
  - a. Ch. 15: “The Story of *El-Masri v. Tenet*: Human Rights and Humanitarian Law in the ‘War on Terror’”
- II. *Assignment:*
  - a. Reaction Paper: include a synthesis of the reading with its main points, why this topic is important in international human rights, and briefly mention your findings of a real life case of a person subjected to extraordinary rendition.

**Week 14: November 24, 2014**

- I. No class. Office hours available during class time to discuss papers and any additional feedback prior to submissions.

**Week 15: December 1, 2014**

- I. **Submission of final paper** via SafeAssign in Blackboard.