**Introduction**

This seminar introduces graduate students to the study of human rights, repression, and contentious politics, focusing on the causes and consequences of state sponsored violence and human rights violations. We will begin the course with an overview of the reasons for state sponsored violence. That is, why do states develop the capacity to behave violently in the first place? What strategic purpose does violence serve? We will also consider how individuals within a state behave and how the emergence of human rights sometimes occurs in the context of the violent and non-violent interaction between the state and individual. We will then consider various conceptualizations of rights and how such conceptualizations are related to the capacity for violence in the state and individual. How do human rights emerge given the propensity for states and individuals to sometimes act violently? This is the core conceptual consideration of the course.

As we work on addressing these fundamental questions, students will also begin to learn how to empirically assess differences in the level of respect for human rights across time and place, how human rights practices have changed globally and locally, and how grass roots activism and different types of legal institutions can be successfully leveraged to modify state behaviors. Throughout the course, students will learn how to identify and critically evaluate human rights issues as they arise in different time periods and settings around the world. Course material will draw from the diverse research methodologies that have been applied to the study of human rights and repression.

**Acknowledgment**

Steve, thanks for lighting the way. We miss you.
Schedule of Readings

Week 1: Background

Required:


Suggested:


Week 2: Human Rights Concepts and Conceptual Debates

Required:


Suggested:


**Week 3: Linking Concepts to Measurements (part 1)**

**Required:**


**Suggested:**


**Week 5a: Linking Concepts to Measurements (part 2)**

**Required:**


**Suggested:**


Week 5b: Repression and Dissent

**Required:**


**Suggested:**


Week 6a: Varieties and Origins of Rights part 1

**Required:**


**Suggested:**


Week 6b: Varieties and Origins of Rights part 2

**Required:**


**Suggested:**


Week 7: Norms and Socialization

Required:


Suggested:


Week 8: Compliance part 1

Required:

Suggested:

Week 9: Compliance part 2

Required:
Suggested:


Week 10: Domestic Courts, Regional Courts, and International Courts

Required:


**Suggested:**


**Week 11: Human Rights Activism and Humanism part 1**

**Required:**


Suggested:


Week 12: Human Rights Activism and Humanism part 2

Required:


Suggested:


Week 13: Rights under the Surveillance State

Required:


Suggested:


Week 14: Designing studies of human rights

Required:


Suggested:


**Week 15: New Human Rights Data Initiatives**

**Required:**


**Suggested:**
Additional Course Information

Student Mental Health and Wellbeing

University of Michigan is committed to advancing the mental health and wellbeing of its students. If you or someone you know is feeling overwhelmed, depressed, and/or in need of support, services are available.

For help, contact Counseling and Psychological Services (CAPS) at (734) 764-8312 and https://caps.umich.edu/ during and after hours, on weekends and holidays, or through its counselors physically located in schools on both North and Central Campus.

You may also consult University Health Service (UHS) at (734) 764-8320 and https://www.uhs.umich.edu/mentalhealthsvcs, or for alcohol or drug concerns, see www.uhs.umich.edu/aodresources.

For a listing of other mental health resources available on and off campus, visit: http://umich.edu/ mhealth/.

Accommodations for Students with Disabilities

If you think you need an accommodation for a disability, please let me know at your earliest convenience. Some aspects of this course, the assignments, the in-class activities, and the way the course is usually taught may be modified to facilitate your participation and progress. As soon as you make me aware of your needs, we can work with the Services for Students with Disabilities (SSD) office to help us determine appropriate academic accommodations. SSD (734-763-3000; http://ssd.umich.edu) typically recommends accommodations through a Verified Individualized Services and Accommodations (VISA) form. Any information you provide is private and confidential and will be treated as such.

Religious and Academic Conflicts

Although the University of Michigan, as an institution, does not observe religious holidays, it has long been the University’s policy that every reasonable effort should be made to help students avoid negative academic consequences when their religious obligations conflict with academic requirements. Absence from classes or examinations for religious reasons does not relieve students from responsibility for any part of the course work required during the period of absence. Students who expect to miss classes, examinations, or other assignments as a consequence of their religious observance shall be provided with a reasonable alternative opportunity to complete such academic responsibilities.

It is the obligation of students to provide faculty with reasonable notice of the dates of religious holidays on which they will be absent. Such notice must be given by the drop/add deadline of the given term. Students who are absent on days of examinations or class assignments shall be offered an opportunity to make up the work, without penalty, unless it can be demonstrated that a make-up opportunity would interfere unreasonably with the delivery of the course. Should disagreement arise over any aspect of this policy, the parties involved should contact the Director of Undergraduate Studies/Director of Graduate Studies. Final appeals will be resolved by the Provost.

Students Representing the University of Michigan

There may be instances when students must miss class due to their commitment to officially represent the University. These students may be involved in the performing arts, scientific or artistic endeavors, or intercollegiate athletics. Absence from classes while representing the University does not relieve students from responsibility for any part of the course missed during the period of absence. Students should provide reasonable notice for dates of anticipated absences and submit an individualized class excuse form.

Academic Integrity

The LSA undergraduate academic community, like all communities, functions best when its members treat one another with honesty, fairness, respect, and trust. The College holds all members of its community to high standards of scholarship and integrity. To accomplish its mission of providing an optimal educational environment and developing leaders of society, the College promotes the assumption of personal responsibility and integrity and prohibits all forms of academic dishonesty and
misconduct. Academic dishonesty may be understood as any action or attempted action that may result in creating an unfair academic advantage for oneself or an unfair academic advantage or disadvantage for any other member or members of the academic community. Conduct, without regard to motive, that violates the academic integrity and ethical standards of the College community cannot be tolerated. The College seeks vigorously to achieve compliance with its community standards of academic integrity. Violations of the standards will not be tolerated and will result in serious consequences and disciplinary action.

Grade Grievances

If you believe a grade you have received is unfair or in error, you will need to do the following:
Wait 24 hours after receiving the grade before approaching your instructor. Provide an explanation in writing for why the grade you received was unfair or in error. If you believe the instructors response fails to address your claim of unfairness or error, you may petition the departments Director of Undergraduate Studies at the latest within the first five weeks of classes following the completion of the course. You must convey in writing the basis for the complaint, with specific evidence in support of the argument that the grade either was given in error or was unfairly determined. This formal complaint also should summarize the outcome of the initial inquiry to the course instructor, indicating which aspects are in dispute. Within three weeks of the receipt of the petition, the DUS will determine whether to convene the Undergraduate Affairs Committee, the student, and the instructor(s) for a formal hearing. Further details on this process are included on the department website under Advising > Contesting a Grade.

Late Assignments

I will deduct one letter grade from an assignment for each week it is past due.

Resources for Harassment

Title IX makes it clear that violence and harassment based on sex and gender, including violence and harassment based on sexual orientation, are a Civil Rights offense subject to the same kinds of accountability and the same kinds of support applied to offenses against other protected categories such as race, national origin, etc. If you or someone you know has been harassed or assaulted, you can find the appropriate resources here: www.bw.edu/resources/hr/harass/policy.pdf

Language and Gender

“Language is gender-inclusive and non-sexist when we use words that affirm and respect how people describe, express, and experience their gender. Just as sexist language excludes women's experiences, non-gender-inclusive language excludes the experiences of individuals whose identities may not fit the gender binary, and/or who may not identify with the sex they were assigned at birth. Identities including trans, intersex, and genderqueer reflect personal descriptions, expressions, and experiences. Gender-inclusive/non-sexist language acknowledges people of any gender (for example, first year student versus freshman, chair versus chairman, humankind versus mankind, etc.). It also affirms non-binary gender identifications, and recognizes the difference between biological sex and gender expression. Teachers and students should use gender-inclusive words and language whenever possible in the classroom and in writing. Students, faculty, and staff may share their preferred pronouns and names, either to the class or privately to the professor, and these gender identities and gender expressions should be honored.” For more information:
www.wstudies.pitt.edu/faculty/gender-inclusivenon-sexist-language-syllabi-statement.