Course number: JUS 394 (86763)  
Fall 2013

Human Rights Organizations and Institutions  
Meets: Tuesday and Thursday, 1:30-2:45 p.m.  
Location: Farmer Education Bldg. Room 336  

Professor: LaDawn Haglund  
E-mail: ladawn.haglund@asu.edu  
Office Location: Wilson Hall Room 265  
Phone number: 480-965-7083  
Office Hours: Tuesday and Thursday, 12:00-1:00 p.m.

I. Course description:

The development of a global human rights regime is one of the most significant achievements of the 20th Century. However, the continuing evolution of a system of norms, rules and institutions that protect individual and group rights against the predatory and destructive actions of state and non-state actors remains one the greatest challenges of the 21st Century. Less than 150 years ago, slavery was practiced in the United States. Much of the world lived under colonial rule, and discrimination—based on race, religion, ethnicity and gender—was widespread. Governments could repress their populations without fear of sanction. Mass murder, genocide, torture, systematic deprivation and economic plunder were tolerated in silence and enabled by increasingly destructive technologies and zealotry. While grave violations of human dignity have not disappeared, a paradigmatic shift in how states are expected to treat their citizenry and each other has occurred since the adoption of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights after World War II.

This course investigates the emergence and continual evolution of the organizations and institutions designed to promote and protect human rights at the global, regional, and national scales. It begins with an overview of the ideational foundations for human rights, seen through a sociological lens. We will then explore the reasons why it become necessary to “institutionalize” human rights (i.e., embed the concept of human rights within organizational systems), and the trial and error process that led to the development of the postwar international human rights regime. Next, we begin to grapple with the complexity of this regime by focusing on the “alphabet soup” of organizations and institutions that comprise the UN human rights apparatus. We then shift to other organizations—NGOs, the media, and corporations—in order to analyze and critique the role they play, with a particular emphasis on how power relations and structural violence affect human rights struggles. During the last few weeks of the class, we will embark upon group-centered case studies in which we take a more in-depth sociological look at several topical areas—Torture and Detention at Guantanamo, Child Soldiers, and Indigenous Rights and the Environment. We will wrap up the semester with student-designed Action Plans for approaching these issues, and a look to the future of human rights.

Note: This course fulfills the “Human Rights Institutions and Organizations” requirement for the ASU Undergraduate Certificate in Human Rights.
II. **Course objectives:**

- To gain a solid understanding of how and why numerous organizations and institutions designed to promote human rights evolved
- To become familiar with the basic legal and procedural characteristics of these entities;
- To be able to explain how the various institutions and organizations work together
- To develop a deep understanding of the global issues & problems addressed by these entities;
- To develop critical analysis and problem-solving skills through preparing and presenting case studies and plans of action for particular human rights challenges;

This knowledge will prepare students for work with international governmental or non-governmental organizations, social movement organizations, or other institutions with an international or human rights focus.

III. **Course requirements and grading policy:**

Many issues will be covered during the semester, and the workload will be fairly demanding. Both attendance and participation are vital to the success of the class and to your grade. Lectures and discussion will extend beyond assigned readings, so it is imperative that you attend class.

If you are unable to attend on a particular day or turn in an assignment on time, please let me know as soon as possible. **Late work will not be accepted** unless you have cleared it with me.

**Your grade will be based on the following (see detailed chart below):**

- Attendance, class participation, and in-class assignments: 10%
- Discussion Board Assignments: 30%
- Short topical assignments (op-ed/video, film review, debate): 30%
- Group case study and Plan of Action: 30%

**Attendance and class participation:** This course is organized primarily around class discussion of, and assessments based on, assigned readings and video materials. Attendance will be tracked and grades lowered for excessive absences (defined as more than four absences for any reason). Please note that **readings are not optional!** Students are expected to read assigned materials carefully and thoughtfully prior to the lecture for which they are due. Meaningful participation in class discussions entails contributing relevant information, addressing controversial issues, and raising probing questions based on readings and films.

**Discussion board posts:** The due dates for your discussion board posts are **firm.** These are not lengthy assignments, but they should be approached professionally nevertheless. Although comments will be posted online, they should not be written while you are online, and you should keep a backup copy of all assignments on your computer. These are not informal “chat sessions;” they are intended to provide thoughtful academic commentary, comprising brief but well organized reflections and criticisms regarding the materials. Conventional grammar and punctuation rules should be observed! In addition to writing your own comments, you will be asked three times during the semester to review the comments circulated by your classmates and comment on at least one other person’s post. Please be respectful and professional at all times.
Short topical assignments: You will be required to complete three short topical assignments around mid-semester. These include a review and critique of a news report, either by writing an “op-ed” or creating a short satirical news video; a written review of a human rights film; and an in-class debate on corporate responsibility that includes an analysis of corporate codes of conduct. More information on these assignments appears below on the course schedule.

Case study: At the end of the semester, students in three topical groups will research a case of human rights violations, give short presentations on the causes and possible solutions for these cases, and devise a “Plan of Action” for addressing them. This assignment will provide an opportunity for students to develop and practice presentation skills, as well as strategies for group coordination/cooperation. You will be expected to meet with your team at least twice before your first presentation, first to decide on what each student will research and present and later to practice your presentation to make sure it flows well, is concise, and doesn’t exceed allotted time. More details appear on the schedule below, and will be disseminated in class.

Study suggestion: You should take notes on the readings and films to help you prepare for discussions, topical assignment, and your final project. In particular:

1. note the main points of each source, and if there is more than one source, consider how they are related (with one main point from each work as an example);
2. consider what is new to you about the topics discussed and how (if at all) they have changed your conception of globalization or economic justice; and
3. develop an understanding of how the week’s readings, films, and lecture material apply to current events

UN-related acronyms and Charter provisions: There are numerous, often confusing acronyms you will learn throughout the course of the semester. In order to keep them straight, I urge you to keep handy and reference regularly the organograms and charts that appear in your readings.

IV. Required texts (you may be able to buy used – and thus cheaper – on Amazon.com):

V. Optional texts that may be of interest
- There is a long appendix with additional readings that might be of relevance to your work in this course (and beyond) at the end of this syllabus.

VI. Supplementary materials
- Articles for the course will be posted on Blackboard
- I want you to engage the readings, so you should be informed about current human rights-related news. To this end, please subscribe to the UN Wire, a free daily summary of UN news stories from around the world, distributed via email. To subscribe, go to [http://www.smartbrief.com/un_wire](http://www.smartbrief.com/un_wire). News is also available on the UN’s websites ([http://www.un.org/News/](http://www.un.org/News/) and [www.unsystem.org](http://www.unsystem.org)).
You are encouraged to read the New York Times regularly at http://www.nytimes.com
You should also check “alternative” (i.e., non-mainstream) sources of news regularly for items that relate to course readings. Some good examples of such sources include:
- http://therealnews.com/t2/
- http://www.alternet.org
- http://www.commondreams.org
- http://truth-out.org/
- http://www.leftbusinessobserver.com
- http://www.oneworld.net
- http://www.opendemocracy.net
You may be asked to watch 1-2 films outside of class. They will be on reserve at Hayden.

VII. Miscellaneous course information:

Obvious courtesies:
- Arrive on time
- Turn off your cell phone
- Do not engage in e-communication during class
- Let me know in advance if you must leave early

ASU e-mail and Blackboard: You will need to be sure that your e-mail is working in order to keep up with course information disseminated by e-mail. If your e-mail account rejects my messages, it is not my problem. If you send me something and I do not respond within 48 hours, you should assume that I did not receive it. If it is an assignment, I suggest you bring a hard copy and put it into my mailbox instead of relying on e-mail, to ensure that you receive credit. We will be using Blackboard extensively, so please familiarize yourself with this interface if you have not done so already. It can be reached through MyASU.

Incompletes: “A mark of ‘I’ (incomplete) is given by the instructor only when a student who is otherwise doing acceptable work is unable to complete a course because of illness or other conditions beyond the student’s control” (from the ASU General Catalog).

Academic integrity: Students must be aware that cheating or plagiarism will be dealt with severely. This includes failing to cite sources that you use for your work, representing others’ work as your own, allowing others to represent your work as theirs, falsifying records, and inappropriate collaboration. If you have doubts about what constitutes academic dishonesty, ask me. The School of Justice and Social Inquiry adheres to university policies regarding academic integrity, which you are encouraged to read and take very seriously: http://provost.asu.edu/academicintegrity/policy.

Maturity and respect: Because discourse is an integral part of university life, I want to ensure that the classroom and online environment are safe places for frank and open discussion. Although the readings and topics we cover may be controversial, and we may have different viewpoints, I expect all of us to treat one another with respect and create an atmosphere conducive to discussion. If you feel a classmate has created a threatening or uncomfortable atmosphere, please speak to me about it immediately.
Writing assistance: The ASU Writing Center is available to all enrolled students to help them improve their writing skills through online and in-person tutoring: [http://studentsuccess.asu.edu/home/writingcenters](http://studentsuccess.asu.edu/home/writingcenters). The Writing Center website also contains handouts and services that can help you write better papers. You are strongly encouraged to use this service for your final paper, especially if you receive feedback on your memos regarding the need to improve your writing.

Disability Services: If you have a learning disability, need disability accommodations in this class, or have other particular needs, please let me know as soon as possible. All information regarding disability is confidential.

Emergency or illness: If you are unable to complete assignments or attend class due to a family emergency or serious illness, please contact the University Advocate, 480-965-6547, who can send me and your other professors a letter to verify your absences and/or inability to meet a deadline. The University Advocate constitutes a resource for student emergencies and will assist students in negotiating university policy across units and campuses.

### ASSIGNMENTS (non-reading): SUMMARY

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Week</th>
<th>Assignment</th>
<th>Value</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>News article due Tuesday</td>
<td>5%</td>
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<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Paragraph on “sociological imagination” due Wed; comment on peer post due Thurs before class</td>
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<td>4</td>
<td>Paragraph on “why institutions are necessary” due Mon</td>
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<td>5</td>
<td>Paragraph on “one crucial right” due Mon; comment on peer post due Tues before class</td>
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<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Paragraph on interesting charter/treaty website due Mon</td>
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<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Paragraph on NGO strategies due Mon; comment on peer post due Tues before class</td>
<td>7.5%</td>
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<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Read/research FAIR story by Mon; begin “op-ed”/video by Wed - due Wed of Week 9 – you’ll be graded on the final product</td>
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<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Op-ed or video due Wed; Choose and watch HR film by the end of the week</td>
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<td>10</td>
<td>Film review due Mon; corp code of conduct due Thursday (graded w/ debate)</td>
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<td>11</td>
<td>Prepare for in-class debate on corporate responsibility (Thurs)</td>
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<td>12</td>
<td>Group #1 Presentation</td>
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<td>13</td>
<td>Group #2 Presentation; Lincoln Center Ethics Symposium, Nov. 12 (required)</td>
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<td>Group #3 Presentation</td>
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<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>None</td>
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<tr>
<td>16</td>
<td>Oral presentations on Plans of Action</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Final written Plans due at the time of scheduled finals</td>
<td>20%</td>
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COURSE OUTLINE

WEEK 1: Overview and Introduction to the Course
August 22

WEEK 2: Where Do Human Rights Come From?
August 27-29
Readings
• Lauren, Intro and Ch. 1 (pp. 1-42)
Films: (Watch before class - two very short, very basic introductions to human rights)
• www.humanrights.com/#/what-are-human-rights
• http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kbul3hxYGNU&list=PLCAA1D8F69131A393&index=3&feature=plpp_video
Assignment
• Print or clip one news article that addresses a human rights issue (or could address one, even if not currently framed in human rights terms). Bring it to class on Tuesday.

Questions to consider as you prepare for class: How are human rights defined? What are their foundations? What is the basis for the universality of human rights? How are rights realized? What are some of the conflicts and contradictions among different ideas about rights?

WEEK 3: Early Struggles for Human Rights
September 3-5
Readings
• C. Wright Mills, The Sociological Imagination, excerpt
• Lauren, Ch. 2-3 [66 pp.]
Assignment (two parts)
1. By Wednesday, post a paragraph on the discussion board explaining how you see a “sociological imagination” being potentially helpful for studying human rights.
2. Thursday prior to class, read over all your peers’ posts and comment on at least one.

Questions to consider as you prepare for class: What are the characteristics of a “sociological imagination”? What structural, historical, and individual factors might influence human rights problems and/or solutions? How did people historically come to understand social problems in terms of rights?

WEEK 4: Institutionalization - From the League of Nations to Dumbarton Oaks
September 10-12
Readings
• Lauren, Ch. 4-5 [63 pp.]
For reference only (no need to read, but you may want to refer to this for later assignments)


Assignment

- On Monday before class, write a paragraph giving two key reasons why institutions became necessary for pursuing human rights and post it on the discussion board. Four volunteers will analyze the postings and report back.

Questions to consider as you prepare for class: Why did it become necessary to “institutionalize” human rights (i.e., embed the concept of human rights within organizational systems)? What advantages do formal regimes and institutions offer for the realization of rights? Why might this be especially important for economic and social rights? What are some ways that human rights are “institutionalized”?

WEEK 5: Postwar International Governance
September 17-19

Readings

- Lauren, Ch. 6-7 [67 pp.]
- Mertus, Ch. 1-2 [36 pp.]
- Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR) – Lauren, p. 305-310

Assignment (two parts)

1. Pick one “right” from the UDHR that you think is crucial. On Monday before class, write a paragraph and post it to the discussion board defending your view that this particular right is of paramount importance.

2. Prior to Tuesday’s class, read through the responses of all your peers and reply to at least one post, indicating why you agree or disagree with their analysis.

Questions to consider as you prepare for class: What real-world human “wrongs” were specific human rights instruments and institutions designed to address? Why did the architects of these institutions believe that these were the best instruments to address these problems?

WEEK 6: Alphabet Soup
September 24-26

Readings

- Lauren, Ch. 8 (first 50 years) [38 pp.]
- Mertus, Ch. 3-4 [61 pp.]

Assignment

- By Monday morning, browse through the websites for the main charter and treaty bodies listed in the Mertus reading. Choose one (1) of these entities and note 1-2 things on the discussion board that stood out or particularly interested you about what this entity does. Be sure to include the URL where the information on this activity can be found. Two volunteers will lead discussion on the postings.

Questions to consider as you prepare for class: What are the different institutions and organizations that make up the “Alphabet Soup” of UN Human Rights bodies? What kinds of activities do these institutions carry out?
WEEK 7: Role of NGOs as Global Governance Institutions
October 1-3
Readings

Assignment (two parts)
1. Surf the Internet for examples of human rights advocacy anywhere in the world. By Monday morning, choose one NGO and analyze in a discussion board post the approach this NGO takes in addressing human rights abuses. Who is the primary audience for this organization? What strategies does the group use try to reach its goals and its audience? To what extent is media involved? Be sure to include a link to the site containing the NGO’s information.
2. Prior to class on Tuesday, read all--and comment on at least one--of your classmates’ chosen NGOs, in particular whether you find their strategies interesting or effective.

Questions to consider as you prepare for class: How do NGOs contribute to legal strategies for human rights protection? What other strategies (beyond law) do NGOs utilize to protect human rights? What are some ways in which governmental and non-governmental bodies create synergies to advance human rights goals? What are some contradictions between these bodies?

WEEK 8: Role of Media as Watchdog
October 8-10:
Readings

Film
- (Watch before class this week): http://www.thedailyshow.com/watch/wed-april-24-2013/weak-constitution

Assignment (Start this week, due next Wednesday, 10/16)
- Read one (1) criticism of mainstream media’s human rights coverage on the FAIR (Fairness and Accuracy in Reporting) website (http://fair.org/topic/human-rights/). Research the issue in preparation for the assignment below, then choose one (1) of the following assignments:
  1. Write a 250-word “opposition editorial” (op-ed piece) explaining why this important issue should get more coverage (1st Point), outlining the human rights issues at stake (refer to human rights articles and UN treaties, conventions, or instruments that protect those specific rights) (2nd Point), and making a broader argument about the role of media as watchdog (3rd Point). Guidelines will be posted on Blackboard to guide you.
2. Create a videorecording of your own satirical news story in the style of the Daily Show, outlining the problems with mainstream coverage of the issue you researched for (1) human rights, and (2) democracy. This should be between 3-5 minutes long.

- Post your op-ed or link to your uploaded video to the class discussion board by Wed 10/16

**Questions to consider as you prepare for class:** How can media act as an effective watchdog for human rights? What are some reasons that it does not always fulfill this role? How do media outlets make hard choices concerning coverage of human rights issues?

**WEEK 9: Role of Film for “Witnessing” Human Rights Violations**

**October 15 [No Class - Fall Break]**

**October 17**

**Readings**


**Optional but interesting reading**


**Assignment (Start this week; review due next Monday)**

- Choose and watch any one (1) human rights film from those featured on the Media That Matters webpage (http://www.mediathatmattersfest.org/issue/human_rights/) (can be a short)
- Write a 600-800 word film review that discusses:
  1. The nature of the human rights problem (including which human rights *articles* are being violated and from which UN *treaties, conventions, or instruments*)
  2. The *target audience* and *strategies* used by the filmmaker (informing, persuading, etc.) to address the issue
  3. Any *ethical concerns* that you think the filmmaker may (or should) have addressed in making this film (danger to subjects, exploitation of suffering, etc.)

- Post your review to the class discussion board by Monday 10/21

**WEEK 10: Business and Human Rights**

**October 22-24**

**Readings**


**Film**
• (Watch before class on Tues) News clip (20 minutes) on Walmart and workers’ rights: http://www.democracynow.org/2013/6/11/striking_workers_bangladeshi_activist_challen ge_walmart
• (In class) The Corporation (excerpts)

Assignment
• Prior to Thursday’s class, surf the Internet to find a corporate code of conduct for a company of your choice, preferably one that you patronize, and post it on the discussion board. Four volunteers will be asked to review the postings and begin class discussion by raising questions based on the collection of codes. You can start here: http://www.business-humanrights.org/Links/Repository/800457/link_page_view.

Questions to consider as you prepare for class: How have businesses attempted to alleviate (or not) human rights problems arising from their operations? What are the strengths and weaknesses of “voluntary” vs. “legally binding” approaches to accountability? How have non-business actors attempted to hold business accountable for these problems?

WEEK 11: Holding Corporations Accountable
October 29-31
Assignment
• Prepare for in-class debate on corporate responsibility (Thursday)

Readings
• Mertus, Ch. 6 [ILO and Global Compact] [24]
• Lauren, Ch. 9 (selections, TBD)
• Read up on the “Kiobel v. Royal Dutch Petroleum (Shell Oil)” case at cja.org/section.php?id=510. Pay particular attention to the section on extraterritoriality.

Film
• (Watch before class on Tues) News clip (10 minutes) on Alien Tort Statue: http://www.democracynow.org/2012/2/24/supreme_court_to_decide WHETHER US

Questions to consider as you prepare for class: How do power differentials and structural violence at the global scale perpetuate human rights violations? What is the role of “extraterritorial obligations” and instruments like the U.S. “Alien Tort Statue” in enforcing respect for human rights? Who ultimately is responsible when production and consumption practices are implicated in human rights violations?

WEEK 12: Case Study #1 – Guantanamo and Torture [U.S.]
November 5-7:
Readings
• Background reading TBD
• Group #1’s selected reading, TBD
• UN Resources (not much here, but it’s a start): http://www.un.org/en/events/torturevictimsday/resources.shtml

WEEK 13: Case Study #2 – Child Soldiers [Africa]
November 12
Assignment
• Attend Ethics Seminar; details will be provided

November 14
Readings
• Background reading TBD
• Group #2’s selected reading, TBD
• UN Resources: http://childrenandarmedconflict.un.org/
• AI: http://www.amnestyusa.org/our-work/issues/children-s-rights/child-soldiers

WEEK 14: Case Study #3 – Indigenous Rights and the Environment [Americas]
November 19-21:
Readings
• Background reading TBD
• Group #3’s selected reading, TBD
• UN Resources: http://social.un.org/index/IndigenousPeoples.aspx

WEEK 15
November 26: Group projects day
November 28 - No class! Happy Thanksgiving!

WEEK 16: Present Action Plans and Wrap Up
December 3-5 (Last Week of Class)
Assignment
• Present your preliminary “Plan of Action” in class

Reading
• Mertus, p. 148-154 (Ch. 7, Conclusions and Postscript) [6]
• Lauren, Ch. 10 [22]

WEEK OF DECEMBER 9TH: FINAL PROJECT DUE – exact place and time TBD
Additional Sources:

Note: this is by no means a complete list. The following websites contain links to human-rights related syllabi that list numerous other sources on a variety of topics that may be of use to you:

- http://learning.berkeley.edu/AIUSA-syl/
- http://humanrights.uchicago.edu/curriculumdevelopment/syllabi.shtml
- http://www.utica.edu/academic/institutes/ihrec/syllabi.cfm

International Organizations:


The United Nations


Human Rights and Regime Theory (IR):


Legal scholarship on HR:


Colonialism and Human Rights:

Environment, Development and Human Rights:

NGOs and Political Activism for Human Rights:

Media and Film

Human Rights in the United States:
Misc. United Nations Documents:


Websites:

- Excellent source for further research on the UN: http://unhistoryproject.org/index.html
- Business and Human Rights Resource Center: http://www.business-humanrights.org/Home
- Center for Justice and Accountability, http://www.cja.org/
- International Rights Advocates, http://www.iradvocates.org/
- Coalition for the International Criminal Court, http://www.iccnow.org/
- Center for Constitutional Rights, http://www.ccr-ny.org/
- http://eitransparency.org/
- http://www.kimberleyprocess.com/
- http://www.globalwitness.org/

Films and Film Clips:

- [Food] America Needs Human Rights (Food First Film)
- [Environment] How to Save the World
- [Environment] Trashed
- [Genocide in Rwanda] Ghosts of Rwanda OR Sometimes in April