

**San José State University**  
**Department of Justice Studies**  
**Spring 2017**  
**JS 25, Introduction to Human Rights and Justice, Section 01**

**Course and Contact Information**

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<b>Office Hours:</b>	Thursdays @ 12pm – 1pm and by appointment
<b>Class Days/Time:</b>	Tuesdays and Thursdays 9:00-10:15 a.m.
<b>Classroom:</b>	MH 523
<b>GE Category:</b>	D3 Social Issues

**Course Description**

From Catalog: “This course is a lower division introduction to the history of human rights as a concept and body of international law, and to the complicated role of human rights in contemporary social justice campaigns.”

This course is designed for students to explore the following:

Where did human rights (as an idea and body of law) come from?

How are human rights defined through international law (i.e. through human rights instruments, such as the Universal Declaration of Human Rights)?

How do the major international courts (ICC and ICJ) work?

What are the most significant human rights related international NGOs and how do they work?

How do international human rights relate to human rights struggles and social problems in the U.S. and our local communities?

**GE Learning Outcomes (GELO)**

Upon successful completion of this course, students will be able to:

- (GELO1) Place contemporary developments in cultural, historical, environmental, and spatial contexts.
- (GELO2) Identify the dynamics of ethnic, cultural, gender/sexual, age-based, class, regional, national, transnational, and global identities and the similarities, differences, linkages, and interactions between them.
- (GELO3) Evaluate social science information, draw on different points of view, and formulate applications appropriate to contemporary social issues.
- (GELO4) Students will be able to apply multidisciplinary material to a topic relevant to policy and social action at the local, national, and/or international levels.

**Course Learning Outcomes (CLO)**

The goals of this course are to (1) give students a basic understanding of the events, actors and ideas that gave rise to the

concept of human rights; (2) give students a basic understanding of international human rights law and a general familiarity with common human rights instruments; (3) give students the opportunity to grapple with the complicated relationship in theory and practice between human rights and social justice. As part of this last goal, students will become relatively familiar with several contemporary human rights campaigns.

Upon successful completion of this course, students will be able to:

- (CLO1) Recall a general history of human rights including the significant events, actors, and ideas that gave rise to the concept of human rights.
- (CLO2) Demonstrate a general familiarity with major human rights instruments and how these instruments work with regard to international (treaty) law.
- (CLO3) Demonstrate a familiarity with several current human rights campaigns (domestic and international), reporting agencies (Human Rights Watch, Amnesty International, etc.), and policy debates.

## Required Texts/Readings

### Textbook

None. All readings and materials will be provided by the instructor as emailed PDF files. Should you have any problems obtaining reading materials throughout the course, please email the instructor for assistance.

### Other Readings

Most readings will be distributed by the instructor as emailed PDF files or web links. Readings will include book chapters, policy papers, news articles and other documents.

Sign up for Human Rights Watch's daily and weekly newsletter - the weekly newsletter is required reading

### Social Media

Follow HRW on Twitter, Facebook and YouTube

### Library Liaison

For help with library resources and library research (including the use of databases and online research materials—such as journal search engines), students are strongly encouraged to contact the Justice Studies Library Liaison: Silke Higgins, [silke.higgins@sjsu.edu](mailto:silke.higgins@sjsu.edu), (408) 808-2118.

## Course Requirements and Assignments

### Readings

Reading assignments will be uploaded to Canvas on a weekly basis. Students are expected to complete readings by the class session indicated on the course schedule and announced on Canvas. Students should come to class prepared to *discuss* the assigned readings such that class time is not wasted, and we can engage the material together.

### Classroom Activities and Discussion:

This course requires a great deal of classroom discussion and classroom activity. This is primarily because much of the course material is often new and challenging for lower division, undergraduate students. These discussions and classroom activities are designed to help students successfully achieve all learning objectives (GELO 1-4; CLO 1-3), and to prepare students for graded assignments and exams.

### The Current Events Quiz:

Description and Purpose: The interdisciplinary study of human rights requires a working knowledge of significant events (news) at the national and international level, particularly regarding significant social problems, policy shifts/debates, issues of war and peace, trends of social and/or

cultural change, international relations, and so forth. Each session of this course will begin with a rundown of the day's major news headlines (as they relate to human rights and international security), and brief discussion of the most provocative stories.

Periodically, students will be expected to complete a quiz on the ongoing news stories of interest to the course. The Current Events Quiz will test student's awareness of relevant events of central concern to the course (as will be evident from course discussion), and "critical news literacy"—or the ability to critically interpret information from specific sources, keeping in mind the interests and constraints of the source (GELO 1, 3, 4; CELO 1, 3).

Grading:

These assignments will be graded on a 10-point scale. They will be evaluated on content (accuracy), clarity, and critical news literacy (critical reflection on news sources).

Completion of these assignments is also meant to help students come up with topics for the larger "Human Rights Report-Back" assignments described below. Current Events presentations will be worth **20%** of the final course grade.

**"Human Rights Report-Back" Assignment & Presentation:**

Description and Purpose:

Students will have the opportunity to research and discuss the human rights situation in a country of their choosing. This assignment requires students to do the following in under 8 pages, employing at least 3 scholarly sources, in standard APA format: (1) describe the current human rights campaign or struggle (GELO 3; CELO 1), providing an historical social context (GELO 1, 2; CELO 1); (2) discuss the explicit application of human rights law and/or discourse (GELO 4; CELO 2); (3) provide a brief analysis of the campaign's aims, strategies, and progress (GELO 4, CELO 3). Paper topics must be cleared by the course instructor before drafting (see course schedule). On the day these assignments are due, students will discuss and share them in small groups (thus, "report-back"). HR report-backs are designed to expose students to how human rights law and discourse may be employed in the messy struggle for social justice. These assignments are also designed to further students' understanding of and familiarity with human rights instruments and reporting bodies/agencies.

Grading:

These assignments will be graded on a 10-point scale. They will be evaluated on content, clarity, thoroughness, and quality of sources. A sample grading rubric will be distributed to students to make all graded expectations clear before assignment submissions.

Students will complete a draft process and all final assignments will be returned with written qualitative feedback from the instructor in order to improve writing and research skills. HR report-backs will be worth **20%** of the final course grade.

**Final Examination or Evaluation**

**Mid Term and Final Exams**

There will be a midterm and final exam in this course to cover all course material. Both exams will be relatively straight forward, in a multiple-choice format, with both retention and application questions designed to evaluate students' substantive grasp of course material. These exams will be worth **35%** of the final course grade (GELO 1-4; CELO 1-3).

**Grading Information**

All grades are up to the subjective judgment of the instructor. Grades will be calculated from a weighted point system. There are no "curves" applied to grades in this course.

Important Note: Students in Justice Studies must achieve a “C” or better in this course to fulfill Justice Studies Major Requirements.

Students may complete as much **extra credit** as they like in this course. In addition to attending select events (will be announced by the instructor), students interested in completing extra credit assignments should see the instructor to “pitch” their ideas and completion date.

<u>Assignment</u>	<u>Percentage of Final Grade</u>
Current Events Quizzes	4 quizzes @ 10 points each = 40 points
HR Report & Presentation	15 points
Mid-Term Exam	15 points
Online discussion questions	10 points
Final Exam (not cumulative)	20 points
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>100 points</b>

### **Grading Scale**

Exams and final grades will be calculated as a percentage on a typical “10 point scale”:

98-100%	A+
94-97	A
90-93	A-
88-89	B+
84-87	B
80-83	B-
78-79	C+
74-77	C
70-73	C-
68-69	D+
64-67	D
60-63	D-
<60	F

### **Classroom Protocol**

1. This course depends on participation and interaction. Students are expected to be on time to class out of respect for your colleagues and instructor.
2. All classroom participants are expected to foster an environment that encourages participation, rather than silencing others (be respectful to one another, do not insult or intimidate others, and so forth).
3. Students are expected to complete all readings and assignments by the dates indicated on the syllabus.
4. Students are responsible for any and all notes and materials missed in their absence.
5. Cell phone, PDA, and Laptop/Internet use will not be tolerated during class time unless they are part of class activities or necessary to field an emergency.

### **University Policies**

Per University Policy S16-9, university-wide policy information relevant to all courses, such as academic integrity, accommodations, etc. will be available on Office of Graduate and Undergraduate Programs’ [Syllabus Information web page](http://www.sjsu.edu/gup/syllabusinfo/) at <http://www.sjsu.edu/gup/syllabusinfo/>”

## JS 25: “Introduction to Human Rights and Justice” Spring 2017 Course Schedule

*This schedule is subject to change with fair notice from the instructor via email. Other assigned readings will be added on a weekly basis. Those readings will be scanned and uploaded to Canvas or offered as Internet links. Guest speakers will be announced on Canvas under announcements.*

### Course Schedule

Week	Date	Topics, Readings, Assignments, Deadlines
1		
1	1/26	Course Introduction, Syllabus Review
2	1/31	What are human rights? Origins and Foundation
2	2/2	Human Rights as Law, UDHR, Universalism – Goodhart Chapters 1
3	2/7	Human Rights in International Law – Goodhart Chapter 4
3	2/9	Monitoring Rights, International Criminal Court – Goodhart Chapter 8
4	2/14	International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights – Reichert Chapter 3
4	2/16	International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights – Reichert Chapter 4
5	2/21	Current Events Quiz, Women’s Rights – Goodhart Chapter 2 and other readings posted on Canvas
5	2/23	Women’s Rights, LGBTQ Rights, Goodhart Chapter 11, readings posted on Canvas
6	2/28	Children’s Rights – Goodhart Chapter 17
6	3/2	Human Trafficking – Goodhart Chapter 16
7	3/7	Genocide – Goodhart Chapter 20
7	3/9	Current Events Quiz, Humanitarian Intervention – Goodhart Chapter 21
8	3/14	Transitional Justice – Goodhart Chapter 22
8	3/16	Torture – Goodhart Chapter 15
9	3/21	Midterm Review - Country selection for HR reports
9	3/23	<b>Midterm Exam</b>
10	3/28	Spring Break - No Class!
10	3/30	Spring Break – No Class!
11	4/4	Immigrants and Refugees – Goodhart Chapters 18 & 14
11	4/6	Immigrants and Refugees
12	4/11	Indigenous Peoples’ Rights – Goodhart Chapter 19
12	4/13	Presentation of HR Reports 5 students, Current Events Quiz

<b>Week</b>	<b>Date</b>	<b>Topics, Readings, Assignments, Deadlines</b>
13	4/18	Presentation of HR Reports 4 students, Environmental Rights – Goodhart Chapter 23
13	4/20	Presentation of HR Reports 5 students , Environmental Rights
14	4/25	Presentation of HR Reports 4 students, Economic Globalization – Goodhart Chapter 13
14	4/27	Presentation of HR Reports 4 students, American Exceptionalism, Poverty and Wealth inequality in the US – Goodhart Chapter 12
15	5/2	Presentation of HR Reports 4 students, Human Rights & Religion – Goodhart Chapter 10
15	5/4	Presentation of HR Reports 4 students, International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination
16	5/9	Presentation of HR Reports 7 students, Current Events Quiz
16	5/11	Presentation of HR Reports 7 students,
17	5/16	Presentation of HR Reports 7 students, Final Exam review
17	5/23	<b>Final Exam</b> on Tuesday 5/23 @ 7:15-9:30 am in MH 523