

**San José State University**  
**Sociology and Interdisciplinary Social Sciences**  
**SOCI 118: Sociology of Human Rights and Social Justice (Section 1) Spring**  
**2020**

**Course and Contact Information**

|                         |  |
|-------------------------|--|
| <b>Instructor:</b>      | Dr. William Armaline   |
| <b>Office Location:</b> | DMH 216  |
| <b>Telephone:</b>       | (408) 294-2935   |
| <b>Email:</b>           | <a href="mailto:william.armaline@sjsu.edu">william.armaline@sjsu.edu</a> |
| <b>Office Hours:</b>    | Mondays and Wednesdays 3:00 – 4:30 p.m.                                  |
| <b>Class Days/Time:</b> | Mondays and Wednesdays 12:00 – 1:15 p.m.                                 |
| <b>Classroom:</b>       | DMH 226A   |
| <b>Prerequisites:</b>   | SOCI 01 or equivalent  |

**Catalog Course Description**

Analyze meanings and practices of human rights violations and promotion by exploring the social consequences of issues such as war crimes, sexism, migrant rights, and social displacement and by reflecting on prevailing and alternative institutions for social justice (SJSU course catalog).

*Instructor Course Description*

This course is designed for students to explore questions such as:

How has the concept of “human rights” evolved?

How are human rights defined through international law?

Who gets to decide what these rights are and how they are realized?

How have people struggled to define and realize fundamental rights and/or dignity for human and non-human animals? To what effects?

How does a discourse of fundamental “right” and/or “dignity” affect the way we understand, articulate, and respond to various social problems?

How do struggles and dialogs over human rights shape culture, policy, and social activism in our local communities?

Most importantly: How can we apply the long history of human rights struggles and scholarship to address social problems and human right abuses in our local and global communities?

**Course Learning Outcomes (CLO)**

Upon successful completion of this course students should be able to:

- (CLO1) Recognize and access human rights instruments defining “human rights” according to international law (such as the Universal Declaration of Human Rights [UDHR]) via online and library resources.
- (CLO2) Recognize and access the reports of central oversight agencies, such as Amnesty International [AI] and Human Rights Watch [HRW], that report on human rights abuses to the United Nations and global populace via online and library resources.

- (CLO3) Compare and contrast “universal” and “relativist” approaches to human rights. This will require students to recognize the unique nuances of “Western,” “non-Western,” and indigenous concepts of fundamental right and dignity. This also requires students to identify the historical context of human rights and human rights concepts as they have developed.
- (CLO4) Compare and contrast how “rights” and “dignity” have been defined for human and non-human animals by various cultures throughout the world.
- (CLO5) Apply a human rights discourse to analyze social problems, policies, and practices in the US—particularly in the SF Bay Area.

## Required Texts/Readings

### Textbook

Armaline, W., D.S. Glasberg, & B. Purkayastha. (2015). *The Human Rights Enterprise: Political Sociology, State Power and Social Movements*. London: Polity Press.

### Other Readings

All assigned readings beyond the required texts above will be provided by the instructor via email (PDF files). Should you have any problems obtaining reading materials throughout the course, please email the instructor for assistance.

### 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 Sociology Subject Librarian: Kathryn Blackmer Reyes, [Kathryn.BlackmerReyes@SJSU.edu](mailto:Kathryn.BlackmerReyes@SJSU.edu).

## Course Requirements and Assignments

### Readings

Students are expected to complete readings by the class session indicated on the course schedule. 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

Though not graded per se, this course requires a great deal of classroom discussion and classroom activity. Discussions and classroom activities are designed to help students successfully achieve all learning objectives and to develop students’ graded assignments.

### Reflection Papers

Description and Purpose: Twice in the semester, students will be given writing prompts to help them to reflect upon and apply assigned readings. Students will respond in writing to these prompts (typed, double spaced, 12-point font, APA or ASA format) in order to demonstrate their mastery of materials and to prepare for the final examination.

Grading: These assignments will count for **60% of the course grade** (30% each).

### Final Examination

Description and Purpose: The final will be a *take home exam*. We will discuss the expectations and parameters for the final exam in class. Students are encouraged to complete and take notes on class readings and classroom activities for use on the final. In general, the final exam will require students to recall and apply human rights discourse and instruments to analyze contemporary social problems (domestic and international). Students should expect the final to cover all significant class readings and activities, including films, lectures, class activities and so forth.

Grading: The final exam will be worth **40% of the final course grade**.

## Grading Information

### Determination of Grades

Final grades will be calculated as a percentage on a typical “100 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  |

| <u>Graded Assignment</u> | <u>Weight</u> |
|--------------------------|---------------|
| Writing Prompt 1         | 30%           |
| Writing Prompt 2         | 30%           |
| Final Exam               | 40%           |
| FINAL GRADE              | 100%          |

Students have the opportunity to complete unlimited **extra credit** for this course. Extra credit opportunities will be announced in class. Further, students can “pitch” their own extra credit assignments to the instructor at any time for approval. These assignments and opportunities will be discussed further throughout the course.

## 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/>"

## **University Resources**

### **Campus Policy in Compliance with the American Disabilities Act:**

If you need course adaptations or accommodations because of a disability, or if you need to make special arrangements in case the building must be evacuated, please make an appointment with me as soon as possible, or see me during office hours. Presidential Directive 97-03 requires that students with disabilities requesting accommodations must register with the AEC (Accessible Education Center) to establish a record of their disability.

### **Student Technology Resources:**

Computer labs for student use are available in the Academic Success Center located on the 1<sup>st</sup> floor of Clark Hall and on the 2<sup>nd</sup> floor of the Student Union. Additional computer labs may be available in your department/college. Computers are also available in the Martin Luther King Library. A wide variety of audio-visual equipment is available for student checkout from Media Services located in IRC 112. These items include digital and VHS camcorders, VHS and Beta video players, 16 mm, slide, overhead, DVD, CD, and audiotape players, sound systems, wireless microphones, projection screens and monitors.

### **Learning Assistance Resource Center:**

The Learning Assistance Resource Center (LARC) is located in Room 600 in the Student Services Center. It is designed to assist students in the development of their full academic potential and to motivate them to become self-directed learners. The center provides support services, such as skills assessment, individual or group tutorials, subject advising, learning assistance, summer academic preparation and basic skills development. [The LARC website is located at: http://www.sjsu.edu/larc/](http://www.sjsu.edu/larc/).

### **SJSU Writing Center:**

The SJSU Writing Center is located in Room 126 in Clark Hall. The Writing Center is staffed by professional instructors and upper-division or graduate-level writing specialists from each of the seven SJSU colleges. Our writing specialists have met a rigorous GPA requirement, and they are well trained to assist all students at all levels within all disciplines to become better writers. [The Writing Center website is located at: http://www.sjsu.edu/writingcenter/about/staff/](http://www.sjsu.edu/writingcenter/about/staff/).

### **Peer Mentor Center:**

The Peer Mentor Center is located on the 1<sup>st</sup> floor of Clark Hall in the Academic Success Center. The Peer Mentor Center is staffed with Peer Mentors who excel in helping students manage university life, tackling problems that range from academic challenges to interpersonal struggles. On the road to graduation, Peer Mentors are navigators, offering "roadside assistance" to peers who feel a bit lost or simply need help mapping out the locations of campus resources. Peer Mentor services are free and available on a drop-in basis, no reservation required. [The Peer Mentor Center website is located at: http://www.sjsu.edu/muse/peermentor/](http://www.sjsu.edu/muse/peermentor/).

# SOC 118: Sociology of HR and Social Justice (Section 01) Spring 2020 Course Schedule

*This schedule is subject to change with fair notice from the course instructor via email.*

## Course Schedule

| Week | Date | Topics, Readings, Assignments, Deadlines  |
|------|------|---|
| 1    | 1/27 | Course introduction, discuss syllabus, discuss Minor in HR<br>[Email Learning Modules (PDF) and help notes to students]   |
| 1    | 1/29 | The sticky business of defining “justice”   |
| 2    | 2/3  | Central concepts and basics: What are Human Rights and how do they work?<br>Part 1 (Learning Modules and Help Notes)  |
| 2    | 2/5  | HR Basics Part 2<br>[Distribute Writing Prompt 1]   |
| 3    | 2/10 | HR Basics Part 3  |
| 3    | 2/12 | Theoretical Tensions In Human Rights: Group vs. Individual Rights;<br>Universalism vs. Cultural Relativism; Liberalism/NeoLiberalism vs. Socialisms<br>[Email Armaline and Glasberg article and Jacobin Article]                              |
| 4    | 2/17 | Theoretical Tensions continued; <i>Read Armaline and Glasberg article and Jacobin article on Human Rights and Neoliberal Capitalism</i>   |
| 4    | 2/19 | Defining and applying a Critical Sociology of Human Rights; <i>Read HRE Chapter 1</i><br>[Email link to Drone Papers, Torture Report, and movie about the Torture Report]   |
| 5    | 2/24 | Political and Civil Rights in the U.S. and in connection to U.S. Policy: The U.S. Drone and targeted assassination program, the Senate torture report, and the new “surveillance” state (see also China); <i>Read the Drone Papers report</i> |
| 5    | 2/26 | Continued from 2/24   |
| 6    | 3/2  | TBA; <b>Writing Assignment 1 Due</b>  |
| 6    | 3/4  | Economic Rights in the U.S.: An exploration of unprecedented wealth inequality;<br><i>Readings TBA</i><br>[Assign old film, The Corporation]  |
| 7    | 3/9  | The Power of Multi-National Corporations, Global Finance and the Transnational (global) Owning Class; <i>Read HRE Chapter 4, watch The Corporation</i>  |
| 7    | 3/11 | Examining current (U.S.) platforms for economic reform<br>[Distribute Writing Prompt 2]   |
| 8    | 3/16 | Social and Cultural Rights in the U.S.: Examining contemporary immigration politics in the U.S.; <i>Readings TBA</i>  |
| 8    | 3/18 | Social and Cultural Rights continued  |
| 9    | 3/23 | TBA   |
| 9    | 3/25 | CEDAW and Women’s Rights: History and local ratification  |
| 10   | 3/30 | SPRING RECESS – NO CLASS  |

| <b>Week</b>       | <b>Date</b> | <b>Topics, Readings, Assignments, Deadlines</b>  |
|-------------------|-------------|--|
| 10                | 4/1         | SPRING RECESS – NO CLASS   |
| 11                | 4/6         | Feminism and politics in the U.S. : #MeToo movement (radical vs. liberal feminism) and the return of socialist feminists; <i>Readings TBA</i>                                    |
| 11                | 4/8         | ICERD: Human Rights and anti-racism / anti-fascism; <i>Read HRE Chapter 3</i> [Email Taylor readings, email Amnesty International Report on Ferguson]                            |
| 12                | 4/13        | Racism and policing: Standards on Police Use of Deadly Force and the Policing of Protest; <i>Read Amnesty International Report on Ferguson</i> ; <b>Writing Assignment 2 Due</b> |
| 12                | 4/15        | Racism and Capitalism; <i>Read samples from Taylor</i>   |
| 13                | 4/20        | Contemporary human rights and “overlapping threats” to human survival; <i>Read HRE Chapter 5</i> [Distribute Hiskes article, Klein excerpt, and materials on the Green New Deal] |
| 13                | 4/22        | Early notions of Environmental Human Rights; <i>Read Hiskes article</i>  |
| 14                | 4/27        | Confronting Capitalism, Climate Change and Eco Fascism; <i>Read Klein excerpt</i>  |
| 14                | 4/29        | Analyzing the “green new deal”; <i>Read GND materials</i>  |
| 15                | 5/4         | TBA  |
| 15                | 5/6         | TBA  |
| 16                | 5/11        | Final Exam Review  |
| <b>Final Exam</b> | 5/19        | Tuesday May 19th from 9:45 a.m. – 12:00 p.m. in our regular classroom (take home exam pickup during first 30 minutes)  |