University of Georgia  
INTL 8285: Human Rights  
Fall 2023, Monday 3:00-6:10 PM  
Sanford Hall 109

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Office Hours:  Tuesday, 10 AM-12 PM, and by appointment  
Schedule your meeting here: https://calendly.com/kchadclay/office-hours  
Prerequisites:  INTL 6200 or permission of department

Land and Labor Acknowledgement
The University of Georgia is on the traditional, ancestral territory of the Muscogee-Creek and Cherokee Peoples. If you would like to start learning about the forcible removal of indigenous people around America, including in the Athens area, the work of UGA History Professor Claudio Saunt is one potential place to start: https://bit.ly/37WKe2u. You can also learn more about the Muscogee (Creek) Nation (https://www.mcn-nsn.gov/) and the Eastern Band of Cherokee Indians (https://ebci.com/). In this course, we will spend some time learning about human rights abuses against indigenous people, but there is so much more to learn. The Institute for Native American Studies is a great resource for finding courses and other resources around UGA: https://inas.uga.edu/.

Further, enslaved peoples, primarily of African descent, built much of the University of Georgia. More information about the contribution of enslaved peoples to the development of the University of Georgia can be found on the UGA History Department’s “UGA & Slavery” website (https://slavery.ehistory.org/), as well as the “Slavery at the University of Georgia” exhibition (https://digihum.libs.uga.edu/exhibits/show/slavery). This class will also spend some time discussing human rights abuses related to racial discrimination and some of the persistent effects of slavery on human rights practices.

Course Description & Objectives:

The aim of this class is to provide you with a greater understanding of the concept of human rights, including their importance in international politics and the various means by which these rights might be either violated or protected. Further, we will also discuss many of the methods used to study and evaluate respect for human rights cross-nationally. As such, by the end of this course, you should:

- Have a strong grasp on the various conceptions of human rights, including comparisons between universal and culturally contingent perspectives, as well as the ability to clearly express and justify your preferred view of human rights and explain its implications
- Have gained a general understanding of many of the sources of human rights violations, as well as the many ways in which human rights may be violated and the cross-national extent of the problem of human rights violations
- Be able to list and discuss the implementation and effectiveness of several types of efforts aimed at improving respect for human rights, including the efforts associated with international law, powerful states, and non-governmental organizations
- Be capable of designing and conducting original research on the topic of human rights
• Be able to effectively critique and communicate information about both your research and the work of others

Course Assignments & Grades

Human Rights Basics Quizzes (20% of your grade)

Over the course of the semester, I will give you a few brief quizzes covering basic material from the classes. These quizzes are open book, but I do ask that you do them by yourself. They are not meant to be difficult. Rather, the intention of these quizzes is to ensure that you are grasping the basic substance of the course and to encourage you to better engage with the material that you encounter that you are perhaps less familiar with. I will follow up with more information on these quizzes as the semester progresses.

Human Rights Research (60% of your grade)

Your approach to meeting the requirements for the human rights research portion of this class will depend, to some extent, on the degree you are pursuing and some choices you will make.

As a member of this class, you are automatically a part of the GLOBIS Human Rights Research Lab this semester. The Lab has several projects underway that may benefit from your support this semester, including data collection, a web video series in the early stages of production, blog posts, and reports. We will discuss these projects as they arise throughout the class.

Every student in this class will also be required to turn in an independent research project by the end of this class. However, the length/completeness of this research project will depend on the choices you make below.

As such, Master’s students (students pursuing, or beginning the track for, a MA, MIP, MPH, or other Master’s degree) have two options for meeting the human rights research requirements of this class. The first option is to participate in every Lab Project (30% of your final grade) and turn in a research design (or similarly scaled-down research project) for your final project (30% of your final grade). The second option is to pick one Lab Project to participate in (15% of your grade) and turn in a first draft of a completed independent research project by the end of the semester (45% of your grade). You must make this choice by the time you turn in your initial project proposal, due September 18 (see below). For those choosing the second option, you will be required to sign up for one of the Lab projects as they come up. We will discuss this further as the semester progresses.

PhD students must choose the second option above, i.e. pick one Lab Project to participate in (15% of your grade) and turn in a first draft of a completed independent research project by the end of the semester (45% of your grade). Further, your final project must take the form of a research paper suitable for publication in a peer-reviewed journal. Again, you will be required to sign up for one of the Lab projects as they come up.

More details on both kinds of assignments can be found below.
Lab Assignments

Over the course of the semester, we will likely take on several projects related to GLOBIS Human Rights Research work. While these projects vary from semester to semester, a few examples that we are likely to work on can be found below.

**Human Rights Data Projects:** As a part of this course, you will have the opportunity to gain experience with the assessment of government human rights practices by working with a human rights data project. Human rights data like these are utilized by scholars and students who seek to test theories about the causes and consequences of human rights violations, as well as policy makers and analysts who seek to estimate the human rights effects of a wide variety of institutional changes and public policies. Indeed, previous data projects that I have worked on have been utilized by hundreds of governments and organizations worldwide, including the United States’ Millennium Challenge Corporation (MCC), the World Bank, the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), the European Commission, and the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID), among others. As such, your work on this project is very serious and important, with implications that go far beyond your grade in this course.

I work on several human rights data projects, including the Human Rights Measurement Initiative (https://humanrightsmeasurement.org/) and the Sub-National Analysis of Repression Project (http://snarpdata.org/). Your work will depend on the specific data project you are working on and the goals of that data project during the semester.

**GLOBIS Human Rights Research Lab Videos or Podcasts:** The GLOBIS Human Rights Research Lab is dedicated to producing educational materials that help people understand human rights issues outside of an academic setting. As such, if we end up working on one of these projects this semester, you will be involved with producing a video or podcast for eventual public sharing via GLOBIS’ online platforms or some other outlet. These projects can take many forms, serving as a quick explainer of a human rights concept, a story about human rights practices in another country, or some other human rights-related task.

**Blog Posts and/or Research Digests:** You may also have the opportunity to prepare blog posts or research digests that could potentially be published online. More details on these opportunities will be presented as the semester progresses.

**Independent Human Rights Research**

By the end of the class, I would like you to produce one unique creative research product. In its simplest form, this project would be a research paper. This paper should rely on scholarly research, as well as research that you conduct on your own, to address a question concerning some aspect of human rights. If you are writing a research design (Option 1 above), the paper should be 15-25 double-spaced pages in length and should rely on no fewer than 15 academic sources, but should not contain a full analysis that empirically examines your question. If you are writing a complete paper (Option 2 above), the paper should be 20-35 double-spaced pages in length and should rely on no fewer than 20 academic sources.

However, **Master’s students** are not limited to producing a research paper for the course, if you would like to produce another kind of creative product. I am open to the final project taking many formats, including the form of an educational video, podcast, short-form article (e.g. a blog post), research digest, or short story. However, no matter which type of final project you produce, I will work with you to ensure that the work is essentially equivalent to that required to
write a research paper, and if your work is either a short written piece or a non-written piece, you will be required to turn in additional supporting written material that demonstrates that the necessary requirements were met (including reliance on no fewer than 15 academic sources).

I have found throughout my career that co-authorship with colleagues can be a terrific, rewarding experience. As such, if you would like to work with one or more of your fellow students on your project, you are welcome to do so. That said, if you would like to co-author your final project for this class, you should be aware that the expectations for the final product will be higher, and your final grade will be inexorably linked to that of your co-author, regardless of outcome. Thus, if you would like to co-author your class project, you must receive authorization from the instructor at the project proposal stage, so that expectations can be clearly discussed.

I also find that students leave far too many papers from previous classes aside in order to write new papers for the courses they are currently taking. Sadly, it seems that many promising ideas are scrapped after a class is over due to the student’s perception that they lack the time to bring those ideas to fruition. As such, I am willing to let students continue to work on a pre-existing project for their research paper if (1) the topic of the paper fits with the overall topic of the class, (2) a copy of the previous version of the paper is turned in to me at the project proposal stage discussed below, and (3) the student meets with me to discuss what will be expected on their final paper. As with co-authored papers, the expectations for the final product in these cases will be higher.

There will be a series of deadlines to help guide you through this process over the course of the semester. The attached percentages are the amounts of your independent human rights research grade that each component counts for.

- **September 18 - Project Proposal & Annotated Bibliography (10%)**: This assignment should consist of one or two paragraphs describing your research question and project approach. You must also provide an annotated bibliography containing at least 10 academic sources, each with information describing the source and why the source is relevant to your project.

- **October 9 - Revised Proposal & Outline (15%)**: A revised version of your proposal, with a detailed outline of your project (should be 3-4 pages).

- **November 6 - First Draft (15%)**: Draft of at least the first 2/3 of your project, with an outline of any remaining parts.

- **November 20 - Peer Responses (10%)**: Responses to the two separate drafts, written by your colleagues, that you were responsible for reviewing (should be about 1 page each).

- **December 9 - Final Draft (50%)**

**Conscientious Participation (20% of your grade)**

While I will not be taking attendance in this class, participation is a necessary condition for satisfactory achievement. I am here for guidance and to share knowledge with you. However, the best way for you to learn in this course is to engage with the material and to debate and discuss it at length with your peers. Thus, excellence in participation means more than just
talking a lot; rather, it requires that your participation be high in both quality and quantity. In order to pull this off, you should do your best to be a critical reader. Critical readers are (Schumm, J. S., and Post, S. A. 1997. Executive Learning, 282; Richards 2006):

- willing to spend time reflecting on the ideas presented in their reading assignments
- able to evaluate and solve problems while reading rather than merely compile a set of facts to be memorized
- logical thinkers
- diligent in seeking out the truth
- eager to express their thoughts on a topic
- seekers of alternative views on a topic
- open to new ideas that may not necessarily agree with their previous thought on a topic
- able to base their judgments on ideas and evidence
- able to recognize errors in thought and persuasion as well as to recognize good arguments
- willing to take a critical stance on issues
- able to ask penetrating and thought-provoking questions to evaluate ideas
- in touch with their personal thoughts and ideas about a topic
- willing to reassess their views when new or discordant evidence is introduced and evaluated
- able to identify arguments and issues
- able to see connections between topics and use knowledge from other disciplines to enhance their reading and learning experiences

Now, you might ask, what does conscientious participation look like in this class? It includes, but is not limited to:

- Being a critical reader, as described above,
- Staying up to date on class readings, lectures, and discussions,
- Participating in class discussions where possible,
- Being aware of the various projects being conducted in the class at any given time, and participating in the planning and conduct of those projects,
- Staying in contact with the instructor, as needed,
- Giving sufficient time and effort to projects and assignments,
- Being a good teammate to other class members on group activities,
- Being conscientious and timely in the conduct of small participation assignments, and
- Communicating in a respectful manner that encourages everyone to participate, as described in the Course Policies below.

As mentioned above, there will be several small assignments over the course of the semester that will also contribute to your final participation grade. If necessary, I may also intermittently give brief pop quizzes to gauge the degree to which you are engaging with and understanding the material. As a result, it is important that you stay caught up on the readings at all times.

Finally, I should note that points for participation are not simply given out; they are earned. Grades in my classes are often raised by participation. However, others have found their grade lowered when they paid participation little attention. As such, it is in your best interest to take the guidance in this section, and participation in general, seriously.
Course Policies

1. Attendance & Participation

Physical, in-person attendance will not be monitored in this class. If you need to be absent from the classroom, it will not count against your grade. If you feel ill or if you suspect that you may have been exposed to COVID-19 or other contagious illnesses, you should feel comfortable missing class. Indeed, if you believe that you may be sick or contagious, I ask that you please do not attend. However, you will be responsible for the material you miss. If you believe that your illness (or other challenge) merits accommodation, please contact me, and we can discuss what is possible and fair.

However, your conscientious participation in course activities is crucially important and will be graded. See the Conscientious Participation section above for more information about what that means. In general, it is crucial you stay up to date on what is happening in the class at any given time by attending and paying attention in class when possible, monitoring the class eLC page, and checking your email.

2. Cell Phones and Other Noise-Making Devices

All cell phones and other devices that make noise must be turned off or put on silent/vibrate upon entering the classroom. Repeated unnecessary disruptions of class caused by such devices may negatively affect a student’s grade.

3. Academic Honesty

As a University of Georgia student, you have agreed to abide by the UGA Student Honor Code: "I will be academically honest in all of my academic work and will not tolerate academic dishonesty of others." A Culture of Honesty, the University’s policy and procedures for handling cases of suspected dishonesty, can be found at www.uga.edu/ovpi. Lack of knowledge of the academic honesty policy is not a reasonable explanation for a violation. Questions related to course assignments and the academic honesty policy should be directed to the instructor.

4. Creating an Inclusive Class

I will do my best to ensure that all students can thrive in this course, regardless of their identities or backgrounds. My goal is to create an inclusive classroom, where all people are given every opportunity to succeed. Diversity in this class should be viewed as a strength, and our success as a class is dependent on creating a setting where everyone feels comfortable to be creative in an environment of mutual support, respect, and understanding. I will strive to ensure that the class feels welcoming to everyone, regardless of race, ethnicity, age, gender identity, gender expression, sexuality, nationality, disability, cultural background, religion, socioeconomic status, or other identities, and that each of us feel that our identities, experiences, and ways of understanding the world are well served by the course material. As such, your suggestions and comments are welcome. If you believe there is something that can be done that would make the class more inclusive, or even just better for you personally, and you feel comfortable sharing that information with me, please let me know.
5. Class Discussion and Debate

In keeping with the above material on creating an inclusive class environment, it is important that we set some ground rules surrounding class discussion and debate. Political debates and discussions can become quite heated. This passion is part of what makes the study of politics fun. However, the fun ends where personal attacks and disrespect begin. As such, please abide by the following guidelines in all class discussions:

- Listen respectfully, without interrupting.
- Listen actively, with an ear to understanding others’ views, rather than simply thinking about what you going to say while someone else is talking.
- Criticize ideas, not individuals.
- Allow everyone a chance to speak.
- Do not make assumptions about any member of the class or generalizations about social groups.
- Do not ask individuals to speak for their (perceived) social group.
- Never use discriminatory language or engage in personal attacks.

As a group, we may choose to add to this list over the course of the semester, as necessary. We will discuss this further in class. However, at a minimum, all students are expected to engage in class discussions in good faith, in an environment of mutual care and respect. Discriminatory language and personal attacks will not be tolerated.

6. Communicating with the Instructor

My primary method of communicating with you outside of class time/office hours will be through email and eLC. You have each been assigned an email address by the university and will be held responsible for regularly checking this account. Assignment changes, important dates, changes to the class schedule, updated information about what is available on eLC, and other valuable information will be sent to this account over the course of the semester. Please check it regularly.

That said, I recognize that email is not fun. Indeed, I receive far too many emails every day, and it is one of the top sources of stress in my work life. As such, I use the Yesterbox method of managing my email (https://yesterbox.com/). In short, I generally do not look at emails on the day they were received; instead, I try to cover yesterday’s emails every day. As such, it can take as long as 48 hours to get a response from me, and sometimes it may take longer. If you have not heard from me within 48 hours of sending an email, and you need a response urgently, please feel free to email me again and let me know the response is urgent. I will not be offended.

I have posted office hours from 10 until 12 PM on Tuesdays. I will be holding these office hours either in person or over Zoom, whichever you prefer. If you would like to meet with me one-on-one during office hours, simply schedule a time (in 15-minute blocks) at this link: https://calendly.com/kchadclay/office-hours. If you need more time than 15 minutes, please select two 15-minute blocks back-to-back. However, I ask that you please not book more than two blocks for any given day.

If none of these times work for you, I would be more than happy to set up an appointment at a different time during the week; in that case, please email me.
We will also use a Slack workspace for our work in this class, and you may find that it is an easier way of staying in touch with Dr. Clay and each other. More information will be shared about this in class.

7. **Prohibition on Recording Lectures**

In the absence of written authorization from the UGA Disability Resource Center, students may not make their own visual or audio recordings of any aspect of this course. I will be providing video recordings of all of our classes on eLC, but students must agree that they:

- Will use the recordings only for their own personal academic use during the specific course.
- Understand that faculty members have copyright interest in their class lectures and that they agree not to infringe on this right in any way.
- Understand that the faculty member and students in the class have privacy rights and agree not to violate those rights by using recordings for any reason other than their own personal study.
- Will not release, digitally upload, broadcast, transcribe, or otherwise share all or any part of the recordings. They also agree that they will not profit financially and will not allow others to benefit personally or financially from lecture recordings or other course materials.
- Will erase/delete all recordings at the end of the semester.

Violation of these terms may subject them to discipline under the Student Code of Conduct or subject them to liability under copyright laws.

8. **Staying Informed**

In this course, we will often discuss current political events and issues. It is therefore important that you stay informed. Your ability to take the news of the day and view it through the lens of what you are learning will be a vital component of your success in this class. You may get your information from whatever outlet you choose. However, it is recommended that at least some of your information comes from a national news source, such as The New York Times (www.nytimes.com), The Washington Post (www.washingtonpost.com), CNN (www.cnn.com), or NPR (www.npr.org). Also, blogs are often great places to encounter discussions of current events through the lens of the things we are talking about in class. A few blogs that may be useful for this course are OpenGlobalRights (https://www.openglobalrights.org/), the HRMI blog (https://humanrightsmeasurement.org/blog/), Political Violence @ a Glance (http://politicalviolenceataglance.org/), The Monkey Cage (https://www.washingtonpost.com/monkey-cage/), The Quantitative Peace (www.quantitativepeace.com/), and The Duck of Minerva (https://duckofminerva.com/), among others.

9. **UGA Well-Being Resources**

UGA Well-being Resources promote student success by cultivating a culture that supports a more active, healthy, and engaged student community.
Anyone needing assistance is encouraged to contact Student Care & Outreach (SCO) in the Division of Student Affairs at 706-542-8479 or visit sco.uga.edu. Student Care & Outreach helps students navigate difficult circumstances by connecting them with the most appropriate resources or services. They also administer the Embark@UGA program which supports students experiencing, or who have experienced, homelessness, foster care, or housing insecurity.

UGA provides both clinical and non-clinical options to support student well-being and mental health, any time, any place. Whether on campus, or studying from home or abroad, UGA Well-being Resources are here to help.

- Well-being Resources: well-being.uga.edu
- Student Care and Outreach: sco.uga.edu
- University Health Center: healthcenter.uga.edu
- Counseling and Psychiatric Services: caps.uga.edu
  - or CAPS 24/7 crisis support at 706-542-2273
- Health Promotion/Fontaine Center: healthpromotion.uga.edu
- Disability Resource Center and Testing Services: drc.uga.edu

Additional information, including free digital well-being resources, can be accessed through the UGA app or by visiting https://well-being.uga.edu.

10. **Changes to the Syllabus**

The course syllabus is a general plan for the course; deviations announced to the class by the instructor may be necessary. As such, I reiterate the absolute necessity that you (1) come to class and (2) check your email regularly.

**Preliminary Course Schedule**

**Week 1 – August 21:** What are human rights (according to international law)?

5. Key pages from OHCHR:
   c. Status of Ratification Interactive Dashboard: https://indicators.ohchr.org/

**Week 2 – August 28:** Universalism, Relativism, Colonialism, & Alternative Conceptualization

2. Samson, Solin. 2020 “What is the colonialism of human rights?”

Week 3 – September 4: Labor Day (No Class)

Week 4 – September 11: Understanding International Human Rights Law I

5. International Legal Document Readings
      i. Make sure you download and read the following pdf, linked on the page above: https://www.unhcr.org/media/convention-and-protocol-relating-status-refugees
Week 5 – September 18: Understanding International Human Rights Law II


4. International Legal Document Readings

Week 6 – September 25: Measuring Human Rights I


5. Dataset Descriptions & Presentations: Part I (See assignment specifics)

Week 7 – October 2: Measuring Human Rights II


4. Dataset Descriptions & Presentations: Part II (See assignment specifics)
Week 8 – October 9: General Theories & Correlates of Human Rights Practices

**Decision to Repress**

**Principals, Agents, & Delegation**

**Oppression**

**General Correlates**

Week 9 – October 16: Repression & Dissent

   a. Selected testimony on eLC


Week 10 – October 23: International Law & Human Rights I


Week 11 – October 30: International Law & Human Rights II


   a. Alternatively, you may read the following (which makes a different point):


**Week 12 – November 6: Domestic Institutions & Human Rights I**


**Week 13 – November 13: Domestic Institutions & Human Rights II**


**Week 14 – November 20: Political Economy & Human Rights**


**Week 15 – November 27: Foreign State Intervention & Human Rights**


**Week 16 – December 4: Human Rights Advocacy**