

PSCI 371 | The Evolution of Human Rights: From Cyrus to the Global War on Terror Fall 2026

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COURSE DESCRIPTION

This course examines human rights as a historical, legal, and political project shaped by power, crisis, and contestation. Rather than treating rights as fixed or self-evident, the course advances a central claim: Human rights are best understood not through their proclamation, but through their violation. Students will apply a structured “Rights Under Stress” analytical framework throughout the course to evaluate how rights function in real world cases. From early articulations of rights in imperial and religious traditions to their codification in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR), students will trace how rights emerge from political struggle, gain legitimacy through institutions, and are selectively enforced. The course uses the Global War on Terror (GWOT) as a sustained case study to examine how democratic states reinterpret, suspend, or violate rights under conditions of perceived existential threat. Through this lens, students will analyze the fragility of rights, the gap between norms and enforcement, and the conditions under which rights endure or collapse. The course is divided to four modules:

1. FOUNDATIONS
2. RIGHTS UNDER STRESS
3. THE UDHR IN PRACTISE
4. FUTURES AND LIMITATIONS

Each section of the course pairs UDHR principles with empirical case studies, including torture, surveillance, targeted killing, migration, and disinformation. The course concludes by examining contemporary challenges and interrogates what constitutes “success” in human rights: legal compliance, institutional enforcement, or lived outcomes.

By the end of the course, students will be able to critically assess:

- How human rights norms are constructed and contested
- Why states comply with or violate human rights
- The impact of the Global War on Terror on human rights norms and practices
- Identify and analyze the ethical grey areas and conundrums associated with the “War on Terror”
- Whether human rights can withstand modern security, technological, and political pressures

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

By the end of this course, students will be able to:

- Explain the historical development of human rights from ancient to modern periods
- Distinguish between natural, legal, and political conceptions of rights
- Analyze the gap between human rights norms and enforcement
- Apply a structured analytical framework to evaluate human rights under conditions of crisis
- Evaluate the impact of the Global War on Terror on human rights law, practice and human security
- Analyze human rights under conditions of stress using real world examples
- Apply specific UDHR articles to real-world case studies
- Critically assess the role of media and institutions in shaping human rights outcomes
- Construct, write and present evidence-based arguments about human rights policies.

Course Requirements and Assessment

Class Contribution 10% Class Contribution includes physical and mental presence in the classroom, arriving on time, preparation, participation in class discussions. Reading assignments are to be completed before each class session. Class contribution is one of the most important factors for determining your grade for the semester. I expect all of you to come prepared, engage in our discussions, ask questions, and voice your opinions in class. If you are extremely uncomfortable speaking in front of a large group of students, you may send your opinions or afterthoughts in writing via email. If you never participate in class and do not send any thoughts by email, your contribution grade will be low

In-Class Quiz 20% A 30 minute in-class multiple choice and fill in the blanks quiz. The quiz will be based on Stephen P Mark's Paper "A Brief Introduction to Human Rights" which students can find on the required reading list and will also test students' knowledge of the 30 Articles of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights

Midterm Paper 20%: A brief on a human rights topic of the student's choice that applies the "Rights Under Stress" analytical framework. (See Appendix C) 2000 words. An Infographic must be included. Include sources in your infographic. Hyperlinks to be used in the brief. See Appendix B for requirements. At least 5 sources should be cited. **DUE DATE: OCTOBER 26, 2026 by midnight Athens time.**

See here on how to create hyperlinks: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QXx8wTonjyk>

See here on how to create an infographic: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=36SIUe_mOZU

In-Class Presentation 20% Conducted in alphabetical order during the final days of the semester, students will be required to make a power point presentations on an Article of the UDHR assigned to them. 15 minutes. Topics and dates will be determined after final class roster is determined. This is the oral equivalent of your human rights brief. See Appendix B.

Include sources in your presentation.

Final Paper 30% An extended research paper on a human rights topic of the student's choice that applies the "Rights Under Stress" analytical framework. (See Appendix C for the analytical framework.) 3000 -4000 words. The student may choose to expand on their midterm topic. Due the final Friday of exams week. MLA Bibliography. See Appendix B for requirements. At least ten sources should be cited.

DUE DATE: DECEMBER 21, 2026 by midnight Athens time.

NOTE: There are no in-class exams during midterm or final week. Your briefs and final papers are your exams.

Policy on Assignments and Make-up Work

Details about assignments and exams will be given in advance. I will accept no late assignments or make-up exams unless discussed with me in advance. If you are unable to come to class, please let me know beforehand via email.

CYA Policies and Regulations Academic Accommodations

Students are required to submit an official letter from the office at their school that handles academic accommodations (generally the Office of Disability Services), or to have that office send a letter. Students who have submitted such a letter to CYA should also talk to their professors individually to discuss how these accommodations will work in each specific course.

ePolicy on Original Work

Plagiarism is literary theft. As such, it is a serious offense which will not be tolerated either at your home institution or at CYA. Plagiarism on an examination or in a paper will result in an F for the course. You must cite the author of any and all ideas that you use that is neither common knowledge nor your own idea. If you are in doubt, it is safest to cite the source. Your work should be original and reflect your own ideas and thoughts. If you are unsure about what counts as original work, please consult your professor and check the Student Handbook.

Use of Laptops

In-class or onsite use of laptops and other devices is permitted **if this facilitates course-related activities such as note-taking, looking up references**, etc. Laptop or other device privileges will be suspended if devices are not used for class-related work.

Upgrade to 400-level course

Courses can be upgraded to a 400-level. This constitutes usually 25% additional work on the part of the student. The option to upgrade opens the second week of classes. If you are interested in this option, please talk to your professor.

REQUIRED READING LIST (MLA STYLE)

Abbas, Madeline-Sophie. "Conflating the Muslim Refugee and the Terror Suspect: Responses to the Syrian Refugee 'Crisis' in Brexit Britain." *Ethnic and Racial Studies*, vol. 42, no. 14, 2019.

Abdolian, Lisa Finnegan, and Harold Takooshian. "The USA PATRIOT Act: Civil Liberties, the Media, and Public Opinion." *Fordham Urban Law Journal*, vol. 30, 2003.

Acemoglu, Daron, and Alexander Wolitzky. "A Theory of Equality Before the Law." *The Economic Journal*, vol. 131, no. 636, 2021, pp.

1429–1465.

Agamben, Giorgio. *State of Exception*. University of Chicago Press, 2005.

Amnesty International. *Combating Torture: A Manual for Action*. Amnesty International Publications, 2002.

Appleby, Kevin. "How Europe Is Slowly Closing Its Doors to Asylum Seekers." Center for Migration Studies, 2024.

Binder, Christina, et al. "Human Rights in Times of Emergency: Assessment of State Practice." *The Oslo Law Review*, 2025.

Burweila, Aya. "The UN Gives War, Not Libya, a Chance." *China-US Focus*, 2011.

Chapsos, Ioannis, and Aya Burweila. "The New Wars and the Human Security Concept." Coventry University, 2011.

Chomsky, Noam, and Edward S. Herman. *Manufacturing Consent: The Political Economy of the Mass Media*. Pantheon Books, 1988.

Coleman, Julie, and Joana Cook. "Shamima Begum, Citizenship Revocation and the Question of Due Process." International Centre for Counter-Terrorism, 2020.

Council on Foreign Relations. "The Rise and Fall of the Responsibility to Protect." 2023.

Falk, Richard. "The Iraq War and the Future of International Law." *American Journal of International Law*, vol. 98, no. 4, 2004.

Gilens, Martin, and Benjamin I. Page. "Testing Theories of American Politics: Elites, Interest Groups, and Average Citizens." *Perspectives on Politics*, vol. 12, no. 3, 2014.

Greenwald, Glenn. *No Place to Hide: Edward Snowden, the NSA, and the U.S. Surveillance State*. Metropolitan Books, 2014.

Harcourt, Bernard E. "Muslim Profiles Post-9/11: Is Racial Profiling an Effective Counterterrorist Measure?" University of Chicago Law School, 2007.

Hafner-Burton, Emilie M. *Making Human Rights a Reality*. Princeton University Press, 2013.

Halperin, Morton H. "A Legal Analysis of the NSA Warrantless Surveillance Program." Center for American Progress, 2006.

Human Rights Watch. *The Road to Abu Ghraib*. 2004.

Human Rights Watch. *A Conspiracy to Grab the Land: Exploiting Pakistan's Blasphemy Laws for Blackmail and Profit*. 2025.

Jeffreys, Branwenn. "New University Free Speech Complaints System to Come into Force This Year." *BBC News*, 2026.

Katyal, Neal K., and Richard Caplan. "The Surprisingly Stronger Case for the Legality of the NSA Surveillance Program." Georgetown University Law Center, 2008.

Khan, Muhammad Imran, et al. "Blasphemy Laws and Human Rights: An Analysis in the Context of International Law." *Asian Social Studies and Applied Research Council*, vol. 3, no. 2, 2020.

Kretzmer, David. "Targeted Killing of Suspected Terrorists: Extra-Judicial Executions or Legitimate Means of Defence?" *European Journal of International Law*, vol. 16, no. 2, 2005.

Manicci, Elysse. "The Assassination of Charlie Kirk: A Complicated Battle for Free Speech." *Syracuse Law Review*, 2025.

Marks, Stephen P. *Human Rights: A Brief Introduction*. Harvard University.

Mavronicola, Natasa. "Protecting Human Rights While Countering Terrorism: The Role of Human Rights Institutions." ENNHRI, 2016.

Mechitov, Alexander I., and Helen M. Moshkovich. "Nordic Model: What Makes Scandinavia So Successful?" *Journal of Academy of Business and Economics*, vol. 21, no. 1, 2021.

Moyn, Samuel. *The Last Utopia: Human Rights in History*. Harvard University Press, 2010.

Parmigiani, Alberto. "Campaign Contributions and Legislative Behavior: Evidence from U.S. Congress." *Journal of Public Economics*, vol. 243, 2025.

Pozen, David E. "The Leaky Leviathan: Why the Government Condemns and Condone Unlawful Disclosures of Information." *Harvard Law Review*, vol. 127, 2013.

Rahman, Md Mahbubur. "Statelessness – the Root Cause of the Rohingya Crisis – Needs to Be Addressed." NewLines Institute, 2024.

Save the Children. "DRC: Cobalt Mines, Child Labour and the Green Transition." 2024.

Shetty, Salil. "Do Human Rights Matter in Times of Crisis?" Amnesty International, 2017.

Simmons, Beth A. *Mobilizing for Human Rights: International Law in Domestic Politics*. Cambridge University Press, 2009.

Stephen, Chris. *The Future of War Crimes Justice*. Melville House UK, 2024.

Stiglitz, Joseph E., and Linda J. Bilmes. "The True Cost of the Iraq War: \$3 Trillion and Beyond." *The Washington Post*, 5 Sept. 2010.

United Nations. *Universal Declaration of Human Rights*. 1948.

United Nations. *International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights*. 1966.

United Nations. "Syrian Returnees Subjected to Gross Human Rights Violations and Abuses."

Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights, 2024.

van Schaak, Beth. "A Look at the Case of the ex-CIA Officer Being Extradited to Italy for Her Role in a 2003 Rendition." Stanford Law School, 2017.

Vinicius, Marcus. "The Role of the International Criminal Court in Preventing Crimes Against Humanity and in the Rebuilding of Nations." Policy Center for the New South, 2025.

FALL 2026 SCHEDULE

Class Day	Date	Topic / Readings / Assignments Due
1	Sept 8	<p>FOUNDATIONS What Are Human Rights? Focus: Introduction and conceptual foundations Key Concepts:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Categories of rights (civil, political, economic, social) • Natural vs political rights • Norm creation vs enforcement <p>Case: From the Code of Hammurabi to Modern Slavery Question: Are human rights discovered or invented? Small group debate: natural vs political rights Required Reading: Stephen P. Marks, <i>Human Rights: A Brief Introduction</i>, Harvard University https://dash.harvard.edu/server/api/core/bitstreams/7312037d-84ae-6bd4-e053-0100007fdf3b/content</p>
2	Sept 10	<p>FOUNDATIONS Genealogy of Human Rights Focus: Historical evolution Key Concepts:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rights as products of power struggles • Historical milestones <p>Case Anchor:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cyrus Cylinder → Magna Carta → Enlightenment → UDHR <p>Question: Why do rights emerge at specific historical moments and what do all these moments have in common? Required Reading: Moyn, S. (2010). <i>The Last Utopia: Human Rights in History</i> (pp 11-83.) https://www.ias.edu/sites/default/files/sss/The%20Last%20Utopia.pdf</p> <p>The United Nations, The Universal Declaration of Human Rights https://www.un.org/en/about-us/universal-declaration-of-human-rights</p>
3	Sept 15	<p>FOUNDATIONS Law, Institutions, and Enforcement Focus: Why human rights fail in practice. Introduction to an analytical framework for studying rights under stress for Lessons 4-10. See Appendix A. Key Concepts:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Human Rights Implementation Table • Enforcement gap • Treaties vs compliance • Institutional limits <p>Case Study:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • International Criminal Court (ICC) <p>Question: Why do states sign treaties they don't follow? Required Reading: The Role of the International Criminal Court in Preventing Crimes Against Humanity and in the Rebuilding of Nations. https://www.policycenter.ma/sites/default/files/2025-04/PB_26-25_Marcus%20Vinicius.pdf Hafner-Burton, E. (2013). <i>Making Human Rights a Reality, Human Rights Quarterly</i> https://www.academia.edu/123066993/Making_Human_Rights_a_Reality_by_Emilie_M_Hafner_Burton Simmons, B. (2009). <i>Mobilizing for Human Rights, Cambridge University Press</i> https://assets.cambridge.org/97805218/85102/frontmatter/9780521885102_frontmatter.pdf</p>
4	Sept 22	<p>RIGHTS UNDER STRESS 9/11, The Global War on Terror the Transformation of Law Focus: The Patriot Act and Crisis as turning</p>

point

Key Concepts:

- Emergency powers
- State of Exception

Question: Do crises justify redefining rights?

Required Reading

Lisa Finnegan Abdolian and Harold Takooshian, The USA Patriot Act: Civil Liberties, the Media, and Public Opinion, (2003) Fordham Urban Law Journal, Volume 30, Article 4

<https://ir.lawnet.fordham.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=2097&context=ulj>

Giorgio Agamben, "The State of Exception", 2005, The University of Chicago Press

<http://pdf-objects.com/files/US-English-PDF-Object.pdf>

5 Sept 24

RIGHTS UNDER STRESS

Media, Disinformation, and War Focus: Information and consent **Key Concepts:**

- Propaganda
- Manufacturing consent
- Costs of the Iraqi War and Unintended Consequences
- Whistleblowers: Protections vs Prosecution

Case Study : Iraq War and WMD reporting

Question: If media fails, can democracy, and human rights, function?

Required Reading:

Chomsky, N. & Herman, E. (1988). *Manufacturing Consent*

Falk, R. (2004). The Iraq War and the Future of International Law. <https://www.jstor.org/stable/25659933>

Stiglitz, Joseph E., and Linda J. Bilmes, The True Cost of the Iraq War: \$3 Trillion and Beyond, The Washington Post, September 5, 2010.

<https://outropolitica.wordpress.com/2010/09/06/the-true-cost-of-the-iraq-war-3-trillion-and-beyond/>

6 Sept 25

RIGHTS UNDER STRESS

Torture and Human Dignity

Focus: Absolute vs conditional rights

Key Concepts:

- Torture prohibition
- Moral vs legal boundaries

Case: Abu Ghraib Prison Camp

Question: Why did torture prohibitions fail?

Required Reading:

Human Rights Watch, "The Road to Abu Ghraib", June 2004.

<https://www.hrw.org/reports/2004/usa0604/usa0604.pdf>

Amnesty International, Combating Torture a Manual for Action, Amnesty International Publications 2002

https://www.humanrightsconsulting.com/docs/Amnesty_combating%20torture_%20A%20manual%20of%20action%202003.pdf

7 Sept 29

RIGHTS UNDER STRESS

Detention and Due Process

Focus: Procedural Justice and Legal black holes

Key Concepts:

- Arbitrary detentio
- Suspension of legal norms

Case: Guantanamo Bay Prison Camp

Question: Can law exist without accountability? How can we protect human rights while countering terrorism?

Required Reading

Natasa Mavronicola, Background Note: Protecting Human Rights While Countering Terrorism: The Role of Human Rights Institutions, The Council of Europe and the European Network for Human Rights Institutions, May 2016.

http://ennhri.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/10/background_note_-_counter-terrorism_event.pdf

8	Oct 1	<p>RIGHTS UNDER STRESS Surveillance and Privacy Focus: Security vs privacy Case: NSA Surveillance Program Question: Can privacy survive national security? Required Reading Neak K. Katyal and Richard Caplan, The Surprisingly Stronger Case for the Legality of the NSA Surveillance Program: The FDR Precedent, Georgetown University Law Center, March 3, 2008. https://scholarship.law.georgetown.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1058&context=f_wps_papers Morton Halperin, A Legal Analysis of the NSA Warrantless Surveillance Program, The Center for American Progress, January 2006. https://cdn.americanprogress.org/wp-content/uploads/kf/nsa_surveillance.pdf</p>
9	Oct 6	<p>RIGHTS UNDER STRESS Targeted Killing and the Right to Life Focus: Drone warfare Key Concepts: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Extrajudicial killing • Legal justification Question: Is targeted killing lawful or illegal? Required Reading David Kretzmer, Targeted Killing of Suspected Terrorists: Extra-Judicial Executions or Legitimate Means of Defence? The European Journal of International Law Vol. 16 no.2 © EJIL 2005 https://www.ejil.org/pdfs/16/2/292.pdf</p>
10	Oct 7	<p>RIGHTS UNDER STRESS Equality Under Threat Focus: Discrimination in crisis Case: Racial profiling post-9/11 Question: Are rights applied equally in times of fear? Required Reading Bernard E. Harcourt, Muslim Profiles Post 911: Is Racial Profiling an Effective Counterterrorist Measure and Does it Violate the Right to Be Free from Discrimination? The University of Chicago Law School, 2007. https://chicagounbound.uchicago.edu/public_law_and_legal_theory/197/ Salil Shetty, Do Human Rights Matter in Times of Crisis?, Issam Fares Institute, American University of Beirut, June 2017. https://www.amnesty.org/es/wp-content/uploads/2023/01/ACT3060702017ENGLISH.pdf</p>
11	Oct 13	<p>UDHR IN PRACTICE Rule of Law and Legal Recognition Focus: UDHR Arts 6–8 Case: equality before law Question: What happens when law becomes selective? Required Reading Daron Acemoglu , Alexander Wolitzky, A Theory of Equality Before the Law, The Economic Journal, Volume 131, Issue 636, May 2021, Pages 1429–1465, https://doi.org/10.1093/ej/ueaa116</p>
12	Oct 15	<p>UDHR IN PRACTICE Fair Trial and Justice Focus: UDHR Arts 9–11 Case: The Extraordinary Rendition of Abu Omar and the Extradition of Sabrina de Sousa Question: What is lost when due process disappears? Required Reading: Beth van Schaak, A Look at the Case of the ex-CIA Officer Being Extradited to Italy for Her Role in a 2003 Rendition The Center for Internet and Society at Stanford Law School, February 2017. https://cyberlaw.stanford.edu/publications/look-case-ex-cia-officer-being-extradited-italy-her-role-2003-rendition/ IN CLASS QUIZ.</p>
13	Oct 20	<p>UDHR IN PRACTICE Privacy and Reputation Focus: UDHR Art 12 Case Study: NSA mass surveillance and The Role of whistleblowers. Legal protections vs</p>

prosecution

Class Discussion:

1. Are whistleblowers defenders of human rights or threats to national security?
2. How is privacy tied to reputation and how is it related to the right to political participation?

Required Reading:

Greenwald, G. (2014). *No Place to Hide*

Pozen, D. (2013). *The Leaky Leviathan*

14 Oct 22

UDHR IN PRACTICE

Movement and Asylum

Focus: UDHR Arts 13–14

Case: Arab Spring-EU refugee crisis

Question: Is asylum still a real right? How did the Global War on Terror contribute to the refugee crisis?

Required Reading

Kevin Appleby, How Europe is Slowly Closing its Doors to Asylum Seekers, The Center for Migration Studies, April 2024

<https://cmsny.org/how-europe-closing-doors-to-asylum-seekers/>

United Nations, Syrian returnees subjected to “gross human rights violations and abuses”, UN report details, United Nations Human Rights Office of the High Commissioner, February 2024

[syrian-returnees-subjected-gross-human-rights-violations-and-abuses-un](https://www.unhcr.org/refugees/syrian-returnees-subjected-gross-human-rights-violations-and-abuses-un)

Madeline-Sophie Abbas, Conflating the Muslim refugee and the terror suspect: responses to the Syrian refugee “crisis” in Brexit Britain, *Journal of Ethnic and Racial Studies*, Vol. 42, Issue 14, April 2019 <https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/01419870.2019.1588339#d1e396>

15 Nov 3

UDHR IN PRACTICE

Nationality and Statelessness

Focus: UDHR Art 15

- **Cases:** Myanmar and the Rohingya and the UK and Shamima Begum

Question: Should citizenship be a human right?

Do countries have the right to revoke the citizenship of those who join trans-national terrorist groups such as the Islamic State?

Required Reading:

Julie Coleman, Joana Cook, Shamima Begum, Citizenship Revocation and the Question of Due Process, The International Centre for Counter-Terrorism, July 17, 2020.

<https://icct.nl/publication/shamima-begum-citizenship-revocation-and-question-due-process>

BBC, Who is Shamima Begum and how can you lose your citizenship?, 25 March, 2024.

<https://www.bbc.com/news/explainers-53428191>

Md Mahbubur Rahman, Statelessness – the Root Cause of the Rohingya Crisis – Needs to Be Addressed, NewLines Institute, July 2024.

<https://newlinesinstitute.org/intl-law-peace/statelessness-the-root-cause-of-the-rohingya-crisis-needs-to-be-addressed/>

16 Nov 5

UDHR IN PRACTICE

Religion and Belief

UDHR Art 17- 18

- **Case:** Pakistan’s blasphemy laws and the unlawful deprivation of private property

Question: Can religious freedom coexist with state power?

Required Reading:

Muhammad Imran Khan, Sidra Kanwel, Nagina Riaz, and Nazia Ayub, Blasphemy Laws and Human Rights: An Analysis in the Context of International Law, *Asian Social Studies and Applied Research Council*, Volume 3, Issue 2, May 2020.

https://www.researchgate.net/publication/378722733_Blasphemy_Laws_and_Human_Rights_An_Analysis_in_the_Context_of_International_Law_SIDRA_KANWEL#:~:text=blasphemy%20laws%2C%20while%20intended%20to%20universal%20right%20to%20of%20reely

Human Rights Watch, A Conspiracy to Grab the Land: Exploiting Pakistan’s Blasphemy Laws for Blackmail and Profit, June 2025.

https://www.hrw.org/sites/default/files/media_2025/05/pakistan0625%20web.pdf

17	Nov 10	<p>UDHR IN PRACTICE Expression and Assembly Focus: UDHR Arts 19–20 Case: Impact of college campus censorship and terrorism on free expression and assembly. Question: Should freedom of speech be limited? How does censorship and acts of political violence affect freedom of expression and assembly? Required Reading: Branwenn Jeffreys, New university free speech complaints system to come into force this year, BBC News, April 20, 2026. https://www.bbc.com/news/articles/cm29dngvjqeo Elysse Manicci The Assassination of Charlie Kirk: A Complicated Battle for Free Speech, Syracuse University, Syracuse Law Review, September 25, 2025. https://lawreview.syr.edu/the-assassination-of-charlie-kirk-a-complicated-battle-for-free-speech/</p>
18	Nov 17	<p>UDHR IN PRACTICE Political Participation Focus: UDHR Arts 21–22 Case: Campaign contributions in the United States and impact on congressional voting, Question: Is the United States an Oligarchy or a Democracy? Required Reading: Martin Gilens and Benjamin Page, Testing Theories of American Politics: Elites, Interest Groups, and Average Citizens, Cambridge University Press, September 18, 2014. https://www.cambridge.org/core/journals/perspectives-on-politics/article/abs/testing-theories-of-american-politics-elites-interest-groups-and-average-citizens/62327F513959D0A304D4893B382B992B Sandra Knispel, Corporate money in politics threatens US democracy -or does it?, University of Rochester, July 6, 2020 https://www.rochester.edu/newscenter/does-money-in-politics-threaten-us-democracy-442802/ Alberto Parmigiani, Campaign contributions and legislative behavior: Evidence from U.S. Congress, Journal of Public Economics, Volume 243, March 2025 https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S0047272725000179</p>
19	Nov 19	<p>Labor and Economic Rights Focus: UDHR Arts 23–24 Case: Global supply chains and the case of child labor in Congo’s mines. Question: Are economic rights treated as secondary? How do we reconcile environmental rights with labor rights? Required Reading Save the Children, DRC: Cobalt Mines, Child Labor and the Green Transition, November 2024 https://www.savethechildren.net/stories/drc-cobalt-mines-child-labour-and-green-transition OHCHR, International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, Dec 1966, https://www.ohchr.org/en/instruments-mechanisms/instruments/international-covenant-economic-social-and-cultural-rights</p>
20	Nov 24	<p>Welfare, Education, and Dignity Focus: UDHR Arts 25–28 Case 1: Afghanistan: Rights, Intervention, and Collapse <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Gains (education, women’s rights) after intervention • Loss of education and rights after Taliban return Case 2: The Scandinavian success story as a counterpoint when rights are sustained Question: What does dignity require? Required Reading: Alexander I. Mechitov and Helen M. Moshkovich, Nordic Model: What Makes Scandinavia So Successful? Journal of Academy of Business and Economics 21(1):27-40, March 2021 https://www.researchgate.net/publication/350757110_NORDIC_MODEL_WHAT_MA_KES_SCANDINAVIA_SO_SPECIAL</p>
21	Dec 1	<p>FUTURES & LIMITS Duties and Limits of Rights Focus: UDHR Arts 29–30 Case: COVID restrictions Question: When should rights be limited? Required Reading</p>

Christina Binder, Christina, M Cerna , Ioana Cismas , Niels Petersen, Emanuele Sommaro and Stefan Kadelbach, Human Rights in Times of Emergency: Assessment of State practice in respect to times of emergency, Scandinavian University Press, The Oslo Law Review, October 1, 2025.
<https://www.scup.com/doi/10.18261/olr.12.1.1>

22 Dec 3

FUTURES & LIMITS

Libya and the Responsibility to Protect (R2P) Doctrine Focus: Humanitarian intervention and State Failure

Key Concepts:

- Responsibility to Protect
- Sovereignty vs intervention
- State Failure vs. GWOT

Question: Did R2P in Libya protect human rights or undermine them and contribute to Global Terrorism?

Required Reading:

Aya Burweila, The UN Gives War, Not Libya, A Chance, The China-US Focus Journal, May 6, 2011

<https://www.chinausfocus.com/foreign-policy/a-failure-of-statesmanship-the-un-gives-war-not-libya-a-chance>

Ioannis Chapsos and Aya Burweila, *The New Wars and the Human Security Concept*, Human Security, New Challenges, New Perspectives Proceedings, The Centre for Peace and Reconciliation Studies, Coventry University, October 2011, pp 43-74. I will email you the pdf.

Class Presentations

23 Dec 8

FUTURES & LIMITS

Syria: War, Non-Intervention, and the GWOT's Full Circle

Focus: Assad era and post-Assad era war crimes, the rise of Abu Mohamed al Jolani and subsequent war crimes

Key Concepts:

- Non-intervention
- Proxy war dynamics
- Rise of non-state actors

Question: What happens when human rights violations are not stopped?

Council of Foreign Relations, The Rise and Fall of the Responsibility to Protect, April 2023.

<https://education.cfr.org/learn/timeline/rise-and-fall-responsibility-protect>

Stephen, Chris. The Future of War Crimes Justice. Melville House UK, February 2024.

Class Presentations

24 Dec 10

FUTURES & LIMITS

Final Synthesis: The Paradox of Human Rights

Focus: Human rights face a fundamental paradox:

- Not enforcing rights can permit atrocities.
- Enforcing rights can produce instability, war, or new rights violations.

Question 1

If human rights are universal, why are they enforced so selectively?

Question 2

Are human rights primarily legal norms, moral ideals, or political tools?

Question 3

Are democracies better protectors of human rights?

Question 4

What sustains human rights when institutions fail?

Success Stories in Human Rights

Class Presentations

COURSE BIBLIOGRAPHY

Foundations of Human Rights

Marks, Stephen P. *Human Rights: A Brief Introduction*. Harvard University, n.d.

Moyn, Samuel. *The Last Utopia: Human Rights in History*. Harvard University Press, 2010. United Nations. *Universal Declaration of Human Rights*. 1948.

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APPENDIX A. THE 30 ARTICLES OF THE UDHR

Article 1

All human beings are born free and equal in dignity and rights. They are endowed with reason and conscience and should act towards one another in a spirit of brotherhood.

Article 2

Everyone is entitled to all the rights and freedoms set forth in this Declaration, without distinction of any kind, such as race, color, sex, language, religion, political or other opinion, national or social origin, property, birth or other status. Furthermore, no distinction shall be made on the basis of the political, jurisdictional or international status of the country or territory to which a person belongs, whether it be independent, trust, non-self-governing or under any other limitation of sovereignty.

Article 3

Everyone has the right to life, liberty and security of person.

Article 4

No one shall be held in slavery or servitude; slavery and the slave trade shall be prohibited in all their forms.

Article 5

No one shall be subjected to torture or to cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment.

Article 6

Everyone has the right to recognition everywhere as a person before the law.

Article 7

All are equal before the law and are entitled without any discrimination to equal protection of the law. All are entitled to equal protection against any discrimination in violation of this Declaration and against any incitement to such discrimination.

Article 8

Everyone has the right to an effective remedy by the competent national tribunals for acts violating the fundamental rights granted him by the constitution or by law.

Article 9

No one shall be subjected to arbitrary arrest, detention or exile.

Article 10

Everyone is entitled in full equality to a fair and public hearing by an independent and impartial tribunal, in the determination of his rights and obligations and of any criminal charge against him.

Article 11

1. Everyone charged with a penal offence has the right to be presumed innocent until proved guilty according to law in a public trial at which he has had all the guarantees necessary for his defence.
2. No one shall be held guilty of any penal offence on account of any act or omission which did not constitute a penal offence, under national or international law, at the time when it was committed. Nor shall a heavier penalty be imposed than the one that was applicable at the time the penal offence was committed.

Article 12

No one shall be subjected to arbitrary interference with his privacy, family, home or correspondence, nor to attacks upon his honour and reputation. Everyone has the right to the protection of the law against such interference or attacks.

Article 13

1. Everyone has the right to freedom of movement and residence within the borders of each state.
2. Everyone has the right to leave any country, including his own, and to return to his country.

Article 14

1. Everyone has the right to seek and to enjoy in other countries asylum from persecution.
2. This right may not be invoked in the case of prosecutions genuinely arising from non-political crimes or from acts contrary to the purposes and principles of the United Nations.

Article 15

1. Everyone has the right to a nationality.
2. No one shall be arbitrarily deprived of his nationality nor denied the right to change his nationality.

Article 16

1. Men and women of full age, without any limitation due to race, nationality or religion, have the right to marry and to found a family. They are entitled to equal rights as to marriage, during marriage and at its dissolution.
2. Marriage shall be entered into only with the free and full consent of the intending spouses.

3. The family is the natural and fundamental group unit of society and is entitled to protection by society and the State.

Article 17

1. Everyone has the right to own property alone as well as in association with others.
2. No one shall be arbitrarily deprived of his property.

Article 18

Everyone has the right to freedom of thought, conscience and religion; this right includes freedom to change his religion or belief, and freedom, either alone or in community with others and in public or private, to manifest his religion or belief in teaching, practice, worship and observance.

Article 19

Everyone has the right to freedom of opinion and expression; this right includes freedom to hold opinions without interference and to seek, receive and impart information and ideas through any media and regardless of frontiers.

Article 20

1. Everyone has the right to freedom of peaceful assembly and association.
2. No one may be compelled to belong to an association.

Article 21

1. Everyone has the right to take part in the government of his country, directly or through freely chosen representatives.
2. Everyone has the right of equal access to public service in his country.
3. The will of the people shall be the basis of the authority of government; this will shall be expressed in periodic and genuine elections which shall be by universal and equal suffrage and shall be held by secret vote or by equivalent free voting procedures.

Article 22

Everyone, as a member of society, has the right to social security and is entitled to realization, through national effort and international co-operation and in accordance with the organization and resources of each State, of the economic, social and cultural rights indispensable for his dignity and the free development of his personality.

Article 23

Everyone has the right to work, to free choice of employment, to just and favourable conditions of work and to protection against unemployment.

1. Everyone, without any discrimination, has the right to equal pay for equal work.
2. Everyone who works has the right to just and favourable remuneration ensuring for himself and his family an existence worthy of human dignity, and supplemented, if necessary, by other means of social protection.
3. Everyone has the right to form and to join trade unions for the protection of his interests.

Article 24

Everyone has the right to rest and leisure, including reasonable limitation of working hours and periodic holidays with pay.

Article 25

1. Everyone has the right to a standard of living adequate for the health and well-being of himself and of his family, including food, clothing, housing and medical care and necessary social services, and the right to security in the event of unemployment, sickness, disability, widowhood, old age or other lack of livelihood in circumstances beyond his control.
2. Motherhood and childhood are entitled to special care and assistance. All children, whether born in or out of wedlock, shall enjoy the same social protection.

Article 26

1. Everyone has the right to education. Education shall be free, at least in the elementary and fundamental stages. Elementary education shall be compulsory. Technical and professional education shall be made generally available and higher education shall be equally accessible to all on the basis of merit.
2. Education shall be directed to the full development of the human personality and to the strengthening of respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms. It shall promote understanding, tolerance and friendship among all nations, racial or religious groups, and shall further the activities of the United Nations for the maintenance of peace.
3. Parents have a prior right to choose the kind of education that shall be given to their children.

Article 27

1. Everyone has the right freely to participate in the cultural life of the community, to enjoy the arts and to share in scientific advancement and its benefits.
2. Everyone has the right to the protection of the moral and material interests resulting from any scientific, literary or artistic production of which he is the author.

Article 28

Everyone is entitled to a social and international order in which the rights and freedoms set forth in this Declaration can be fully

realized.

Article 29

1. Everyone has duties to the community in which alone the free and full development of his personality is possible.
2. In the exercise of his rights and freedoms, everyone shall be subject only to such limitations as are determined by law solely for the purpose of securing due recognition and respect for the rights and freedoms of others and of meeting the just requirements of morality, public order and the general welfare in a democratic society.
3. These rights and freedoms may in no case be exercised contrary to the purposes and principles of the United Nations.

Article 30

Nothing in this Declaration may be interpreted as implying for any State, group or person any right to engage in any activity or to perform any act aimed at the destruction of any of the rights and freedoms set forth herein.

See Also: [universal-declaration-of-human-rights](#)

APPENDIX B. WHAT MAKES A GOOD HUMAN RIGHTS BRIEF?

A strong 2,000-word brief on a human rights topic should be **clear, focused, evidence-based, and persuasive**. Whether you're writing for my class, an NGO, policymaker, or publication, the key is to combine solid research with structured argumentation.

Here's what makes it effective:

1. A Clearly Defined Focus

Human rights is a broad field, covering issues from freedom of expression to refugee protection to digital privacy. A good brief:

- Narrows to **one specific issue**
- Frames a **clear central question or argument**
- Identifies the **legal and political context**

Weak topic: "Women's rights in Africa"

Strong topic: "Barriers to enforcement of domestic violence laws in Kenya under the 2010 Constitution"

You want precision, not general description.

2. A Strong Thesis Statement

A human rights brief is not just informative, it is analytical and often persuasive. Your thesis should:

- Make a **clear claim**
- Be arguable
- Signal your analytical direction

Example: Despite progressive legal reforms, enforcement gaps and institutional bias continue to undermine protection against gender-based violence in Kenya.

3. Clear Structure (Essential for 2,000 Words)

A strong structure might look like this:

Introduction (200–300 words)

- Introduce the issue
- Provide brief background
- State your thesis
- Explain why it matters

Legal Framework (400–500 words)

- International law (Treaties, Conventions, UDHR)
- Regional law (if relevant)
- Domestic law (if relevant)
- Key definitions and obligations

Analysis of the Problem (700–900 words)

- Evidence (data, cases, reports)
- Institutional barriers
- Political or cultural factors
- Case studies
- Judicial decisions

Counterarguments or Challenges (200–300 words)

- Government justifications
- Resource constraints

- Cultural relativism arguments

Recommendations (200–300 words)

- Legal reform
- Policy reform
- Institutional changes
- Monitoring mechanisms

Conclusion (150–200 words)

- Reinforce thesis and provide solutions and recommendations
- Highlight urgency or broader implications

4. Use of Authoritative Sources

A good brief relies on credible evidence:

- UN reports (e.g., Human Rights Committee, Special Rapporteurs)
- NGO reports (e.g., Amnesty, Human Rights Watch)
- Academic journal articles
- Case law
- Government statistics
- Avoid:
 - Unsupported opinion
 - Over-reliance on news articles
 - Vague claims (“many people believe...”)

5. Engagement with International Human Rights Law

Strong briefs:

- Reference relevant treaties
- Explain state obligations (respect, protect, fulfil)
- Discuss enforcement mechanisms
- Use jurisprudence where relevant. For example:
 - Positive vs negative obligations
 - Proportionality analysis
 - Margin of appreciation (if discussing Europe)

6. Critical Analysis (Not Just Description)

Descriptive writing explains what exists. Analytical writing evaluates effectiveness, consistency, and impact.

Instead of: Country X ratified the ICCPR in 1992.

Write: Although Country X ratified the ICCPR in 1992, its domestic legislation fails to incorporate Article 19 protections adequately, resulting in systematic suppression of dissent.

Always ask:

- Does the law work?
- Who benefits?
- Who is excluded?
- What are the structural barriers?

7. Clear and Professional Writing

A good brief:

- Uses formal academic tone
- Avoids emotional language
- Defines key terms
- Uses headings for clarity
- Has consistent citation style
- Human rights writing should be:
 - Precise
 - Neutral in tone
 - Strong in argument

8. Contextual Awareness

Human rights issues don't exist in a vacuum.

Consider:

- Historical background
- Political environment

- Social norms
- Economic conditions
- Power structures

This adds depth and credibility.

9. Practical and Realistic Recommendations

Your recommendations should be:

- Specific
- Feasible
- Grounded in legal standards
- Tailored to the political context

Avoid vague endings like: Governments should do more to protect human rights.

Instead: The government should establish an independent oversight body with prosecutorial authority and mandatory reporting obligations under Article X of the Constitution.

10. Cohesion and Logical Flow

A strong brief:

- Connects each section logically
- Refers back to the thesis
- Avoids repetition
- Uses signposting (“This section argues...”)

Common Weaknesses to Avoid

- Overly broad scope
- Pure description without analysis
- Lack of legal grounding
- No clear thesis
- Emotional rhetoric without evidence
- No engagement with counterarguments
- Weak conclusion

Final Checklist Before Submission

Ask yourself:

- Is my research question clearly defined?
- Does every section support my thesis?
- Have I engaged with international legal standards?
- Is my analysis critical rather than descriptive?
- Are my sources authoritative?
- Are my recommendations realistic?
- Is the structure logical and clear?

APPENDIX C. THE IN-CLASS ANALYTICAL FRAMEWORK USED FOR THE STUDY OF “RIGHTS UNDER STRESS”

1. The Goal of the Framework:

How to analyze human rights under conditions of stress

2. The Framework

“Rights Under Stress” Analytical Framework

Every human rights case is analyzed through 5 steps:

3. The Right

Which UDHR article(s) are at stake?

4. The Threat

What crisis or justification is invoked?

Terrorism

War

Public safety

Political instability

5. The State Response

What actions are taken?

Laws, policies, military actions, surveillance, etc.

6. The Justification

How is the action defended?

Security

Necessity

Emergency

Moral claims

7. The Outcome

What actually happens to the right?

Upheld?

Violated?

Reinterpreted?

Undermined long-term?

APPENDIX D. ABSENCES POLICY

CYA Attendances and Absences policy:

Coursework at CYA involves a great deal of experiential learning: classroom discussion, site visits, and the like, which cannot be replicated if the student is absent. Grades reflect a student's performance on assessments, but also acknowledge the degree to which a student has mastered the material through such active learning activities. As a result attendance and punctuality are essential to learning in CYA courses, which rely on in-class and on-site interaction. Faculty is required to record absences and either the Academic Advisor (on academic issues) or Student Affairs (on wellness issues) will check-in with students who have repeated absences. This policy applies to all scheduled class meetings and off-site activities (Athens sessions and school-wide Field Studies)

1. Punctuality

Students are expected to arrive on time; instructors have a corresponding obligation to begin on time.

2. Recording & Outreach

Instructors must record absences at every class/on-site session.

In the case of repeated absences, the Academic Advisor (for academic issues) or Student Affairs (for wellness issues) will check in with the student.

3. What Counts as an Excused Absence

3.1. Illness

The student must report the illness via the form available in the Student Portal.

If illness requires missing more than one session per class, the student must submit a signed and stamped doctor's note to Student Affairs and remain in communication with them. Remote [online] appointments and retroactive doctor's notes will not be accepted.

3.2. Other Exceptional Circumstances

Excused absences for non-illness exceptional circumstances require prior approval from the Academic Director (not the course instructor).

3.3. Accommodations

If the student has an academic accommodation that relates to their attendance and has been filed with CYA, they should follow the procedure outlined on the accommodation form that they agreed upon with their professor.

3.4. Timing

The student must seek approval as soon as the problem arises, not retroactively, in order for the absence to be excused.

3.5. Academic priority

Class attendance takes precedence over other student appointments, travel, volunteering, or visiting friends/family, and missing class for these reasons is not excused. Students are responsible for avoiding such conflicts; the semester calendar is available here.

4. How to Request an Excused Absence

Before the class submit the relevant form or request (for illness the Student Affairs form; for exceptional circumstances the Academic Director). Notify your instructor that a request has been submitted, and learn what material will need to be made up and how you will do so. Provide documentation if required to administration, not the professor (e.g., doctor's note for multi-session illness). Await the decision from the appropriate office. Professors do not grant excused absence status.

5. Unexcused Absences & Consequences

Three (3) unexcused absences in any class automatically lowers the final course grade.

More than three (3) unexcused absences in a class may lead to: a) the placement of a student on academic probation, and potentially b) the student receiving a failing grade for the course depending on course requirements.

6. Make-Up Work & Grading

Students must make up missed work for any absence (excused or unexcused) and communicate with instructors about requirements. Failure to complete missed work will result in the reduction of minimum one letter grade.

Quizzes, exams, and in-class assessments missed due to an unexcused absence may receive a zero (0) grade, per course requirements as outlined in the syllabus.

Because participation is integral to learning at CYA, a high number of excused absences may still affect the course grade, per the course's participation policy.

Course syllabi specify how attendance and participation affect the final grade.

IMPORTANT: AI POLICY

Allowed/disallowed AI uses:

- Students must disclose their AI usage on assignments, following either their professor's guidelines or the guidelines below (see "AI disclosure"). Failure to disclose how AI has been used, or submission of AI work as one's own, is a violation of academic integrity [see relevant section on student handbook]. Using AI in any way that is not explicitly permitted by the syllabus, assignment instructions, or the professor is considered a violation of academic integrity. If a professor suspects that AI was improperly used to complete an assignment, they may ask the student to explain or discuss their work orally to confirm that the student has the knowledge their submitted work represents.
- Mistakes made by AI are the responsibility of the student, even when they have disclosed their AI usage. Using AI does not excuse errors, misrepresentations, plagiarism, or violations of course policies. All allowed AI output should be double-checked and used with caution (see "AI problems" below).
- Because mistakes made by AI are the responsibility of the student, when faculty allows for specific AI uses, faculty also has a responsibility to provide students with the critical tools necessary to evaluate AI output for those uses.

AI disclosure

- To disclose the use of AI on submitted work, students should either use the format given by a specific professor, or the following format: "AI Usage Disclosure: [specific AI tool] was used in the creation of this work in the following ways: [list uses and outcomes]. The content can be viewed here [add link] and has been reviewed and edited by [student's full name]."
- Failure to disclose, or incomplete disclosure, is a violation of academic integrity. You are fully responsible for the accuracy, originality, and integrity of any work you submit, regardless of whether AI tools were used. Keep records of your process (prompts, drafts, and sources) in case your professor requests documentation.

Things to consider when using AI:

There are a number of problems with generative AI that students should be aware of.

- Users should keep in mind that AI does not have access to the world, only to its training data and new data brought to it. Its output is not based on the evaluation of the meaning of that data and its content, only on the way words tend to line up and follow each other. It has no concept of truth, of intent, or of accuracy.
- Data is not private. Content entered into most AI tools may be stored and accessed by third parties, or used to improve the system. No one should input personal, sensitive, or proprietary information, or essentially anything they would not like to be seen by others.
- Lack of sources or citations. AI systems often generate text without providing verifiable references, and when citations are supplied they may be incomplete or misattributed. AI is not a primary or secondary source and should not be cited as a source; it is a tool that predicts plausible language. Students must locate, read, and cite credible sources appropriate to their assignments.
- Bias. Because AI models learn from existing data, they can reproduce and amplify historical and social biases found in that data. Outputs may marginalize certain groups, rely on stereotypes, or present dominant perspectives as neutral facts. Students must critically evaluate AI-generated content for fairness and inclusivity, and corroborate claims with diverse, reputable sources. Students must examine all outputs with such bias concerns in mind.
- Hallucinations (fabricated content). AI may produce confident but incorrect statements, fabricated statistics, misquoted passages, or nonexistent sources. These "hallucinations" can be difficult to spot because the writing style appears fluent and authoritative. Students are responsible for verifying the validity of anything they submit.