



**COURSE NUMBER AND TITLE: POL 375 - Special Topics: Human Rights  
(45 contact hours, 3 credits)**

This syllabus is informational in nature and is not an express or implied contract. It is subject to change due to unforeseen circumstances, as a result of any circumstance outside the University's control, or as other needs arise. If, in the University's sole discretion, public health conditions or any other matter affecting the health, safety, upkeep, or well-being of our campus community or operations requires the University to move to remote teaching, alternative assignments may be provided so that the learning objectives for the course, as determined by the faculty and the University, can still be met. The University does not guarantee specific in-person, on-campus classes, activities, opportunities, or services or any other particular format, timing, or location of education, classes, activities, or services.

**Mask Policy**

Please be advised that the mask policy in this class will follow Sant'Anna Institute requirements. When/if the University enacts a mask policy, all students are expected to adhere to the policy.

**COURSE DESCRIPTION**

The purpose of this course is to examine the history, development, structure and efficacy of international human rights law. In this course, students will investigate the legal framework of the United Nations and regional systems relating to the protection and promotion of, inter alia, the rights of minorities and indigenous peoples, women's rights, the rights of migrants and refugees, cultural rights, and the emerging field of environmental rights. Students will assess the remedies that exist for violations of human rights law in the various systems and examine practical case studies where relevant.

Class time will be used for a combination of lectures, discussions, and group exercises. Participation is very important in this course. **Students will be asked to explain readings and concepts, to offer analysis of cases and to express their opinion.**

**COURSE OBJECTIVES / LEARNING OUTCOMES**

On completion of the course the students will be able to:

- Compare the international human rights law system and regional human rights law systems

- Evaluate the various mechanisms and procedures for human rights law enforcement
- Critically assess specific areas of international human rights law with reference to relevant legal instruments and contemporary cases
- Acquire basic competency in legal writing and research

#### **FORMAT**

- Students will engage in small group work and discussions. and peer reviews.

#### **REQUIRED TEXTS**

*UNDERSTANDING HUMAN RIGHTS - MANUAL ON HUMAN RIGHTS EDUCATION*, edited by W. Benedek, European Training and Research Centre for Human Rights and Democracy (ETC), 2012. Additional complementary readings on specific issues and relevant case studies will be provided throughout the course.

#### **EXAMS and ASSIGNMENTS**

Further details on the assignments will be distributed during lectures and discussed. Opportunities for questions about the assignments will be given during the course. The grade for the course will be based on student's work as follows:

- Attendance & Participation (including assignments if any): 15%
- Mid-term exam: 20%
- Oral presentation: 15%
- Final exam: 25%
- Final project: 25%

The oral presentation should last 10 minutes (date to be agreed).

Details on the final project will be shared at the beginning of the course..

For the exams students are required to answer 8-10 multiple choice questions and comprehensively answer one open questions.

#### **GRADING SCALE**

A	95%-100%
A-	90%-94%
B+	87%-89%
B	83%-86%

B-	80%-82%
C+	77%-79%
C	73%-76%
C-	70%-72%
D+	67%-69%
D	63%-66%
D-	60%-62%
F	< 60%

## **SCHEDULE OF TOPICS**

### **Section 1**

- Concept and history of Human Rights
- Human Rights standards at the universal Level: the UDHR and the UN System
- Regional Systems of protection and promotion of Human Rights
- Universal Jurisdiction and the problem of impunity: the International Criminal Jurisdictions

### **Section 2**

Special focuses may include:

- Prohibition of Torture
- Anti-Racism and non-discrimination
- Freedom from poverty
- HR and Tourism
- Right to health
- Human Rights of women
- Rule of Law and fair trial
- Religious freedoms
- Right to education
- Human Rights of the child
- Human Rights in armed conflict
- Freedom of expression and freedom of the media
- Right to Democracy
- Minority Rights

## **CLASS POLICY**

### **Attendance**

You are allowed **ONE** unexcused absence. Documentation for any other absence **MUST** be produced and **APPROVED** by your faculty. For absences due to illness, please provide the faculty with a doctor's note upon returning to class as well as inform them and/or the Office the first day of illness.

Participation grants the student one point for each lesson they attend. Unjustified absences result in 0 points. Participation in **field-trips**, if any, awards 2 points, while non-participation results in a loss of 2 points.

Both by school policy and Italian law attendance at all classes is required of all students. (Yes, your student visa is dependent on perfect attendance.) Even so, I will reward students (round a borderline grade up) for perfect or very good attendance, but I am also forced by school policy to penalize students who accrue more than two unexcused absences, so please do your very best to be here and engaged when you are here. Students are expected to arrive at class on time, having completed the readings and written assignments due that day (see schedule below), in order to receive a passing (C or better) grade.

Since our texts are provided in electronic form, you will have a laptop in front of you during our class sessions, both the literary discussions and the workshops. Having lived for some years in a world free of such devices, I can tell you from experience that your laptop is *not* your friend, that it has already damaged your ability to concentrate and made it far more difficult for you to stay focused and benefit from classroom education than those of us lucky enough to have studied before this very tempting distraction-machine was invented. Serious psychological studies have demonstrated again and again that the laptop (and the myth of "multi-tasking") is seriously detrimental to human information retention, that taking notes on a computer is a far less effective memory jog than notes written on paper, and that the distractions that computers offer (social media, online shopping, games, etc.) are the greatest impediments to your education at the present moment. Please do your best to defeat these temptations and use the laptop only to refer to the text under discussion and, if you must, to take notes and jot down thoughts, interpretations, and possible paper topics. For 1.5 hours twice a week, please try your best to leave the buzz of the cyber world behind, to stay with us and live "in the moment." This is your only hope.

### **Late submissions:**

Assignments not submitted by the due date will receive a penalty of 10% for the first 24 hours, 20% for a 48-hour delay. No submissions will be accepted more than 3 days after the deadline, unless arrangements have been made with the instructor (for extensions under exceptional circumstances, apply to the course instructor).

### **Personal Technology:**

Please turn cell phones off during class. You can use laptops to take notes, however social networking, e-mailing, surfing the Internet, playing games, etc. are forbidden during class. Any

student caught using their laptop/cell phones inappropriately during class will be asked to turn them off. Repeated violations of this rule after the first warning will result in the student being marked absent for the day and permanently losing their laptop privileges. Please be respectful and limit your use of personal electronic devices during class to academic purposes.

### **Contesting a grade:**

If students wish to contest a grade, they must make an appointment to do so in person. The student should contact the instructor with any concerns within ONE week of receiving the grade. The student must also demonstrate that they have read the comments accompanying the grade by presenting a brief written statement specifying why the grade does not reflect the quality of the work. It is at the discretion of the instructor to decide whether the work and the student's request warrant any increase or decrease in the grade. Students should retain a copy of all submitted assignments and feedback (in case of loss) and should also retain all of their marked assignments.

### **Recommended behavior:**

- Class begins promptly at the beginning of the class period. It is advisable that you be in your seat and ready to start participating in class at that time.
- Always bring the required supplies and be ready to be actively engaged in the learning process. This communicates preparedness and interest.
- Turn your cell phone off or to vibrate mode before the start of class;
- It is fine to bring a drink or a snack to class, as long as it is not distracting. In conjunction with this, please pick up your trash when you leave the room.
- Your professor expects your full attention for the entire class period. If you know that you'll need to leave before the class is over, try to sit as close to the door as possible so as not to disrupt others. Similarly, if you arrive in class late, just slip in as quietly as possible and take the first available seat you come to.
- Do not sleep in class! Laying your head on the desk or sleeping in class is rude, and it is distracting to others. Turn in assignments on time.
- When you have a question or comment, please raise your hand first as a courtesy to your classmates and the professor. Remember, your questions are NOT an imposition – they are welcome. So, ask questions! You'll learn more, it makes the class more interesting, and you are helping others learn as well.
- If an emergency arises that requires an absence from a session, it is your responsibility to get the notes and all other information that was covered in class from a colleague you trust.

### **Secular and religious holidays:**

Sant'Anna Institute recognizes that there are several secular and religious holidays - not included in the Italian calendar - that affect large numbers of its community members. In

consideration of their significance for many students, no examinations may be given and no assigned work may be required on these days. Students who observe these holidays will be given an opportunity to make up missed work in both laboratories and lecture courses. If an examination is given on the first class day after one of these holidays, it must not cover material introduced in class on that holiday. Students who wish to observe such holidays must inform their instructors within the first two weeks of each semester of their intent to observe the holiday even when the exact date of the holiday will not be known until later so that alternative arrangements convenient to both students and faculty can be made at the earliest opportunity.

Students who make such arrangements will not be required to attend classes or take examinations on the designated days, and faculty must provide reasonable opportunities for such students to make up missed work and examinations. For this reason it is desirable that faculty inform students of all examination dates at the start of each semester.

## **ACADEMIC HONESTY**

“Members of the Jacksonville University community are expected to foster and uphold the highest standards of honesty and integrity, which are foundations for the intellectual endeavors we engage in.

To underscore the importance of truth, honesty, and accountability, students and instructors should adhere to the following standard:

“On my honor as a student of Jacksonville University, I promise to uphold the values of honesty, trust, fairness, respect, and responsibility in all my dealings with faculty, staff, and students.”

Academic misconduct occurs when a student engages in an action that is deceitful, fraudulent, or dishonest regarding any type of academic assignment that is intended to or results in an unfair academic advantage. In this context, the term “assignment” refers to any type of graded or ungraded work that is submitted for evaluation for any course. Academic misconduct includes but is not limited to cheating, collusion, falsification, misrepresentation, unauthorized collaboration on assignments, copying another student’s work, using or providing unauthorized notes or materials, turning in work not produced by the individual, attempting to get credit for a single instance of work submitted for more than one course, and plagiarism. Furthermore, providing deceitful, fraudulent, or dishonest information during discussions of an academic matter with faculty are also examples of academic misconduct.” (Jacksonville University Academic Integrity [Policy](#)).

Throughout this course we will be reading and reporting about the work of others. All information that is not original to the student must be appropriately attributed in both presentations and written work. All students are expected to do their own work and give appropriate credit for all sources used in the process of preparing papers, presentations, and homework assignments. Group assignments will be graded based on the product of the work, although some adjustment may be made for participation. [If you have a question about whether or not collaboration is allowed, or how to cite a reference, please ask. It is always better to check than to be accused of an unintended violation of the academic honesty policy].

Violations of the academic honesty policy will be dealt with in accordance to university policies [Refer to current Academic Catalog “Academic Integrity and Misconduct”].

Course Level Penalties: A first offense may result in a failing grade for the assignment. Second offenses may result in failure in the course. Significantly egregious violations may result in expulsion from the university. When in doubt give credit for all information that did not come directly out of your head!

### **DISABILITY STATEMENT**

Students with a documented disability requesting classroom accommodations or modifications, either permanent or temporary, resulting from the disability are encouraged to inform the faculty in the first week of the program.