

**Georgia Institute of Technology**  
**Sam Nunn School of International Affairs**  
**Spring 2024**

**INTA 3031/8803MF: Human Rights**  
**Class Time: MW 11:00-12:15 AM**  
**Classroom: Engineering Science and Mechanics 201**

**Instructor:**

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**Course Description:**

The central idea behind human rights in international affairs is that human beings have rights (1) simply by virtue of being human, and that (2) their realization is not merely a responsibility of the countries in which they reside, but also of the outside world. The purpose of this course is to understand the premises and implications of this idea. It will address questions such as: Where do human rights come from and what particular entitlements do they consist of? Who has obligations to realize human rights and what are these obligations specifically? What role do, and should, human rights play in the formulation and leadership of a country's foreign policy? To what extent are international human rights treaties and organizations effective? What conditions or actions help prevent human rights violations? Does increased awareness and reporting of foreign human rights violations, made possible by great technological strides, also mean increased concern about them? How do we reconcile conflicts among rights, as well as conflicts between the pursuit of rights and other goals?

The course has the following intended learning outcomes:

1. Students will demonstrate familiarity with different perspectives on the role of human rights in international relations.
2. Students will show the ability to explain the role of different institutional actors dealing with human rights internationally.
3. Students will be able to analyze important human rights issues in world politics.
4. Students will be able to demonstrate knowledge of principal contemporary global challenges in the field of international affairs.

INTA 1110: Introduction to International Relations is **highly recommended** as a pre-requisite for undergraduate students.

INTA 3031 fulfills these attributes: International Relations (IP) and Social Science Requirement.

**This is a Core IMPACTS course that is part of the Social Sciences area.**

Core IMPACTS refers to the core curriculum, which provides students with essential knowledge in foundational academic areas. This course will help students master course content, and support students' broad academic and career goals.

This course should direct students toward a broad Orienting Question:

- How do I understand human experiences and connections?

Completion of this course should enable students to meet the following Learning Outcome:

- Students will effectively analyze the complexity of human behavior, and how historical, economic, political, social, or geographic relationships develop, persist, or change.

Course content, activities and exercises in this course should help students develop the following Career-Ready Competencies:

- Intercultural Competence
- Perspective-Taking
- Persuasion

**Required Texts:**

David P. Forsythe, *Human Rights in International Relations*, 4th ed. (Cambridge University Press, 2018).

Tim Dunne and Nicholas J. Wheeler (eds.), *Human Rights in Global Politics* (Cambridge University Press, 1999).

Both books are available for purchase in the GT Barnes & Noble bookstore. They are also on course reserve in the GT Library. Other readings will be available directly on the Canvas course website under Files. It is the responsibility of students to ensure access to resources posted on Canvas. Should you experience technical difficulties, contact the Office of Information Technology (oit.gatech.edu) for help.

**Course Evaluation for Undergraduate Students:**

Undergraduate students will be evaluated according to the following format:

- Two closed-book exams, on February 12 and March 25 (worth 25% each)
- Final open-book take-home exam, handed out via e-mail on Friday, April 19 and due to be uploaded on Canvas/Assignments on April 29 at 2 PM (40%)
- Class participation (10%) + extra credit up to 5%

You must take both exams, and hand in the final take-home exam, on their assigned dates and times. The two close-book exams can be appealed to the instructor within one week of their return. Students must attach to the exam a typed explanation specifying why their grade should increase. The instructor reserves the right to re-grade the entire assignment (i.e., not just the appealed part) and to increase, affirm or decrease the originally assigned grade.

You **must attend classes** and have the assigned readings completed **before** each class. Doing the assigned reading prior to each class is important since class time will regularly feature discussion. You should also follow human-rights related events and developments by reading respectable news publications such as *The New York Times*, *The Wall Street Journal* and *The Economist* and by following online and in the social media the human rights work of intergovernmental organizations such as the United Nations (ohchr.org) and the Council of Europe (coe.int) and non-governmental organizations such as the Human Rights Watch (hrw.org) and Amnesty International (amnesty.org).

In addition to being present in every class, you are expected to **participate actively**. Although this is a relatively large class, we will have frequent discussions in a variety of formats. Bring with you 3"x5" index cards to every class – I will repeatedly ask you to write brief discussion summaries or other written exercises and hand them to me at the end of the class. On some occasions, I may only take class attendance and count it in the same way as written index-card exercises. I also plan online discussions of topics via the course's Canvas Discussion board. Your participation grade will be determined by the ratio of the discussions you participated in (if they show familiarity with the course material) to the total number of these exercises. If you participated in 90%-100% of the total number of exercises, your participation grade will be 10/10, if in 80%-90% your participation grade will be 9/10, etc. Students can earn **up to 5 % extra credit** by making both **regular** and **informed** verbal contributions in class.

### **Course Evaluation for Graduate Students:**

Graduate students will be evaluated according to the following format:

- Three analytical response papers on the assigned readings (30%; 10% each)
- Research paper outline, due in class on March 4 (10%)
- Research paper, due to be uploaded on Canvas/Assignments on April 29 at 2 PM (40%)
- Class participation and research paper presentation (20%)

### **Three analytical response papers:**

Graduate students are required to write three response papers on the assigned readings. The dates of the following ten lectures correspond to the possible topics: 1/22, 2/14, 2/26, 3/6, 3/11, 3/27, 4/1, 4/8, 4/10 and 4/17. You can turn in four papers – in that case I will count the three highest grades you receive. The papers, which are due to be handed in to the instructor at the beginning of the class when the topic they deal with is discussed, should be no less than one-page and no more than two pages single-spaced (with 1" margin from each side and 12-size font). In the papers you should:

- (1) Identify and concisely summarize the main arguments in the readings as they relate to the assigned topic.
- (2) Compare and contrast the readings. Are there any points of convergence between them? In what ways do they differ?
- (3) Critically engage with the readings. Do you find one more convincing than the others? If you do, why? If you do not find any of the readings convincing, why not? What questions are left in your mind?

### Research paper outline and research paper:

There is no set list of questions for the research paper assignment. Graduate students should formulate their own research question based on their interests and mandatory consultation with the instructor prior to proceeding with their research. In general, students should seek to examine a significant human rights issue/debate and include empirical evidence in their analysis. By early March, you should have enough research to draw up an eight-page (double-spaced, except the annotated bibliography which should be single-spaced) outline which encompasses the paper's title, description of the problem, preliminary argument, and annotated bibliography of at least 15 academically reputable sources beyond the course material, including books and academic journal articles. The outline is due on March 4 and is worth 10% of your final course grade. Toward the end of the semester, your work should have progressed further, to the point where you can make an oral presentation of your findings and field questions from your classmates. Presentations of research paper findings will be done in class on April 22. That presentation will count towards your class participation grade. The final research paper (15 to 20 pages, double-spaced, with 1" margin from each side and 12-size font) is worth 40% of the final course grade. It is due to be uploaded on Canvas/Assignments on April 29 at 2 PM. Papers will be graded based on their originality and logic of argument, quantity and quality of supporting research, and readability and elegance of writing style.

### Class participation and presentation:

Graduate students **must** attend every class and participate **actively** and **regularly** in class discussions. On occasion, they may be asked to meet with the instructor for discussion of class material as a separate group.

### Class Absence and Penalty Policy:

Class absence is only justified for **documented** medical and family emergency reasons and in other cases approved by the GT Office of the Dean of Students. Late written assignments – final take-home exams for undergraduate students and research paper outlines and research papers for graduate students – will be penalized by 10% per day unless valid justification for missing the due date/time is provided before the due date/time.

### Academic Integrity:

Georgia Tech aims to cultivate a community based on trust, academic integrity, and honor. Students are expected to act according to the highest ethical standards. For information on Georgia Tech's Academic Honor Code, please visit <http://www.catalog.gatech.edu/policies/honor-code/> or <http://www.catalog.gatech.edu/rules/18/>.

Final projects submitted on Canvas will be screened for plagiarism via Turnitin. Any student suspected of cheating or plagiarizing on an exam or assignment will be reported to the Office of Student Integrity, which will investigate the incident and identify the appropriate penalty for violations.

### **Accommodations for Students with Disabilities:**

If you are a student with learning needs that require special accommodation, contact the Office of Disability Services at (404) 894-2563 or <http://disabilityservices.gatech.edu/>, as soon as possible, to make an appointment to discuss your special needs and to obtain an accommodations letter. Please also e-mail me as soon as possible so that I know of your learning needs.

### **Additional Student Resources:**

The Center for Academic Success ([success.gatech.edu](http://success.gatech.edu)) offers a variety of academic support services to help students succeed academically at Georgia Tech (e.g., tutoring, peer-led study groups, study skills, writing lab). The Division of Student Life ([studentlife.gatech.edu](http://studentlife.gatech.edu)) in the Office of the Dean of Students offers resources and support for all students in the Tech community. The Counseling Center (<http://counseling.gatech.edu/>) offers free mental health services, as well as stress management and wellness workshops to all currently enrolled students. They are located in Smithgall, Suite 210 and are offering virtual and in-person resources.

### **Communications Policy:**

As your official GT email is the only means for the instructor to reach you outside the classroom, you are responsible for checking it **daily**. You are also asked to **turn on** to receive **all** the course-related notifications on Canvas.

### **Tips for Success:**

1. Come to class.
2. Come to class having read and reflected on the assigned readings and prepared to engage in discussion.
3. Participate in class by both asking and answering questions and sharing your perspectives. There is no such thing as a bad or stupid question.
4. Make sure you understand the material for each class before attending the next class.
5. Form study groups with your peers both to compare notes and to get feedback on your grasp of the course material. Where relevant, study the material/concepts comparatively and with reference to empirical examples.
6. Make use of all available resources including, but not limited to, the library and the instructor's office hours. Reach out if you need additional assistance or support.
7. Follow real world news on human rights and reflect on them with reference to the course material.

### **Outline of Classes and Readings:**

[N.B. The schedule is subject to revision. Should that occur, I will provide ample notice.]

#### **January 8: Course Introduction**

Begin reading for the next class.

##### ***I. The Foundations of Human Rights Standards***

#### **January 10: Human Rights in International Relations**

Dunne and Wheeler, ch. 5.

Forsythe, ch. 1.

**January 15: MLK Jr. Day (NO CLASS)**

**January 17: What are “Human Rights”?**

Forsythe, ch. 2.

Dunne and Wheeler, ch. 2.

**January 22: Human Rights Universalism vs. Cultural Relativism**

Dunne and Wheeler, chs. 3 and 4.

***II. Implementing Human Rights Standards in a World of States***

**January 24: Global Institutions**

Forsythe, ch. 3.

Read also the following online: Universal Declaration of Human Rights; International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (including its Optional Protocols); International Covenant on Social, Economic and Cultural Rights.

**January 29: Regional Institutions**

Forsythe, ch. 5.

Read also at least one of the following online: European Convention for the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms; American Convention on Human Rights; African Charter on Human and Peoples’ Rights.

**January 31: Foreign Policy Leadership**

Hans J. Morgenthau, “Human Rights and Foreign Policy,” *First Distinguished Council on Religion and International Affairs Lecture* (1979), pp. 1-8.

Forsythe, ch. 6.

**February 5: Non-Governmental Institutions: The Role of NGOs and Transnational Corporations**

Dunne and Wheeler, ch. 7.

Forsythe, chs. 7 and 8.

**February 7: Review Session**

**February 12: Undergraduate In-Class Exam 1**

***III. Contemporary Human Rights Issues***

**February 14: Humanitarian Intervention**

Michael Walzer, "The Argument about Humanitarian Intervention," *Dissent* (Winter 2002), pp. 29-37.

Miroslav Nincic and Donna Nincic, "Humanitarian Intervention and Paradoxes of Moral Authority: Lessons from the Balkans," *International Journal of Human Rights*, Vol. 8 (2004), pp. 45-64.

Report of the International Commission on Intervention and State Sovereignty, *The Responsibility to Protect* (2001), pp. vii-18.

**February 19: Case Study: Rwanda (1994) – Documentary Watching I**

The Ghosts of Rwanda (PBS, 2004)

Dunne and Wheeler, ch. 6 + Read online the UN Convention on the Prevention of Genocide (1948).

**February 21: Case Study: Rwanda (1994) – Documentary Watching II + Discussion**

**February 26: Case Study: Libya (2011)**

Thomas G. Weiss, "RtoP Alive and Well after Libya," *Ethics and International Affairs*, Vol. 25, No. 3 (Fall 2011), pp. 287-292.

Alan J. Kuperman, "NATO's Intervention in Libya: A Humanitarian Success?" in Aidan Hehir and Robert Murray (eds.), *Libya, the Responsibility to Protect and the Future of Humanitarian Intervention* (Palgrave Macmillan, 2013), pp. 191-221.

**February 28: The Role of the Media**

Forsythe, ch. 9.

Dunne and Wheeler, ch. 8.

Clifford Orwin, "Distant Compassion: CNN and Borrioboola-Gha," *The National Interest* (Spring 1996), pp. 42-49.

**March 4: Transitional Justice – GRADUATE RESEARCH PAPER OUTLINE DUE IN CLASS**

Forsythe, ch. 4.

Also read the Rome Statute online.

**March 6: Case Study: The US Rejection of The International Criminal Court**

Kenneth Roth, "The Court the US Doesn't Want," *The New York Review of Books* (November 19, 1998).

John R. Bolton, "The Risks and Weaknesses of the International Criminal Court from America's Perspective," *Law and Contemporary Problems*, Vol. 64 (Winter 2001), pp. 167-180.

**March 11: Justice vs. Peace: International Criminal Justice vs. National Reconciliation**

Juan E. Méndez, “National Reconciliation, Transnational Justice, and the International Criminal Court,” *Ethics and International Affairs*, Vol. 15, No. 1 (2001), pp. 25-44.

Brad Roth, “Peaceful Transition and Retrospective Justice: Some Reservations - A Response to Juan E. Méndez,” *Ethics and International Affairs* Vol. 15, No. 1 (2001), pp. 45-50.

**March 13: Review Session**

**March 18, 20: Spring Break (NO CLASSES)**

**March 25: Undergraduate In-Class Exam 2**

**March 27: Human Rights in Public Emergency: Torture**

Henry Shue, “Torture in Dreamland: Disposing of the Ticking Bomb,” *Case Western Journal of International Law*, Vol. 37, Nos. 2-3 (2006), pp. 231-239.

Charles Krauthammer, “The Truth about Torture,” *The Weekly Standard*, December 5, 2005.

**April 1: External Responses to China’s Human Rights Situation – the Uyghur Case Simulation**

Read the Model Diplomacy Pop-Up Case: Uighur Repression in Xinjiang, Council of Foreign Relations

Rosemary Foot, “Positioning Human Rights in China-US Relations, in Christopher Sabatini (ed.), *Reclaiming Human Rights in a Changing World Order* (Brookings, 2023), pp. 31-49.

Zhou Qi, “Conflicts over Human Rights between China and the US,” *Human Rights Quarterly*, Vol. 27, No. 1 (2005), pp. 105-124.

**April 3: Guest Lecture by Dr. Robert Bell, INTA Distinguished Professor of the Practice**

**April 8: NGOs and Economic, Social and Cultural Rights**

Kenneth Roth, “Defending Economic, Social and Cultural Rights: Practical Issues Faced by an International Human Rights Organization,” *Human Rights Quarterly*, Vol. 26, No. 1 (2004), pp. 63-73.

Leonard S. Rubenstein, “How International Human Rights Organizations Can Advance Economic, Social and Cultural Rights: A Response to Kenneth Roth,” *Human Rights Quarterly*, Vol. 26, No. 4 (2004), pp. 845-865.

Kenneth Roth, “Response to Leonard S. Rubenstein,” *Human Rights Quarterly*, Vol. 26, No. 4 (2004), pp. 873-878.

Leonard S. Rubenstein, “Response by Leonard S. Rubenstein,” *Human Rights Quarterly*, Vol. 26, No. 4 (2004), pp. 879-881.



**April 10: Children's Rights**

Kristina A. Bentley, "Can There Be Any Universal Children's Rights?" *International Journal of Human Rights*, Vol. 9, No. 1 (2005), pp. 107–123.

Sonja Grover, "A Response to K.A. Bentley's 'Can There Be Any Universal Children's Rights?'" *International Journal of Human Rights*, Vol.11, No. 4 (2007), pp. 429-443.

**April 15: Critical Perspectives on International Human Rights Practice**

John Laughland, "Human Rights and the Rule of Law: Achieving Universal Justice?" in David Chandler (ed.), *Rethinking Human Rights: Critical Approaches to International Politics* (Palgrave, 2002).

Abdullahi Ahmed An-Naim, *Decolonizing Human Rights* (Cambridge University Press, 2021), ch. 1.

**April 17: Conclusion: The Politics of Human Rights in a World of States**

Forsythe, ch. 10.

Dunne and Wheeler, ch. 11.

**April 22: Graduate Students' Research Paper Presentations**