

**Georgia Institute of Technology**  
**Sam Nunn School of International Affairs**  
**Spring 2025**

**INTA 3031/8803MF: Human Rights**  
**Class Time: TR 12:30-1:45 PM**  
**Classroom: MRDC 3403**

**Instructor:**

Prof. Mikulas Fabry  
Office: Habersham 152  
Tel.: (404) 385-6883  
E-mail: mfabry@gatech.edu  
Office hours: by appointment, Tuesdays 3:00-5:00 PM

**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. The course will do so in two parts. Part I will outline the fundamentals. It will address the place of human rights in international affairs and investigate the role of various actors and institutions which act, or can act, on behalf of human rights beyond national borders. Part II will ask students to build on insights from Part I and to deepen and expand them by participating in a collaborative Diplomacy Lab research project “Investigating Global Human Rights Trends.” The Diplomacy Lab is a partnership between the Department of State and select universities that addresses research needs of US foreign service professionals.

The course has the following intended learning outcomes:

1. Students will demonstrate familiarity with different perspectives on the role of human rights in international affairs.
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.

### **The Diplomacy Lab Project:**

<b><u>Project Name</u></b>	Investigating Global Human Rights Trends
<b><u>Bureau of the US Department of State</u></b>	Democracy, Human Rights and Labor
<b><u>Project Description</u></b>	1 - Investigate and report on some disturbing global human rights trends: --protections and abuses of marginalized communities (suggest focusing on East Asia); --protections and abuses of women (suggest focusing on sub-Saharan Africa); --protections and abuses of LGBTQI+ persons (suggest focusing on the Caribbean); --regulation of harmful digital and print content (including racial hatred) online and how this affects

	<p>freedom of expression (suggest focusing on South and Central Asia); and</p> <p>--how governments are using advances in artificial intelligence to limit freedoms and violate human rights (suggest focusing on Eastern Europe). This will help us better understand these important global trends and how they are affecting the human rights of people in these regions (NOTE: Given the single year focus of the annual Human Rights Reports, it can be challenging for us to monitor longer-term trends.).</p> <p>2 - Research and analyze the impact of the Human Rights Reports (and recent historic trends) on human rights by major region of the world (i.e. Europe, East Asia, South and Central Asia, Middle East, Africa, Western Hemisphere). Report whether the Human Rights Report appears to have influenced governments or was used by civil society. This will help us understand the overall impact of the Human Rights Reports in different regions with an eye to determining whether we could do anything to increase their effectiveness.</p>
<b><u>Final Product Format</u></b>	Research paper summarizing major conclusions with appendices for sources and underlying data.

**Course Evaluation:**

Students will be evaluated according to the following format:

- One in-class closed-book exam, on February 18 (worth 25%)
- Initial team presentation of one-page summary of research findings (worth 5%)
- Team annotated bibliography presentation of at least 15 sources per student (10%)
- Final PowerPoint team presentation (15%)
- Final team research report of 10-15 double-spaced pages (excluding annotated bibliography of at least 15 sources per student) (30%), due Tuesday, April 22 at 8:00 PM on Canvas/Assignments
- Class participation (15%)

You must take the exam on the assigned date and time. Its grade 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 regrade the entire assignment (i.e., not just the appealed part) and to increase, affirm or decrease the originally assigned grade.

For Part II, students will be split into multiple teams, with each team conducting a portion of the Diplomacy Lab project. Each team will present three assignments in class – initial findings, annotated bibliography and final PowerPoint presentation – and get feedback from other teams

and the instructor. The artifacts for these presentations will be due at 5:00 PM in Canvas/Discussions the day preceding the assigned presentation date. Only Word, Power Point or PDF files are acceptable as submissions on Canvas/Discussions, and you must verbally present the files you uploaded the preceding day.

The final research team reports will be due at 8:00 PM on Tuesday, April 22 in Canvas/Assignments. The final research team report must be a Word document. Working as a team, the graduate students will be expected to collate the various partial team reports into a single final class report and to draw out the various partial conclusions in a two-page double-spaced summary at the beginning of the final class report. That final class report will be due to the instructor by 8:00 PM on Wednesday, April 30 via email to the instructor and the effort will count towards the graduate students' class participation grade.

All students **must attend all classes** and have the assigned readings and submissions completed **before** class. Doing the assigned readings prior to each class is important since class time will regularly feature discussion on them. 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*, *The Financial Times* 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. For Part I, bring with you 3"x5" index cards to every class in Part I – I will repeatedly ask you to write brief discussion summaries or other written exercises and hand them to the instructor at the end of the class. Online discussions of topics via the course's Canvas Discussion board are also planned. For Part II, provide constructive feedback on other teams' presentations. Your participation grade will be determined by the frequency and quality of your index card, online and verbal contributions to class.

### **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 – the initial research one-pagers, the annotated bibliographies, the final PowerPoint presentations and the final team research reports – 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 [catalog.gatech.edu/policies/honor-code/](http://catalog.gatech.edu/policies/honor-code/) or [catalog.gatech.edu/rules/18/](http://catalog.gatech.edu/rules/18/).

Final reports submitted on Canvas will be screened for plagiarism via Turnitin, which now checks for AI fraud too. Any student suspected of cheating or plagiarizing on any 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 every class.
2. For Part I: Come to class having read and reflected on the assigned readings and prepared to engage in discussion.
3. For Part I: 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. For Part I: Make sure you understand the material for each class before attending the next class.
5. For Part I: 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. For Part II: Engage in respectful collaboration with your fellow team members.
- 7: For Part II: Read all team submissions prior to class and be ready to provide constructive verbal feedback to other teams.
8. Make use of all available resources, including the instructor's office hours and GT Library, GT Communication Center and Seerist contacts. Reach out if you need additional assistance or support.
9. 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 7: Course Introduction****January 9: Presentation by Sherri Holliday-Sklar, US State Department****Part I:***1. The Foundations of Human Rights Standards***January 14: Human Rights in International Relations**

Dunne and Wheeler, ch. 5.

Forsythe, ch. 1.

**January 16: What are “Human Rights”?**

Forsythe, ch. 2.

Dunne and Wheeler, ch. 2.

**January 21: Human Rights Universalism vs. Cultural Relativism**

Dunne and Wheeler, chs. 3 and 4.

**January 23: Seerist Presentation by Campus Representative Maggie Mitchell***2. Implementing Human Rights Standards in a World of States***January 28: 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 30: 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.

**February 4: 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 6: Non-Governmental Institutions: The Role of NGOs and Transnational Corporations**

Dunne and Wheeler, ch. 7.

Forsythe, chs. 7 and 8.

**February 11: Review Session**

**February 13: Presentation on GT Library Research Resources by INTA Subject Librarian Jay Forrest**

**February 18: In-Class Exam****Part II:**

**February 20: Diplomacy Lab Division of Tasks**

**February 25: GT Communication Center Session**

**February 27: Presentation and Q&A by Sherri Holliday-Sklar, US State Department**

See <https://www.state.gov/reports-bureau-of-democracy-human-rights-and-labor/country-reports-on-human-rights-practices/>

**March 4: Research Day (NO CLASS)**

**March 6: Initial Presentation of Team Research I**

**March 11: Initial Presentation of Team Research II**

**March 13: Initial Presentation of Team Research III**

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

**March 25: Individual Consultation with Teams I**

**March 27: Individual Consultation with Teams II**

**April 1: Annotated Bibliography Presentation by Teams I**

**April 3: Annotated Bibliography Presentation by Teams II**

**April 8: Annotated Bibliography Presentation by Teams III**

**April 10: Final PPT Presentation of Team Research I**

**April 15: Final PPT Presentation of Team Research II**

**April 17: Final PPT Presentation of Team Research III**

**April 22: Drop-in Consultations with the Instructor**