



## **Human Rights on Film (920:319: 790:465)**

Spring 2022

ENG 201

Dr. Lynn M. Kuzma

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Office Hours: by appointment

- Virtual

Class: R 2:30-5:20

### **Course Objectives and Student Responsibilities:**

This course is designed to introduce students to the concept of international human rights through the medium of film. At virtually all levels of politics, from the local to the international and across both geographic and cultural divides, “human rights” have entered the political discourse. Perhaps it is fair to say that a virtual “revolution” in human rights has occurred over the previous few decades. Until recently, how states treated their citizens was largely nobody else’s business. However, there now exists an extensive array of international laws protecting citizens from abuse and, in some cases, providing them legal remedies to abuse. There is also a generally accepted “norm” against the most serious abuses of human rights.

In spite of this revolution, massive abuses persist, and billions of the world’s citizens are effectively left without sufficient protections. In this course we will discuss both the successes and limitation of current efforts to protect and promote human rights. We will focus on topics ranging from the nature and origins of human rights, to the motives for abuse of these rights, to the remedies available to redress these abuses. Throughout the course, we will seek to answer a question that continues to plague people interested in human rights: If we all basically agree that abuse is terrible, why are we so often unable to stop it?

**Format and organization:** I believe that one of the most effective ways to provoke interest and debate on issues related to human rights and human security is through the medium of film. The usefulness of films is that they engross us and allow us to connect concepts about which we read to the very real (often very painful) experiences of individuals. We can see ourselves (or friends or family) in characters in ways we cannot when we read about historical events, legal cases, or abstract theories in a classroom. I have therefore chosen to structure this course around a select group of exceptional films that I believe help illustrate core issues in international human rights.

Make no mistake. This is a course on human rights and not simply a “movie class”. Each film is paired with a set of **required readings**. Completing these readings is essential because they provide the theoretical, legal, and policy perspectives necessary to understand and discuss the core concepts introduced in the course. In addition, you will be graded on your ability to discuss and reflect upon these readings and their connection to the films we view.

## Book:

This semester I am trying to find electronic versions of readings so you do not have to buy a book and you can instead invest in watching great movies!!!!!! All reading assignments will be in weekly reading folders in Canvas.

## Course Learning Goals and Assessment

**Goal 1: Remember course content:** Students will be able to arrange, choose, find, label, recall, and recognize facts and information about human rights and the movies they watch. To assess this, students will take a **midterm exam**.

**Goal 2: Understand course concepts:** Students will be able to interpret, exemplify, classify, summarize, illustrate, compare, and explain human rights topics or ideas and how they relate to the movies watched in class. Students will post to weekly **“Discussion Board” threads** by the end of the day on Wednesday of each week.

**Goal 3: Apply course concepts:** Students will be able to construct, estimate, implement, and illustrate course concepts. Students will produce an “infographic” from a topic that is covered in class.

**Goal 4: Analyze and Evaluate course material:** Students will be able to differentiate, organize, attribute, and modify course concepts. Students will take a midterm.

**Goal 5: Create clear and well-written work:** Students will be able to generate or produce original work based on the analysis and evaluation of course concepts. Students will write two compare and contrast papers (see below).

**Evaluation:** Your final grade will be based on the combination of the activities outlined below based on a 10-point grading scale:

A	90% - 100%
B	80% - 89%
C	70% - 79%
D	60% - 69%
F	0% - 59%

**Papers (40%):** During the semester, students will write **two (2)** formal papers (20% each paper). Each paper (**6-7 double spaced pages**) will address a theme from the course. See assignments for specifics. **Due date for 1<sup>st</sup> paper: 2/25 at the end of the day;** Second paper is due **5/6 at the end of the day**.

**Blackboard Discussion Forum (20%): Active contribution** to the online discussion forum represents a significant portion of your grade. For each film we view in class you will be required to participate in the discussion by responding to a previously posted question on the reading/film and responding to two of your peers’ posts. Responses will be graded on content rather than length. Your responses need not be long, but they should directly address **the themes of the course** and should **draw together the readings and the films**. The grading rubric for the discussion boards is found in the Assignments Folder.

**Midterm (20%)**

**Infographic Assignment (10%):** An infographic is a highly visual representation of information, data, or content that is intended to quickly communicate information to a reader. Smaller than but similar to a poster, an Infographic often communicates a central argument, topic, or thesis focusing on the overall patterns, themes, or salient points. Each student will produce an infographic that captures a theme from one of their compare and contrast papers. Due anytime before 5/6.

Late assignments (those that are turned in after the end of the day the assignment is due) will receive a letter grade deduction each day late.

**Academic Integrity:** Students are expected to read, understand, and comply with University standards for academic integrity and the policy on plagiarism. Violations of the Code in course work may lead to grade penalties including failure of the course. Class papers should conform to the *Chicago Manual of Style* guidelines for source citations and references. A complete set of endnotes (or internal citations) and a bibliography should be included for all papers. Please view the tutorials on academic integrity and citations linked in Blackboard under “Libraries.” Each student is responsible for knowing this information.

**Appropriate Behavior.** Most weeks the class will focus on a film (documentary or feature) that reflects specific core human rights issues. We will then meet to discuss the film as well as the relevant assigned readings. Given the topic of the course, many of these films necessarily deal with mature subject matter and may include graphic imagery, *including but not limited to killing, torture, rape, sexual violence, and other degrading or inhumane treatment.* Viewing these films may (and probably should) cause you some discomfort. Many of the films are quite simply difficult to watch, though they are all exceptional films.

**However, if you are terribly uncomfortable with this subject matter or believe you will be unable to address/discuss these issues in a mature and respectful manner, this may not be the course for you.**

*Given the unease that some of films and discussions may cause some students, I expect that you will remain respectful of other students*

A few other general notes on behavior. Students are expected to show respect for the professor and other students. Students whose behavior is disrespectful or inappropriate may be asked to leave the course.

**If you do not understand something, please ask questions;** others in the class likely will thank you for doing this! We will not be able cover every reading or idea, if a concept is unclear, please ask questions during lecture or during virtual office hours.

**Accommodations:** Your success in this class is important to me. If there are circumstances that may affect your performance in this class, please let me know as soon as possible so that we can work together to develop strategies for adapting assignments to meet both your needs and the requirements of the course. There are official forms you need to file with the university and share with me for the arrangement of certain accommodations. Please feel free to email me and arrange a private meeting to discuss this further.

Rutgers University Newark (RU-N) is committed to the creation of an inclusive and safe learning environment for all students. RU-N has identified the following resources to further the mission of access and support:

- **Students with Disabilities:** Rutgers University welcomes students with disabilities into all of the University's educational programs. The Office of Disability Services (ODS) is responsible for the determination of appropriate accommodations for students who encounter barriers due to disability. In order to receive consideration for reasonable accommodations, a student with a disability must contact

ODS, register, have an initial appointment, and provide documentation. Once a student has completed the ODS process (registration, initial appointment, and documentation submitted) and reasonable accommodations are determined to be necessary and appropriate, a Letter of Accommodation (LOA) will be provided to the student. The student must give the LOA to each course instructor, followed by a discussion with the instructor. This should be completed as early in the semester as possible as accommodations are not retroactive. More information can be found at [ods.rutgers.edu](http://ods.rutgers.edu). Contact ODS: (973) 353-5375 or [ods@newark.rutgers.edu](mailto:ods@newark.rutgers.edu).

- **Religious Holiday Policy and Accommodations:** Students are advised to provide timely notification to instructors about necessary absences for religious observances and are responsible for making up the work or exams according to an agreed-upon schedule. The Division of Student Affairs is available to verify absences for religious observance, as needed: (973) 353-5063 or [DeanofStudents@newark.rutgers.edu](mailto:DeanofStudents@newark.rutgers.edu).
- **Counseling Services:** Counseling Center Room 101, Blumenthal Hall, (973) 353-5805 or <http://counseling.newark.rutgers.edu/>.
- **Students with Temporary Conditions/Injuries:** Students experiencing a temporary condition or injury that is adversely affecting their ability to fully participate in their courses should submit a request for assistance at: <https://temporaryconditions.rutgers.edu>.
- **Students Who are Pregnant:** The Office of Title IX and ADA Compliance is available to assist students with any concerns or potential accommodations related to pregnancy: (973) 353-1906 or [TitleIX@newark.rutgers.edu](mailto:TitleIX@newark.rutgers.edu).
- **Gender or Sex-Based Discrimination or Harassment:** Students experiencing any form of gender or sex-based discrimination or harassment, including sexual assault, sexual harassment, relationship violence, or stalking, should know that help and support are available. To report an incident, contact the Office of Title IX and ADA Compliance: (973) 353-1906 or [TitleIX@newark.rutgers.edu](mailto:TitleIX@newark.rutgers.edu). To submit an incident report: [tinyurl.com/RUNReportingForm](http://tinyurl.com/RUNReportingForm). To speak with a staff member who is confidential and does **NOT** have a reporting responsibility, contact the Office for Violence Prevention and Victim Assistance: (973) 353-1918 or [run.vpva@rutgers.edu](mailto:run.vpva@rutgers.edu).

# Course Schedule

*Week 1: Introduction (1/20)*

*Week 2: Human Rights History and Law (1/27)*

[“Universal Declaration of Human Rights”](#)

Donnelly, Chapter 1 “Human Rights in Global Politics- Historical Perspective”

Safia Swimelar “Making Human Rights Visible through Photography and Film”

Film: *Night and Fog*

<https://vimeo.com/189672641>

*Week 3: Whose Rights? Norms, Rights and Evolutionary Change (2/3)*

Donnelly, Chapter 2 “Theories of Human Rights”

Donnelly, “Chapter 3 “Cultural Relativism and Universal Human Rights”

Film: *12 Years a Slave*

*Week 4: Genocide, Mass Killing and Crimes against Humanity (2/10)*

[“Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide”](#)

Film: *The Act of Killing*

<https://video-alexanderstreet-com.proxy.libraries.rutgers.edu/watch/the-act-of-killing>

*Week 5: Intervention and Prosecution (2/17)*

Donnelly, Chapter 10 “Humanitarian Intervention”

Film: *Sometimes in April*

*Week 6: Preventing Genocide (2/24)*

[“Eight Stages of Genocide” Gregory Stanton](#)

Film: *Men Against Fire*

*Week 7: Civil-Political Rights (Physical Integrity Violations) (3/3)*

[“International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights”](#)

[“Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment”](#)

Film: *Zero Dark Thirty*

<https://digitalcampus-swankmp-net.proxy.libraries.rutgers.edu/rutgers313400/play/B9AFB525D2233201>

*Week 8: Social, Economic & Cultural Rights (3/10)*

[The International Covenant on Social, Economic and Cultural Rights](#)

Film: *Precious*

<https://www.sbs.com.au/ondemand/video/167027267856/precious>

*Week 9: Social, Economic & Cultural Rights (Globalization & Development) (3/24)*

Donnelly, Chapter 11, “Globalization, the State, and Human Rights”

Film: *Slumdog Millionaire*

Hindi with English subtitles <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4rW0S6BKfdI>

*Week 10: : Women’s Rights (3/31)*

[Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women](#)

Chiseche Salome Mibenge “Human Rights, Women and Gender”

Film: *It’s a Girl*

*Week 11: Gender-based Violence and Trafficking (4/7)*

Merry, Human Rights & Gender Violence (Chap. 1&3)

Film: *The Whistleblower*

**Week 12: Sexual Minority Rights (4/14)**

Human Rights Watch, "License to Harm"

Gwendolyn Beetham "The Human Rights of Gays, Lesbians, Bisexual and Transgender People"

Film: ***Call Me Kuchu***

[https://tubitv.com/movies/337826/call\\_me\\_kuchu?utm\\_source=google-feed&tracking=google-feed](https://tubitv.com/movies/337826/call_me_kuchu?utm_source=google-feed&tracking=google-feed)

**Week 13: Globalization and Environmental Justice (4/21)**

[Draft Declaration of Principles on Human Rights and the Environment](#)

Dimitra B. Manou "Climate Change and Human Rights"

Film: ***An Inconvenient Sequel***

<https://video-alexanderstreet-com.proxy.libraries.rutgers.edu/watch/an-inconvenient-sequel>

**Week 14: Refugees and Asylum Seekers (4/28)**

Azubike Onuora-Oguno "Migration, Refugees, Asylum and Uprooted Peoples' Rights"

Film: ***God Grew Tired of Us***

<https://www.dailymotion.com/video/x5tg3ps> You don't have to create an account to watch for free, but you do have to sit through ads.