

**Human Rights Policy  
PA 5885**

(Cross-listed for political science students as POL 4485/5485)  
Tuesdays, 6:20 - 8:50 pm, Humphrey 25

**Instructor:** James Ron, [www.jamesron.com](http://www.jamesron.com)

**Office hours:** Humphrey School 264, Mondays 10:00-1:00 pm. Please sign up online for a 30-minute time slot [using this URL](#).

**Phone:** Please use email. I will often not remember to check my voicemail.

**Skype:** Jimronlaptop.

**Appointments:** I prefer to meet during office hours, in person, or via Skype. If that is absolutely impossible, please write to Laura Noble ([lnoble@umn.edu](mailto:lnoble@umn.edu)) to arrange a 30-minute meeting.

**Email:** [Jamesr@umn.edu](mailto:Jamesr@umn.edu)

**Description:** This class is for students interested in human rights issues, policies, and actors, in the United States and internationally. Students in the political science department should enroll in POL 4485 (undergraduates) or POL 5485 (graduates); all others should enroll in PA 5885.

**Class dates:** September 5, 12, 19, 26

October 3, 10, 17, 24, 31

Nov 7, 14, 21, 28

Dec 5, 12

**Requirements and Grading**

Grades will be based on the following:

Reading Memo (800 words)	10 points
Attendance & Participation	10 points
Group Exercise	20 points
Mumbai Memo (800 words)	20 points
Final Paper (4,000 words) (3000 words for seniors)	30 points
Summary of Final Paper (800 words)	10 points
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Total	100 points

**Requirements and Grading: Detail**

**1. On Chosen Week, but With Immediate Moodle Signup Required**

**One 800-word reading memo/blog post (10 points):** After the first class, please go to the course Moodle website and choose one of the available weeks to sign up for a “reading memo,” a short, blog-style post about the week’s readings. Sign-up is on a first-come, first-serve basis.

To write your memo, please emulate the style of short essays/blog posts published on the [OpenGlobalRights](http://OpenGlobalRights) website. Write clearly and professionally; be succinct and to the point; use examples whenever possible; DON’T use jargon – plain English is best; and use hyperlinks to English-language open sources (whenever possible), rather than footnotes to sources behind a pay wall. Make sure your writing is appropriate for an interested but **non-specialist** audience; **this means that you must read your memo, out loud, to one or more fellow students unfamiliar with our class content**. Let’s assume that the listener will be brutally honest with you. Then, if you find that s/he can easily understand your argument, your blog post is on the right track. If there is any difficulty or confusion on the listener’s part, however, you will need to rewrite.

Please post this 800-word memo on Moodle at least four hours prior to the relevant class. Your contribution should summarize one or more of the arguments made in the week's readings, with examples.

Your memo will be graded for substance, such as your comprehension of the readings, and ability to apply its lessons to a concrete empirical case; and for the style of your writing, including clarity of prose, lack of jargon, correct word choice, and grammar.

Since these memos are designed to facilitate class discussion, I will not grade late submissions (except in cases of special accommodation, as per a written request from the University's [Disability Resource Center](#)).

2. **All Semester**

**Attendance and participation (10 points):** Please participate regularly in class by asking and responding to questions; making comments; debating with peers and the instructor; and remaining generally engaged. You will never be penalized for making a “wrong” statement or asking a “silly” question - there are no such things! I just want you to actively engage in class discussions, as this is crucial to the learning process. If you anticipate having a hard time speaking out regularly in class, please come to see me in the semester's first two weeks.

3. **October 17, 2017**

**Mumbai memo (20 points): Please submit a 800-word memo/blog post on Moodle, four hours before class, on October 17, 2017, by 2:20 pm (at the latest).** In this paper, please draw on your reading of Katherine Boo's *Behind the Beautiful Forevers* to describe at least one specific human rights abuse. The book does not use the term, “human rights abuse,” so you must use your imagination, and the learning we have done together over the previous weeks, to describe the abuse. Describe the event, process, or issue at hand; explain *why* it is a violation of *which* human rights treaty, law, clause, or principle in an international and/or regional and/or national framework; *identify* the relevant “rights-bearers” and “duty holders”; briefly *discuss* one or two potential policy remedies— specify which duty holder would be involved; and propose one or two potential accountability mechanisms.

Please write in the style of an [openGlobalRights](#) article, as per the instructions above (hyperlinks instead of footnotes, clarity and simplicity of prose, etc.) You will be graded on both substance and style.

4. **October 24, 2017, with Immediate Moodle Signup Required**

**Group Power Point Presentation on October 24, 2017 (20 points):** Directly after the full class, please sign up online for one of the six working groups identified below in the syllabus section for that week (first come, first served).

Meet with your group online or in person at least three times over the course of the three weeks prior to October 24, 2017. In those meetings, please prepare and rehearse a 15-minute, collective, power point presentation for the class of October 24, 2017.

In this presentation, you will define the human rights problem in question; delimit the relevant time period for discussion; discuss the relevant laws, treaties, clauses, or principles; and **discuss at least three ways of measuring the problem's scope and severity, providing examples**. Use ideas and writings from earlier weeks to prepare your analysis.

Excellent, persuasive, and exciting presentations require lots of thought, design, and practice. An excellent resource is the website, [Presentation Zen](#). To seriously improve your presentation skills, enroll in the class, “Presentation Skills” (PA 5926) and, as a second step, in “Data Visualization” (PA 5929). Working in a group is not easy either, so consider enrolling in the class, “Working in Teams” (PA 5081). All of these are short “skills classes” offered by the Humphrey School every fall semester.

**5. Due December 5, 2017**  
**500-word summary of your final paper topic**

Please send me a 500-word summary of your proposed paper topic. You'll need written approval from me before finalizing your paper topic.

**6. Due December 17, 2017**

**One 3000-word essay, together with an 800-word summary (Undergraduates: 2000 words for essay):** Please submit online by 3 pm on December 17, 2017 a 3,000-word research essay written in the [OpenGlobalRights](#) style, along with an 800-word version, also written in the OpenGlobalRights style. I may choose one or more of these to be published online.

The essay should identify a concrete human rights human rights problem; discuss its breadth, depth, and scope; identify the relevant rights-holders and duty bearers; identify existing policies attempting to address the problem; identify existing accountability mechanisms; and offer your opinion about how well those policies and mechanisms are doing. Are they having a positive impact? Why, or Why not? How do we know?

Your essay must include at least 10 sources from outside our syllabus, as well as at least five from within our syllabus. These sources should be a mixture of the following: scholarly, behind-the-paywall articles written by academics (eg, the *American Political Science Review*, *Human Rights Quarterly*); long, policy-style essays and articles (eg, *OpenGlobalRights*, *Foreign Affairs*, *The National Interest*); books or book chapters, either by academics or others; reports by NGOs, non profits, advocacy groups, and other policy "claims makers" (eg, *Human Rights Watch*); newspaper or magazine articles that have appeared in the mainstream press (eg, the *New York Times*).

In your bibliography, please specify which of these categories each of your cited readings belongs to.

## **Readings**

Most readings are available on Moodle. Several of the books we use for class, however, can be easily purchased online, and may also be available for in the library. These include:

- Katherine Boo (2012). *Behind the Beautiful Forevers: Life, Death and Hope in a Mumbai Undercity*. Random House
- Michael Goodhart (2016), *Human Rights: Politics and Practice*, 3<sup>rd</sup> edition. Oxford University Press.
- George Kent (2005). *Freedom From Want: The Human Rights to Adequate Food*. Georgetown University Press.
- Doreen Loseke. (2003). *Thinking About Social Problems: An Introduction to Constructionist Perspectives* (2<sup>nd</sup> edition). Transaction Publishers.
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**1. Preliminary Class (September 5, 2017)**

**2. Introduction (September 12, 2017)**

- Michael Goodhart (2016). [Human Rights: Politics and Practice](#). 3<sup>rd</sup> edition. Chapters 1-3, 5-7, 10, 18

**3. International Law & Human Rights (September 19, 2017)**

- Goodhart (2016). Chap 4
- Beth Simmons(2009). [Mobilizing for Human Rights: International Law and Domestic Politics](#). Chaps 1 & 6
- M. Htun and S. Weldon (2012). “The Civic Origins of Progressive Policy Change: Combating Violence Against Women in Global Perspective, 1975-2005.” *American Political Science Review* 106/3: 548-569.

**4. Human Rights as a Social, Political, and Organizational “Field” (September 26, 2017)**

- Doreen Loseke. (2003). [Thinking About Social Problems: An Introduction to Constructionist Perspectives](#) (2<sup>nd</sup> edition). Transaction Publishers. Chapters 1-5.
- Case study: Police brutality in the USA
  - Read Amnesty International’s 2015 report, [Deadly Force](#), and browse other newspaper articles, websites, and articles on the topic. Be prepared to apply abstract ideas from the Loseke book to this particular case of human rights policy.

**5. Understanding Economic & Social Rights (October 3, 2017)**

- Center for Economic and Social Rights (2009). [Is Poverty a Violation of Human Rights?](#) *CESR Human Rights Insights* #1. (New York).
- George Kent (2005). [Freedom from Want: The Human Rights to Adequate Food](#). Intro & Chaps 1 2 (skim only), 3, 4 (skim only), 5, 6, 7, 8, 10

**6. Measuring the Scope and Severity of Human Rights Problems: Qualitative Approaches (October 10, 2017)**

- Advocates for Human Rights (2011). *A Practitioner’s Guide to Human Rights Monitoring, Documentation, and Advocacy*. [Chapter 3: Monitoring](#).
- Examples:
  - **Interviewing victims:** F. Scorgie et al (2013). “Human Rights Abuses and Collective Resilience among Sex Workers in Four African Countries.” *Globalization and Health*, 9(1), 33
  - **Analyzing dominant group perspectives:** E. Bonilla-Silva and T Forman. (2000). “I Am Not a Racist But...”: Mapping White College Students’ Racial Ideology in the USA. *Discourse & Society*, 11(1), 50–85.
  - **Interviewing perpetrators:** James Ron. (2000). “[Savage Restraint: Israel, Palestine & the Dialectics of Legal Repression](#).” *Social Problems* 47/4: 445-472.
  - **Analyzing the legal environment:** Amnesty International (2015): [Deadly Force](#),

**7. Measuring the Scope and Severity of Human Rights Problems: Quantitative Approaches (October 17, 2017)**

- Amelia Hoover Greene (2016). [Violence Data: What Practitioners Need to Know](#). *OpenGlobalRights*.

- Octavio Ferraz (2015). [Where's the Evidence? Moving from Ideology to Data in Economic and Social Rights](#). *OpenGlobalRights*.
- Sarah Mendelson (2016). [Doubling Down on Human Rights Data](#).
- Ian Allen et al (2016): [Using Budget Analysis to Confront Governments: What Practitioners Need to Know](#). *OpenGlobalRights*.

#### **8. Group Exercise: Identifying the Scope and Severity of a Human Rights Problem (October 24, 2017)**

Your 15-minute group oral presentation is due today. You will hopefully have chosen one of these groups online, in Moodle, weeks ago.

- **Group #1:** How many people are at risk from hunger and malnutrition in East Africa (Ethiopia, Kenya, Somalia, and South Sudan)?
- **Group #2:** How many people have been killed by indiscriminate fire in the ongoing Yemen civil war?
- **Group #3:** How many women were sexually assaulted during the Democratic Republic of Congo civil war?
- **Group #4:** How many Jewish civilians has the Israeli state resettled - or allowed to settle - in the occupied territories? What impacts has this had on the human rights of Palestinians?
- **Group #5:** How many people around the world will be forced to move from their homes by climate change over the next 20 years, without adequate compensation or provision?
- **Group #6:** What is the extent of caste discrimination in India, and what impacts has it had on the human rights of lower-caste persons over the last 25 years?

#### **9. Identifying Human Rights Violations in a Mumbai Neighborhood (October 31, 2017)**

- Katherine Boo (2012). [Behind the Beautiful Forevers: Life, Death and Hope in a Mumbai Undercity](#).
- Your 800-word Mumbai memo is due today. Please load to Moodle four hours prior to class

#### **10. International NGOs and Rights Promotion (November 7, 2017)**

- Carroll Bogert. 2010. Human Rights Advocacy in Global Governance: A Case Study of Human Rights Watch. Chapter 10 in James P. Muldoon Jr. et al, [The New Dynamics of Multilateralism](#). Westview Press
- Ian Gorvin (2009). "Producing the Evidence that Human Rights Advocacy Works: First Steps towards Systematized Evaluation at Human Rights Watch." *Journal of Human Rights Practice*, 1/3: 477-487
- Case Study: Police violence in India & Brazil
  - Read/skim the two Human Rights Watch (2016) reports, [Bound by Brotherhood: India's Failure to End Police Killings in Police Custody](#) and [Good Cops Are Afraid: Unchecked Police Violence in Rio de Janeiro](#).
  - Read the report by the University of Minnesota team (2017), *Learning Exercise Pilot: Police Accountability*.

#### **11. Domestic NGOs and Rights Promotion (November 14, 2017)**

- Barbara A. Frey (2015). "Uneven Ground: Asymmetries of Power in Human Rights Advocacy in Mexico." Chapter 7, pp. 121-139, in Joel Puce, ed., [The Social Practice of Human Rights](#).

- Janice Gallagher. (2017). “The Last Mile Problem: Activists, Advocates, and the Struggle for Justice in Domestic Courts. *Comparative Political Studies*.
- K.M. Brumley, (2010). “Understanding Mexican NGOs: Goals, Strategies, and the Local Context.” *Qualitative Sociology*, 33(3), 389–414.
- Study the website of [Centro Prodh](#).

## **12. Communicating With Publics (November 21, 2017)**

- Boyle et al (2017). “Making Human Rights Campaigns Effective.” Briefing paper prepared for USAID by a University of Minnesota human rights and social science team.
- Joe Braun and Steven Arves (2017), “[Tailoring the Message: How the Political Left and Right Think Differently About Human Rights](#).” OpenGlobalRights.
- Crowson, H. (2004). Human Rights Attitudes: Dimensionality and Psychological Correlates. *Ethics & Behavior*. 14. 235-253.
- Nat Kendal-Taylor, (2015) “[Why Framing Matters: And Polls Only Give You So Much](#).” OpenGlobalRights.
- Browse through the OpenGlobalRights theme on [public opinion and human rights](#). Choose one of these short essays to read and summarize orally for the class in an informal, 3-5 minute in-class presentation.

## **13. The Spiral Model of Human Rights Compliance (November 28, 2017)**

- [Risse, Roppe and Sikkink \(2013\). \*The Persistent Power of Human Rights\*](#). Chapters 1, 8, 9 and 10.

## **14. Criminal Trials (December 5, 2017)**

- Kathryn Sikkink (2011). [The Justice Cascade](#). Chapters 1, 4, 5, 6 and 7.
- Jack Snyder and Leslie Vinjamuri (2015). [To Prevent Atrocities, Count on Politics First, Law Later](#). *OpenGlobalRights*.

## **15. Class Discussion of Your Final Essays. (December 12, 2017).**