

## HIST 601/641 Human Rights Seminar

Fall 2020  
Monday 3:30-6:20pm (online)  
Online student meeting hours Wednesday 2:30-4:30pm  
Professor Klein-Pejšová (PAY-shova)



### Course Description

The concept of – and struggle for – human rights is powerful, pervasive. Its origins, development, and strategies of implementation contested. Have human beings always had the "right to have rights"? How did the concept of "rights" arise? What does it mean, and how has it been used? This seminar will examine the scholarship of human rights as a recent field of historical inquiry, engaging a broad geographical scope, and topics including: economic inequality, migration, emancipation, justice, health care, international human rights movements. Students will come away with a deeper understanding of a human rights narrative that belongs to the world, its politics and ideas, and our own humanity.

### Required Texts

1. *A World Divided: The Global Struggle for Human Rights in an Age of Nation-States*, Eric Weitz
2. *Not Enough: Human Rights in an Unequal World*, Samuel Moyn
3. *Jewish Emancipation: A History Across Five Centuries*, David Sorkin
4. *The International Human Rights Movement: A History, second edition*, Aryeh Neier
5. *Laid Waste! The Culture of Exploitation in Early America*, John L. Larson
6. *Sovereign Emergencies: Latin America and the Making of Global Human Rights Politics*, Patrick William Kelly
7. *Dance in Chains: Political Imprisonment in the Modern World*, Padraic Kenney
8. *The Hidden Face of Rights: Toward a Politics of Responsibilities*, Kathryn Sikkink
9. *Internationalism in the Age of Nationalism*, Glenda Sluga
10. *To Heal Humankind: The Right to Health in History*, Adam Gaffney

### Course Requirements

Attendance and participation	25%
Five briefs and discussion prep	25%
One comparative book review	25%
Conference paper and presentation	25%

**Grade scale:** A+ = 98-100; A = 93-97; A- = 90-92; B+ = 88-89; B = 83-87; B- = 80-82;  
C+ = 78-79; C = 73-77; C- = 70-72; D+ = 68-69; D = 63-67; D- = 60-62; F = 0-59

### Attendance and Participation

Your attendance is mandatory, and with your participation counts for one quarter of your course grade. You are expected to come to class prepared to participate. Please let me know in advance if you will not be able to attend in cases other than illness.

### Briefs & Discussion Prep

You will prepare 5, two-page written briefs over the course of the semester. For each of these, you will also be asked to assist in facilitating discussion for that week's session. Briefs are due on the day the book is discussed in class. For books we discuss over two sessions (looking at you, Weitz & Sorkin), the brief is due on the first day of discussion. The books for which you choose to prepare a brief should not be the same two books for which you are preparing a comparative book review. **Briefs should discuss the main argument the author makes, their approach and contribution to human rights history, the types of sources they use, and any surprises you encounter along the way (i.e. exciting ways of using sources, clever insights, transformative content, etc.).** These points will form the focus of our broader class discussion as we frame each work in the wider scholarly conversation.

### Comparative Book Review

As a graduate student, I found it more helpful to write comparatively about two books, rather than about one. For this assignment, write one, 5-page comparative book review, analyzing any two of the required course texts. Your review is due on the day we discuss the second book under review in class. **The book review should include identification of the author and the author's credentials, discussion of the book's argument, the author's most important observations and conclusions, discussion of sources, and what is new and/or distinctive about the method, argument, style, and/or conclusions for the field of human rights history. Which book do you find more compelling in its analysis and argument? Why? To what extent do the books talk to each other, take issue with each other, directly or indirectly? Which overarching issue, or issues, in human rights history do the books address? Did the books do what you had hoped they would? Which areas were unsatisfying, or conversely, gratifying?**

### Conference paper

During the last two weeks of the semester, we will hold our own class conference. Each of you will 1) write a 6-page paper (15 minute presentation) drawing on primary sources that address a problem in human rights history which has the potential to move forward our understanding of current issues (of which we have an embarrassment of riches). Each of you will also 2) deliver 3-5 minutes of commentary (2 pages) on a colleague's paper with a similar format to the briefs. In other words, we will hear a paper presentation, commentary, and then open the floor for discussion. Your one paragraph paper proposals are due on **Monday, October 19<sup>th</sup>**. On that day, you will also randomly draw from a hat, or rather by other spatially distanced means, the name of the colleague for whom you will be commentator.

### **Schedule of Classes:**

M, Aug. 24: **Introduction, Rights & Responsibilities**

Sikkink, *The Hidden Face of Rights* – be prepared to discuss on the first day

### **Human Rights and Human Wrongs in a World of Nation-States**

M, Aug. 31: Weitz, *A World Divided* – Introduction and Chapters 1-5

M, Sept. 7: Weitz, *A World Divided* – Chapters 6-10 and Conclusion

### **The Interminable Emancipation Project**

M, Sept. 14: Sorkin, *Jewish Emancipation* – Introduction and Chapters 1-14

M, Sept. 21: Sorkin, *Jewish Emancipation* – Chapters 15-27 and Conclusion

M, Sept. 28: No Class – Yom Kippur

### **Sustainability**

M, Oct. 5: Larson, *Laid Waste! The Culture of Exploitation in Early America*

**\*With Professor Larson**

### **Leveraging Internationality**

M, Oct. 12: Sluga, *Internationalism in the Age of Nationalism*

### **Economic Rights**

M, Oct. 19: Moyn, *Not Enough: Human Rights in an Unequal World*

**Paper proposals due**

### **Political Imprisonment**

M, Oct. 26: Kenney, *Dance in Chains: Political Imprisonment in the Modern World*

**\*With Professor Kenney**

### **Healthcare**

M, Nov. 2: Gaffney, *To Heal Humankind: The Right to Health in History*

### **To Dream a Just Society**

M, Nov. 9: Osita Nwanevu, “The Willful Blindness of Reactionary Liberalism” [article pdf](#)

### **State Sovereignty vs. Transnational Human Rights**

M, Nov. 16: Kelly, *Sovereign Emergencies: Latin America and the Making of Global Human Rights Politics*

### **NGOs and Human Rights Protections**

M, Nov. 23: Neier, *The International Human Rights Movement: A History, second edition*

### **Class conference**

M, Nov. 30: paper presentations, commentary, and discussion

M, Dec. 7: paper presentations, commentary, and discussion

## UNIVERSITY POLICIES

### Protect Purdue Pledge

Being a part of the Boilermaker community means that each of us must take extraordinary steps to stay well and persistently protect each other, on campus and in the community. Accountable together, I pledge to take responsibility for my own health, the protection of others and help keep the Purdue community safe from spread of COVID-19 and other infections as identified and instructed by the university.

**PROTECT PURDUE WEBSITE:** <https://protect.purdue.edu/>

### CHEATING / PLAGIARISM

Plagiarism refers to the reproduction of another's words or ideas without proper attribution. University Regulations contains further information on dishonesty. Plagiarism and other forms of academic dishonesty are serious offenses, and will be treated as such in this class. **You are expected to produce your own work and to accurately cite all necessary materials.** Cheating, plagiarism, and other dishonest practices will be punished as harshly as Purdue University policies allow. Any instances of academic dishonesty will likely result in a grade of F for the course and notification of the Dean of Students Office. Please make sure that you are familiar with Purdue's academic integrity policies:

<http://www.purdue.edu/odos/aboutodos/academicintegrity.php>

### GRIEF ABSENCE POLICY

Purdue University recognizes that a time of bereavement is very difficult for a student. The University therefore provides the following rights to students facing the loss of a family member through the Grief Absence Policy for Students (GAPS). Students will be excused from classes for funeral leave and given the opportunity to complete missed assignments or assessments in the event of the death of a member of the student's family.

### STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES

Purdue University is committed to providing equal access and equal opportunity to university courses, activities, and programs for students with disabilities. Students with documented disabilities that substantially limit a major life activity, such as learning, walking, or seeing, may qualify for academic adjustments and/or services. If you have a disability that requires special academic accommodation, please make an appointment to speak with me within the first three weeks of the semester in order to discuss any adjustments. It is the student's responsibility to notify the Disability Resource Center of any impairment/condition that may require accommodations and/or classroom modifications. To request information about academic adjustments, auxiliary aids, or services, please contact the Disability Resource Center in the Office of the Dean of Students, 830 Young Hall, (765) 494-1247 (V/TTY), [drc@purdue.edu](mailto:drc@purdue.edu).

### NONDISCRIMINATION POLICY STATEMENT

Purdue University is committed to maintaining a community which recognizes and values the inherent worth and dignity of every person; fosters tolerance, sensitivity, understanding, and mutual respect among its members; and encourages each individual to strive to reach his or her own potential. In pursuit of its goal of academic excellence, the University seeks to develop and

nurture diversity. The University believes that diversity among its many members strengthens the institution, stimulates creativity, promotes the exchange of ideas, and enriches campus life.

Purdue University prohibits discrimination against any member of the University community on the basis of race, religion, color, sex, age, national origin or ancestry, marital status, parental status, sexual orientation, disability, or status as a veteran. The University will conduct its programs, services and activities consistent with applicable federal, state and local laws, regulations and orders and in conformance with the procedures and limitations as set forth in Executive Memorandum No. D-1, which provides specific contractual rights and remedies.

### **VIOLENT BEHAVIOR POLICY**

Purdue University is committed to providing a safe and secure campus environment. Purdue strives to create an educational environment for students and work environment for employees that promote educational and career goals. Violent behavior impedes such goals. Therefore, violent behavior is prohibited in or on any university facility or while participating in any university activity.