San José State University
Department of Justice Studies
JS 171, Human Rights and Justice - Spring 2022

*The schedule is subject to change with fair notice. Students will be notified of changes to the schedule or assigned readings via email. You can always find the most up-to-date syllabus here **so check back frequently.***

Course and Contact Information

Instructor:	Roni Abusaad, Ph.D
Email:	roni.abusaad@sjsu.edu
Office Location:	Online
Office Hours:	Tuesday 5-6pm or Contact me via Canvas with any inquiries.
Prerequisites:	Core GE, WST test, 100W
GE/SJSU Studies Category:	Area V: Culture, Civilization, and Global Understanding
JS Competency Area:	Area D: Local, Transnational, Historical

Class Overview

This is a self-paced online class.

The expectation is that you will spend **4-6 hours on each module. First you should** complete the readings, then work through the module deck, watching videos and completing the assignments which include class participation and reflections. You will need to complete work and assignments every week. These are always due by midnight on Sundays - see the due date column below. The only exceptions are related to holidays (in those cases, the Sunday deadline is pushed back to the Tuesday after the holiday weekend).

All quizzes and tests are cumulative and may include material from any point in the course preceding that assessment.

Please send all communication via Canvas. This is where you will complete quizzes and submit assignments, as well.

Preparing for success

I want you to have success in this class and to have a powerful learning experience. Especially in an online class like this where you are driving your own learning, you truly get as much out of the class as you put in. This class is unique in that you get to choose a topic to research that is aligned with your own interests and passions. To prepare for the semester:

1. Review this syllabus in depth. It should have answers to all your questions.
2. Download the [Respondus Lockdown Browser](#). You will need this in order to take quizzes and should make sure you don't have any trouble installing it before the day of the quiz. [Link to download is here](#).
3. Get oriented to Canvas. This is where you'll submit all of your assignments. You can see all of these with the due dates under "Syllabus." This is also the best place to send me messages.
4. Plan ahead. Review the upcoming assignments and material and don't wait until the last minute. It is especially important to look at the requirements detailed in the rubric, which clearly outline the grading criteria. Reviewing in advance allows for time to navigate any technical difficulties or to reach out to me with clarification and questions.
5. It will take time to explore possible research topics, conduct the initial research for your proposal and plan for your action. If coordinating with an organization, be sure to reach out well in advance to schedule with them so you can complete your action well in advance of the paper and presentation being due.
6. The writing center and research librarian are both excellent resources for getting help on your paper. The draft you submit should effectively be your final paper so it is recommended you complete your draft and reach out for help on your writing or research if needed a couple of weeks in advance of the due date for the draft.

FAQs

I have a disability that requires accommodation.
Please reach out to me at the start of the class and we'll adjust the course as needed.

I had a medical emergency on the day the assignment was due. Can I get an extension?
If you were incapacitated due to sickness or had a medical emergency, you need to provide a doctor's note and I will work with you to make up the work.

I'm having technical issues with Canvas or the Respondus Lockdown browser. What do I do?
I cannot provide technical support (definitely not my area of expertise!). If you need any technical help, reach out to the student help desk or computer lab.

Can I do _____ for my action?
Please refer to the details about this on the syllabus. You need to detail your action plan in your proposal and I will provide feedback on all proposals, including if your proposed action meets the requirements.

Can my presentation be longer than five minutes?
As the saying goes brevity is the soul of wit. The goal is for you to present the most important, relevant and interesting information in a thoughtful and engaging presentation. Please keep the presentation to five minutes. You don't need to re-record your video if you run over by 10-30 seconds, but try to keep the presentation to five minutes.

Can I use photos and a slide deck for my presentation?
No. The presentation shouldn't include any audio or visual aids. What is most important is your ability to present the information in a compelling way.

Module	Topics and Readings	Assignments	Due Date for all readings and assignments
1	Introduction to the Course	**Class participation #1 - Introductions** **Complete the "Check-in: Ready for Success?" quiz.** **Opening Reflection** **Sign up for the Human Rights Watch Daily Briefing and Amnesty International emails to keep up with the latest news related to human rights and get action alerts.**	8/26
2	Human Rights History and Theory	**Class participation #2** **Discussion: What does the public know about human rights?** **Quiz #1**	9/2

3	**Human Rights in the U.S. - Understanding Institutional Discrimination through the Right to Education**	Quiz #2	**9/9**
4	**Human Rights in International Law**	**Quiz #3**	**9/16**
5	Case Study: The Israel-Palestine Situation	**Quiz #4**	**9/23**
6	**Interconnections Between Political, Economic, Social and Cultural Rights: COVID-19 and Human Rights**	**Class Participation #4:** **Discussion: Human rights in the news**	**9/30**
7	**Environmental Rights and Sustainability**	**Video Presentation**	**10/7**
	Spring Break		**10/14**
8	**Racial Discrimination**	**Class participation #5:** **Complete the implicit bias test <u>- Take the test called "Race ('Black - White' IAT)" and post to the discussion.</u>**	**10/21**
9	**Racial Justice Appeals to the Human Rights Council**	**Participation #6 - Class discussion** **Select your research topic and start thinking about ways to take action. For the rest of the semester, you will be broken into smaller groups with other students researching related topics to collaborate, learn from each other and deepen your analysis.**	**10/28**

	Going Deeper: **Choose one of these modules to go deeper into a topic of interest to you. As you work through the module, take notes aligned with the questions in the assignment prompt and write up your final responses and submit via the form on the assignment in Canvas.** **Options:** **Trump's Travel Ban** **Human Trafficking** **Homelessness and Economic Inequality** **Racial Discrimination in the Criminal Justice System** **Human Rights and the Criminal Justice System** **Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity** **Immigration** **Environmental Rights and Climate**		
9	**Change**	Reflection #2 Due	11/4

10	**Taking Action to Advance Social Change**	Proposal due	**11/11**
11	**Civil and Political Rights - Looking at Security and Torture through the Example of Abu Ghraib**	Quiz	**11/18**
12	**Vulnerable Groups**	**Class Participation:** **Complete the survey: "How is San Jose doing on human rights?" via link in Canvas NOTE: This has to be graded manually and you won't see your participation register immediately**	**11/25**
	Work on final projects	Action Report Due	**12/2**
	Work on final projects	Research Brief and Presentations Due	**12/8**

Find all videos and readings on Canvas.

Grading Information

Rubrics for all written assignments are posted on Canvas, at the appropriate assignment submission page. Missing, late, or plagiarized work will receive a grade of zero.

Determination of Grades

Discussions	15%
Class Participation (5 assignments)	10%
Module of choice	5%
Environmental rights presentation	5%
Quizzes	15%
Proposal for Final Paper and Action Project	5%
Issue Research Brief	15%

Action report	15%						
Presentation	15%						

Grading Scale

The final course grade will be calculated based on the following standard scale:

98-100	A+	80-83	B-	64-67	D	
94-97	A	78-79	C+	60-63	D-	
90-93	A-	74-77	C	<60	F	
88-89	B+	70-73	C-			
84-87	B	68-69	D+			

Students must achieve a grade of C or better (C- not accepted) to fulfill Justice Studies major requirements.

Passage of the Writing Skills Test (WST) or ENGL/LLD 100A with a C or better (C‐ not accepted), and completion of Core General Education are prerequisite to all SJSU Studies courses. Completion of, or co-registration in, 100W is strongly recommended. A minimum aggregate GPA of 2.0 in GE Areas R, S, & V shall be required of all students.

Course Description

Interdisciplinary exploration of human rights instruments, institutions, and notable human rights campaigns. The historical development of human rights and contemporary threats to the realization of fundamental dignity for human and non-human animals will also be explored.

This course is designed for students to explore questions such as:
- How has the concept of "human rights" evolved? How are human rights defined through international law?
- Who gets to decide what these rights are and how they are realized?
- How have people struggled to define and realize fundamental rights and/or dignity, and to what effects?
- Where human rights have been defined, why/where/how/by whom have they been violated? How can human rights concepts shape remedies to such violations?
- How does a discourse of fundamental "right" and/or "dignity" affect the way we understand, articulate, and respond to various social problems?
- How do struggles and dialogs over the lessons of human rights struggles and scholarship shape culture, policy, and social activism in our local and global communities?

Learning Outcomes and Course Goals

GE Learning Outcomes (GELO)

Upon successful completion of this course, students will be able to:

1. GELO 1 - Compare systematically the ideas, values, images, cultural artifacts, economic structures, technological developments, and/or attitudes of people from more than one culture outside the U.S.

2. GELO 2 - Identify the historical context of ideas and cultural traditions outside the U.S. and how they have influenced American culture.

3. GELO 3 - Explain how a culture outside the U.S. has changed in response to internal and external pressures.

Course Learning Outcomes (CLO)

Upon successful completion of this course, students will be able to:

1. CLO 1 - Read, write, and contribute to discussion at a skilled and capable level.

2. CLO 2 - Recognize and access human rights instruments defining "human rights" according to international law (such as the Universal Declaration of Human Rights) via online and library resources.

3. CLO 3 - Recognize and access the reports of central oversight agencies, such as Amnesty International and Human Rights Watch, that report on human rights abuses to the United Nations and global populace via online and library resources.

4. CLO 5 - Compare and contrast how "rights" and "dignity" have been defined for human and non-human animals by various cultures throughout the world.

5. CLO 6 - Apply a human rights discourse to analyze social problems, policies, and practices in the U.S.

6. CLO 7 - Work in a team to apply knowledge and solve problems.

Course Format

This course will be conducted entirely online through Canvas. Course materials such as this syllabus, readings, handouts, assignment rubrics, etc. can be found on Canvas at http://sjsu.instructure.com. You are responsible for regularly checking the email address associated with your MySJSU account to learn of any updates.

With any questions or problems, send me a message via Canvas. Also use Canvas to complete assignments and submit your papers. Hard copy, email, or Turnitin submissions will not be accepted.

Required Texts/Readings

All course readings and materials are available in the class folder on Canvas

Other technology requirements / equipment / material

All quizzes will need to be completed within the Respondus Lockdown Browser, which can be downloaded [here](#).

Course Requirements and Assignments

Final Activism - Research Project

The culminating assignment in this course is an individual research project comprised of three assignments around a current issue in human rights that you want to explore, each worth 15% of your grade:

1) Research Issue Brief: Researching the issue to understand the root causes, proposed solutions and pathways to change

2) Taking Action: Taking an action that has the potential to promote human rights and make an impact related to this issue

3) Presentation: Presenting on your research and the outcome of your action.

See details and rubrics on Canvas.

Optional: Extra Credit Opportunity

I highly encourage students to get out into the community and engage with current issues. To this end, I'm offering all students the opportunity for extra credit up to 5 percentage points. This is optional and could be completed anytime during the semester, but must be submitted before the final.

To earn extra credit, identify an event related to a current human rights topic and email me beforehand to check if it would count. Pre-approval is required. If approved, attend the event and write a 1,500 word essay that summarizes the issue highlighted in the event and your reflection, connecting the event to specific material covered in this course.

Let me know at any point if there is an event you are interested in attending and I will also highlight opportunities throughout the semester.

Suggested Resources for Reference and Research

- Ishay, M. (2008). *The history of human rights: from ancient times to the Globalization Era*. Berkeley, CA: University of California Press.

- Lauren, P. (2011). *The evolution of international human rights: visions seen (3rd edition)*. Philadelphia, PA: University of Pennsylvania Press.

- Soohoo, C., Albisa, C. & Davis, M. F. [Eds.]. (2008). *Bringing human rights home*. Westport, CT: Praeger.

- Steiner, H. J., Alston, P. & Goodman, R. [Eds.]. (2007). *International human rights in context: law, politics, morals (3rd edition)*. New York, NY: Oxford University Press.

- Weissbrodt, D. & de la Vega, C. (2007). *International human rights law: an introduction*. Philadelphia, PA: University of Pennsylvania Press.

- [Human Rights Review](#) and [Human Rights Quarterly](#) - the two leading academic peer reviewed journals dedicated to human rights issues. Available electronically through the library's website.

Online Resources for Reference and Research

- [www.un.org/en/rights](#) - The United Nations Human Rights Portal

- [www.ohchr.org](#) - The United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights

- [www.ohchr.org/EN/ProfessionalInterest/Pages/UniversalHumanRightsInstruments.aspx](#) - A list of UN-level human rights instruments (treaties, conventions, declarations, protocols, etc.), arranged by topic.

- [www.amnesty.org/en/human-rights](#) - Browse Amnesty International's website by country or issue, or search their report library

- [www.hrw.org/en/publications](#) - Reports by Human Rights Watch

- [www.state.gov/g/drl/rls/hrrpt](#) - The U.S. State Department Country Reports on Human Rights Practices, which cover most countries in the world (but not the U.S. itself)

- [www.hurisearch.org](#) - A search engine dedicated to human rights documents

- [www1.umn.edu/humanrts](#) - The University of Minnesota Human Rights Library - contains thousands of human rights documents

- [www1.umn.edu/humanrts/edumat/hreduseries/hereandnow/Part-5/6_glossary.htm](#) - Glossary of terms

Suggested Resources on Activism

- Minieri, J., & Getsos, P. (2007). *Tools for Radical Democracy: How to Organize for Power in Your Community* (1st ed.). San Francisco: Jossey-Bass. [http://catalog.sjlibrary.org/record=b4943244~S1](#)

- Shaw, R. (2013). *The Activist's Handbook: Winning Social Change in the 21st Century* (2nd ed.). Berkeley: University of California Press. [http://catalog.sjlibrary.org/record=b4833190~S1](#)

Online Resources on Activism

- [https://actipedia.org/](#) - a community-generated wiki to document, share, and inspire Creative Activism

- [http://beautifultrouble.org/case/](#) - a web toolbox of creative and effective actions

- [http://nvdatabase.swarthmore.edu/browse_methods](#) - the Global Nonviolent Action Database

- [http://www.amnestyusa.org/get-involved/take-action-now](#) - action ideas by Amnesty International

- [www.commoncause.org/take-action/find-elected-officials](#) - a tool to find your representatives

- [http://reclaimdemocracy.org/effective_letters_editor/](#) - how to write an effective "letter to the editor"

University Policies

Per University Policy S16-9, university-wide policy information relevant to all courses, such as academic integrity, accommodations, etc. will be available on Office of Graduate and Undergraduate Programs' [Syllabus Information web page](http://www.sjsu.edu/gup/syllabusinfo/) at http://www.sjsu.edu/gup/syllabusinfo/"

Library Liaison

Nyle Monday - Nyle.Monday@sjsu.edu, (408) 808-2118, http://libguides.sjsu.edu/justicestudies Students are strongly encouraged to contact

their library liaison for individual help with their research.

CASA Student Success Center

The Student Success Center in the College of Applied Sciences and Arts (CASA) provides advising for undergraduate students majoring or wanting to major in programs offered in CASA Departments and Schools. All CASA students and students who would like to be in CASA are invited to stop by the Center for general education advising, help with changing majors, academic policy related questions, meeting with peer advisors, and/or attending various regularly scheduled presentations and workshops. If you are looking for academic advice or even tips about how to navigate your way around SJSU, check out the CASA Student Success Center. Location: MacQuarrie Hall (MQH) 533 - top floor of MacQuarrie Hall. Contact information: 408.924.2910.

Website: http://www.sjsu.edu/casa/ssc/. The CASA Student Success Center also provides study space and laptops for checkout.

Justice Studies Department Reading and Writing Philosophy

The Department of Justice Studies is committed to scholarly excellence. Therefore, the Department promotes academic, critical, and creative engagement with language (i.e., reading and writing) throughout its curriculum. A sustained and intensive exploration of language prepares students to think critically and to act meaningfully in interrelated areas of their lives–personal, professional, economic, social, political, ethical, and cultural. Graduates of the Department of Justice Studies leave San José State University prepared to enter a range of careers and for advanced study in a variety of fields; they are prepared to more effectively identify and ameliorate injustice in their personal, professional and civic lives. Indeed, the impact of literacy is evident not only within the span of a specific course, semester, or academic program but also over the span of a lifetime.

SJSU Writing Center

The SJSU Writing Center is located in Clark Hall, Suite 126. All Writing Specialists have gone through a rigorous hiring process, and they are well trained to assist all students at all levels within all disciplines to become better writers. In addition to one-on-one tutoring services, the Writing Center also offers workshops every semester on a variety of writing topics. To make an appointment or to refer to the numerous online resources offered through the Writing Center, visit the [Writing Center website.](#)

SJSU Counseling Services

The SJSU Counseling Services is located on the corner of 7th Street and San Fernando Street, in Room 201, Administration Building. Professional psychologists, social workers, and counselors are available to provide consultations on issues of student mental health, campus climate or psychological and academic issues on an individual, couple, or group basis. To schedule an appointment or learn more information, visit Counseling Services website at http://www.sjsu.edu/counseling.

Free Food

Students in need have access to several self-serve, no-registration food pantries around campus. Just stop by and take items as needed. For locations and more info visit: www.sjsu.edu/wellness/foodresources/oncampus.