**Syllabus**

**DOPP5303 Advanced Topics in Human Rights**

**Spring Term 2023/24**

**Course level: MA**

**Credits: 2 credits/4ECTS**

**Course type: Elective**

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**PLEASE CHECK MOODLE FOR THE MOST UP TO DATE VERSION**

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# Course Description

This course provides an opportunity to consider some of the most challenging issues facing the world today, and to discuss how human rights could be used to address these.

In-class time will focus on discussions of some of the major challenges impacting the world:

* climate change and breakdown,
* armed conflict,
* inequality, human displacement and migration,
* technology including artificial intelligence,
* transnational human rights violations,
* authoritarianism and the rise of the far right.

Each week, we will discuss whether human rights standards and mechanisms are ‘fit for purpose’ to address these challenges – where human rights can be useful, where they are failing, and how to use human rights to help tackle these issues.

This course is designed as a follow-on to the *Introduction to Human Rights* course in the Winter Term, however it is not a requirement to have completed that course. Some experience or prior education in human rights is required to be able to follow the material. Please reach out to me if you have any questions about this - I am open to accommodating all those interested in the course.

## Learning Outcomes:

This course will support students to:

1. Gain an understanding of the major challenges facing human rights law and practice today, including climate change, armed conflict, human displacement, technology, transnational human rights violations, and the rise of authoritarianism and the far right.
2. Develop critical thinking skills to analyze and evaluate the effectiveness of human rights standards and mechanisms in addressing the identified challenges.
3. Apply human rights principles and standards to analyze and propose solutions for complex challenges.
4. Develop strong research skills to gather and critically evaluate relevant sources of information, including academic literature, legal documents, and case studies related to human rights law and practice.
5. Develop a more nuanced understanding of the cultural, social, and political contexts in which human rights issues arise and the implications for their effective implementation.

# Assessment and Policies

## Assessment Components

As a course taking place in the shorter Spring Term, assessment will be centered on a current (2023/24) event/issue on a topic of the student's choice connected to one of the 6 themes of the course.  Students who took the *Introduction to Human Rights* Course in the Winter Term are welcome to further develop their topics for this course (we will discuss the parameters in class).

The assessment components are:

1. Active **participation**\* during the in-class discussions (20%).
2. A detailed **research note** on the current research and publications on your topic (40%) **due in week 6.**
3. An **academic OpEd**, ~800 words, (that is, a well-written, thoughtful, referenced opinion piece, done in the style of The Conversation.com) on your topic (40%) due at the end of Term.

It is important that you read the further information and guidance on what is required for each of these elements, including grading rubric, in the **Guidance Notes**.

**IMPORTANT Note**: A passing grade (C+) is required in each of these 3 components in order to pass the course.

I am flexible on assessment methods where students have specific needs, please reach out to me to discuss.

*\*Particularly if you have a concern about this element, please see the participation policy, below.*

The grading scheme for the assessments are provided in the Guidance Notes on Moodle. Examinations and coursework are graded in accordance with the University Grading Scheme (Student Rights, Rules, and Academic Regulations (2022), Annex 2) and the University Grading Rubric (Student Regulations, Annex 3).

## Readings

Students will need to have the required reading done before each class as this forms the basis of what we will do in the class. Basic material from the readings will not be repeated in class.

It is suggested that you do the required readings in the order they are listed.

Additional reading and/or resources are suggested each week, which can enhance your knowledge of the topic and/or provide another perspective.

Students writing their advocacy paper on that week’s topic can use the additional reading as a point of reference.

Hyperlinks to the readings are provided wherever possible (click ‘LINK’). Where they are not provided, please check the library, or Google Scholar to see if there is an online version you can access. Books listed in the required reading list will be available on reserve in the library.

**If you have trouble accessing the readings please let me know in advance of the class.**

Please note: specific pages that should be read are noted with an asterisk (\*), if there are no pages or section specified, students should read the whole piece.

Suggested reference and background readings and materials are listed in the link at the end of this section.

Please ensure that you check Moodle for any revisions to the syllabus before the class begins.

## Feedback and Advice on Assessments

I understand that people have different learning styles. If you would like more feedback than the current approach requires, I am happy to provide interim reviews and feedback on your progress. In any event, we'll have regular check-ins and opportunities for constructive feedback in class during the course to ensure you're on track and not feeling overwhelmed.

Please note however that while you are always welcome to reach out about the assignment, because this is a graded assignment, I cannot give detailed feedback on full/final versions prior to submission.

## Workload

Per CEU policy, the total student workload (for in-class and out of class work combined) is estimated to be approximately 30 hours per ECTS credit. This is a 4 ECTS course, therefore total student workload both in and outside of class would be expected at 110-120 hours over the Term. Readings and the assignment have been prepared with this in mind. If you are struggling with the workload, please reach out.

* Class time (in class): 21 hours (3.3 hours (200 mins) per week)
* Seminar preparation (readings): 30 hours (5 hours per week)
* Assignments: 58 hours (5.5 hours per week + 25 hours in weeks 7&8 (after classes finish).

Total = ~109 hours.

## Communications

You are welcome to email me at any time of the day and week that suits your schedule, but please be aware that I only check and respond to emails during working hours and during the working week (i.e., Monday-Friday). I will try to respond to all student emails within 24 hours within these parameters. If you haven’t heard back within 2 working days, please feel free to try again in case I’ve overlooked your email.

## Policy on plagiarism and Academic Honesty

Please make sure you have read and understand the ‘Academic Dishonesty’ part of the Student Handbook, the CEU Policy on Plagiarism and accompanying guidelines and the CEU Code of Ethics. Plagiarism is extremely serious academic misconduct. If you have any questions or concerns, please just ask! You can also reach out to the Academic Writing Centre for support.

Turnitin software is used to verify the originality of all submitted material.

Please be aware that I have a zero-tolerance policy for academic dishonesty and will pass any suspected cases to the Departmental integrity committee.

## Policy on attendance and lateness

I understand everyone leads a busy life, and that CEU workloads can be heavy, but for the benefit of the whole group, it is important that you engage fully in this course. This includes going through the readings assigned before each class, joining each session, and participating actively in the discussions. Each of your voices adds value to our collective learning experience.

If there are any challenges impacting your ability to attend/be on time, please reach out and get in touch with me. Both myself as the instructor, and the Department are here to support you and help find solutions.

Attendance at all classes is required per CEU and DPP policy. A make-up assignment may be required for any missed classes (apart from absence for medical or other extenuating reasons) and will be based on the work done in the missed class.

Out of respect for the instructor and your classmates, please come on time.

Please read the section of the Student Handbook on Attendance so that you are aware of the Department’s policy, including unauthorized absences from class.

Phone use is not permitted during class. If you have any concerns about this policy, please come to see me at the start of term.

## Participation Policy

This course is designed to be a collective learning experience, and your active participation is a valuable part of this process. However, I understand that individual circumstances can sometimes make it challenging to participate in the way I might typically expect. If you are facing such challenges, I encourage you to communicate with me as early as possible – preferably before the course starts - so that we can work together to find a solution that supports your learning.

If you find it challenging to participate during class time, we can discuss alternative ways for you to contribute to the learning environment, such as writing reflective notes on the readings, or sharing thoughts and questions via email or office hours.

Please note that the ultimate goal is your learning in this course. I am here to facilitate that, and appreciate your unique perspectives and contributions. Let's keep the lines of communication open to ensure your success in this course.

## AI Policy

AI tools can be used to assist in understanding course material, brainstorming ideas, and identifying source material. Literature searching tools can help find relevant articles, books, and other resources.

A goal of this course is to enhance your understanding, critical thinking skills, and develop your own voice on the topics we cover. The use of AI tools should always support, not supplant, your learning.

You may use AI tools to practice problem-solving, to get a different perspective on a topic, locate materials or to assist with language translation. We will discuss the usefulness and limitations of some of some of the available tools during the course.

Prohibited Uses: Maintaining academic integrity in your work is essential. Any assignment submitted for a grade must be your own original work, in line with CEU's Policy on Student Plagiarism and the Student Handbook. AI tools may not be used to generate your responses or write some or all of your assignments. Text may not be copy-pasted from an AI tool (such as ChatGPT) into an assignment and presented as your own work. Automated paraphrasing by AI for graded assignments is also prohibited. Presentation of AI generated text as your own work will result in a failing grade on the assignment.

If you incorporate ideas generated by an AI tool into your work, it must be properly cited (quotation marks + reference), just as you would cite any other source. Failing to do so may constitute plagiarism.

Caution in Use: While AI can be helpful, it does not replace critical thinking, original ideas, or deep understanding. Be aware that AI tools, including LLMs, such as ChatGPT, have limitations. They do not understand content in the way humans do and can sometimes generate misleading, inaccurate, and/or incorrect information, including generating false references. Many do not have access to current information (e.g., ChatGPT 3.5/4 currently has a cut-off of 2021). Always double-check any information obtained through these tools.

Please be aware that failing to adhere to these guidelines can result in academic penalties including, but not limited to, receiving a fail grade on an assignment, failing the course, or even facing disciplinary action by the University.

Please also note that these guidelines may be amended given the rapid pace at which AI capabilities are changing, or if a new Departmental/University policy on AI usage is adopted. You will be notified if this occurs during the Term.

If you have any questions on what constitutes appropriate/fair use of AI tools, please reach out to me at any time so we can discuss.

## Office hours

**[TBC]**

Students are free to email me with any questions or issues or to arrange a meeting at any point before and during the course.

## Recording of lectures

Please be aware that recording of all or part of any class is not permitted without express agreement from all present. Please refer to the Student Handbook for the DPP policy on recording of lectures.

**Course Content**

# Week 1: Climate change and environmental breakdown

\*For students considering taking this course, attendance in week 1 is a requirement\*

This week, we will consider the human rights implications of climate change and environmental degradation. In particular, we will examine:

* The International Framework and human rights (UNFCC, Paris Agreement, Kyoto Protocol)
* Direct and indirect impacts on human rights
* Impact on particular groups (women, children, indigenous peoples, human rights defenders, migrants, persons with disabilities, older persons, people experiencing poverty).
* Climate change litigation.

This week will also introduce the course, the policies and requirements.

You should come to class prepared to consider what topic you might like to work on for your personal assignment (research & OpEd, see *Assessment Components* section above).

**Pre-Class Reading**

* Introduction to Climate Change and Human Rights (2 min video) <https://unccelearn.org/course/view.php?id=136&page=overview&lang=en>
* OHCHR, Human Rights and Climate Change (overview) https://www.ohchr.org/en/climate-change/impacts-climate-change-effective-enjoyment-human-rights
* OHCHR, Understanding Human Rights and Climate Change, <https://www.ohchr.org/sites/default/files/Documents/Issues/ClimateChange/COP21.pdf>
* White House, Report on the Impact of Climate Change on Migration, October 2021, <https://www.whitehouse.gov/wp-content/uploads/2021/10/Report-on-the-Impact-of-Climate-Change-on-Migration.pdf> \*\*part II & Annex II.
* Global Witness. “Honduras: the Deadliest Place to Defend the Planet.” January 31, 2017. <https://www.globalwitness.org/documents/18804/English_Honduras_full_report_single_v6.pdf> \*\*Introduction pp. 4-6, Case Study 4 pp. 21-22, What’s Driving the Attacks pp. 28-31\*\*
* The Escazú Agreement (2018) <https://treaties.un.org/doc/Treaties/2018/03/20180312%2003-04%20PM/CTC-XXVII-18.pdf>
* Farhana Yamin, “Why I broke the law for climate change,” 573 Nature 337 (2019) https://www.nature.com/articles/d41586-019-02736-9

**Additional Reading/Resources**

* Timothy M. Lenton et al., Climate tipping points – too risky to bet against, 575 Nature 592 (2019) https://www.nature.com/articles/d41586-019-03595-0
* Daniel Bodansky, “The Paris Climate Change Agreement: A New Hope?” 110 *Am. J. Int’l L.* 288 (2016)
* Tseming Yang, “The Relationship Between Domestic and International Environmental Law,” in Martella & Grosko, eds., *International Environmental Law: The Practitioner’s Guide to the Laws of the Planet* (2014) https://digitalcommons.law.scu.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1770&context=facpubs
* Scott Barrett, Climate treaties and the imperative of enforcement, 24 Oxford Rev. Econ. Pol’y 239 (2008)
* Yamide Dagnet et al., “COP25: What We Needed, What We Got, What’s Next” (World Resources Institute, December 23, 2019)
* https://www.wri.org/blog/2019/12/cop25-what-we-needed-what-we-got-whats-next
* Robert J. Brulle, “Networks of Opposition: A Structural Analysis of U.S. Climate Change Countermovement Coalitions, 1989-2015,” Sociological Inquiry (2019)
* Mark Carney, “Breaking the tragedy on the horizon – climate change and financial stability” (Bank of England, September 29, 2015)  
  https://www.bis.org/review/r151009a.pdf
* James Huffman, Previously Unrecognized Rights: Climate Change Lawsuits and the Rule of Law, Quillette, October 30, 2018 [https://quillette.com/2018/10/30/previously-unrecognized-rights-climate-change-lawsuits-and-the- rule-of-law/](https://quillette.com/2018/10/30/previously-unrecognized-rights-climate-change-lawsuits-and-the-%20rule-of-law/)
* Philippe Sands & Jacqueline Peel, *Principles of International Environmental Law* (Cambridge 2012), “Ozone,” pp. 262-274
* Daniel Bodansky et al., *International Climate Change Law* (2017), pp. 1-34
* Michael B. Gerrard, “Sadly, the Paris Agreement Isn’t Nearly Enough,” *Environmental Forum*, November/December 2016, p. 57 http://columbiaclimatelaw.com/files/2016/10/Gerrard-2016-10-Paris-Agreement-Isnt-Nearly- Enough.pdf

# Week 2: Armed conflict

This week, we will discuss the applicability of human rights in armed conflict, and the potential and shortcomings of human rights mechanisms in dealing with armed conflict.

While we will touch on the relationship between international humanitarian law and human rights, our main focus will be on how the international human rights mechanisms deal with situations of armed conflict. We will consider how armed conflicts provides a lense through which the efficacy and adaptability of the current human rights framework can be critically examined.

**Reading**

* OHCHR, International Legal Protections on Human Rights in Armed Conflict (2011), Chapter I (Legal Sources, Principles and Actors), [LINK](https://www.ohchr.org/sites/default/files/Documents/Publications/HR_in_armed_conflict.pdf)
* Gerd Oberleitner, Human Rights in Armed Conflict, (CUP, 2015), Chapter 6 (Complementarity) [LINK](https://books.google.co.uk/books?id=-KSUBgAAQBAJ&printsec=frontcover&source=gbs_ge_summary_r&cad=0#v=onepage&q&f=false) [LINK2](https://www.cambridge.org/core/books/human-rights-in-armed-conflict/89E350833B225EBD8823C1384EEAF3B0)

**Additional reading/resources**

[see Moodle]

* Seixas-Nunes A, “Introducing Autonomous Systems of War: The Challenges of Artificial Intelligence,” The Legality and Accountability of Autonomous Weapon Systems: A Humanitarian Law Perspective (Cambridge University Press 2022) <https://www.cambridge.org/core/books/abs/legality-and-accountability-of-autonomous-weapon-systems/introducing-autonomous-systems-of-war/EDC5E1C6FB42D80150990BD642FEAAA8>

# Week 3: Inequality, human displacement and migration

This week considers the interplay between inequality, human displacement, and migration through the lens of human rights. As global phenomena, these issues are not only symptomatic of broader socio-economic and political challenges but also have profound implications for the human rights framework.

We will look at how human rights approaches the underlying drivers of migration, human rights at borders, the impact of inequalities, and future trajectories.

**Reading**

* IOM, Reducing Global Inequalities <https://www.iom.int/reducing-global-inequalities>
* UNHCR, Climate change, displacement and human rights <https://www.unhcr.org/media/climate-change-displacement-and-human-rights>
* Charles Jones (2021) Are human rights enough? On human rights and inequality, *Ethics & Global Politics*, 14:4, DOI: [10.1080/16544951.2021.1991138](https://doi.org/10.1080/16544951.2021.1991138)
* McLeman, R., Faist, T., Schade, J. (2016). Introduction: Environment, Migration, and Inequality—A Complex Dynamic. In: McLeman, R., Schade, J., Faist, T. (eds) Environmental Migration and Social Inequality. Advances in Global Change Research, vol 61. Springer, Cham. [**https://rdcu.be/diT3c**](https://rdcu.be/diT3c)
* Landman and Larizza, *Inequality and Human Rights: Who Controls What, When, and How*, International Studies Quarterly (2009) 53, 715–736 <https://repository.essex.ac.uk/3482/1/2009_%20‘Inequality%20and%20Human%20Rights_Who%20Controls%20What%2C%20When%2C%20and%20How’.pdf>

**Additional reading/resources:**

[See Moodle]

* Radhika Balakrishnan, Global inequality and human rights, in Inequality Studies from the Global South (2020, Taylor & Francis)
* Human Rights and Economic Inequalities. (2021). In G. MacNaughton, D. Frey, & C. Porter (Eds.), Human Rights and Economic Inequalities (Globalization and Human Rights, p. I). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. <https://www.cambridge.org/core/books/abs/human-rights-and-economic-inequalities/human-rights-and-economic-inequalities/71663BBB5E3B02A233811FF84A43A41B>
* Michał Burzyński and others, Climate Change, Inequality, and Human Migration, Journal of the European Economic Association, Volume 20, Issue 3, June 2022, Pages 1145–1197, <https://doi.org/10.1093/jeea/jvab054>
* Guzi, M., Kahanec, M., Ulceluse, M.M. (2021). *Europe’s migration experience and its effects on economic inequality*. MUNI ECON Working Paper n. 2021-05. Brno: Masaryk University. <https://doi.org/10.5817/WP_MUNI_ECON_2021-05> <http://repec.econ.muni.cz/mub/wpaper/wp/econ/WP_MUNI_ECON_2021-05.pdf>
* MacNaughton, Gillian. "Chapter 4: Is economic inequality a violation of human rights?". In Research Handbook on Human Rights and Poverty, (Cheltenham, UK: Edward Elgar Publishing, 2021), <https://doi.org/10.4337/9781788977517.00013>
* **\*notable\* Bibliography on Inequality and Human Rights**, University of Texas at Austin, <https://law.utexas.edu/humanrights/inequality-and-human-rights/>
* Dehm, Julia. "Righting Inequality: Human Rights Responses to Economic Inequality in the United Nations." *Humanity: An International Journal of Human Rights, Humanitarianism, and Development* 10, no. 3 (2019): 443-459. doi:10.1353/hum.2019.0022.
* Samuel Moyn, Not Enough: Human Rights in an Unequal World, (Cambridge, 2018).

# Week 4: Technology

This week, we examine the rapidly evolving realm of technology, with a particular emphasis on artificial intelligence (AI), and its implications for human rights. As technological advancements continue to reshape societies globally, they bring opportunities and challenges for the human rights framework.

We will particularly consider how emerging technologies, from big data to biometrics, intersect with human rights principles and standards, questions of artificial intelligence and ethics, surveillance and privacy, and how (and whether) the human rights system can tackle these issues.

**Reading**

* Baweja and Singh, Beginning of Artificial Intelligence, End of Human Rights, (LSE Blog, 2020) <https://blogs.lse.ac.uk/humanrights/2020/07/16/beginning-of-artificial-intelligence-end-of-human-rights/>
* Livingston S and Risse M, “The Future Impact of Artificial Intelligence on Humans and Human Rights” (2019) 33 Ethics & International Affairs 141, <https://www.cambridge.org/core/journals/ethics-and-international-affairs/article/abs/future-impact-of-artificial-intelligence-on-humans-and-human-rights/2016EDC9A61F68615EBF9AFA8DE91BF8>
* US White House, Blueprint for an AI Bill of Rights - Making Automated Systems Work for the American People <https://www.whitehouse.gov/ostp/ai-bill-of-rights/>

**Additional Resources**

[Check Moodle]

* Dominika Bychawska-Siniarska, "Protecting the right to Freedom of Expression under the European convention on human rights," Council of Europe, https://rm.coe.int/handbook-freedom-of-expression-eng/1680732814. pp. 107-114
* Daniel Joyce, "Internet Freedom and Human Rights | European Journal of International Law | Oxford Academic," OUP Academic, September 4, 2015, https://academic.oup.com/ejil/article/26/2/493/423010.
* "World Report 2017: Rights Trends in The Internet is Not the Enemy," Human Rights Watch, https://www.hrw.org/world-report/2017/country-chapters/the-internetis-not-the-enemy.
* "Report of the Special Rapporteur on the promotion and protection of the right to freedom of opinion and expression," OHCHR, last modified May 16, 2011 http://www2.ohchr.org/english/bodies/hrcouncil/docs/17session/A.HRC.17.27\_en.pdf

# Week 5: Transnational human rights violations

Exiled human rights defenders, including democracy activists, academics and lawyers, are increasingly targeted by repressive regimes in their country of exile. This repression can also spread to their family members both abroad and in their home countries.

This class will delve into the complexities of human rights violations that have a transnational character, who is responsible for protecting victims and how and whether the human rights framework is equipped to cope with this emerging issue.

**Reading**

**[check Moodle for additions prior to Term]**

* King’s College London, Workshop on Transnational Human Rights Violations, May 2023 <https://www.rights-practice.org/Handlers/Download.ashx?IDMF=a7a5e884-3a79-4d1a-baec-4ba5f3a84aea%20>
* Human rights Watch, Hong Kong Warrants aim at activists abroad, <https://www.hrw.org/news/2023/07/04/hong-kong-warrants-aim-activists-abroad>
* The Rights Practice, <https://www.rights-practice.org/transnational-repression-impact-of-china>
* Freedom House, 2020, ‘Perspectives on “Everyday” Transnational Repression in an Age of Globalization’
* Essex Court Chambers, 26 March 2021, <https://essexcourt.com/essex-court-chambers-statement-onsanctions-imposed-by-chinese-government/>

# Week 6: Authoritarianism and the rise of the far right

This week will explore the challenges posed by authoritarian regimes and far-right movements to the protection and promotion of human rights. We will consider the cooption of human rights language and concepts, common tactics such as the targeting of particular rights and of human rights activists (foreign agents laws, anti-civil society laws), anti-human rights rhetoric, and consider some of the responses and resistance at the national and international levels.

**Reading**

* Freedom House, The Global Expansion of Authoritarian Rule (2022) <https://freedomhouse.org/report/freedom-world/2022/global-expansion-authoritarian-rule>
* Kathryn Sikkink, "Evidence for Hope: Making Human Rights Work in the 21st Century"
* Kenneth Roth, How to Stand up for Human Rights in the Age of Trump, *Foreign Policy* (2018)

**Additional reading**

* **See Moodle**

# Guidance Notes

See Moodle