

**American University of Central Asia**  
**Liberal Arts and Science/ Human Rights**  
**Introduction to Human Rights**  
**HR 100 3358**  
**SYLLABUS**  
**Fall Semester 2018**

**Credits - 6**

**Class Meetings Time:** Tuesday (Room 221) and Thursday (Room 234) at 10.50

**Instructor:** Chyngyz Batyrbekov (ICP);

**E-mails:** batyrbekovc@gmail.com;

**Office Hours:** by appointment;

### **I General Description and Objectives of the Course**

Intro to Human Rights is a 6 credit core course for students who are pursuing Human Rights concentration, which offers an introduction to contemporary human rights discourses in their broader historical and theoretical contexts. The course enables students to understand basic philosophy of human rights, principles and place of human rights in modern world. Students acquire essential knowledge of substantive areas of human rights; the emergence of human rights as such, their historical background, sources and legal-institutional development. Furthermore, it examines the philosophical background of the contested categories making up the terms, “human” and “rights”. It explores the philosophical, political, legal, and cultural dimensions of the claims made by these terms. Finally, students consider the foundations of rights claims, the legal and violent ways of advancing, defending and enforcing rights, and human rights instruments and institutions.

### **II Learning Outcomes**

By the end of the course students should:

- Clearly understand the conventional ideas and concepts of human rights;
- Become introduced to main sources and founding ideas behind human rights;
- Know the scope of main legal and institutional bases of human rights;
- Become critically aware of broad problems, discontents, and debates over questions of human rights around the world, and;
- Develop an educated and critical appreciation for human rights.

### **III Course Readings & Sources**

The reading assignments and other course materials will be made available to students in several different ways: mainly through the **e-course** page of this course, and some via internet, from the AUCA library, and any other way indicated by instructors in the relevant week below.

All students must speedily register in this course’s page on AUCA e-course facility; please also make sure that the email address in your e-course profile is a valid address that you check regularly - it will be used to send group communications.

#### IV Teaching Methods

One obvious feature of this course - and for some students, hopefully, the main attraction - is the fact that it is co-taught by two different instructors. One from law and one from political science, in that sequence in the semester schedule. The benefit of this inter-disciplinary multi-instructor course is that the students will get exposed to two different perspectives and broad aspects of human rights. All parts put together, however, will add up to a single introduction to this voluminous subject.

Regardless of which instructor happens to teach in a given week, the general course format applies to the whole course: Interactive, combined lecture-seminar formats of class meetings, where the instructors provide the core themes and issues of a given week. Class discussions are based on given topics and the assigned reading (and/or watching) material. Students are always encouraged to speak up with their questions, thoughts, and concerns. A subject as many-sided, debated, and omnipresent as human rights cannot be successfully 'taught' by straightforward lecturing; understanding it requires the format of an interactive discussion forum. The teachers will do their part to encourage an interactive atmosphere in classes.

In most of the weeks (indicated in the schedule below), during Thursday meetings, the class will feature a small group presentation by 2 or 3 students on a pre-assigned topic related to that week's theme. The rest of the class will be invited to react to the presentation with questions, objections, comments, and more.

#### V Assessment

The overall grade of a student will be based on the usual 100% rubric, and it will be based on the following specific graded course components:

<b>Component</b>	<b>%</b>
Participation and attendance	15%
Midterm exam One	25%
Small group presentation	25%
Project Proposal	35%
Total	100%

**Class participation** is extremely important in this course. *Class participation is defined as the following: consistent, active contribution in the class meetings by discussing the readings, answering posed questions, asking questions, reacting to instructor's and other students' ideas with your own comments, objections and arguments in a relevant manner. Such participation indicates a student's preparation for classes and satisfactory attention during a class.*

**Note:** Your participation grade will be affected negatively by: 1) unexcused absences, 2) coming late to classes and leaving the room during classes, 3) using phones and other gadgets (except for course purposes), 4) talking to each other in a disruptive manner, 5) any other behavior that disturbs normal proceeding of a class. (See section VI below for more specific policies)

### Grading Scale

A 94-100%	B- 77-79%	D+ 60-63%
A- 90-93%	C+ 74-76%	D 54-59%
B+ 86-89%	C 68-73%	D- 50-53%
B 80-85%	C- 64-67%	F less than 50%

#### VI Course Policies & Student Conduct

Students are expected to **BE ON TIME** for classes. 1) If the instructor marked the student absent when he/she comes in late or 2) if the student is late by 10 minutes or more - whichever happens first - he or she will be considered absent for the whole class.

**Attendance is required. If a student misses 4 class meetings he/she will automatically get zero points for class participation. Missing more than 8 classes can incur failure of the entire course upon discretion of instructors.**

#### VII Originality, Academic Honesty & Plagiarism

All course assignments should be original and must not be plagiarized. Plagiarism is the appropriation of another person's thoughts or words without attribution. Plagiarism is an offence against the AUCA Code of Student Rights, Responsibilities and Conduct. All types of cheating (plagiarism, copying, unauthorized group work... etc.) are strictly prohibited. If student fails to observe this requirement, instructor may give from an "F" for the work up to an "F" for the whole course depending on the type of assignment and other circumstances.

#### VIII Schedule of the Semester

Week & Date	Topic
Week 1 Sep 5-7	<p><b>INTRODUCTION TO THE COURSE</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- The subject of the course (and the human rights concentration)</li> <li>- Course design and expectations</li> <li>- Organizational matters and technicalities</li> <li>- What is meant by human rights? Why is it (or should it be) a compelling and universally applicable moral code?</li> <li>- When and where do questions of human rights arise?</li> <li>- How does the idea of human rights (contribute to) shape today's standards of good political governance?</li> </ul>

<p>Week 2 Sep 12-14</p>	<p><b>The foundations and origins of modern human rights</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Where and who in the history of political thought raised ideas of human rights?</li> <li>- What is 'natural law' and 'natural right'?</li> <li>- What historical and civilizational issues led to the realization and specification of human rights?</li> <li>- 'Nature vs Culture' in human rights foundations</li> <li>- What is human dignity, and why should it be a cornerstone of HR?</li> <li>- Philosophical arguments</li> </ul>
<p>Week 3 Sep 19-21</p>	<p><b>Modern Legal Concepts in Human Rights</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Human rights in domestic legal systems</li> <li>- Constitutions and the rule of law</li> <li>- 1<sup>st</sup> generation rights</li> <li>- What do they protect? How do we enforce them?</li> </ul> <p>Small group presentation on Thursday</p>
<p>Week 4 Sep 26-28</p>	<p><b>International Humanitarian Law</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- IHRL as a branch of International Law</li> <li>- Jus cogens (Peremptory norms of International Law)</li> <li>— UN HR Documents (UNDHR, ICCPR, CEDAW)</li> <li>- Regional HR documents (European, African, American HR treaties)</li> <li>- The impact of the Holocaust and other XX century genocides on current ideas of human rights</li> </ul> <p>Small group presentation on Thursday</p>
<p>Week 5 Oct 3-5</p>	<p><b>Democracy and Human Rights</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Can human rights be protected for everyone in a majority rule system?</li> <li>- Parliaments, legislation and political agendas</li> <li>- Balancing majority and minority views</li> <li>- How can it be done? Different approaches</li> </ul> <p>Small group presentation on Thursday</p>
<p>Week 6 Oct 10-12</p>	<p><b>Human Rights Enforcement in the International System</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- HR trial procedures and enforcement bodies</li> <li>- Human Rights Council and the European Court of Human Rights</li> <li>- Sanctions and political pressure</li> <li>- Politics and HR trial cases</li> <li>- Nuremberg Tribunal, Pinochet Case</li> </ul> <p>Small group presentation on Thursday</p>

<p>Week 7 Oct 17-19</p>	<p><b>2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> Generation Rights</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- What exactly are human rights?</li> <li>- Where do they end? Where should they end?</li> <li>- What are reasonable limits?</li> <li>- Different standards in different countries? Is that ethical?</li> </ul> <p>Small group presentation on Thursday</p>
<p>Week 8 Oct 24-26</p>	<p><b>Review for Part 1</b></p> <p><b>Oct 26: Mid-Term exam 1</b></p>
<p>Week 9 Oct 31-Nov 2</p>	<p><b>Securing Human Rights: Actors and Mechanisms</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- UN mechanisms of securing HR</li> <li>- Human Rights Council</li> <li>- The role of state in UN Mechanisms</li> </ul> <p>Small group presentation on Thursday</p>
<p><b>[Week 10: Nov 7-9 Fall Break]</b></p> <p>Week 11 Nov 14-16</p>	<p><b>State Mechanisms of Protecting Human Rights</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Ombudsman's office</li> <li>- Parliamentary Committees</li> <li>- Law Enforcement Bodies</li> </ul> <p>Small group presentation on Thursday</p>
<p>Week 12 Nov 21-23</p>	<p><b>NGO and/or Individual Case study</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- HR Activism</li> <li>- Role of NGOs</li> <li>- NGOs in Kyrgyzstan</li> <li>- Guest lecturer from local NGO</li> </ul> <p>Small group presentation on Thursday</p>
<p>Week 13 Nov 28</p> <p><b>[Nov 30 Holiday]</b></p>	<p><b>Business and Human Rights</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Human Rights Approach to Business Management</li> <li>- Corporations and International Human Rights Law</li> <li>- Corporate Social Responsibility</li> <li>- Cases</li> <li>- Films</li> </ul> <p>Small group presentation on Thursday</p>
<p>Week 14 Dec 5-7</p>	<p>Human Rights Issues in Kyrgyzstan and Central Asia</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Torture</li> <li>-Bride Kidnapping</li> <li>-Child Labor</li> </ul>
<p>Week 15 Dec 12-14</p>	<p><i>Final Paper preparation session</i> <i>Conclusion of the course</i></p>
<p><b>Exam Week</b></p>	<p><b>Final Papers are due on Dec 23, 23:55.</b></p>

