COURSE DESCRIPTION
This course critically analyzes the idea and practice of human rights as a framework for social justice. We will analyze historic and current human rights struggles to better understand the potential, politics, challenges and limitations of the international human rights movement. The course will also explore specific rights such as the right to a healthy environment, the right to food, among others.

COURSE STRUCTURE AND CONTENT
The course is divided into four units that provide opportunities to critically examine theoretical and practical dimensions of the human rights framework. Unit One looks at the social context and struggles that led to the formulation of human rights. It is only by understanding the historical development of human rights and the specific content of those rights that we will be better able to analyze -- throughout the remainder of the course -- the promises, politics and limitations of current human rights struggles. (Please note that we will break up the historical perspective by having a session about current migrant farmworkers in Canada.) Unit Two explores different cases of how human rights are mobilized. In Unit Three we focus more closely on specific critiques of the human rights framework. Then in Unit Four we delve once again into analyzing different human rights struggles in various parts of the world.

This is a seminar course. There will be no lectures other than those given by guest speakers. Instead, students must read the assigned material and come to class prepared to engage in discussions of these readings. The seminars will be free flowing while at the same time involve focused and informed discussion. Throughout the course students will be asked to engage in the seminars by discussing what they found to be the most interesting and/or important arguments, themes and issues addressed in the readings. At times students may be given different readings so that we can cover more and different aspects of human rights. In these cases students will be asked to present the key arguments in their assigned readings.

Since this is a seminar course students either make or break the course. That is, it is your individual and collective engagement in discussion, your ideas, your critiques of arguments presented in the readings, your contributions in general that will make this course the best it can be.

REQUIRED READINGS
We will begin the course by reading (throughout Unit One) Micheline R. Ishay’s (2008) *The History of Human Rights: From Ancient Times to the Globalization Era*. (The book is available
at the University of Manitoba Bookstore). As we progress through the course all references to the required readings for all remaining units will be communicated to you via desire2learn (https://universityofmanitoba.desire2learn.com/). You should check desire2learn regularly for any updates throughout the term.

**COURSE ORGANIZATION**

*NOTE: Some parts of this syllabus are subject to change. That is, the sequence of topics and topics themselves may change based on student interests and as we progress through the course.*

**Unit One: The History of Human Rights**

We begin my gaining an understanding of the historical struggles for human rights. The required readings for Unit One are listed for each of the dates that we will meet in January.

January 9: Introduction to the course

January 16: Analyzing the roots of human rights: context, content and struggles


January 23: Agricultural Migrant Workers: Canada’s Disposable Workforce

  Guest speaker and seminar facilitator: Armando Perla, Canadian Museum for Human Rights

  (We interrupt our historical perspective by examining a current human rights struggle.)

  Readings:


January 30: Analyzing the roots of human rights: context, content and struggles


**Unit Two: Examining Different Cases of How Human Rights Are Mobilized**

February 6: Indigenous rights vs. the extractive industries


  *Luis Fondebrider teaches in the Department of Legal Medicine at the University of Buenos Aires in Argentina. He was President of the Argentine Forensic Archeology Team, and has been involved in international tribunals on political violence and human rights -- focusing on the use of forensic anthropology in identifying victims of mass violence -- in over forty countries in Latin America, Africa, Asia and Europe.*

February 20: No Class – Reading Week

February 27: The global food crisis: agrarian movements and the right to food

**Unit Three: Focusing on Critiques of Human Rights**

March 6: Human Rights: A global mission to civilize ‘others’ and other key problems with the human rights framework

Unit Four: Persistent challenges in realizing human rights

March 20, 27 and April 3: During the last three sessions we will analyze various rights and dimensions of those rights. The specific topics will be selected as we progress through the course. That is, through the seminars we may find that we want to learn more about particular dimensions of human rights or deepen our understanding of specific human rights struggles; we will take the last three sessions to explore these. Here, I provide a list of some possible topics:

- Right to private property and the rights to natural resources and a healthy environment
- Social movements and NGOs: Claiming Economic, Social and Cultural Rights
- Human rights and the media
- The promises and pitfalls of Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) and Socially Responsible Investment (SRI)

COURSE REQUIREMENTS (See below for a description of each of these.)

Your grade will be determined as follows:

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Contribution to discussion</td>
<td>30%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Questions</td>
<td>10%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Discussion/reflection paper one (Due 11:30am, Feb. 27, 2014)</td>
<td>20%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Major reflection paper or research paper on human rights (Due 4:00pm, April 9, 2014)</td>
<td>40%</td>
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<td>Total</td>
<td>100%</td>
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Contribution to seminar discussions (30% of final grade)

Students’ primary responsibility is to read the assigned readings, to think about the issues and arguments presented in the articles, and to come to class prepared to discuss in an informed manner about them. Students are expected to participate fully in discussions of the assigned readings – this demands more than just quickly skimming the reading. You need to have a very good understanding of, and be able to engage with the authors’ argument(s) and the evidence used to defend the argument.

Active and engaged participation in this class demands preparation and contribution.

a/ Preparation: Here are some tips to help you prepare. There are three stages to critical reading: 1/ writing a short summary of the article so that you understand and remember what you have read, 2/ providing a succinct critique in which you articulate your own ideas and reasoning about the issues raised in the reading, and 3/ formulating thoughtful questions based on the readings that you then raise in the seminar discussions.

b/ Contribution: Your contributions must be directly related to the topic(s) being discussed. It is the quality of your contributions to the class discussions that really counts. Contributions should demonstrate that you:

- have critically read the materials and are able summarize and engage with key arguments and points made,
- can raise thoughtful questions as a result of the readings,
- can link ideas from different readings done throughout the course, and
- your ability to interact with your fellow classmates in a respectful manner.
Students must attend all classes. Your contribution grade will be determined based on attendance (you can’t contribute if you are not in class) and the criteria discussed above. I will assign a grade out of 10 for each week, accompanied by a brief explanation of why you got that grade. Your final contribution grade will be a compendium of these weekly grades. Periodically I will provide you with these so that you know how you are doing. The best way to get a good grade is to read all of the required material, come to class prepared to talk about them and take an active part in the discussion.

**Questions (10% of final grade)**
To help foster discussion students will come to class with at least three written questions about the readings to be discussed during the weekly seminar. The questions must be sent to me through desire2learn by 9:00am of each Thursday that the class meets. Bring a copy of these questions with you to the seminar. Along with the questions you should also include the date, the title of the seminar, your student number and name. I will grade these questions that represent 10% of your grade.

**Critical Discussion/reflection paper (20% of final grade)**
You are required to submit an 8-page (double-spaced) critical discussion/reflection paper of the readings assigned for Units 1 and 2. Please feel free to discuss this paper with me before starting on it if you still have questions after reading the description provided here.

The focus of the discussion/reflection paper is to explore the course readings. It is not a summary of the readings; nor is it simply your own ideas about the readings. A discussion/reflection paper is like a think piece. Discussion papers must do two things: they must provide an assessment of the major arguments in the readings and they must frame those into an overall approach or argument about the readings. The discussion papers should not be a cataloguish summary of each article, but rather you should weave your discussion of the articles into an overall argument or approach. A good discussion/reflection paper, therefore, must take a sophisticated approach in summarizing the salient points of the readings, relating the readings to each other. It should also critique the readings (note critique does not necessarily mean to criticize) by talking about how the approach in individual readings either helps us or does not help us understand the issues and by telling the reader how your opinion about the issues has been reflected in, is opposed to, or has been deepened or altered by the readings.

Know that for the discussion/reflection papers you are not expected to do any further reading in addition to the readings provided in the course. You are expected to spend some time thinking about the issues explored in the units, linking the ideas together, expressing your own ideas about the readings, and making cogent arguments in clear and eloquent language.

This first discussion/reflection paper is due at 11:30am on February 27, 2014. This paper must meet the following specifications:
- typed on 8.5” x 11” white paper,
- 8 pages in length (not including the bibliography and end notes if these are used)
- double spaced lines using Times New Roman 12 pt font
- be submitted through desire2learn
You must include an additional page (the title page) that contains the title, your name, the prof’s name, and the course number. Remember to number the pages.

**Major reflection/discussion paper or research paper (40%)**
For the final assignment students must choose one of the following options.
Option 1: Writing a major reflection paper. This is essentially a major think piece (see the description provided above for the first assignment) that allows you to reflect on the course material as a whole.

Option 2: Writing a research paper for this course. Major research paper: You may choose any topic related to human rights but a short proposal (one or two paragraphs) must be sent to and approved by me before you begin extensive work on your essay.

The due date to submit this final assignment is 4:00pm on April 9, 2014. The major reflection or research paper must meet the following specifications:
- Be typed on 8.5” x 11” white paper,
- 18 pages in length (You must include an additional page (the title page) that contains the title, your name and student number, my name, and the course number).
- Double-spaced lines using Times New Roman 12 pt font
- Remember to number the pages
- Submitted through desire2learn

*Please note that it is not acceptable to submit a paper, or portions of a paper, that you have written for another class as this is a form of academic misconduct.*

**Due Dates**
All due dates are final. Late papers will be penalized 5% per day late. No papers will be accepted if they are submitted five days or more after the due date. Exceptions will be made only in the case of acceptable circumstance (i.e. serious illness) and acceptable documentation.
In the event of such a case the request for an extension must be made before the due date. Unfortunately, computer failures do not fall in the category of acceptable circumstances.

**Some basic rules established by the University of Manitoba and the Faculty of Arts**

**Grading Scale:** In assigning letter grades for the course, the following scale will be used:
- A+ 90% and over
- A 80 - 89%
- B+ 75 - 79%
- B 70 - 74%
- C+ 65 - 69%
- C 60 - 64%
- D 50 - 59%
- F less than 50%
**Academic Integrity:**
University policy on academic integrity will be enforced. A full description of academic integrity matters, including plagiarism and cheating, can be found in Section 8 of the general Academic regulations and Requirements of the University of Manitoba.

The Faculty of Arts also reserves the right to submit student work that is **suspected of being plagiarized** to Internet sites designed to detect plagiarism.

**Voluntary Withdrawal**
Please note that the last day for voluntary withdrawal from second term courses is **Wednesday, March 19, 2014.**

**Unclaimed Term Work**
Any term work that has not been claimed by students will be held for four (4) months from the end of the final examination period for the term in which the work was assigned. At the conclusion of this time, all unclaimed term work will become property of the Faculty of Arts and be destroyed according to FIPPA guidelines and using confidential measures for disposal.

**Absence from Class**
Students are requested to email the instructor (Annette.desmarais@umanitoba.ca) if they are going to be absent from class.

The university recognizes the right of all students to observe recognized **holidays of their faith,** which fall within the academic year. With instructor discretion, necessary arrangements can be made to ensure studies are not jeopardized. The instructor should be notified of a student’s intended absence in advance and at least three weeks’ notice of absence should normally be given where special arrangements are sought.