“Where, after all, do universal human rights begin? In small places, close to home - so close and so small that they cannot be seen on any maps of the world. Yet they are the world of the individual person; the neighborhood he lives in; the school or college he attends; the factory, farm, or office where he works. Such are the places where every man, woman, and child seeks equal justice, equal opportunity, equal dignity without discrimination. Unless these rights have meaning there, they have little meaning anywhere. Without concerted citizen action to uphold them close to home, we shall look in vain for progress in the larger world.”  
Eleanor Roosevelt

1. Course Statement

a. Course description
The course aims to provide a basic introduction to international human rights, their conceptual and historical foundations, as well as the main international legal instruments and institutions aimed at protecting and promoting human rights worldwide. The course has three purposes: to define and explore the terms, histories and theories of human rights; examine alternative or competing definitions of rights; and apply human rights thinking to local and international issues using a case-based approach. Throughout the course, concrete case studies will be used to illustrate the range of human rights problems as well as the utility of the accountability paradigm to current international and national events and problems. The class includes lectures, discussion, special events and guest lectures of representatives from local non-governmental organizations (NGOs) / social movements and international organizations may also guest lecture.

b. Course objectives and competencies
- Demonstrate critical and reflexive understanding of social, economic, and environmental problems and injustices and human rights violations within a local and global context (e.g. human trafficking, gender-based violence and gender discrimination, climate change). (EPAS 1, 3; PODS)
- Demonstrate critical and reflexive understanding of potential solutions to select local and global problems. (EPAS 4, 5, 7, 8; PODS)
• Critically and reflexively examine the structure of institutions and the actors who influence global policy and practice decision-making (e.g. United Nations programs, international social work federations; indigenous and transnational communities and advocacy groups). (EPAS 1, 5, 7, 9; PODS)

• Apply the understanding of social, economic, and environmental justice and human rights to develop policy, practice, and/or research-related projects. (EPAS all; PODS)

c. Course design
This class will strive to foster a learning environment where each student can reflect critically on human rights-based frameworks. This course will work to create a climate that supports critical analyses, mutual learning, engaging within and across differences. It involves lectures, videos, large and small group discussions and participation in experiential activities. Special attention will also be given knowledge about justice and change, and principles of change towards justice.

d. Intensive focus on PODS
This course integrates PODS content and skills with a special emphasis on the identification of theories, practice and/or policies that promote social justice, illuminate injustices and are consistent with scientific and professional knowledge. Through the use of a variety of instructional methods, this course will support students developing a vision of social justice, learn to recognize and reduce mechanisms that support oppression and injustice, work toward social justice processes, apply intersectionality and intercultural frameworks and strengthen critical consciousness, self-knowledge and self-awareness to facilitate PODS learning.

This course has a substantial focus on PODS as it emphasizes understanding power in the global context, including how power contributes to privilege, oppression, diversity, and social justice in a global social work. The course will teach students to apply social justice lenses (e.g., feminism, emancipation, decolonization) to describe and explain global phenomena (e.g., human trafficking, climate change, and environmental disasters) and potential solutions to global problems.

The course emphasizes the following PODS’ skills:

Critical Contextual/Structural Thinking
• Demonstrate skills relevant for the critical and reflexive understanding of how global issues (experienced locally and globally) are constructed, understood, and addressed, through information gathering and
• Critical analysis of manifestations, consequences, and mechanisms of injustice at a global level.
• Demonstrate analytical skills by applying comparative, historical and global perspectives.

Take Actions towards Social Justice
• Demonstrate the ability to develop research- and policy- questions relevant to global problems by using collaborative/participatory theories and methods.
• Build on positive sources of power to envision and to work toward globally social justice and empowerment.

Critical Self-Awareness, Use of Self & Strategies for Resilience & Generativity
• Recognize one’s own positionality as citizen, resident or member of a specific community, location or nation, within the global context.
• Demonstrate knowledge and skills for intersectional humility, related to community, location or nation membership (be able to suspend one’s own assumptions and perspectives in order to understand/recognize alternative worldviews).

2. Class Requirements

a. Text and class materials
The required and optional readings will be provided via Canvas in the form of links to external sites (e.g., news, videos, podcasts) or PDFs. The Canvas site will be an important resource for completing and submitting assignments, keeping track of due dates, and communicating with one another via Canvas, so please take some time to familiarize yourself with it and check it on a weekly basis. Please utilize the U-M online library for access to restricted content such as *New York Times* articles, or request a PDF from me if unavailable via U-M access.

You are required to read all assigned readings **BEFORE** each class session. As a discussion-based course, we will engage in most of the assigned readings from each week. At this time, all readings have been posted in Canvas. I will continue to upload **OPTIONAL** readings, podcasts, recordings, and other useful resources throughout the semester based on current events and the general flow of the course. I’ll alert you when I’ve uploaded new readings and documents.

### b. Class schedule

Below is an overview of the weekly themes/topics, required readings and videos, and assignments for your review. **PLEASE NOTE THAT THIS SYLLABUS IS SUBJECT TO CHANGE. If changes are made to the syllabus, an email will be shared at least 72 hours in advance. Updates will be added to the Canvas website accordingly.**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Wednesday, May 10th</th>
<th><strong>FOUNDATION:</strong> The History of Human Rights</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>WEEK 1</strong></td>
<td><strong>Readings:</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>○ <strong>OPTIONAL (HIGHLY RECOMMENDED):</strong> Alexander, L.E. (2023, May 2). <em>Are some human rights more important than others? Religion freedom advocates often put it first.</em> The Conversation. <a href="https://news.yahoo.com/human-rights-more-important-others-121039754.html?guccounter=1&amp;guce_referrer=aHR0cHM6Ly93d3cuZ29vZ2xlLmNvbS8&amp;guce_referrer_sig=AQAAANlbRDafVh1qRcc4-hfoBELyW5Z-aRWDA-HBwlIDj0gSA9wkL_uwyxjdSnEp02i12_5Jd9hZWrHKsrFQSPAB4Reoe-FT9ky4jphzInx6Ak0WaivOQFjcx187edQ66KIS__ijWPuGFyp8wsYNvzDQ1rLtoFc778nsJvYr31mj6">https://news.yahoo.com/human-rights-more-important-others-121039754.html?guccounter=1&amp;guce_referrer=aHR0cHM6Ly93d3cuZ29vZ2xlLmNvbS8&amp;guce_referrer_sig=AQAAANlbRDafVh1qRcc4-hfoBELyW5Z-aRWDA-HBwlIDj0gSA9wkL_uwyxjdSnEp02i12_5Jd9hZWrHKsrFQSPAB4Reoe-FT9ky4jphzInx6Ak0WaivOQFjcx187edQ66KIS__ijWPuGFyp8wsYNvzDQ1rLtoFc778nsJvYr31mj6</a></td>
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<td><strong>Videos:</strong></td>
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<td>○ <strong>REQUIRED:</strong> What are the universal human rights? Benedetta Berti. TED ED <a href="https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nDgIVseTkuE">https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nDgIVseTkuE</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>○ <strong>OPTIONAL (HIGHLY RECOMMENDED):</strong> Universal Declaration of Human Rights (6:10 minutes) <a href="https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5RR4VXNX3jA">https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5RR4VXNX3jA</a></td>
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### WEEK 2

**THEORY:** The Philosophy of Human Rights

- **Readings:**

### WEEK 3

**HUMAN RIGHTS:** Women’s Rights

- **Readings:**
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Wednesday, May 31st</th>
<th>HUMAN RIGHTS: Children’s Rights</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>WEEK 4</td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>

**Readings:**

- **OPTIONAL (HIGHLY RECOMMENDED):** Bhabha, J. (2014).

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**International Treaties:**

**ADDITIONAL RESOURCES**


**Assignment:** Response Paper Assignment due on Wednesday, May 31, 2023 by 11:59 PM EST via Canvas.
### Wednesday, June 8th

**WEEK 5**

**HUMAN RIGHTS: Climate Justice/Change & Human Rights**

- **Readings:**

- **Videos:**
  - **OPTIONAL (HIGHLY RECOMMENDED):**
c. Assignments

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Assignment</th>
<th>Due date</th>
<th>Percent of overall grade</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Attendance &amp; Class Participation</td>
<td>Active listening and engagement during every class session</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Response Paper (Written or Audio)</td>
<td>Submit this assignment on Wednesday, May 31, 2023 by 11:59 PM via Canvas</td>
<td>40%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Infographic Assignment</td>
<td>Submit this assignment on Wednesday, June 7, 2023 by 11:59 PM via Canvas</td>
<td>40%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Attendance and Class Participation (20%)**

“As a classroom community, our capacity to generate excitement is deeply affected by our interest in one another, in hearing one another’s voices, in recognizing one another’s presence.” bell hooks, Teaching to Transgress, p. 8

This is a discussion-based course that gives students an opportunity to apply what they have learned to readings. Effective learning occurs when all members of the course actively participate. Class participation consists of the following components:

- Consistent class attendance and arrival on time;
- Coming to class well prepared, having read all course materials before class and having completed the assignments;
- Contributing meaningfully and organically to class discussions and activities;
- Demonstrating increasing mastery of the material; and
- Thinking critically about differing ideas and perspectives.
For each class session, **you will earn four (4) points for your attendance and active participation.** If you anticipate being absent, please let me know via email at least 24 hours in advance. You are still expected to complete the assigned readings and final assignments by the due dates. Moreover, please click on the following link for more context on the class attendance policy found in the MSW Student Guide.

**Life can be extremely stressful, so make sure you are taking care of yourself.** If you anticipate missing class for any reason and would like to receive your attendance and participation point for that day, you have the option to submit a summary (1-2 paragraphs) on the major themes highlighted in the assigned readings and PowerPoint slides. This policy ensures that students still engage in the course content even when you are absent.

*Grades are not a reflection of your value as a person or even your personal capacity. Grades serve as a reflection of the reality of balancing school with other responsibilities and of your level of effort. Grades also reflect the extent to which the content of a course fits with your existing knowledge and skills, which will vary from course to course. What is most important is that you are challenged, that you are ready to learn, and that you walk away with new knowledge. Remember, it is progress, not perfection.*

**Response Paper (40%)**

For this response paper, you have **TWO** options for how you synthesize course content and submit the assignment:

1. **You can submit a traditional response paper (750-1,000 words)** that addresses **ONE** topic of interest to you from the assigned readings and course themes covered in the class. **You should draw connections between multiple readings (more than three) and class lectures and discussions.** Below are suggested prompts to guide your process. **Please note that you are NOT required to address all of the below prompts in your response paper.**
   a. *Describe the aspects of the readings and/or class content that you find to be particularly useful, surprising, or unconvincing, etc.*
   b. *Describe how the assigned/suggested readings connect to key ideas or themes highlighted throughout the course.*

2. **Instead of submitting a formal written essay, you also have the option of recording an 8-10-minute audio/video recording that addresses a topic of interest to you.** Please refer to the above questions to guide this process. While you will focus on **ONE** topic or theme, you **ARE** still required to **draw connections between several readings and/or authors to substantiate your claims.**

This written or audio/video response paper is intended to be both a tool for you to think more deeply about something of concern to you and a strategy for me to see that you are attempting to reflect on overarching themes highlighted in course materials.

While creating the audio/video recording, please consider and/or incorporate the following components:

1. Address one topic/theme – do not be overly ambitious and attempt to cover multiple themes
2. Include several (3 or more readings/course resources [journal articles, videos, podcasts, etc.]) within the recording
3. **Do NOT exceed 10 minutes** – please stick to the time frame (be concise)
4. Include your name at the beginning of the audio recording
5. Include a clear thesis statement/topic that you plan to address in the recording

**Due Date: The response paper (audio/video or written) is due on the following dates: Wednesday, May 31, 2023 by 11:59 PM EST via Canvas.**

**Infographic Project (40%)**

Research general information, data, and patterns about your assigned topic and create an infographic presenting relevant information and what you learned to educate others. Please note that this assignment can be completed in pairs or individually. **At minimum, your infographic should include the following sections:**

May 2023
Create an infographic poster that will bring awareness to a human rights issue. Use this multimedia tool to create a visual response that demonstrates your understanding of this universal human rights. You could use Piktochart or Canva to create the infographic.

Your infographic poster should include:

- A title that identifies your current event/human right topic and geographic region
- Date or timeframe (when did this current event occur?)
- At least one (1) map, two (2) quotes, three (3) key vocabulary terms, and four (4) images
- Include a section on the specific human rights violations(s)
- Include the reference list that indicates the sources you used in the infographic. Include this content on a separate reference page.

In addition to creating the infographic poster, you will respond to several reflection questions about the process of creating the infographic and its connection to human rights-related course themes as a Discussion Board post. More details to come. Please note that a rubric will be used to grade the assignment.

Due Date: The infographic projects are due on Friday, June 7, 2023 by 11:59 PM EST and must be submitted via Canvas.

d. Grading

IMPORTANT MESSAGE AROUND GRADING: This course will focus on qualitative and quantitative forms of assessment, which we will discuss during the class, both with reference to your own work and the works we will be studying. While you will get a final grade at the end of the term, I will not be assigning grades to individual assignments. Instead, I will provide ample feedback to guide your future engagement with assignments by asking questions and making comments that engage your work rather than simply evaluate it. You will also be reflecting carefully on your own work. The intention here is to help you focus on working in a more organic way, as opposed to working as you think you are expected to. If this process causes more anxiety than it alleviates, see me at any point to confer about your progress in the course to date. If you are worried about your grade, your best strategy should be to join the class discussions, do the assigned readings, and complete the assignments. You should consider this course a “busy-work-free zone” – I care about your learning process and growth as a critical social worker. I am focused on progress, not perfection. If an assignment does not feel productive, we can find ways to modify, remix, or repurpose the instructions.

Final grades are based on 100 percentage points. Letter grades are assigned to point totals according to the following schedule. Letter grades from A through E are given for class performance in most cases. Please refer to the MSW Student Guide for more questions or clarity around grades.

100 - 94 = A
93 - 90 = A-
89 - 87 = B+
86 - 84 = B
83 - 80 = B-
79 - 77 = C+
76 - 74 = C
73 - 70 = C-
69 - 67 = D+
66 - 64 = D

May 2023
63 - 60 = D- 59 and below = E

A grade (90-100%) suggests mastery of material, inclusive of both deep description and analysis.
B grade (80-89%) suggests competence related to course material.
C grade (70-79%) suggests familiarity with material and is not considered adequate for professional practice.
D grade (60-69%) indicates deficiency and carries no course credit. (Below 70) E grade (<60%) indicates failure and carry no course credit.

If you are concerned about your class performance or grade, I am willing to work with you to help improve your understanding of the class material or the assignments prior to the end of the semester. Your final grade reflects both your effort and the quality of your engagement and assignments.

Assignments are due at or before the dates listed on the syllabus. All assignments will be submitted on Canvas. Please submit all work on time. Except where indicated, late assignments will be penalized 1/3 of a letter grade for the first day past the due date and time, and a full letter grade for each additional day thereafter.

Assignment Grade Dispute Process
If you believe you have been graded unfairly on an assignment, please wait 24 hours before contacting me directly. Challenges must be in writing (not verbal), must be detailed, and must be based on substantive arguments (or mathematical errors) as opposed to references to “fairness.” I reserve the right to re-read and/or re-grade the work in its entirety in the case of a challenge. The grade may be adjusted upwards or downwards. Thank you in advance for your patience.

Electronic Devices
Please minimize your use of cell phones in this course. Laptops, tablets, and screen readers may be used in class for reading and taking notes. However, electronics can function as a distraction in class and disrupt class discussion. If I find them to become distracting, I hold the right to disallow them or to minimize your use in class. If you would prefer to print assigned readings, please talk to me, and we’ll figure out alternative ways to access them.

Writing Skills and Expectations
Strong writing and communication skills are essential to students’ academic success and professional career. I will consider writing quality in grading. Please proofread written work carefully. I strongly recommend that you have a colleague read your documents for clarity, typos, omitted words, etc.

The Writing Coordinator for the School of Social Work may be available to virtually meet with students during the writing process. Students can access this service through the Career Services Office at ssw-cso@umich.edu.

APA Format
Unless otherwise noted, all assignments should be submitted using APA style formatting. The current edition of APA style should be used in formatting papers prepared for this course and papers should be formatted using one-inch margins, double spacing, and 12-point Times New Roman or Garamond font. Please include in-text citations and a reference list as well. For further information, please refer to the American Psychological Association Publication Manual (often called the APA Style Manual). You can find out more at: http://www.apastyle.org. Please consider accessing Purdue University's OWL website, which is an excellent resource for general writing and formatting advice.

It is critical to reference all sources of information or ideas you use in your writing. To do otherwise is academic dishonesty. In particular, direct quotes must be identified as such. Situations of apparent plagiarism or academic dishonesty will be reported and handled according to University of Michigan policies.

Plagiarism and Academic Dishonesty
Plagiarism consists of “presenting others' work without adequate acknowledgement of its source, as though it were one’s own.” Plagiarism is a form of fraud. We all stand on the shoulders of others, and we must give credit to the creators of the works that we incorporate into products that we call our own.

May 2023
Some examples of plagiarism:
• a sequence of words incorporated without quotation marks
• an unacknowledged passage paraphrased from another's work
• the use of ideas, sound recordings, computer data or images created by others as though it were one’s own

Communication with Instructor
Email is the best way to reach me. Please anticipate 48 hours for a response Monday-Friday, 9:00 AM - 5:00 PM EST. Weekend emails may have a longer response time (72 hours). Professional email etiquette is expected. Please address me by my formal title as “Dr. Cureton”, “Professor Cureton”, or “Prof. Cureton” in written and oral communications. Include “SW 680” in the subject line to help ensure that your email is seen in a timely manner.

e. Class Recording and Course Materials
Audio and video recording of in-class lectures and discussions is prohibited without the advance written permission of the instructor. Students with an approved accommodation from the Office of Services for Students with Disabilities permitting the recording of class meetings must present documentation to the instructor in advance of any recording being done. The instructor reserves the right to disallow recording for a portion of any class time where privacy is a special concern. If the instructor chooses to record a class, they will decide which classes, if any, are recorded, what portion of each class is recorded, and whether a recording is made available on the course management website. On days when classes are recorded, students will be notified a recording is occurring. Class recordings and course materials may not be reproduced, sold, published or distributed to others, in whole or in part, without the written consent of the instructor.

Additional information on class recordings can be found the Recording and Privacy Concerns FAQ:

f. COVID-19 Statement
For the safety of all students, faculty, and staff on campus, it is important for each of us to be mindful of safety measures that have been put in place for our protection. By returning to campus, you have acknowledged your responsibility for protecting the collective health of our community. Your participation in this course on an in-person basis is conditional upon your adherence to all safety measures mandated by the state of Michigan and the University, including maintaining physical distancing of six feet from others, and properly wearing a face covering in class. Other applicable safety measures may be described in the Wolverine Culture of Care and the University’s Face Covering Policy for COVID-19. Your ability to participate in this course in-person may be impacted by failure to comply with campus safety measures. Individuals seeking to request an accommodation related to the face covering requirement under the Americans with Disabilities Act should contact the Office for Institutional Equity. If you are unable or unwilling to adhere to these safety measures while in a face-to-face class setting, you will be required to participate on a remote basis. I also encourage you to review the Statement of Student Rights and Responsibilities and the COVID-related Addendum to the Statement of Student Rights and Responsibilities.

g. Health-Related Class Absences
Please evaluate your own health status regularly and refrain from attending class and coming to campus if you are ill. You are encouraged to seek appropriate medical attention for treatment. School of Social Work students who miss class due to illness of any kind will be given opportunities to access course materials online or provided with alternative learning opportunities. Please notify me by email about your absence as soon as practical, so that I can make accommodations. Please note that documentation (a doctor’s note) for medical excuses is not required.

Additional School and University policies, information and resources are available here: https://ssw.umich.edu/standard-policies-information-resources. They include:

● Safety and emergency preparedness
● Mental health and well-being
● Teaching evaluations
● Proper use of names and pronouns
● Accommodations for students with disabilities
● Religious/spiritual observances
● Military deployment

May 2023
h. Mental-Health Supports
If you are struggling with your mental health or you need someone to talk to, I encourage you to access supports through the Counseling and Psychological Services (CAPS) by visiting their website at https://caps.umich.edu. Please do not wait until you reach a state of crisis to ask for help. It is hard to do, but important. These services are free and anonymous. You should also feel free to let me know if you need extensions or additional supports.

i. Policy on Accommodations for Students with Disabilities
It is my goal that this class be an accessible and welcoming experience for all students, including those with disabilities that may impact learning in this class. If you believe the design of this course poses barriers to effectively participating and/or demonstrating learning, please meet with me (with or without a Notice of Accommodation from Disability Services) to discuss reasonable options or adjustments. During our meeting, I may suggest the possibility or necessity of your contacting Services for Students with Disabilities. You can visit the website at https://ssd.umich.edu/. You are welcome to talk to me at any point in the quarter about course design concerns, but it is always best if we can talk at least one week prior to the need for any modifications.

j. Sexual Misconduct – Measures to Protect Students

I, Professor Cureton, am committed to creating a learning environment for my students that is free of Prohibited Conduct, including gender-based and sexual harassment, sexual violence, retaliation, and a hostile environment based on discrimination and intimidation. I acknowledge the power differentials between instructors and students, and the prohibition of “Covered Relationships” (sexual, romantic, or dating) between instructors and students. To accomplish this, I pledge to:

• I will conduct office hours with my door open. Students who wish to have confidential conversations with me may schedule a private meeting via Zoom or may ask to have a closed-door meeting. But this closed-door meeting must be made on your request in writing, even on the spot. I will never suggest a closed-door meeting myself because of the power dynamic.
• I will document all pre-scheduled meetings between the instructor and the student via Google Calendar (or other software) and/or university email. Students who email to request an office hour appointment should expect to receive an email confirmation or a Google Calendar (or other software) invitation from me, or, upon my email confirmation and request, may send me a Google Calendar (or other software) invitation for this meeting. The purpose is to provide a permanent record of the meeting and to ensure that all class activities are documented and transparent. Students who choose to drop by for informal meetings are welcome to do so, but there will be no documentation provided. (See above for open-door policy.)
• Choose meeting locations and conduct meetings with student and instructor safety in mind.
• All individual meetings between instructor/student will take place at university venues. Off-campus meetings, trips or events must engage with course material. Off-campus meetings will not involve alcohol or take place at locations that serve alcohol. If the class goes out for a meal, it will be at a cafe or restaurant that does not serve alcohol.