

Professor Rachel Cichowski  
Office: Gowen Hall 127  
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Class Location: KNE 220  
Lectures: T, Th 8:30-9:50am  
Office Hours: Wednesday 2-4pm

Teaching Assistants:

- AA/AB Sections: Julia Wejchert, jwejch@uw.edu
- AC/AD Sections: Ryan Goehrung, goehrnr@uw.edu

**COURSE SYLLABUS**  
**POLS/LSJ 327: Women's Rights as Human Rights**

**COURSE DESCRIPTION**

This course is an elective course for the comparative legal institutions and human rights track of the Law, Society and Justice Program. There are no pre-requisites for the course. The course is both interdisciplinary and comparative rather than having a United States focus. The purpose of the course is to expose students to the complex issues - social, political, economic and legal - that characterize women's rights around the globe. Students will be asked to think critically about women's rights while thinking comparatively about the varying domestic and international settings that can alter the meaning and practical application of these rights. The course will focus on various substantive areas of rights - from reproductive rights to health rights - at the domestic level. And we will also focus on women's rights at the international level - in such areas as the issue of rape as a war crime and sex trafficking.

Further, students will be asked to conduct research on a women's rights topic of their choice and to present their findings to class participants. The course will provide students with an introduction to and assistance in utilizing the web as a tool for conducting research on women's rights.

**COURSE LEARNING GOALS AND OBJECTIVES**

- Analyze and examine global women's right issues
- Critically assess policy approaches and solutions for global women's rights issues
- Construct and conduct an independent research project on a global women's rights issue of your choice
- Acquire and apply skills to share your research analysis including writing a Research Paper and designing and presenting a Research Presentation.

**COURSE MATERIALS**

**Required Readings**

There are two types of required readings for this course. First, there are two required books. These include, *Half the Sky* by Kristoff and WuDunn and *Girls Like Us* by Rachel Lloyd. They are at the UW Bookstore. Second, a set of required readings are available through the Course website under Modules.

**Course Website:** Be sure to check out the Course Website, as this will be a place to look for this syllabus, announcements, research links, weekly questions, study guides and assignments:  
<https://canvas.uw.edu/courses/1322336>

**Research Resources**

You will find extensive research resources on the course website. These include how-to tips and videos on conducting social science research using library resources and web based resources. You also will find information on research specific to the course's topic on women's human rights.

## COURSE ASSESSMENT AND ASSIGNMENTS

### Assessment

15%	Quiz Section Discussion/Reading and Writing Assignments (1-2pp.)
25%	Midterm Exam
30%	Final Exam
30%	Research Paper (10pp.)

Assessment in this course will be based on the above criteria. Receiving a zero on any one of the three main course assignments, will result in a failing grade for the course. In addition to your performance on the exams and paper, 15 percent of your course grade will be based on your class participation and assignments turned in quiz section. You will be expected to turn in writing assignments (1-2 pages) in your quiz sections. Weekly Reading Questions are posted on the Course Website on Fridays for the following week. The TA alone has responsibility over this element of the final grade. Your enrollment in this course constitutes acceptance of the following: 1) papers turned in late will be penalized .2 for each day after the due date and no make-up exams will be scheduled and 2) other than unforeseeable circumstances, no exceptions will be made to point #1. Please inform me or your TA as soon as possible of any such circumstances immediately. We are here to help. The syllabus marks clearly when exams are and when the paper is due, enabling all students to schedule their quarter accordingly. If you have conflicting commitments, such as military service or others, please come speak with me as soon as possible so accommodations can be made.

**Research and Writing:** This course aims to develop research skills. In particular, students will be instructed in and given time to utilize library resources in order to develop and complete a research paper. Further, students will also be asked to do a significant amount of writing and your ability to formulate and express a rigorous argument will be central to your success. You are encouraged to speak with the TA and me about your writing and to use the Political Science Writing Center. The Writing Center is located in Gowen Hall 105; they have handouts on their door and on their website (<http://depts.washington.edu/pswrite/>) and they will meet with you for writing consultations. Subsequently, students are expected to produce polished papers that are thoroughly revised, proofread, and spell-checked. Students are expected to cite their sources properly, and failure to do so will result in a grade reduction and a possible zero on the assignment.

**Access and Accommodations:** Your experience in this class is important to us, and it is the policy and practice of the University of Washington to create inclusive and accessible learning environments consistent with federal and state law. If you experience barriers based on disability, please seek a meeting with DRS to discuss and address them. If you have already established accommodations with DRS, please communicate your approved accommodations to your instructor at your earliest convenience so we can discuss your needs in this course. Disability Resources for Students (DRS) offers resources and coordinates reasonable accommodations for students with disabilities. Reasonable accommodations are established through an interactive process between you, your instructor(s) and DRS. If you have not yet established services through DRS, but have a temporary or permanent disability that requires accommodations (this can include but not limited to; mental health, attention-related, learning, vision, hearing, physical or health impacts), you are welcome to contact DRS at 206-543-8924, Mary Gates Hall 011, [uwdrs@uw.edu](mailto:uwdrs@uw.edu) or [disability.uw.edu](http://disability.uw.edu).

**Religious Accommodation:** Washington state law requires that UW develop a policy for accommodation of student absences or significant hardship due to reasons of faith or conscience, or for organized religious activities. The UW's policy, including more information about how to request an accommodation, is available at Religious Accommodations Policy (<https://registrar.washington.edu/staffandfaculty/religious-accommodations-policy/>). Accommodations must be requested within the first two weeks of this course using the Religious Accommodations Request form (<https://registrar.washington.edu/students/religious-accommodations-request/>).

**Counseling and Support:** The Counseling Center and Hall Health are excellent resources on campus that many UW students utilize. Students may get help with study skills, career decisions, substance abuse, relationship difficulties, anxiety, depression, or other concerns.

- Counseling Center <https://www.washington.edu/counseling/>
- Hall Health <https://wellbeing.uw.edu/>

**Academic Conduct.** We will enforce strictly the University of Washington's Student Conduct Code, including the policy on plagiarism. Violations of the Student Conduct Code, including plagiarism, can result in a variety of disciplinary actions, including suspension or permanent dismissal from the University. The entire code can be found at <http://www.washington.edu/cssc/for-students/academic-misconduct/>

The instructor and TAs in this course are here to help you utilize proper citation techniques, please seek out their assistance. This course will use the VeriCite platform to help support student learning and proper citation practices. Students will be given the chance to check and edit their research paper in advance. The Political Science Writing Center has an excellent handout on best practices for citation and how to avoid plagiarism. <http://depts.washington.edu/pswrite/Handouts/Plagiarism.pdf>

**Notice:** *The University has a license agreement with VeriCite, an educational tool that helps prevent or identify plagiarism from Internet resources. Your instructor may use the service in this class by requiring that assignments are submitted electronically to be checked by VeriCite. The VeriCite Report will indicate the amount of original text in your work and whether all material that you quoted, paraphrased, summarized, or used from another source is appropriately referenced.*

## COURSE SCHEDULE

Thursday, September 26: Course Introduction

### Lesson 1: Women's Rights as Human Rights: History and Theory

This lesson introduces women's rights as human rights: it's origins as both a movement and a policy approach. The lesson identifies the key historical developments of the women's human rights movement and also a set of pre-requisite factors for attaining women's human rights. The lesson also describes the theoretical approaches to studying women's human rights. This discussion will provide a basis for questions and approaches we will continue to engage as we examine substantive areas of women's human rights throughout the course.

Tuesday, October 1

- Bunch, *Women's Rights as Human Rights*

Thursday, October 3

- Engel, *International Human Rights and Feminisms: When Discourses Keep Meeting*
- United Nations, *Policy Brief #7: Recommendations on Women's Human Rights and Gender Equality*

### Lesson 2: Women's Rights as Human Rights: Legal Instruments

This lesson focuses on the international and transnational dimensions of women's human rights. In particular, we will explore international laws and conventions governing women's human rights and the movements that mobilized for these reforms. The last fifty years is marked by significant international legal reforms supporting women's rights, yet Millennium Development Goal 5 of Gender Equality emphasizes there is still much work to be done. This lesson enables us to critically reflect on past reforms so we might better understand the conditions necessary for future policy success.

Tuesday, October 8

- Merry, *Constructing a Global Law: Violence Against Women and the Human Rights System*

### Lesson 3: Women Rights and Health

This lesson examines the ways in which women's health and access to healthcare can affect the status of women's rights. If girls are not surviving childhood and women are not surviving childbearing years, civil and political rights are meaningless.

Thursday, October 10

- Yasmin, *The Ebola Rape Epidemic No One is Talking About*
- Amin, *Addressing Gender Inequalities to Improve Sexual and Reproductive Health and Well being of Women Living with HIV*

Tuesday, October 15

- Kristoff & WuDunn, *Half the Sky*, Introduction & pages 93-148 (*book*)
- World Health Organization (WHO), *Fact Sheet No.348: Maternal Mortality*

### Lesson 4: Women's Rights, Culture and Customs

This lesson turns to the ways in which women, the status of women and women's bodies are often a site for tensions between varying cultural and religious practices and customs. We will explore the ways in which this shapes their experience with women's rights. As we begin to grapple with the power of culture and its effects on women's rights, we also can see the ways in which culture is not static. This more dynamic understanding of culture will enable us to explore reforms and policy developments that will continue to raise the status of girls and women in societies throughout the world. We will also examine Western concerns about women in Islam and I will emphasize the need to be wary of reducing women's issues, advocacy and identity to their religion. There are many recent equality and justice trends in Muslim societies fueled by the work of feminists and this lesson provides the foundation to evaluate how this may empower women now and in the future.

Thursday, October 17

- Murray, *From the Beginning: A Deadly Preference*
- Yurdakul & Korteweg, *Gender equality and immigrant integration: Honor killing and forced marriage debates in the Netherlands, Germany, and Britain*

Tuesday, October 22:

- al-Hibri, *Islam, Law and Custom*
- Abu-Lughod, *Topless Protests Raise the Question: Who Can Speak for Muslim Women* (The Nation)
- Zhou, *The Sexism in School Dress Codes*

### Thursday, October 24: Mid Term Exam

### Lesson 5: Women's Rights and the Environment

This lesson explores the connections between the environment, natural resource management, access to clean water and women's empowerment. Building on our discussion in the previous lessons, we focus on the basic needs and infrastructure and how these provide the foundation for women's attainment of rights and equal status. Clean water and sanitation are inextricably linked to women's empowerment. This lesson puts in stark relief the need to ground rights reforms firmly in a larger discussion of access to basic life needs. We cannot build one without the other.

Tuesday, October 29

- United Nations, *Women and Water*
- MacDonald, *Women and the Right to Water* (speech United Nations Human Rights Council)

Thursday, October 31

- Demetriades & Esplen, *The Gender Dimension of Poverty and Climate Change Adaptation*
- Arora-Jonsson, *Virtue and Vulnerability: Discourses on Women, Gender, and Climate Change*

## **Lesson 6: Women's Rights and Global Trafficking**

This lesson focuses on the issue of global trafficking and the effects on women's rights. We will cover labor trafficking and sex trafficking and explore this phenomenon at the local, state and international level. Trafficking victims are all around us, we just might not know it. This lesson will provide the foundation to begin developing policies to bring change.

Tuesday, November 5

- Lloyd, *Girls Like Us* (book)

Thursday, November 7

- Trafficking & Prostitution Reconsidered
- Kristof and WuDunn, *Half the Sky*, pp.3-60 (book)

## **Lesson 7: Women's Rights in Times of War**

This lesson will cover the ways in which war time has created rights violations that are particular to women. The lesson is both historical and contemporary covering major innovations in international laws governing women's rights violations during war. Gender violence has always played a role in wartime atrocities, but we are beginning to open the chapter on justice as both perpetrators and victims are better understood.

Tuesday, November 12:

- Cohen, Green & Wood, *Wartime Sexual Violence: Misconceptions, Implications and Ways Forward*
- Kristoff & WuDunn, *Half the Sky*, pages 61-92 (book)
- Storr, *The Rape of Men* (news article)

Thursday, November 14:

- Caprioli, *Primed for Violence: The Role of Gender Inequality in Predicting Internal Conflict*
- Stewart & Adelstein, *Civil War, Women and Social Development*

**Friday, November 15:** Research Paper due in Quiz section and online to the course website.

## **Lesson 8: Women's Rights and the Global Economy**

This lesson examines women in the global economy. In particular, we will learn about the impact of global economic mechanisms such as structural adjustment programs have on the status of women. We will also cover micro credit programs and artisan cooperatives critically examining the way in which they can empower, but also present new challenges for equality. Together this lesson gives a basis for critically examining the global economic processes with an eye for women's rights.

Tuesday, November 19:

- Kristoff & WuDunn, *Half the Sky*, pages 149-254 (book)

Thursday, November 21:

- Sadasivam, *The Impact of Structural Adjustment on Women*
- Goetz & Gupta, *Who Takes Credit: Gender, Power and Control over Loan Use in Rural Credit programs in Bangladesh*

**Tuesday, November 26 (No Class Meeting)**

- **Out of class assignment:** Research assignment due in by Wednesday, November 27 at 10pm.

**Thursday, November 28 and Friday, November 29: Thanksgiving Holiday (No Class Meetings)**

**Lesson 9: Women's Rights and Mobilization Approaches**

This final lesson of the course will focus on the many approaches and modes of action that characterize women's rights mobilization. Returning to topics studied throughout the quarter, we will examine the different tactics, strategies and collaborations that activists and advocates have used to bring about social, political and legal change.

Tuesday, December 3  
*readings to be decided*

Thursday, December 5  
*readings to be decided*

**Final Exam is Tuesday, December 10, 10:30-12:20, KNE 220**