**LSJ 320 / POLS 368: The Law & Politics of International Human Rights**

**Final Project Assignment**

**Due Dates:**

Sunday, August 1 by midnight: Final Project Proposal

Wednesday, August 18 by midnight: Final Project

**Final Project Goals**

For the final project, you are asked to examine a major contemporary human rights problem. Your main goals are:

1. **describe the problem and develop a thesis** for whyit is happening,
2. **analyze the violation of specific human rights**, as protected in international and domestic law, in their social, cultural and political context, and
3. **develop thoughtful policy recommendations** (at the international and domestic levels) for addressing the problem.

As we discussed throughout the course, the perspective from which we analyze a human rights issue (e.g. from the international level, from the state level, from the organization level, from the social movement level, from the individual level) will impact how we understand that issue. Reflect on and incorporate thoughts about how your research and final project are in some way driven by the perspective you chose to adopt.

**Final Project Format**

The final project may be completed in a format of the student’s choosing. Possible options include, but are not limited to:

* Podcast
* Fictional Short Story based on your research
* Comic Book
* Art Poster Series
* Human Rights Teach-In (collaborate with others on this if you want!)
* Short Documentary
* Original R&B songs
* Human Rights Organization-Style Policy Pamphlet
* Newspaper Op-Ed Series
* *New Yorker* style long-form journalism
* Research Paper (~1750-2500 words not including works cited)

Each student will propose a format for their final project, alongside the human rights topic and country of their choice, in an assignment that is due Sunday, August 1 by midnight. Format approval is subject to review by the instructor, but we will work with you to make your idea possible. See more detailed instructions for this proposal assignment below.

**Final Project Elements**

Every final project will include:

1. **The final project in the format of your choosing** (with instructor approval), which must:
   1. Describe/tell a story about a human rights problem (this should be sufficiently narrow – e.g. in a particular country, impacting a particular group, involving a particular institution, etc.)
   2. Develop a thesis about why it is happening (gray area welcome, but be clear)
   3. Identify the specific human rights that are being violated, including:
      * Philosophically (why are these things human rights, why do they matter?)
      * International Human Rights Law (including regional human rights law)
      * Domestic Law
   4. Identify relationship between human rights violators and the relevant international human rights instruments (i.e. if a country, have they ratified the treaties? Do they cooperate with monitoring bodies? Have their been investigations? <- in creative expositions, there may be ways to signal this creatively, but you can also use the reflection to expound further)
   5. Explain how the rights are being violated, by whom, and with what cost
   6. Situate this human rights issue in its political and social context (what are the conditions that contributed to this human rights issue, in politics and in society?)
   7. Develop policy recommendations (which may involve government, NGOs, activists, human rights organizations, etc.)
2. **A short reflection** (at least 3 pages double-spaced) that discusses:
   1. how you developed your project and thesis,
   2. why you chose your format,
   3. how you successfully executed the goals of the final project,
   4. what you learned in the process, and
   5. whether your views changed during the course of developing and completing your project (how did they change? Why did they/didn’t they?)
3. **An Annotated Bibliography**, which must:
   1. Draw on **at least three (3) course readings**
   2. Draw on **at least three (4) external readings** (at least two of which are scholarly peer-reviewed)
   3. For each of the seven required citations, write an annotation between 100-150 words highlighting that reading’s key points and relevance to your project.

Note: The annotated bibliography requires only 7 annotated sources. You may have more sources, but are not required to annotate every additional source. [Click here to see this guide for more about how to write an annotated bibliography](https://guides.library.cornell.edu/annotatedbibliography).

**Assignments Due:**

1. **Final Project Proposal (DUE: Sunday, August 1 by midnight),** which must:
   1. Identify the human rights issue of your choosing, and explain:
      1. Why are you interested in this topic?
      2. How will you sufficiently narrow the scope (e.g. will you look at the issue in a particular country)?
      3. What do you think is going on here – i.e. what do you expect your “thesis” to be?
   2. Propose a format for the final project, specifying:
      1. What format did you choose?
      2. What is your plan – how will you make this a reality?
      3. What is your timeline for executing your plan?
      4. How will your final project address all of the seven (7) required points as described above (including how you will use the reflection to do this)?
      5. If all goes according to plan, what do you expect to submit on Wednesday, August 18 before midnight?
   3. Provide **two sources** directly related to the country and topic of your choice and annotate them in 100-150 words (describe what they’re about, the major points, and how it relates to your project)
2. **Final Project (DUE: Wednesday, August 18 by midnight)**
   1. Your final project must be uploaded to Canvas. If your project format is not compatible with Canvas, you must upload it and provide a link on the Canvas assignment (for example, to YouTube, Google Drive, Dropbox, etc.). Your submission must include all **Final Project Elements** described above, including the **1. Final Project, 2. Short Reflection, and 3. Annotated Bibliography.**

**Final Project FAQ:**

**Q: If I draw from more than 7 sources do I have to annotate them all?**

A: No! You only have to annotate the required 7 sources but may include as many in your works cited as you used!

**Q: I'm worried that my research project isn't creative enough, or that my creative project isn't academic enough. What should I do?**

A: Remember that you only have a few weeks start to finish to complete this whole project! You can't do everything and we don't expect you to do everything. Also, don't ever forget that formal research requires a ton of creative energy to come up with ideas, figure out how to tell a compelling story, etc.

**Q: I'm doing a creative final project and I'm not sure I can meet all the requirements on the assignment. Do I have to do everything or can I pick and choose?**

A: Even traditional research papers will have to make compromises about which things to emphasize and spend time focusing on. While I want  you to think about all the different requirements of the project, your final product may not be able to emphasize them all. Don't forget you can draw connections between your project and your research in the reflection!

**Q: How long should my paper be if I'm doing a traditional research paper?**

A: I want you to set reasonable goals for yourself, but I think successful papers will be between 1500-2500 words not including references.

**Q: Under project elements iii, it says "Identify the specific human rights that are being violated, including: philosophically; international human rights law; domestic law." What do you mean by philosophically?**

A: One of the things we've talked about in this course is that "human rights" are a contested notion - what counts as human rights is debatable! Some things are included in law while others aren't. It's possible you're interested in analyzing a human rights issue without much in the way of relevant law even. So how can you make sure to identify human rights "philosophically"? Easy! Ask yourself the questions: Why is this a human right? Why does it matter? Why should people care about it? How you answer these questions counts as "philosophical."

**Q: If I do a podcast, how long should it be? How should I include citations? Is there anything I can submit alongside my podcast to help the grading along?**

A: How long your podcast ends up being is less important to me than that you sufficiently explore your topic according to the guidelines in the assignment. I can imagine a 15-20 minute podcast being very successful, but I can also imagine them being longer. When it comes to citations, think about how people on the radio (NPR, podcasts, etc.) talk about their sources. You can talk more specifically about how you did your research in the reflection part of the assignment. **To make things easier for your TA,**consider submitting either a podcast script or a podcast outline (e.g. 0-60 seconds: intro; 1-5 minutes: background; 5-10 minutes, introduce guest and talk about how they got interested in this topic; etc.).