

Human Rights and Archives



<https://www.consilium.europa.eu/media/44356/archives1.png>

Course Description

This research seminar is centered around the concept of and the struggle for human rights over time, with special attention to development, institutionalization, and strategies for implementation from 1945 forward, especially following the [Universal Declaration of Human Rights](#) in 1948. The course will focus on research and writing methodologies, archival practices and collections, and case studies, with particular emphasis on effectively using archival collections, analog and digital. Students will gain practical training in using the platforms **Zotero** (citation software) and **Tropy** (software for organizing archival materials), built for historians by historians, as they hone their research and writing skills in a step-by-step production of a conference-style paper on a topic of their choosing. This course counts towards the Human Rights Minor/ Human Rights Concentration.

Texts

- Wendy Lower, *The Ravine*. Mariner Books, 2022.
- Mary Lou Rampolla, *A Pocket Guide to History*, 10th edition. Bedford/St. Martin's, 2021.
- Peter N. Stearns, *Human Rights in World History* 2nd edition. Routledge, 2023.

Course Objectives

By the end of this course, students will have:

- 1) demonstrated a deeper understanding of the patterns and processes, ruptures and continuities in the human rights history narrative which have shaped today's world, its politics, ideas, and ambitions;
- 2) engaged in an environment of open inquiry to exchange ideas and interpretations of concepts, with the understanding that history is a multidimensional conversation;
- 3) developed and articulated a question worthy of historical investigation;
- 4) evaluated, contextualized, and assessed the significance of primary and secondary sources;
- 5) trained in effective use of the research platforms Zotero (citation software) and Tropy (archival material organization software);
- 6) assessed primary sources as evidence to construct and defend a compelling argument;
- 7) critiqued and revised their own and others' work critically and constructively;
- 8) written and presented a conference-style research paper.

Course Requirements and Grade Evaluation

This is an overview of the assignments you will complete over the course of the semester by course component section toward the goal of producing and presenting your conference-style research paper. Grades will be calculated by the course component section, whose relative weights are listed below.

1) Doing Human Rights History (weeks 1-4): 15%

Working with a range of approaches and case studies, research tools and archives through short daily written assignments, participation in class discussions and activities.

2) Choosing a Topic (week 5): 5%

Here is where you develop a research topic. You will define the conversation into which you want to enter with your project and map out the conversational landscape. You will specify the question you want to try to answer and where you are going to find the sources to do so.

3) Historiography/Secondary Literature (weeks 6-8): 15%

This is where you find yourself in the historian's nexus between your research question and the accessible, feasible sources (main considerations here are time, language skills, and access restrictions). Which key interpretive secondary sources will you use to create a framework? Annotated bibliography and Zotero assignment are included in this section.

4) Primary Materials (weeks 9-11): 15%

We will work on some primary source documents in class, and you will then work on collecting and studying the primary sources you will use for your paper. The Opening Paragraph assignment, Primary source interpretation assignment, and Tropy assignment are included in this section.

5) Writing (weeks 12-14): 15%

- Draft outline for peer review in class. Create the structure for your argument. Prepare how you will organize and present your evidence. Create topic sentences.
- You will be given class time for on-site writing.
- Progress Report #1: what is your working hypothesis? What is your tentative conclusion? What problems remain? What challenges are you facing?
- Progress Report #2: where are you now in terms of distance to completion? What challenges remain?

6) Paper and Class Conference Presentation (weeks 15-16): 35%

- Final conference-style paper will be 6-7 pages long, or about 1500-1750 words. Title and references do not count toward the final word count. Paper must include Chicago-style footnotes and bibliography.
- Class conference presentations: 3 papers to a panel, 12-minute presentations, Q&A to follow all 3 panel presentations.

Grade scale:

A = 94-100; **A-** = 90-92; **B+** = 88-89; **B** = 83-87; **B-** = 80-82; **C+** = 78-79; **C** = 73-77; **C-** = 70-72; **D+** = 68-69; **D** = 63-67; **D-** = 60-62; **F** = 0-59

FREEDOM OF EXPRESSION POLICY

- In this class, I encourage you to exercise your rights to free inquiry and expression. You are welcome to discuss and express any view relevant to subject matter introduced by me (the instructor) or other class members, at appropriate times and places within the structure of the course. (Of course, we cannot lose sight of our course progress, so sometimes discussions will

need to continue informally after class or in office hours.) You will be held responsible for learning the content of this course, but you remain free to take reasoned exception to the views presented and to reserve judgment about matters of conscience, controversy, or opinion. As we examine a range of competing ideas over the course of the semester, you are each encouraged to engage vigorously with the material, while being respectful of each other and the instructor. I urge you to speak your mind, listen attentively to others, explore ideas and arguments, play devil's advocate, and engage in civil but robust discussions. When you encounter ideas that you find offensive, unwise, immoral or wrong-headed, I encourage you to engage them with the proper currency of intellectual discourse – reasons, evidence, and arguments. No relevant ideas or positions are out of bounds. Your course grade will be based upon your academic performance, and not upon opinions or conduct in matters unrelated to academic standards.

- While our commitment to freedom of expression means that no relevant ideas or positions are out of bounds in our discussions and assignments, disruptive or disorderly behavior (including threats or harassment) is strictly prohibited. Such behavior will be reported to the Office of the Dean of Students, in accordance with Purdue University policy.