Human Rights in Latin America: A Critical Approach

General description of the course

This course is aimed at providing students with a profound understanding of the essence of Human Rights in the Latin American context, by analyzing the history of colonialism, eurocentrism, patriarchalism, and neoliberalism that perpetuate structures of violence in the region.

The first part of the course introduces students to a critical theory of human rights, relating concepts and ideals of human rights within the Latin American history of authoritarian governments, systematic violations of human rights by states and groups in power, and by examining the structural, cultural and direct violence through the human rights lenses. To deepen in the analysis and application of the critical theory of human rights, two main issues are studied: human trafficking and organized crime.

The second part of the course focuses on understanding the dynamics of violence inflicted to specific populations in situation of vulnerability: women, children, indigenous peoples, and migrants. The specific human rights of these groups will be reviewed, as well as the systematic violations of human rights (cultural/structural), and current efforts to provide them with special protection. Finally, the role of the corporations in the perpetuation of violence, impoverishing the region and benefiting elite and oligarch groups will be analyzed, as well as Corporate Social Responsibility efforts to promote the respect of human rights and human development.

The methodology of the course mainstreams gender and human rights approaches, creating and promoting a participatory, democratic, holistic, and creative classroom. During the semester, participants will have plenty of opportunities to reflect, discuss and build knowledge together, through games, case analysis, debates, plays, oral presentations, among others.

Evaluation

Two written tests 20% each
A 10-page essay on a selected topic 40%
Class participation and attendance (assigned by the professor) 20%
Course Content

Part I

Human Rights: A Critical Approach

Session #1
Introduction to the course
Human Rights and Latin America: overview

Session #2
- Latin America: from the colonial period to the colonialism of states, decolonizing human rights

*Mandatory Reading:*

*Suggested reading:*

Session #3
- The discourse of human rights to validate the violation of human rights

*Mandatory Reading:*

*Suggested reading:*

Session #4
- Understanding the dynamics of violence: direct, structural and cultural from the Peace Studies lenses a basic paradigm and approach

*Mandatory Reading*
**Suggested Reading**


**Session #5**

- Latin America: a history of dictatorships and coups

  *Mandatory Reading:*

  *Suggested Reading:*

**Session #6**

- Genocide and Torture

  *Mandatory Reading:*

**Session #7**

- Organized crime and human rights in Latin America

  *Mandatory Reading:*

  *Suggested Reading:*

Session # 8
➢ Human Trafficking

*Mandatory Reading:*

Session # 9
➢ Visit to the Inter American Court of Human Rights

Session # 10
➢ Mid-term exam

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**Part II**

**Human Rights of Particularly Vulnerable Groups**

Session # 11
➢ The state of women's rights in Latin America

*Mandatory Reading:*

*Suggested readings:*
Inter American Institute of Human Rights (2006) Situation and Analysis of Femicide in the Central American Region. IIHR: San Jose, Costa Rica.


Inter-American Convention on the Prevention, Punishment and Eradication of Violence Against Women, "Convention of Belem do Para".
Session # 12
- Reproductive rights as human rights

**Mandatory Reading:**

**Suggested readings**

Session # 13
- Children’s rights
- International Covenant of the Rights of the Child (CRC)
- The state of the children in Latin America

**Mandatory Readings:**

**Suggested readings:**
Declaration on the Rights of the Child
Convention on the Rights of the Child

Session # 14
- Child labor
- Child sexual exploitation

**Mandatory Reading:**
Session #15

➢ Indigenous Peoples
➢ What are their rights as member of a community and what is their perspective on human rights?

*Mandatory Reading:*

*Suggested Readings*

International Labor Organization Convention (No. 169) concerning Indigenous and Tribal Peoples in Independent Countries
American Society of International Law (2007) ASIL Insights The UN General Assembly adopts the Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples
[http://www.asil.org/insights071009.cfm](http://www.asil.org/insights071009.cfm)

Session #15

➢ Indigenous Peoples

*Mandatory Reading:*

*Suggested readings:*

Session #17:

➢ Rights of Migrant Workers and their families
➢ Poverty and Migration

*Mandatory Reading:

*Suggested Reading:*
International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families (1990)
Session # 18
- Conflicts, refugees and migration
- Migrants as a development resource
- Modern day slavery

*Mandatory Reading:*

*Suggested readings:*


Session #19:
- Paper due and oral presentation

Session #20
- Visit to the University for Peace

Session # 21
- Corporations and Human Rights

*Mandatory Reading:*

Session # 22
- Corporations and Human Rights

*Mandatory Reading:*
Session #23

- Corporate Social Responsibility

*Mandatory Reading:*

- Guest Speaker on Corporate Social Responsibility and actions taken in Costa Rica

Session #24:

- Final Examination
ICDS Academic Policy

**Special Needs:** In case of requiring additional time for taking exams, or if experiencing any circumstance during the course of the term that would interfere with the student’s ability to complete his/her work or take a test, students should let the professor know ahead of time.

**Academic Integrity**

Students in this course are expected to abide by common sense and normal regulations of Academic Integrity. Violations of the Academic Integrity policy include, but are not limited to plagiarism, fabrication, cheating, and academic misconduct, including dishonest acts such as tampering with grades or taking part in obtaining or distributing any part of an administered test/assignment. The intent to violate this policy also represents a violation of this policy.

**Possible Sanctions for Violating Academic Integrity Policy**

If an act of academic dishonesty is determined to have occurred, one or more of the following sanctions will be imposed, depending on the severity of a first-time offense:

- Reduction of a course grade
- An “F” for the assignment or exam
- Failure for the entire course
- Other action deemed appropriate by the faculty member
- Any of the above sanctions with the inability to withdraw

The decision about the sanction to apply will be made jointly by the course’s professor and ICDS’ Academic Director, in consultation with home university on-site Director for the program, if applicable. The incident will be reported to the home university and may result in an official conduct record for the student(s).

**Second violation:** A second violation will result in suspension or expulsion from the program, in addition to any sanction issued from the list above.

**Changes to Syllabus**

The student acknowledges receipt of this syllabus and the information herein by continuing to attend this course. The Instructor reserves the right to make changes to this syllabus if circumstances warrant such change, with previous approval of ICDS’ Academic Director. All major changes will be provided to the student in writing.