

San José State University
Department of Sociology
SOCI 118, Sociology of Human Rights and Social Justice

*The schedule is subject to change with fair notice. Students will be notified of changes to the schedule or assigned readings via email. You can always find the most up-to-date syllabus here **so check back frequently.***

Course and Contact Information

Instructor:	Dr. Roni Abusaad
Email:	roni.abusaad@sjsu.edu
Office Location:	Online
Office Hours:	Tuesday, 5-6 p.m online (details below)
Prerequisites:	SOCI 01 or equivalent

Catalog Course Description

Analyze meanings and practices of human rights violations and promotion by exploring the social consequences of issues such as war crimes, sexism, migrant rights, and social displacement and by reflecting on prevailing and alternative institutions for social justice (SJSU course catalog).

Course Overview

This course provides an interdisciplinary exploration of human rights instruments, institutions, and notable human rights campaigns. Starting with the historical development of human rights, you will look at contemporary threats to the realization of fundamental human dignity and take action on an issue that is important to you.

This course is designed for students to explore questions such as:

- How has the concept of “human rights” evolved? How are human rights defined through international law?

- Who gets to decide what these rights are and how they are realized?
- How have people struggled to define and realize fundamental rights and/or dignity, and to what effects?
- Where human rights have been defined, why/where/how/by whom have they been violated? How can human rights concepts shape remedies to such violations?
- How does a discourse of fundamental “right” and/or “dignity” affect the way we understand, articulate, and respond to various social problems?
- How do struggles and dialogs over the lessons of human rights struggles and scholarship shape culture, policy, and social activism in our local and global communities?

Course Learning Objectives

Upon successful completion of this course students should be able to:

- (CLO1) Recognize and access human rights instruments defining “human rights” according to international law (such as the Universal Declaration of Human Rights [UDHR]) via online and library resources.
- (CLO2) Recognize and access the reports of central oversight agencies, such as Amnesty International [AI] and Human Rights Watch [HRW], that report on human rights abuses to the United Nations and global populace via online and library resources.
- (CLO3) Compare and contrast “universal” and “relativist” approaches to human rights. This will require students to recognize the unique nuances of “Western,” “non-Western,” and indigenous concepts of fundamental right and dignity. This also requires students to identify the historical context of human rights and human rights concepts as they have developed.
- (CLO4) Compare and contrast how “rights” and “dignity” have been defined for human and non-human animals by various cultures throughout the world.
- (CLO5) Apply a human rights discourse to analyze social problems, policies, and practices in the US— particularly in the SF Bay Area.

Required Texts/Readings

Textbook

Armaline, W., D.S. Glasberg, & B. Purkayastha. (2015). *The Human Rights Enterprise: Political Sociology, State Power and Social Movements*. London: Polity Press.

Other Readings

All assigned readings beyond the required texts above will be provided by the instructor via email (PDF files). Should you have any problems obtaining reading materials throughout the course, please email the instructor for assistance.

Library Liaison

For help with library resources and library research (including the use of databases and online research materials—such as journal search engines), students are strongly encouraged to contact the Sociology Subject Librarian: Kathryn Blackmer Reyes, Kathryn.BlackmerReyes@SJSU.edu.

Class Overview, Expectations and Resources

This is a self-paced online class with weekly modules. The expectation is that you will spend **4-6 hours on each module**. First you should complete the readings, then work through the module deck, watching videos and completing the assignments to show your learning. You will need to complete work and assignments every week. These are always due by midnight on Fridays - see the due dates on the Syllabus tab.

Because this will be a completely online course, we will need to spend time becoming accustomed to the online platform and learning environment. This "Start Here" introductory module will walk you through a variety of course materials, activities, and steps to ensure that you understand how this course works and ensure your computer is properly set, and that you can use the elements of Canvas needed for this course.

You can find all due dates for assignments on the Syllabus page on Canvas, accessing detailed instructions and rubrics by clicking on each assignment. Missing or plagiarized work will receive a grade of zero. **No late work will be accepted.**

If you have a medical or family emergency that interferes with you being able to submit an assignment on time, please reach out to me or shortly thereafter, with documentation, I can provide accommodation.

Creating a Successful Learning Experience

We all collaborate to produce a successful learning experience. Specific responsibilities are as follows.

My responsibilities

- Create a high-quality curriculum that meets the requirements of the Justice Studies department.
- Lead the course.
- Plan for and contribute to an inclusive learning environment that appreciates our diversity.
- Grade assignments and provide appropriate and timely feedback.
- Make adaptations to the course, based on your feedback and update all course contents to be up to date reflective of current conditions.

- Respond respectfully and promptly to questions and concerns raised.

Your responsibilities

- Read, listen to and watch assigned materials.
- Be prepared and complete assignments timely.
- Contribute to an inclusive learning environment. This includes, but is not limited to a) sharing your knowledge, experience, reflections, comments, feedback, and alternative opinions; and b) respectfully listening to and dialoguing with others.
- Proactively seek guidance and feedback from me as needed to assure your progress and receive guidance, clarification and assistance.
- Inform me if there are circumstances bearing on your ability to attend or fully participate in this course.

Communication

Please send all communication via Canvas. I make it a priority to quickly respond to my students and this ensures that I see your message and can address it. I am available to meet via Zoom or for a phone call - please just reach out to arrange a time. If needed for back-up, my email is roni.abusaad@sjsu.edu .

Office Hours

My office hours are on Tuesdays from 5-6 p.m. Please reach out to me if you want to meet and let me know what time to expect you during that window. If this time doesn't work for you, please get in touch and we can find an alternate time. Never hesitate to reach out!

Preparing for success

I want you to have success in this class and to have a powerful learning experience. Especially in an online class like this where you are driving your own learning, you truly get as much out of the class as you put in. To prepare for the semester:

1. Review this syllabus/Welcome page in depth. They should have answers to all your questions.
2. Get oriented to Canvas. This is where you'll submit all of your assignments. You can see all of these with the due dates under "Syllabus." This is also the best place to send me messages.
3. Make sure you receive and see all updates and communications. I will regularly send out announcements via Canvas, including short video messages. In Settings, you can make sure these announcements go to your email. I would also recommend that you download the Canvas Student app.
4. Plan ahead. Review the upcoming assignments and material and don't wait until the last minute. It is especially important to look at the requirements detailed in the rubric, which clearly outline the grading criteria. Reviewing in advance allows for time to navigate any technical

difficulties or to reach out to me with clarification and questions.

5. Complete the *Ready for success? practice quiz!* This is a tool for you to get oriented to the course.

Grading Information

The final project (issue brief, action report and presentation) is a critical part of showing your learning and is worth over 40% of your grade in this course.

Determination of Grades	
Quizzes	20%
Class Participation	10%
Discussions	15%
Module of Choice	5%
Proposal for Final Paper and Action Project	4%
Environmental Rights Presentation	4%
Issue Research Brief	14%
Action Research	14%
Presentation	14%
TOTAL	100%

All graded assignments are scored by a rubric. The rubric is attached to the assignment in Canvas. Always look at the rubric before submitting the

assignment. Make sure you have met all the requirements as listed. Once an assignment is graded, you will be able to access the rubric and see exactly what you missed.

At any time you can go to the Grades in Canvas and see your current grades. You can expect work to be graded within a week and usually within 48 hours.

Note: Your current score might be different from your final score, as the current score omits all ungraded items from the calculation.

- Current Score = Points Earned / Points Possible of Assignments Graded
- Final Score = Final score includes empty cells in calculation Points Earned / Total Points Possible for All Assignments

Grading Scale

The final course grade will be calculated based on the following standard scale:

98-100	A+	80-83	B-	64-67	D
94-97	A	78-79	C+	60-63	D-
90-93	A-	74-77	C	<60	F
88-89	B+	70-73	C-		
84-87	B	68-69	D+		

Students must achieve a grade of C or better (C- not accepted) to fulfill Justice Studies major requirements.

Passage of the Writing Skills Test (WST) or ENGL/LLD 100A with a C or better (C- not accepted), and completion of Core General Education are prerequisite to all SJSU Studies courses. Completion of, or co-registration in, 100W is strongly recommended. A minimum aggregate GPA of 2.0 in GE Areas R, S, & V shall be required of all students.

Module	Topics and Readings	Assignments	Due Date for all readings and assignments
1	<p>Introduction to the Course <i>All readings and videos are on Canvas</i></p>	<p>Class participation #1</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Introductions <p>Complete the “Check-in: Ready for Success?” quiz.</p> <p>Opening Reflection</p> <p>Sign up for the Human Rights Watch Daily Briefing and Amnesty International emails to keep up with the latest news related to human rights and get action alerts.</p>	1/26
2	<p>Overview of Human Rights</p>	<p>Class participation #2</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discussion: What does the public know about human rights? <p>Quiz #1</p>	2/2
3	<p>American Exceptionalism and Human Rights in the U.S.</p>	<p>Class participation #3:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Complete the survey: “How is San Jose doing on human rights?” via link in Canvas <i>NOTE: This has to be graded manually and</i> 	2/9

		<i>you won't see your participation register immediately</i>	
		Quiz #2	
4	Human Rights in International Law	Quiz #3	2/16
5	Case Study: The Israel-Palestine Conflict		2/23
6	Israel-Palestine Continued	Quiz #4	3/1
7	Interconnections Between Political, Economic, Social and Cultural Rights: Looking at "The Covenants": the ICCPR and ICESCR	Class Participation #4: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discussion: Human rights in the news 	3/8
8	Environmental Rights and Sustainability	Environmental Rights Presentation	3/15
9	Module of Choice Going Deeper: <i>Choose one of the "Going Deeper" modules to go deeper into a topic of interest to you. As you work through the module, take notes aligned with the questions in the assignment prompt and write up your final responses and submit via the form on the assignment in Canvas.</i>		3/22
10	Taking Action to Advance Social Change	Discussion #3	3/29
	Spring Break		4/5
11	Artificial Intelligence (AI) and Human Rights	Reflection	4/12

12	Racial Discrimination and Xenophobia	Class participation #5: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Complete the implicit bias test - Take the test called “Race ('Black - White' IAT)” and post to the discussion. 	4/19
13	Human Rights Appeals to the UN by African Americans		4/26
14	Vulnerable Groups <i>Single-issue Human Rights Instruments, Intersectionality and Solidarity</i>	Participation #6 - Class discussion Select your research topic and start thinking about ways to take action. For the rest of the semester, you will be broken into smaller groups with other students researching related topics to collaborate, learn from each other and deepen your analysis.	5/3
	FINAL PROJECTS	Issue Research Brief	5/10
	FINAL PROJECTS	Action Report and Presentation	5/17

Course Format

This course will be conducted entirely online through Canvas. Course materials such as this syllabus, readings, handouts, assignment rubrics, etc. can be found on Canvas at <http://sjsu.instructure.com>. You are responsible for regularly checking the email address associated with your [MySJSU](#) account to learn of any updates.

With any questions or problems, send me a message via Canvas. Also use Canvas to complete assignments and submit your papers. Hard copy, email, or Turnitin submissions will not be accepted.

Other technology requirements / equipment / material

All quizzes will need to be completed within the Respondus Lockdown Browser, which can be downloaded [here](#).

How will the objectives be met?

You will have work to complete each week, with a mix of modules to complete, class participation, assignments, quizzes and tests.

Modules

The expectation is that you will spend **4-6 hours on each module**. First you should complete the readings, then work through the module deck, watching all videos included.

Class Participation

Throughout the course, you will have several participation assignments to support you in reflecting on the material and connecting it to your own experiences.

Quizzes

All quizzes are cumulative and may include material from any point in the course preceding that assessment. All are available on Weds. of the week due and need to be completed by Friday at midnight. This ensures that you can access tech support and the computer lab. **I cannot help with any technical issues related to the internet or Canvas - for these, reach out to tech support.**

University Policies

Per University Policy S16-9, university-wide policy information relevant to all courses, such as academic integrity, accommodations, etc. will be available on Office of Graduate and Undergraduate Programs' [Syllabus Information web page](http://www.sjsu.edu/gup/syllabusinfo/) at <http://www.sjsu.edu/gup/syllabusinfo/>

CASA Student Success Center

The Student Success Center in the College of Applied Sciences and Arts (CASA) provides advising for undergraduate students majoring or wanting to major in programs offered in CASA Departments and Schools. All CASA students and students who would like to be in CASA are invited to stop by the Center for general education advising, help with changing majors, academic policy related questions, meeting with peer advisors, and/or attending various regularly scheduled presentations and workshops. If you are looking for academic advice or even tips about how to navigate your way around SJSU, check out the CASA Student Success Center. Location: MacQuarrie Hall (MQH) 533 - top floor of MacQuarrie Hall. Contact information: [408.924.2910](tel:408.924.2910).

Website: <http://www.sjsu.edu/casa/ssc/>. The CASA Student Success Center also provides study space and laptops for checkout.

Justice Studies Department Reading and Writing Philosophy

The Department of Justice Studies is committed to scholarly excellence. Therefore, the Department promotes academic, critical, and creative

engagement with language (i.e., reading and writing) throughout its curriculum. A sustained and intensive exploration of language prepares students to think critically and to act meaningfully in interrelated areas of their lives—personal, professional, economic, social, political, ethical, and cultural. Graduates of the Department of Justice Studies leave San José State University prepared to enter a range of careers and for advanced study in a variety of fields; they are prepared to more effectively identify and ameliorate injustice in their personal, professional and civic lives. Indeed, the impact of literacy is evident not only within the span of a specific course, semester, or academic program but also over the span of a lifetime.

SJSU Writing Center

The SJSU Writing Center is located in Clark Hall, Suite 126. All Writing Specialists have gone through a rigorous hiring process, and they are well trained to assist all students at all levels within all disciplines to become better writers. In addition to one-on-one tutoring services, the Writing Center also offers workshops every semester on a variety of writing topics. To make an appointment or to refer to the numerous online resources offered through the Writing Center, visit the [Writing Center website](#).

SJSU Counseling Services

The SJSU Counseling Services is located on the corner of 7th Street and San Fernando Street, in Room 201, Administration Building. Professional psychologists, social workers, and counselors are available to provide consultations on issues of student mental health, campus climate or psychological and academic issues on an individual, couple, or group basis. To schedule an appointment or learn more information, visit [Counseling Services website](#) at <http://www.sjsu.edu/counseling>.

Free Food

Students in need have access to several self-serve, no-registration food pantries around campus. Just stop by and take items as needed. For locations and more info visit: www.sjsu.edu/wellness/foodresources/oncampus.