

**SENIOR WRITING SEMINAR:  
INTERNATIONAL HUMAN RIGHTS  
LAW 590**

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Office Hours: Wednesdays 2-4 pm or by appointment

Fall 2023  
TTH 3-4:15 p.m.  
Room 164

**Course Description and Objectives:**

This course introduces students to the international and regional laws and institutions governing human rights. We will study the theoretical foundations of human rights as well as the continuing evolution of these rights. Students will become familiar with the three main legal documents collectively known as the International Bill of Rights – the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights and the International Covenant on Economic, Social, and Cultural Rights – as well as other legal sources for human rights. We will also consider how the protection of these rights is or is not made effective by the international community through international, regional, and national legal systems and institutions. Finally, we will evaluate the impact of non-state actors such as non-governmental organizations and corporations on human rights.

This course is designated to meet the senior writing requirement. Students will satisfy this requirement by choosing a topic of interest in the field of international human rights law, researching that topic, and writing a seminar-length paper (approximately 30 pages in length, double-spaced including footnotes) exploring that topic in more detail.

**Learning objectives:** During this course, students should:

1. Learn about the historical development of human rights;
2. Become familiar with international and regional laws and institutions that govern the implementation and protection of human rights;
3. Develop an understanding of some of the major problems and challenges in the field of human rights;
4. Consider diverse perspectives on the relative importance of various human rights in different countries and cultures;
5. Identify appropriate topics, improve research skills, and write good quality seminar-length papers analyzing an aspect of international human rights.

**Required Reading:**

There is no required book for this course. Most of the reading assignments for this course will be posted on the class D2L webpage. Students also will be expected to do their own research and share some of these materials with the class.

If you have not taken a course in international law before, I strongly recommend you read chapters 1-3 of Mark W. Janis, *An Introduction to International Law* (Aspen), which is available in the library.

### **D2L:**

We will be using D2L as the course webpage. I will post the syllabus, reading assignments and materials, and a schedule of assignments on the webpage, as well as other relevant information. Students are expected to check it at least weekly and are responsible for any materials posted there.

### **Class Attendance and Preparation:**

Because this is a writing-intensive course, time off from some classes will be given to work on research and writing. Therefore, barring extraordinary circumstances, students are permitted only **four (4) absences** during the semester. Absent extraordinary circumstances, a greater number of absences will result in a withdrawal from the course. Students are expected to be on time for class and attendance will be taken daily. Students are responsible for keeping track of their absences. If you are late to class more than twice, it will count as an absence.

Students are expected to read the assigned material for each class, prepare any written assignments, and actively participate in the class discussion of that material. If I call on you and I judge that you are unprepared, I reserve the right to mark you as absent for that class. During the latter part of the course, students will be expected to prepare an abstract of their paper topic for the class and give a short oral presentation to the class based on their chosen topic. Each student will be asked to read and give constructive feedback on at least one other student's draft paper. All students are expected to come prepared to ask questions and comment on oral presentations. All of these activities will be taken into account in calculating the class participation portion of the grade. In addition, students will be required to meet with me individually at least once, and possibly more than once, during the semester to discuss their paper.

If you are unprepared for class but would like to attend and receive the benefit of the class discussion: (1) do not sign the attendance sheet; (2) give me a note at the start of class with your name and the date. A day of "noting out" counts as one of your permitted absences.

### **Evaluation:**

The final grade will consist of multiple parts. Students will be expected to turn in a written thesis statement, outline, and annotated bibliography for the research paper which collectively will count for approximately 10% of the final grade. The first draft of the paper will count for approximately 35% of the grade. The abstract and oral presentation will count for approximately 10% of the grade. The final draft of the paper will count for approximately 35% of the grade. Class participation will count for the final 10% of the grade.

**Workload Expectations:**

The American Bar Association standards for accrediting law schools contain a formula for calculating the amount of work required to earn one credit hour of law school credit. Pursuant to these standards, for this three-credit-hour class, you should spend 150 minutes per week in class (2.5 hours), plus a minimum of six hours of reading, studying, and writing each week, for a total of 8.5 hours per week.

**Class Recordings:**

This class will be recorded using Echo360. Links to the recordings will be made available upon request. Viewing a recording of the class does not count as being present in the class unless the professor has made a special exception.

**Professional Behavior:**

I consider it part of my responsibility as a professor to address the learning needs of all of the students in this course. I will do my best to present materials in a manner that is respectful of diverse viewpoints and personal characteristics. I also believe that the diversity of student experiences and perspectives is essential to the deepening of knowledge in a course. A good attorney must learn to listen carefully to what others say without interrupting even if they disagree with the viewpoint being expressed. During this class, we will discuss topics on which personal and political views are likely to vary greatly. In order to test ideas, I strongly encourage open discussion and the expression of different viewpoints. Keep in mind that successful attorneys make statements and arguments based in facts, legislative authority, and case law, not based on generalizations, assumptions, or stereotypes. The goal of class discussion is not that everyone agrees, but that everyone in the class gains new insights and experiences. In sum, I expect professional, respectful, and courteous behavior and commentary at all times that would be appropriate in a courtroom, legislative hearing, or public meeting. Students whose behavior is disruptive to the class or that violates the rules may be asked to leave the classroom or may face other consequences based on the circumstances.

Respectful behavior also includes addressing each person as they prefer to be addressed. I prefer to be called Professor Buys in the classroom setting and I use the pronouns she/her/hers. Please let me know if you prefer to be called by a particular name and the pronouns you prefer to use.

Please be courteous to the others in the class by keeping distractions to a minimum, turning off any noise-making devices, and giving the class your full attention. You are expected to use laptops and other devices only for class-related tasks during class. Other uses of technological devices are likely to be distracting and possibly even offensive to other persons in the class and are therefore prohibited. If I believe there is a problem with improper usage of laptops or other electronic devices during class, I reserve the right to take appropriate disciplinary action. If it is absolutely necessary for you to leave the class while it is in session, please do so as discretely as possible to as not to disrupt the class.

**Ban on Collaboration:**

I expect the written assignments you submit in this course to be your own original work. You are not allowed to obtain help from generative artificial intelligence (including, but not limited to, ChatGPT) on written assignments for this course. However, you may discuss your seminar paper with others in accordance with the instructions for individual assignments and to obtain research assistance from the law librarians. If you violate the ban on this collaboration policy, you will receive a failing grade on the assignment. You also may be found in violation of the Honor Code, which can lead to serious penalties, including expulsion. An Honor Code investigation must also be reported to the Bar Examiners, even if you are cleared of any violation. When in doubt about how to proceed, ask me.

**EMERGENCY PROCEDURES:** We ask that you become familiar with **Emergency Preparedness @ SIU**. Emergency response information is available on posters in buildings on campus, on the Emergency Preparedness @ SIU website, and through text and email alerts. To register for alerts, visit <http://emergency.siu.edu/>.

**DISABILITY POLICY.** SIU Carbondale is committed to providing an inclusive and accessible experience for all students with disabilities. Disability Support Services coordinates the implementation of accommodations. If you think you may be eligible for accommodations but have not yet obtained approval, please contact DSS immediately at 618-453-5738 or [disabilityservices.siu.edu](http://disabilityservices.siu.edu). You may request accommodations at any time, but timely requests help to ensure accommodations are in place when needed. Accommodations and services are determined through an interactive process with students and may involve consideration of specific course design and learning objectives in consultation with faculty. Please send approved accommodations to your faculty through the DSS online portal.

**SALUKI CARES.** The purpose of Saluki Cares is to develop, facilitate and coordinate a university-wide program of care and support for students in any type of distress—physical, emotional, financial, or personal. By working closely with faculty, staff, students, and their families, SIU will continue to display a culture of care and demonstrate to our students and their families that they are an important part of the community. For Information on Saluki Cares: (618) 453-2461, or [siucares@siu.edu](mailto:siucares@siu.edu), <https://salukicare.siu.edu/>. Associate Dean Doug Lind ([dlind@siu.edu](mailto:dlind@siu.edu), 618-453-8713) and Assistant Dean Judi Ray ([judiray@siu.edu](mailto:judiray@siu.edu), 618-453-8135) are available at the School of Law to help students access university resources.

**SAFETY AWARENESS FACTS AND EDUCATION** Title IX makes it clear that violence and harassment based on sex and gender is a Civil Rights offense subject to the same kinds of accountability and the same kinds of support applied to offenses against other protected categories such as race, national origin, etc. If you or someone you know has been harassed or assaulted, you can find the appropriate resources here: <http://safe.siu.edu>