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# **Anthropology 219**

# **Sociology 219**

## **Human Rights in Social Perspective**

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Department of Social Sciences  
Faculty of Media, Society and Culture (MSC)

# **UNIT OUTLINE**

## **Semester 1 2008**



## Essential Administrative Information

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<b>Unit Title</b>	<b>Human Rights in Social Perspective</b>
<b>Unit Description</b>	
<b>Unit Study Package Number</b>	<b>311062</b>
<b>Teaching Area</b>	<b>Anthropology, Sociology</b>
<b>Credit Value</b>	<b>Anthropology 219 is 25 credits Sociology 219 is 25 credits</b>
<b>Mode(s) of study</b>	<b>Internal/area external</b>
<b>Co-, Pre- and Anti-requisites</b>	<b>None</b>
<b>Additional requirements</b>	<b>None</b>
<b>Core Unit status</b>	<b>If you are taking this unit as a required (core) unit in your course of study, you may be terminated from your course of study if you fail this unit twice</b>
<b>Result Type</b>	<b>Grade and Mark</b>
<b>Ancillary Fees and Charges</b>	<b>All fee information can be obtained through the Fees Centre. Visit <a href="http://www.fees.curtin.edu.au/index.cfm">http://www.fees.curtin.edu.au/index.cfm</a> and/or by contacting the relevant Faculty Office.</b>
<b>Unit Controller</b>	<b>Dr Anne-Marie Hilsdon</b>
<b>Contact Details</b>	<b>Phone: 08 92663349</b> <b>Location: Building 209 Room 308</b> <b>Email: <a href="mailto:a.hilsdon@curtin.edu.au">a.hilsdon@curtin.edu.au</a></b>
<b>Unit Website</b>	<b><a href="http://webct.curtin.edu.au">http://webct.curtin.edu.au</a></b>
<b>Divisional Website</b>	<b><a href="http://www.humanities.curtin.edu.au">http://www.humanities.curtin.edu.au</a></b>

## <http://www.humanities.curtin.edu.au> Student Feedback



For Semester 1 and Semester 2 **eVALUate** is open for student feedback in weeks 12-17. For other study periods see <http://evaluate.curtin.edu.au/info/dates.cfm>

We welcome your feedback as one way to keep improving this unit. Later this semester, you will be encouraged to give unit feedback through **eVALUate**, Curtin's online student feedback system (see <http://evaluate.curtin.edu.au>).

## Student Rights and Responsibilities

It is the responsibility of every student to be aware of all relevant legislation and policies and procedures relating to their rights and responsibilities as a student. These include:

- ◇ the Student Charter
- ◇ the University's Guiding Ethical Principles
- ◇ the University's policy and statements on plagiarism and academic integrity
- ◇ copyright principles and responsibilities
- ◇ the University's policies on appropriate use of software and computer facilities

Information is available through the University's "Student Rights and Responsibilities" web page: <http://students.curtin.edu.au/administration/responsibilities.cfm>.

## Introduction

Our human rights as universal and inviolable are under threat. Through poverty and war, people of different ethnicities and religions have always been subject to human rights abuses. Yet communities around the world in western and non western countries are increasingly exposed to risks of all kinds – natural and man made disasters, and violence and discrimination on the basis of ethnicity, religion, gender and sexuality, age migration status and so on. Huge movements of people between continents to escape some of this abuse have produced a whole new lot of human rights violations. How can societies be reconstructed after societal upheaval and disaster? How can the rights of all people involved, be protected?

Whose human rights ought to be protected? Universal human rights discourse is being exposed as 'westernised' through debates by some governments of East and Southeast Asia who champion Asian values; Feminists and women's groups in the west continue to be critical of universal human rights as exclusive in protecting predominantly the rights of the 'male citizen;' and Islamic leaders in opposition to universal covenants have developed a set of rights thought applicable to all Muslims.

We will explore the issues of human rights in a number of different ways. Working from a community perspective, using case studies and qualitative research, this unit exposes the violation of rights and evaluates the claims for their protection.

## Aims

The specific aims of this unit are:

- To provide an introduction to the main ideas and approaches in the study of human rights as discourse, policy and practice within the global context.
- To examine the contemporary debate on the relationship between universalism, cultural relativism and human rights.

- To illustrate these ideas and approaches with examples and case studies from a range of societies in Australia, Asia and the world.
- Provide a basic component of the Department of Social Sciences sociology and anthropology major and a useful complementary unit for other departmental and faculty majors/minors
- To provide readings, websites and other sources of information on human rights issues and to provide you with skills in Internet use and library searching, oral presentation, working in small groups and formulation and preparation of a written report on a selected project

Please note: The unit will be placed online during the semester so students will be able to access the unit outline and lecture notes.

## Learning Outcomes

On successful completion of this unit students will:

- Be exposed to extensive written and visual materials on the unit's main themes
- Participate in group discussions of the unit's main themes
- Write one or more assignments on a topic of your own choice from the unit
- Have access to the unit controller to discuss the unit's main themes and clarify any problems related to readings, tutorials, lectures and assignment
- Gain an understanding of key ideas, approaches and issues in the field of human rights.
- Acquire transferable analytical, writing, electronic and presentation skills in how to deal with the issues covered in the unit
- Acquire a useful base for taking other units in Sociology, Anthropology, the Department of Social Sciences, the Faculty of Media, Society and Culture and the Division of Humanities

## Content and Activities

### Syllabus

- Origin and history of human rights thinking
- The idea of human rights and its history in Western thought and practice
- Feminist critiques of human rights thinking
- Post-World War Two emergence of 'human rights' and their relationships with states
- Universalism and individualism vs cultural relativism re human rights
- Contributions of anthropology and sociology to human rights debates
- United Nations Covenants, Conventions and Declarations and their application
- Human rights and the law
- Local and global discourses of human rights
- Rights and - indigeneity, ethnicity, culture, religion, gender and sexuality
- Social movements and international organizations for human rights
- Rights of migrants and refugees
- Rights of women and children
- Rights of people with a disability
- Environmental rights
- Contemporary positions of nation states on questions of human rights
- Nations borders security and human rights
- War, conflict torture, terrorism and rights
- Human rights in context; human rights in practice
- Methods of human rights research

## How this unit works

The unit is organised around a three hour session divided into lecture and workshops. Lectures are designed to provide background for workshops and will be available on-line.

## Organisation of workshops

You will run workshops, with the tutor as facilitator.

- There will be a workshop early in the semester on 'Gathering Human Rights Resources'. This is an opportunity to broaden the base and effectiveness of your search for materials, particularly for the first essay, but also the second essay and powerpoint presentation in this unit. To prepare, *develop some useful search terms* for each topic.
- All other workshops will discuss a question or set of questions linked to the week's lecture and readings. Students are expected to participate in the discussion *and complete a one A4 page 1.5 line spaced 12pt font summary of each reading i.e reading logs to handed to the tutor TWICE*, the first time for comments and second, for *assessment*.
- Powerpoint presentations in the workshop sessions (by groups of 3 students) will be for 15 minutes (i.e each person will speak for 5 mins) followed by a question and answer session. Remaining members of the workshop will provide an assessment of each group member's presentation which will assist the tutor in providing a final evaluation.
- In addition to the powerpoint presentation, each presenter will provide a 500 word written summary (not dot points) of *their part of the presentation* which is to be posted to the assignment box on the day of your power point presentation.
- Students preparing written summaries are asked to make copies for all workshop participants and to distribute them **PRIOR** to handing them in to the tutor for marking.

### What will your tutor be looking for in workshops?

- evidence of prior reading and thought in the topic
- the ability to present and defend a point of view
- a willingness to respond constructively to the viewpoints of other workshop participants
- evidence of developing overall knowledge of, and interest in, the subject matter

### What is your role in the workshops?

- Your tutor in workshops is a facilitator rather than a leader. The success of workshops depends upon you working cooperatively with others to meet the goals agreed upon.
- You should discuss among yourselves and with the tutor how to ensure that you and your peers get the most out of the workshops.
- At the end of every session it is hoped that you will have learned something and feel pleased to have done so.

## Reading and Resources

### Unit Materials

The Unit materials you will need for this unit are:

- Recommended Reading (held in Library Reserve or Reference sections)
- Web-Based Resources
- Unit outline

### Recommended

The following are good initial reference sources:

Cowan, J. Dembour, M. Wilson eds 2001. *Culture and Rights: anthropological perspectives*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Morris, L. (ed) 2006 *Rights: Sociological Perspectives*. London: Routledge

Freeman, M. 2002 *Human Rights*. Cambridge: Polity.

Harrison, F. (ed) 2005 *Resisting Racism and Xenophobia: global perspectives on Race, Gender and Human Rights*. Walnut Creek: Altamira  
Hilsdon, A. McIntyre, M. Mackie, V. & Stivens, M. 2000 (eds) *Gender Politics and Human Rights: Asia Pacific Perspectives*. London: Routledge.  
*Human Rights Encyclopedia* ed by James Lewis and Carl Skutsch. Armonk: Sharpe Reference 2001  
O'Byrne, D. 2003 *Human Rights: An Introduction*. Harlow: Longman.  
Van Ness, P. 1999. *Debating Human Rights: Critical Essays from the United States and Asia*. London: Routledge

In addition references to journal articles, books and websites will be made available for each topic in the programme

### Unit outline

This unit outline gives you important information about the general aims of the unit, texts and references, and details about the assessment, including allocation of marks, grading criteria and submission dates. Keep it available as a reference for any questions throughout the semester.

## Assessment

Your assessment will be based on participation in all workshops and completion of written assignments based on required and other readings. Workshop attendance is compulsory and except for an emergency, non-attendance at more than ONE workshop will affect your final grade significantly. Aspects of assessment are discussed below.

2nd YEAR STUDENTS	WORD LIMIT	MARKS	DUE DATE
1 Power point presentation + summary	500 words max	20	<b>Due the day you present</b>
Reading logs Participation	1 page per reading (see above)  10 workshops	20  10	<b>Due twice in the semester: March 20 &amp; May 23</b>
1 major assignment	2,000 words	40	<b>May 16</b>
1 minor assignment	1,000 words	10	<b>April 4</b>

### Assessment topics: Assignments

#### 2<sup>nd</sup>. Year

Minor assignment:

Critically evaluate the 'universalism' of human rights.

Major Assignment: Select any one. In each case use examples or case study/ies to support your argument and analysis.

1. Critically evaluate the involvement of civil society (eg social movements or ngos) in the provision and protection of specific human rights.
2. Interpretive social science can bring the concept of human rights down from the heights of philosophy and law to the everyday lives of the ordinary people it claims to defend. Critically discuss.
3. Evaluate the effectiveness of human rights law in the protection of human rights.
4. A topic negotiated with the course coordinator.

#### The presentation and referencing of assignments:

- ✓ All assignments must be word processed in Times New Roman or Arial 12 point font, 1.5 line spacing.

- ✓ The assignment must be referenced using either the Harvard or APA style. However, if you use the APA style, *page numbers are required for all intext references.*
- ✓ Remember to state clearly your aims and objectives in your introduction, provide a critical analysis and your views/argument, and in your conclusion state how you met your aims and objectives.
- ✓ Your ability to conduct a literature search, assemble a bibliography and access and evaluate internet sources of information will be taken into consideration in marking.

### **Notes on Power point presentations**

- Power point presentations will begin early in the teaching semester. You should consult your tutor or lecturer to identify a topic. This is important for narrowing the topic area so that it is manageable within the semester.
- These presentations can be on any aspect of Human Rights, from a summary of a case study to research design and methodology.
- Through the presentations you will improve your ability to work effectively within a group setting, organise your time effectively and meet deadlines.
- Independence of thought as well as the ability to present concise, critical and structured arguments will be assessed by your peers.
- Seminar timeslots will be allocated within the first couple of weeks of semester. After signing up, any changes must be made between students.

### **Peer Assessment**

Seminars will be peer assessed by fellow students following a marking schedule. Peer assessment is increasingly being recognised as an effective way of encouraging students to take more responsibility for their learning and as a means of providing you with a greater understanding of the assessment criteria used by lecturers. By understanding the assessment criteria (by being the assessors and the assessed), and taking responsibility for “teaching” others, students will improve both their communication and learning skills. More will be said about this in the first week of tutorials/workshops.

### **Workshops**

See above

## **Your Responsibilities in the Unit**

- Workshop attendance and completing your tutorial summaries is compulsory and except for an emergency, non-attendance at more than ONE workshop and failure to hand in your Reading Logs twice will affect your final grade significantly.
- If you email your lecturer/tutor please allow at least 48 hours for a response.
- Marked assignments will be returned within TWO weeks.
- Many questions you may have about the unit can be answered by reading the unit outline thoroughly. It is your responsibility to get in touch with your tutor if you have any problems completing work for the unit.
- Students must attend all lectures, tutorials, workshops/pracs. Failure to attend will result in a Did Not Attend (DNA) Grade.
- Students must complete all components of the assessment in order to pass the unit. Failure to do so will result in a Did Not Complete Grade.
- All assignments must be submitted by the due date. If you have difficulty meeting the deadline it is your responsibility to contact your tutor *before the due date*.

## **Lecture and Workshop Times**

**LECTURES:            Mondays    12.00 - 13.00 Rm 501.301**

**TUTORIALS/WORKSHOPS**

Tuesdays 16.00 - 18.00 Rm 401.253

## Unit Study Calendar

### Semester 1 2008

Week	Date	Lecture Topic	Workshop	Assessment	Date Due
1	25 Feb	Human Rights: an introduction	No workshop		
2	3 March	Human Rights: provision and protection. Anthropological approaches	<p>Readings: Engle Merry &amp; Cowan</p> <p>Questions: According to Engle Merry who are the 'translators' how do they help transform social life, and what are the limitations?</p> <p>How does Cowan critique political philosophy approaches to culture and rights? How is 'the empirical' different for anthropology and political philosophy?</p>		
3	10 March	Human Rights: provision and protection- Sociological Approaches	<p>Readings: Koenig; Morris</p> <p>Explain the changing models of national statehood and citizenship in the last half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century and its effects on human rights.</p> <p>Morris says that the terrain of rights is a shifting one where we can find expansions as well as contractions. Discuss.</p>	Powerpoint Presentations	

4	17 March	Human Rights: research and documentation.	<p>Workshop on 'Gathering Human Rights Resources'. Please meet at the Robertson Library Room 6.105.</p> <p>Session conducted by Karen Rickman &amp; Mary Anne Schooling</p>	<p>Powerpoint Presentations</p> <p>Reading Logs</p>	<p>Thurs. March 20</p>
5	24 March				
6	31 March	Human Rights and Indigenous peoples	<p>Readings: Short, Quane</p> <p>According to Short what are the limits of Australian native title legislation? How useful is social constructionism for his argument?</p> <p>'What does it mean as Quane says, to consider indigenous rights in a development context?</p>	<p>Minor Essay due</p> <p>Powerpoint Presentations</p>	<p>April 4</p>
7	7 April	<p>Human Rights and Refugees</p> <p>Ms Lucy Fiske (Centre for Human Rights Education)</p>	TBA	Powerpoint Presentations	

8	14 April	Women's Human Rights	<p>Reading:; Meetoo and Mirza; Thomas and Beasley</p> <p>How are multiculturalism and Islamophobia considered by Meetoo and Mirza to exacerbate the problem of honour killings? What is the way forward for women's rights?</p> <p>Critique the human rights approach for combating domestic violence as espoused by Thomas &amp; Beasley</p>	Powerpoint Presentations	
9	21 April				
10	28 April	Human Rights: Sexuality and age	<p>Readings: Kukura; Petchesky</p> <p>How and why does Kukura say sexual orientation is still problematic for recognition as an international human right?</p> <p>Why and how does Petchesky say we need to challenge what she calls 'the exclusive privileging of women as the bearers of sexual rights'?</p>	Powerpoint Presentations	
11	5 May	Environment and human rights	TBA	Powerpoint Presentations	
12	12 May	Religion and human rights	<p>Readings: Said, Shaheed</p> <p>Why does Said say that the practices of Islamic states fail to follow human rights in the Islamic tradition?</p> <p>Why does Shaheed say that Muslim laws extend far beyond legal rights and how does WLUML address autonomy of women in all its aspects?</p>	Major Essay due Powerpoint Presentations	May 16

13	19 May	Disability and human rights	<p>Readings: Hunt Mesquita; McMahon</p> <p>Why do Hunt and Mesquita argue that the right to mental health is complex? How can such rights be guaranteed?</p> <p>According to McMahon is it ethical to abort a fetus with a disability?</p>	<p>Powerpoint Presentations</p> <p>Reading Logs Due</p>	May 23
14	26 May		Review		
15	2 June	<b>Study Week</b>			
16	9 June	<b>Examinations</b>			
17	16 June	<b>Examinations</b>			