



Sociology UNIVERSITY OF TORONTO

SOC6110H – The Revolution of Human Rights – Winter 2024

Professor: Heiko Beyer, heiko.beyer@utoronto.ca

Schedule: Tuesday 3:10 pm-5 pm

Location: TBA

Course Description

The first modern declarations of human rights in the late 18th century are peculiar documents: they spring from revolutionary struggles and form the political basis of a new social order - bourgeois society. At the same time, they institutionalize the revolutionary spirit. From now on, everyone can invoke the rhetorical promises of those declarations. The rights of freedom and equality, initially reserved for a very small group of people, thus soon drifted beyond themselves. To this day, individuals and now even entire collectives invoke human rights when masses are mobilized, laws are changed, or even governments are overthrown.

The seminar would like to take a closer look at this connection between revolution and human rights. We will read older and more recent classics that have defined that relationship differently, but all deal with the questions: What is the utopian potential and what are the limits of human rights? If we pursue these questions, we will come across different complexes, which will determine the thematic structure of the seminar: After we will have dealt with the history of modern human rights in the first weeks, the following sessions will deal with the declarative character of human rights, with the relationship between human rights and democracy, and finally with the problem of participation in human rights.

Schedule & Readings

January 9: *Introduction* (no readings)

January 16: *The revolutionary history of human rights I: What revolution(s)?*

Readings:

- Hannah Arendt, *On Revolution* [Chapter 1, The Meaning of Revolution]

January 23: *The revolutionary history of human rights III: The Critics*

Readings:

- Edmund Burke, *Reflections on the Revolution in France* [extracts]
- Jeremy Bentham, *Anarchical Fallacies: Being an Examination of the Declaration of Rights*

January 30: *The revolutionary history of human rights III: The Advocates of the rights of wo/man*

Readings:

- Thomas Paine, *Rights of Man* [Second Part, Chapters I-IV, Of Society and Civilization, Of the Origin of the Present Old Governments, Of the Old and New Systems of Government, Of Constitutions]
- Olympe de Gouges, *The Declaration of the Rights of Woman*

February 6: *The revolutionary history of human rights IV: Beyond a Eurocentric view*

Readings:

- Susan Buck-Morss, *Hegel and Haiti* [in: Critical Inquiry, Vol. 26, No. 4 (2000), pp. 821-865]

February 13: *The declarative character of human rights I: declarations of independence*

Readings:

- Jacques Derrida, *Declarations of independence* [in: J. Derrida, *Law as Absolute Hospitality*, 2011, pp. 43-73]
- Yarran Hominh, *Re-Reading the Declaration of Independence as Perlocutionary Performative* [in: Res Publica, Vol. 22, No. 4 (2016), pp. 423-444]

February 20: *reading week, no class*

February 27: *The declarative character of human rights II: declarations of hopes*

Readings:

- Costas Douzinas, *Human Rights and Postmodern Utopia* [in: Law and Critique, Vol. 11, No. 2 (2000), pp. 219-240]
- Jürgen Habermas, *Natural Law and Revolution* [in: J. Habermas, *Theory and Practice*, 1974, pp. 82-120]

March 5: *Human rights and democracy I: The relationship between equality and liberty*

Readings:

- Étienne Balibar, *The Statement and Institution of Rights* [in: É. Balibar, *Equaliberty: Political Essays*, 2014, pp. 35-131]

March 12: *Human rights and democracy II: The limits of democracy in international law*

Readings:

- Ingeborg Mauss, *Kant's Reasons against a Global State: Popular Sovereignty as a Principle of International Law* [in: L. Caranti (Ed.), *Kant's Perpetual Peace. New Interpretative Essays*, 2006, pp. 35-54]
- Steven Wheatley, *A Democratic Rule of International Law* [in: *European Journal of International Law* Vol. 22, No. 2 (2011), pp. 525-548]

March 19: *Human rights and individual participation I: The subject of human rights*

Readings:

- Jacques Rancière, *Who is the Subject of the Rights of Man?* [in: *South Atlantic Quarterly*, Vol. 103, No. 2-3 (2004), pp. 297–310]
- Wendy Brown, *Suffering the Paradoxes of Rights* [in: W. Brown, *Left Legalism/Left Critique*, 2002, pp. 420–34]

March 26: *Human rights and individual participation II: The relationship between private and public autonomy*

- Jürgen Habermas, *On the Relation between the Nation, the Rule of Law, and Democracy* [in: *European Journal of Philosophy*, Vol. 3, No. 1(1995), pp. 12-20]
- Étienne Balibar, *Citizen Subject. Response to Jean-Luc Nancy's Question "Who Comes After the Subject?"* [in: É. Balibar, *Citizen Subject: Foundations for Philosophical Anthropology*, 2016, pp. 19–39]

April 2: Final Discussion (no readings)

Course Requirements

COMPONENT	DESCRIPTION	DATE DUE	RELATIVE WEIGHT
1. Class participation	Attendance and participation in class discussions throughout the course	Ongoing	25%
2. Presentation	Presentation of readings and assigned commentary	Ongoing	15%
3. Essay	15-20 pages essay on a problem, controversy, or phenomenon we discussed in class	April 9	60%

Evaluation (including Penalty for Lateness Clause)

With the exception of cases where there are legitimate, documented reasons beyond a student's control the penalty for late submission of the final essay is 5% per day, including weekends. Please be aware that there is no guarantee that late papers are graded in time for grade submission.

Academic Integrity Clause

Copying, plagiarizing, falsifying medical certificates, or other forms of academic misconduct will not be tolerated. Any student caught engaging in such activities will be referred to the Dean's office for adjudication. Any student abetting or otherwise assisting in such misconduct will also be subject to academic penalties. Students are expected to cite sources in all written work and presentations. See this link for tips for how to use sources well: (<http://www.writing.utoronto.ca/advice/using-sources/how-not-to-plagiarize>).

According to Section B.I.1.(e) of the Code of Behaviour on Academic Matters it is an offence "*to submit, without the knowledge and approval of the instructor to whom it is submitted, any academic work for which credit has previously been obtained or is being sought in another course or program of study in the University or elsewhere.*"

By enrolling in this course, you agree to abide by the university's rules regarding academic conduct, as outlined in the Calendar. You are expected to be familiar with the *Code of Behaviour on Academic Matters* (<https://governingcouncil.utoronto.ca/secretariat/policies/code-behaviour-academic-matters-july-1-2019>) and *Code of Student Conduct* (<http://www.viceprovoststudents.utoronto.ca/publicationsandpolicies/codeofstudentconduct.htm>) which spell out your rights, your duties and provide all the details on grading regulations and academic offences at the University of Toronto.

Students will be required to submit their course essays to www.ouriginal.com for a review of textual similarity and detection of possible plagiarism. In doing so, students will allow their essays to be included as source documents in the www.ouriginal.com reference database, where they will be used

solely for the purpose of detecting plagiarism. The terms that apply to the University's use of the www.ouriginal.com service are described on the www.ouriginal.com web site.

Accessibility Services

It is the University of Toronto's goal to create a community that is inclusive of all persons and treats all members of the community in an equitable manner. In creating such a community, the University aims to foster a climate of understanding and mutual respect for the dignity and worth of all persons. Please see the University of Toronto Governing Council "Statement of Commitment Regarding Persons with Disabilities" at

<http://www.governingcouncil.utoronto.ca/Assets/Governing+Council+Digital+Assets/Policies/PDF/ppnov012004.pdf>.

In working toward this goal, the University will strive to provide support for, and facilitate the accommodation of individuals with disabilities so that all may share the same level of access to opportunities, participate in the full range of activities that the University offers, and achieve their full potential as members of the University community. We take seriously our obligation to make this course as welcoming and accessible as feasible for students with diverse needs. We also understand that disabilities can change over time and will do our best to accommodate you.

Students seeking support must have an intake interview with a disability advisor to discuss their individual needs. In many instances it is easier to arrange certain accommodations with more advance notice, so we strongly encourage you to act as quickly as possible. To schedule a registration appointment with a disability advisor, please visit Accessibility Services at <http://www.studentlife.utoronto.ca/as>, call at 416-978-8060, or email at: accessibility.services@utoronto.ca. The office is located at 455 Spadina Avenue, 4th Floor, Suite 400.

Additional student resources for distressed or emergency situations can be located at distressedstudent.utoronto.ca; Health & Wellness Centre, 416-978-8030, <http://www.studentlife.utoronto.ca/hwc>, or Student Crisis Response, 416-946-7111.

Equity and Diversity

The University of Toronto is committed to equity and respect for diversity. All members of the learning environment in this course should strive to create an atmosphere of mutual respect. As a course instructor, I will neither condone nor tolerate behaviour that undermines the dignity or self-esteem of any individual in this course and wish to be alerted to any attempt to create an intimidating or hostile environment. It is our collective responsibility to create a space that is inclusive and welcomes discussion. Discrimination, harassment and hate speech will not be tolerated.

Additional information and reports on Equity and Diversity at the University of Toronto is available at <http://equity.hrandequity.utoronto.ca>.

Use Of Generative AI in Assignments and Term Papers

Students are encouraged to make use of technology, including generative artificial intelligence tools, to contribute to their understanding of course materials. Students may also use artificial intelligence tools, including generative AI, in this course as learning aids or to help produce assignments.

However, students are ultimately accountable for the work they submit. Students must submit, as an appendix with their assignments, any content produced by an artificial intelligence tool, and the prompt used to generate the content. Any content produced by an artificial intelligence tool must be cited appropriately (please use this style guide: <https://style.mla.org/citing-generative-ai/>). Students may choose to use generative artificial intelligence tools as they work through the assignments in this course; this use must be documented in an appendix for each assignment. The documentation should include what tool(s) were used, how they were used, and how the results from the AI were incorporated into the submitted work. Note that some generative AI applications may require a subscription fee. Please feel free to opt-out of using a system if they have concerns about the cost, privacy, security or other issues related to the technology.