A fruitful way to explore the changing themes and trends in moral, political and social philosophy can be ask whether, to what extent, and in which ways, human rights are crucial to the achievement or realization of justice.

It has been suggested that human rights discourse be considered a lingua franca for our time. Philosophers in more recent decades have played a central role in the evolution in contemporary thought, in particular the shift towards a human rights agenda in the context of theorizing about justice. And yet, philosophers in ancient and modern periods constructed their theories of justice without express or explicit reliance upon, or incorporation of, human rights. Instead, their focus was on alternative perspectives on justice, including virtue theory, natural rights and natural law theory, and social contract theory.

In our time, human rights theories continue to be beset by critics within and without. Scholars and activists whose commitments are grounded in progressive politics express skepticism about the liberal origins and tone of prominent and popular variants of human rights. Equity seeking groups have charged that human rights have failed to live up to their claims of universalism and egalitarianism. They have argued that formal declarations of equality have obscured and masked practices of discrimination and exclusion. Human rights, in theory and practice, have neglected to address forcefully and effectively enough the systemic disempowerment, marginalization, oppression, and subordination of minorities, including ethnic, racial, religious, sexual or other minorities.

The seeming universalism and abstraction of human rights is dismissed and rejected by adherents to cultural relativism, or by advocates of culturally sensitive global justice. Policy analysts enamoured with market forces, and measurable indices of human well-being express scepticism about the practical benefits of human rights, viewing them as
unattainable and divisive, in effect as unnecessary distractions from the real work that needs doing.

A series of organizing themes will carry through the discussions, reflected in the following kinds of questions: What is justice? What is injustice? Why focus on rights? What are rights? Are human rights natural? Are human rights universal? Are human rights absolute? Are rights and duties correlative? How much, and in which ways, does the legitimacy of states depend on the recognition, protection, and realization of human rights? Upon whom might human rights duties rest? Should intended recipients of legal and moral rights be extended to nonhumans (such as nonhuman animals or corporations, or others)?

How do human rights intersect with: (i) debates over the multiplicity of meanings of justice; (ii) debates over the respective primacy and priority of liberty and equality; (iii) debates over the relative desirability of negative liberty/ rights or duties and positive liberty/ rights or duties; and (iv) debates over the duty to obey the law and justifiability of civil disobedience? How are distinct categories of human rights (such as the first and second generation of human rights) connected and related? In which ways might human rights be integral to the achievement of global justice? In which ways might they be problematic or a hindrance? Have dominant approaches to human rights betrayed their pretensions to universalism and egalitarianism? To what extent should philosophical theories of human rights be judged by their impacts and import in practice, in the actual, less than ideal, world?

The course readings for the first half of the course will be selected from the writings of classical/ ancient, classical/ modern moral and political philosophers (Aristotle and Plato, Hobbes, Locke, Kant, and Marx). In the second half of the course, readings will be drawn from diverse clusters of contemporary theoretical perspectives on human rights and justice, including critical race theory, feminism, liberal egalitarianism, as well as cosmopolitanism, and deliberative democracy.

### Course Evaluation:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Assignment</th>
<th>Value</th>
<th>Date</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Participation and Presentation</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>During Course</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 Critical Reflective Commentaries</td>
<td>30%</td>
<td>3 X 10% each</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Term Paper</td>
<td>60%</td>
<td>Monday December 19</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Participation and Presentation
The participation component is typically evaluated with the expectation of thoughtful and meaningful engagement in class discussions. Such engagement would normally be comprised of attentively and diligently reading of course materials prior to class, and coming to class prepared to discuss course materials. For any student for whom participation poses especial challenges, please come to see me as soon as feasible, so that we can talk about the possibility of alternate arrangements.

It is expected that each student will elect to prepare and deliver a half hour presentation based on a chosen selection of the course readings for a particular week. The presentation is an opportunity for students to engage in dialogue and discussion, reflecting insights on crucial themes addressed in the specific readings; comparisons and contrasts with other materials; highlighting controversial or challenging passages; articulating ideas on implications of readings; and stimulating class discussion. The main goal is to prompt thoughtful and meaningful interaction between and amongst members of the class, and evaluation of the presentation will reflect the effectiveness of achieving that goal. It is hoped that students will make their best efforts to present without relying too heavily on reading their work. For any student for whom presentation poses especial challenges, please come to see me as soon as feasible, so that we can talk about the possibility of alternate arrangements.

**Critical Reflective Commentaries on Readings**

Each student will be required to produce 3 Critical, Reflective Commentaries on a chosen selection of weekly readings. Critical Reflective Commentary papers should be about 4-6 pages (minimum 1000 words and maximum 1800 words). They will be due on the day of the class for which the chosen selection of weekly readings are to be the focus, to be submitted either electronically or in hard copy.

The purpose of the critical, reflective commentaries component is to provide opportunities for your critical engagement with course readings, and to be well situated for class discussion. The aim is to provide an analysis and critique of key aspects of the chosen selection of weekly readings that you find to be interesting, important, insightful, fruitful, provocative, problematic, or contentious.

You may find yourself to be in agreement with the author, in which case you can consider how the author’s ideas and arguments might be expanded, enhanced, or applied, and how the author might respond to objections and criticisms. If you find that you are not in agreement with the author, it can be beneficial to clarify the basis of your disagreement and consider whether and in which ways the author’s work could be improved upon, or whether, in your view, the approach of the author is fundamentally misguided, and why.

Try to envisage your critical, reflective commentary as part of an ongoing discussion or conversation with the author. You can focus on only a portion of the text, but be sure that you appreciate the role that passage plays in the overall text.
The Critical Commentary may be less formal in its organization and structure than the Term Essay, but the expectation is that it would be more formal than notes to accompany a presentation. It is fine to include citations and references, as appropriate.

You can submit up to 4 critical, reflective commentaries throughout the course, but only one per class; the best 3 marks will be counted.

Further information about potential questions for the Critical, Reflective Commentaries will be provided during the course.

**Term Paper**

The term paper should be comprised of a major analysis essay of approximately 12 to 16 pages (between 3000 words to maximum of 4000 words).

The objective of the assignment is to provide an opportunity for critical engagement, analysis, and integration of independent thinking reflecting upon course materials covered throughout the term, and to articulate one’s own perspective in thoughtful and meaningful ways.

Evaluation of the term papers can be expected to focus on aspects such as the following: (i) demonstrated capacity for philosophical awareness and analysis; (ii) demonstrated understanding of, and insights into, key course materials; (iii) articulation of a persuasive and compelling thesis statement; (iv) development of a highly effective organizing structure, with particular attention to the sequencing and clustering of points being discussed in a cogent and coherent line of reasoning; (v) quality of argumentation and interpretive articulation; (vi) sensitivity to alternate viewpoints, and independent thinking; (vii) use of one’s own words and thoughts to analyze the materials (not relying too heavily on quotation or paraphrase); (viii) quality of writing style (flow of expression, including niceties of grammar, word choice, syntax, sentence structure, paragraph demarcation, spelling, punctuation, and so on).

You are not required to do additional research, although additional research will be fine, if it seems to be merited and would be efficacious and beneficial.

You are encouraged to make an appointment to come and discuss your term papers with me, in draft, outline, or ideas stages.

**Late Penalty Policy**

Students requiring an extension for a Commentary or the Term Paper should request it in advance of, or as close to as feasible, the due date.

Circumstances which fall under Ryerson policies include such reasons as family emergencies, medical reasons, conflicts with religious observance, and so on. Absent
extenuating circumstances of those sorts, a late penalty of 3 percent a day for the Term Paper, for the first week, and 1 percent a day thereafter.

Readings and Resources:

Course readings are itemized and numbered in the Course Schedule below; the full references and citations for all readings follow under the heading “Sources/ Citations for Course Readings”.

Course readings can be accessed electronically. Most are available through Resources, then One Stop Course Readings on the D2L course website, or by connecting to Ryerson University Library electronic holdings. Some items are available directly on the Internet.

See Sources/ Citations for Course Readings following the Course Schedule below.

Please note: A variety and diversity of readings on theories are available through the D2L course website, in order to provide for choice, and for ongoing flexibility as the course evolves. Some of those readings are included as extra, additional, recommended, and for potential interest. Only specified readings will be the focus of weekly class discussion.

Course Schedule:

SCHEDULE

Fridays, from 3:10 pm to 6 pm
Room 440, Jorgenson Hall (Boardroom)

Classes Begin September 6

Week One/ Friday September 9: TOPIC – Introduction and Classical (Ancient) Political Theory: Virtue Theory
Readings:
   (1) Aristotle, Nichomachean Ethics, Book I, subsections (i) to (vii)
   (2) Aristotle, The Politics, Book I

Readings:
Week Three/ Friday September 23: TOPIC – Classical (Modern) Political Theory: John Locke, Natural Rights and Legitimacy of Government and Critique Perspectives: Karl Marx
Readings:
(4) John Locke, Second Treatise of Government, Chapter 5 (“Of Property”), subsections 25 to 51; Chapter 8 (“Of the Beginning of Political Societies”), subsections 95 to 122; Chapter 9 (“Of the Ends of Political Society and Government”), subsections 123-131
(5) Karl Marx, “Comments on James Mill”

Recommended:
Samuel Beer, “Introduction” to Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels, The Communist Manifesto

Week Four/ Friday September 30: TOPIC – Debates Over Political Obligation, Obedience to Law and Cosmopolitanism
Readings:
(6) Plato, Crito
(8) Immanuel Kant, “Idea for a Universal History with a Cosmopolitan Purpose” or “The Idea of a Universal History on a Cosmopolitical Plan”

Week Five/ Friday October 7: TOPIC - Civil Disobedience and Anarchism (Micro and Macro)
Readings:
(9) John Rawls, “Definition and Justification of Civil Disobedience”
(10) Kathryn Pyne Addelson, “Anarchy and Morality”
(11) David Graeber, “The New Anarchists”

Recommended: Kathryn Pyne Addelson, with Martha Ackelsberg and Shawn Pyne, “Anarchism and Feminism”

Recommended: Robert Paul Wolff, In Defense of Anarchism
Week Six/ Friday October 14: No Classes; Fall Term Break Week

Week Seven/ Friday October 21: Conceptual Frameworks for Human Rights
Readings:
(12) Marie-Bénédicte Dembour, “What Are Human Rights? Four Schools of Thought”
(13) James Griffin, “First Steps in an Account of Human Rights”
(14) Amartya Sen, “Elements of A Theory of Human Rights” (selection)

Week Eight/ Friday October 28: TOPIC: Minority Group Rights
Readings:
(15) K. Anthony Appiah, “Grounding Human Rights”

Week Nine/ Friday November 4: TOPIC: Deliberative Democracy and Human Rights
Readings:
(18) Hannah Arendt, “We Refugees”
(19) Joshua Cohen, “Deliberative Democracy and Democratic Legitimacy”
(20) Joshua Cohen, “Is There a Human Right to Democracy”

*Week Ten/ Thursday November 10: Visiting Speaker Talk by Dr Samantha Brennan, Room 514 SLC (Student Learning Centre), at 3 pm; TOPIC: “Ethics and Our Early Years: Making Decisions for Children as if Childhood Really Mattered”

Week Ten/ Friday November 11: TOPIC: Feminist Theory and Human Rights
Guest: Dr Samantha Brennan
Readings:
(22) Iris Marion Young, “Five Faces of Oppression”
(23) Iris Marion Young, “Communication and the Other: Beyond Deliberative Democracy”

Week Eleven/ Friday November 18: TOPIC: Prostitution/ Sex Work and Rights of Gays, Lesbians and Trans Persons, Issues of Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity
Readings:
(24) Martha Nussbaum, “‘Whether From Reason or Prejudice’: Taking Money for Bodily Services”
(26) Martha Nussbaum, “Lesbian and Gay Rights”

Week Twelve/ Friday November 25: TOPIC: Human Rights/ Animal Rights AND Freedom of Expression Debates
Readings:
(27) Paola Cavalieri, “Are Human Rights Human?”
(28) Sue Donaldson and Will Kymlicka, “Universal Basic Rights for Animals”

Week Thirteen/ Friday December 2: TOPIC: Catch Up, Recap and Wrap Up
TBA

Classes End December 5

Monday December 19: Term Paper DUE

Sources/ Citations for Course Readings:

Week One: TOPIC - Classical Political Theory: Ancient Philosophy (Aristotle on Justice)
Readings:
   (1) Aristotle. Nichomachean Ethics. Book I, subsections (i) to (vii). Available online:
       http://classics.mit.edu/Aristotle/nicomachaen.html [17 pages]
   (2) Aristotle, The Politics. Book I. Available online:
       http://classics.mit.edu/Aristotle/politics.html [20 pages]

Week Two: TOPIC - Classical Political Theory: Hobbes and Social Contract Theory
Readings:
   (3a) Hobbes, Thomas. 1651. Leviathan. Chapter 13 (“Of the Naturall Condition of
       Mankind, as concerning their Felicity, and Misery”), Chapter 14 (“Of the first and second
       Naturall Lawes, and of Contracts’) and Chapter 15 (“Of other Lawes of Nature”).
       Available online: https://www.gutenberg.org/files/3207/3207-h/3207-h.htm [5 pages, 9
       pages, and 12 pages]
   +
   (3b) Hobbes, Thomas. De Cive. 1642 (in Latin)/ 1651 (in English). Book I (“Of the State
       of Men Without Civil Society”), subsections 3 – 8. Available online:
Week Three: TOPIC - Classical (Modern) Political Theory: John Locke, Natural Rights and Legitimacy of Government and Critique Perspectives: Karl Marx

Readings:


Week Four: TOPIC – Debates Over Political Obligation, Obedience to Law and Cosmopolitanism

Readings:


Week Five: TOPIC - Civil Disobedience and Anarchism (Micro and Macro)

Readings:


*Week Six: No Class*

*Week Seven: TOPIC - Conceptual Frameworks*

Readings:


*Week Eight: TOPIC - Minority Group Rights*

Readings:


**Week Nine: TOPIC - Deliberative Democracy and Human Rights**

Readings:


**Week Ten: TOPIC - Feminist Theory and Human Rights**

Readings:


Available online: http://www.racialequitytools.org/resourcefiles/young.pdf [14 pages]


Readings:


Week Twelve: TOPIC: Human Rights/ Animal Rights AND Freedom of Expression
Debates
Readings:


**Other Information**

**Faculty Course Survey:**

An online Faculty Course Survey will provide students with an opportunity to evaluate the course.

**Academic Integrity:**

All students are expected to be familiar with the policies on plagiarism and academic integrity. According to Ryerson University’s Academic Code of Conduct, “plagiarism means claiming the words, ideas, artistry, drawings, images or data of another person as if they were your own.” Students are reminded that failure to properly reference sources, including the class texts and lectures, is considered academic misconduct and will result in serious penalties ranging from a mark of ‘0’ on the assignment, failure in the course, or expulsion from the university.

**Graduate Studies Grading Scale:**

Available online:
[http://www.ryerson.ca/currentstudents/essr/gradescales_grad/index.html](http://www.ryerson.ca/currentstudents/essr/gradescales_grad/index.html)

**Ryerson University Policies**

**UNIVERSITY POLICIES:**

Policies can be found online at:
[http://www.ryerson.ca/senate/policies/](http://www.ryerson.ca/senate/policies/)

Graduate Studies Course Management

Policy 151: [http://www.ryerson.ca/content/dam/ senate/policies/pol151.pdf](http://www.ryerson.ca/content/dam/senate/policies/pol151.pdf)

Examinations

Students will be expected to come prepared for the final examination with photo identification; NO PDAs or cell phones allowed on one’s person or at one’s desk during examinations.

**MISSED TERM WORK OR EXAMINATIONS:**
Students are expected to complete all assignments, tests, and exams within the time frames and by the dates indicated in this outline.

Students are required to inform their instructors of any situation which arises during the semester which may have an adverse effect upon their academic performance, and must request any considerations and accommodations according to the relevant policies and well in advance. Failure to do so will jeopardize any academic appeals.

The instructor should be notified by e-mail or by phone before, or on the due date of the test/exam or essay of circumstances preventing completion of course work within the time frames and by the due dates.

Accommodations are provided for in Ryerson University policies. Accommodations and considerations should be requested in advance.

**Academic Consideration - Graduate Studies Academic Appeals Policy**

Policy: [http://www.ryerson.ca/graduate/policies/documents/Appeals_Policy.pdf](http://www.ryerson.ca/graduate/policies/documents/Appeals_Policy.pdf)

Policy 152: [http://www.ryerson.ca/content/dam/senate/policies/pol152.pdf](http://www.ryerson.ca/content/dam/senate/policies/pol152.pdf)

**Medical Certificates**

If a student is going to miss a deadline for an assignment, a test or an examination because of illness, he/she must submit a Medical Certificate AND an Academic Consideration form within 3 working days of the missed assignment deadline, test or examination. If you are a full-time or part-time degree student, then your Medical Certificate and Academic Consideration forms are to be submitted to your own school or department. If you are a Certificate student, or non-Certificate student, then you submit your forms to the staff at the front desk of the Chang School.

[See [http://www.ryerson.ca/senate/forms/medical.pdf](http://www.ryerson.ca/senate/forms/medical.pdf) for the medical certificate And [http://www.ryerson.ca/content/dam/senate/forms/academic_consideration_document_submission.pdf](http://www.ryerson.ca/content/dam/senate/forms/academic_consideration_document_submission.pdf) for the academic consideration form.]

**Compassionate Grounds**
If a student needs accommodation on compassionate grounds for a missed assignment deadline, test or examination, he/she must submit an Academic Consideration form and supporting documents within 3 working days of the missed assignment deadline, test or examination. If you are a full-time or part-time degree student, then your Academic Consideration form and supporting documents are to be submitted to your own school or department. If you are a Certificate student, or non-Certificate student, then you submit your forms to the staff at the front desk of the Chang School.

[See http://www.ryerson.ca/content/dam/senate/forms/academic_consideration_document_submission.pdf for the academic consideration form And Policy.]

Accommodation of Student Religious Observance Obligations

If a student needs accommodation because of religious observance, a formal request must be submitted within the first two weeks of the class, or within two weeks of the posting of the examination schedule (with respect to the final exam). A Request for Accommodation of Student Religious, Aboriginal and Spiritual Observance AND an Academic Consideration form are required.

If the required absence occurs within the first 2 weeks of classes, or the dates are not known well in advance as they are linked to other conditions, these forms should be submitted with as much lead time as possible in advance of the required absence.

[See http://www.ryerson.ca/content/dam/senate/forms/academic_consideration_document_submission.pdf for the academic consideration form And Policy http://www.ryerson.ca/senate/policies/pol150.pdf]

If you are a full-time or part-time degree student, then your formal request is to be submitted to your own school or department. If you are a Certificate student, or non-Certificate student, then you submit your forms to the staff at the front desk of the Chang School.

Academic Accommodation of Students With Disabilities

Policy 159: http://www.ryerson.ca/senate/policies/pol159.pdf
Access Centre: http://www.ryerson.ca/studentservices/accesscentre/index.html

In order to facilitate the academic success and access of students with disabilities, students with disabilities should register with the Access Centre. Before the first graded work is due, students should also inform their instructor through an “Accommodation Form for Professors” that they are registered with the Access Centre and what accommodations are required.

Student Ryerson Email Accounts

**Academic Integrity and Student Code of Academic Conduct**

Policy 60: Effective September 1, 2015  
[http://www.ryerson.ca/content/dam/senate/policies/pol60_Effective_Sept_1_2015.pdf](http://www.ryerson.ca/content/dam/senate/policies/pol60_Effective_Sept_1_2015.pdf)

The Ryerson University Student Code of Academic Conduct defines academic misconduct, the processes the University will follow when academic misconduct is suspected, and the consequences that can be imposed if students are found to be guilty of misconduct.

Academic misconduct includes:

- plagiarism (claiming words, ideas, artistry, drawings or data of another person as your own, including submitting your own work in whole or in part in more than one course)
- cheating
- misrepresentation of personal identity or performance
- submission of false information
- contributing to academic misconduct
- damaging, tampering, or interfering with the scholarly environment
- unauthorized copying or use of copyrighted materials
- violations of departmental policies on professional behaviour and/or course requirements.

The Academic Integrity Website:  
[http://www.ryerson.ca/ai/students/studentcheating.html](http://www.ryerson.ca/ai/students/studentcheating.html)

Further information is also available at Ryerson University Academic Integrity Website:  
[http://www.ryerson.ca/academicintegrity](http://www.ryerson.ca/academicintegrity)

*NOTE: It is expected that students will read and become familiar with Ryerson University’s Policies on Academic Misconduct.*

**Student Code of Non-Academic Conduct:**


**Resources:**

Learning Success (VIC B-15) offers individual sessions and workshops covering various aspects of researching, writing, and studying. Online bookings available through the Learning Success website:  
[http://www.ryerson.ca/studentservices/learningsuccess/](http://www.ryerson.ca/studentservices/learningsuccess/)
English Language Support (VIC B-17) offers workshops to improve overall communication skills. Website: [http://www.ryerson.ca/studentservices/els/](http://www.ryerson.ca/studentservices/els/)

Resources at Ryerson:

*Resources at Ryerson for Graduate Students:*

Graduate Focused Learning Support
LIB-272-B, Writing Centre, Library Building

Services available for assistance in researching, writing, and editing papers: [http://www.ryerson.ca/graduatestudentsupport/](http://www.ryerson.ca/graduatestudentsupport/)

Individual Assistance:
[http://www.ryerson.ca/graduatestudentsupport/individual_assistance/index.html](http://www.ryerson.ca/graduatestudentsupport/individual_assistance/index.html)

Workshops:
[http://www.ryerson.ca/graduatestudentsupport/workshops/index.html](http://www.ryerson.ca/graduatestudentsupport/workshops/index.html)