Part I  Course Overview

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Course Title:</th>
<th>Human Rights in Asia</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Course Code:</td>
<td>AIS5039</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Course Duration:</td>
<td>One semester</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Credit Units:</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Level:</td>
<td>P5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Medium of Instruction:</td>
<td>English</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Medium of Assessment:</td>
<td>English</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prerequisites:</td>
<td>Nil</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Precursors:</td>
<td>Nil</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Equivalent Courses:</td>
<td>Nil</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Exclusive Courses:</td>
<td>Nil</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Part II  Course Details

1. Abstract

The course will provide a space for critical comparative discussions on how human rights are framed, exercised and contested within, and across, states in Asia. It will start with the conceptual foundations of modern human rights and the main international institutions and treaties governing them. Selected human rights issues, such as civil and political rights, dissent and torture, minority rights, mass atrocity and genocide, women’s rights, freedom of religion, and forced migration will then be examined to study how governments, civil society, judicial systems and the increasingly complex body of international law of human rights respond to human rights violations in the region, and to what extent these multiple levels of human rights protections are effective in guaranteeing human rights in the region. Embracing a multiplicity of perspectives through the analysis of interdisciplinary texts, foundational documents and videos, the course will help students engage in personal exploration of what human rights can embody in their own environment.

Course Aims:

- To gain familiarity with the basic concepts, preoccupations and issues of the international and Asian human rights movements
- To understand how experiences of colonialism, nationalism, state formation, nation-building, development, migration and globalization have shaped human rights governance, and resistance, across contemporary Asia
- To explore some aspects of the highly diverse and increasing complex body of international law of human rights and its (tentative and contested) application in Asia
- To engage in philosophical discussion and discourse, so that students can relate human rights issues to their everyday lives

2. Course Intended Learning Outcomes (CILOs)
(CILOs state what the student is expected to be able to do at the end of the course according to a given standard of performance.)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No.</th>
<th>CILOs</th>
<th>Weighting (if applicable)</th>
<th>Discovery-enriched curriculum related learning outcomes (please tick where appropriate)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>A1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>Show comprehensive awareness of the practice of human rights in Asia, as well as their underlying principles, concepts and debates</td>
<td></td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td>Recognise the strengths and limits of different human rights instruments and institutions</td>
<td></td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.</td>
<td>Compile a comparative analysis of the different national and regional human rights regimes in Asia</td>
<td></td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.</td>
<td>Apply the above knowledge to specific issues in specific countries, and understand why, and how, these issues can be interpreted, and addressed</td>
<td></td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

100%
A1: Attitude
Develop an attitude of discovery/innovation/creativity, as demonstrated by students possessing a strong sense of curiosity, asking questions actively, challenging assumptions or engaging in inquiry together with teachers.

A2: Ability
Develop the ability/skill needed to discover/innovate/create, as demonstrated by students possessing critical thinking skills to assess ideas, acquiring research skills, synthesizing knowledge across disciplines or applying academic knowledge to self-life problems.

A3: Accomplishments
Demonstrate accomplishment of discovery/innovation/creativity through producing/constructing creative works/new artefacts, effective solutions to real-life problems or new processes.
3. Teaching and Learning Activities (TLAs)

(TLAs designed to facilitate students’ achievement of the CILOs.)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>TLA</th>
<th>Brief Description</th>
<th>CILO No.</th>
<th>Hours/week (if applicable)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Lectures</td>
<td>The instructor will present overviews of key concepts and issues and lead class debates</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓ ✓ ✓ ✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Class discussion</td>
<td>Students will analyse and discuss weekly required readings</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓ ✓ ✓ ✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Oral Presentations</td>
<td>Students will work in groups to lead class discussions and Q&amp;A sessions on topics assigned by the instructor</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓ ✓ ✓ ✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Book review</td>
<td>Student will read a book drawn from the list provided by the instructor and write a (max. 1,500 words) review of it.</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓ ✓ ✓ ✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Research essay</td>
<td>Students will use relevant materials to write a research paper (max. 3,000 words) as set by the instructor</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓ ✓ ✓ ✓</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

4. Assessment Tasks/Activities (ATs)

(ATs are designed to assess how well the students achieve the CILOs.)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Assessment Tasks/Activities</th>
<th>CILO No.</th>
<th>Weighting</th>
<th>Remarks</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Continual Assessment: 100%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. Attendance &amp; Participation</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓ ✓ ✓ ✓</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Class Presentation</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓ ✓ ✓ ✓</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Book review</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓ ✓ ✓ ✓</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Term paper</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓ ✓ ✓ ✓</td>
<td>(~3,000 words), Submit Week 10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. In-class Examination</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓ ✓ ✓ ✓</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Examination: Nil % (duration: N/A, if applicable) 100%
## 5. Assessment Rubrics

**Grading of student achievements is based on student performance in assessment tasks/activities with the following rubrics.**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Assessment Task</th>
<th>Criterion</th>
<th>Excellent (A+, A, A-)</th>
<th>Good (B+, B, B-)</th>
<th>Fair (C+, C, C-)</th>
<th>Marginal (D)</th>
<th>Failure (F)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>1. Class participation</strong></td>
<td>Students are expected to attend all sessions. Failure to do so will deduct marks. Participating in class discussions with quality interventions will add marks.</td>
<td>High class performance. Ability to comprehend and critique lectures and reading material.</td>
<td>Demonstrates good ability to think conceptually. Student can form plausible arguments and convincing conclusions.</td>
<td>Demonstrates ability to analyse material presented in lectures and readings. Even is all sessions were attended, performance has been below class average.</td>
<td>Student has comprehended little of the material presented in class. The student has participated little in class, demonstrating little interest and/or motivation.</td>
<td>Poor learning or lack of effort, the student has failed to demonstrate even a minimal capacity to analyse concepts and theories.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>2. Presentation</strong></td>
<td>Need to master the assigned presentation topic, demonstrate critical thinking and solid research on the subject, show efficiency in teamwork with good use of powerpoint or similar tools</td>
<td>Excellent knowledge of the topic and capacity to critically integrate lectures and references into the presentation. Contents delivered in an effective and engaging manner.</td>
<td>Good knowledge of the assigned topic and capacity to critically integrate lecture and reading material into the presentation. The contents are delivered in an intelligible manner.</td>
<td>Fair knowledge of the assigned topic and little capacity to critically integrate lecture and reading material into the presentation. The contents are delivered with little structure and poor speech.</td>
<td>Limited knowledge of the assigned topic and little capacity to critically integrate lecture and reading material. The contents, if any, are delivered in an incoherent manner.</td>
<td>Little or no knowledge of the assigned topic and capacity to critically integrate lecture and reading material into the presentation. The contents, if any, are delivered in an incoherent manner.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>3. Book review</strong></td>
<td>Need to show capacity to critically assess and persuade (critical thinking, evaluation and detailed analysis of a book).</td>
<td>Excellent capacity to persuade, demonstrate critical evaluation, and effort in assessing the quality of a scholarly book.</td>
<td>Good capacity to persuade, demonstrate critical evaluation, and effort in assessing the quality of a scholarly book.</td>
<td>Adequate capacity to persuade, demonstrate critical evaluation, and effort in assessing the quality of a scholarly book.</td>
<td>Scant capacity to persuade, demonstrate critical evaluation, or indicate much effort in assessing the quality of a scholarly book.</td>
<td>Little or no capacity to persuade, demonstrate critical evaluation, or indicate much effort in assessing the quality of a scholarly book.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Research essay</td>
<td>Need to show capacity to critically reflect on and theoretically engage with scholarly references</td>
<td>Excellent capacity to critically assess scholarly references, and contribute original recommendations</td>
<td>Good capacity to critically assess scholarly references, and contribute sound recommendations</td>
<td>Adequate capacity to critically assess scholarly references, and contribute recommendations</td>
<td>Scant capacity to critically assess scholarly references, and contribute recommendations</td>
<td>Little or no capacity to critically assess scholarly references, and contribute recommendations</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Part III Other Information

1. **Keyword Syllabus**
   
   *(An indication of the key topics of the course.)*


2. **Weekly schedule**

   **Week 1 – Introduction: What Are (and Are Not) Human Rights?**
   
   This session sets the introduction to the course and clarifies the assignments and responsibilities of the students. The following questions will be addressed: what are human “rights”? “Rights” for whom? Who violates human rights? Who suffers and why? Why so many critiques? Is “Human Rights” solely a Western idea?

   **Required readings**

   **Further readings**

   **Week 2 – Foundations of Modern Human Rights**
   
   This seminar will ask the following questions: where do human rights come from? What are the historical, philosophical foundations and justifications? What is “human dignity”? When, and where, did the human rights movement begin? What were the factors and events that led to the creation of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights?

   **Required readings**

Further readings

Week 3 – International Human Rights Regime
The lecture will interrogate why, and how, a customary international law of human rights has emerged after 1945. What are the strengths and weaknesses of the highly diverse set of international human rights conventions? What is the role of the International Criminal Court and the International Court of Justice? What are the ICCPR, the ICESCR, and the Paris Principles? Why would a country like the United States not give individuals the right to petition to the ICCPR committee? Are regional and national systems more or less efficient than a universal one?

Required readings

Further readings

**Week 4 – Civil Rights and Political Rights**
The class will discuss the “first generation” of civil and political rights and their enforcement in contemporary Asia. How can citizens in Asia participate freely to political and civic life without being punished? How are rights guaranteed under such a diversity of political systems, cultures and societies? How to call on authoritarian and semi-democratic governments in the region not to interfere with the individual exercise of civil liberties?

**Required readings**

**Further readings**
- The text of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR: www2.ohchr.org/english/law/ccpr.htm).

**Week 5 – Dissent, Imprisonment and Torture**
How do the repression of dissent, the structure of prison systems and the wider restrictions on freedom of expression affect human rights in Asia? Can rights be denied in the name of national security, state stability, or social harmony? Is the prohibition (and prosecution) of torture widely accepted across the region? We will also explore issues of lèse-majesté (Thailand) and death penalty.

**Required readings**

**Further readings**

**Week 6 – Social, Economic and Cultural Rights**

Why distinguishing economic, cultural and social rights from political and civil ones? What are the levels of protection afforded to these new categories of rights? Is there a linkage between economic prosperity and human rights? What types of challenges would an international or national court face in enforcing social and economic rights? Why moving beyond individual rights to introduce “collective-developmental” rights? Is there a right to food and health (and thus, to healthy food)? Can the institutions of human rights adequately address the problems caused by climate change in the region?

**Required readings**

**Further readings**
Week 7 – Women’s and Children’s Rights
Students will engage in discussions on how women’s rights and children’s rights fit into human rights movements in Asia. What are the regional and domestic legal instruments protecting women and girls against abuses, violence and discrimination? Is there a distinction between the public and the private in regional and national human rights frameworks? We will also discuss women’s access to education, property rights, contraception, and abortion.

Required readings

Further readings

Week 8 – Migration, Human Trafficking and Modern Slavery
The session will explore the risks faced by populations migrating either voluntary (for work, a new life) or involuntarily (human trafficking) across Asian borders. How to guarantee their rights as individuals in a foreign (even no man’s) land? What is “modern slavery”? What forms does modern servitude take in contemporary Asia? How to fight against human trafficking and smuggling in the region?

Required readings

Further readings

**Week 9 – Refugees and Statelessness**

Students will examine issues of statelessness, asylum and processes of deportation, mass expulsion and forced migration. What are the rights of refugees and asylees? What are the international norms and legal criteria for refugee and asylum status? Why many states have neither signed nor ratified the 1951 Geneva Convention on Refugees?

**Required readings**


**Further readings**


**Week 10 – Ethnic Minority Rights**

In this session, we will identify key issues in minority rights and interrogate specific protections in international and domestic laws for ethnic and linguistic minorities. How are minority rights violated in contemporary Asia, and by whom? How do states respond to inter-ethnic violence? How can ethnic minority citizens protect themselves from state abuses?

**Required readings**

Further readings

Week 11 – Freedom of Religion
What are the realities of religious discrimination, violence and segregation in Asia? What is secularism and can it best guarantee religious freedoms? What are the challenges in realizing freedom of belief in a religiously fractured society such as India or Myanmar? How to deal with the violations of religious rights in a polity where there is an officially designated state religion? We will also debate the issue of blasphemy (especially with regard to Indonesia and Pakistan).

Required readings

Further readings

Week 12 – Mass Atrocity, Genocide and Memory
We will debate how mass atrocities and impunities of the past can affect the present and continue to impact survivors and their rights. How do governments and perpetrators of violence respond to evidence of past misbehaviors? What are the differences between genocide, ethnic cleansing, mass atrocity and slaughter? What is transitional justice? Are truth commissions a necessary tool? We look
at examples drawn from Cambodia under the Khmers Rouge, the Partition of India (1947), independence struggles in Bangladesh (1971) and East Timor (1976), and the case of Myanmar’s Rohingya community.

**Required readings**

**Further readings**

**Week 13 – Final Exam and Wrap-up**
This is a wrap-up session for students to take the exam (2 hours) and (re)consider the trends and themes debated over the course of the semester. Why fighting for a variety of “rights” in Asia today? Who fights, and for whom? What are the next frontiers?

**Suggested readings**
3. Additional references