

Methods in Human Rights

Research and Practice

HRTS 5401

Th 2:30pm – 5:00pm

FSB 216

Professor:

Dr. David L. Richards (david.richards@uconn.edu)

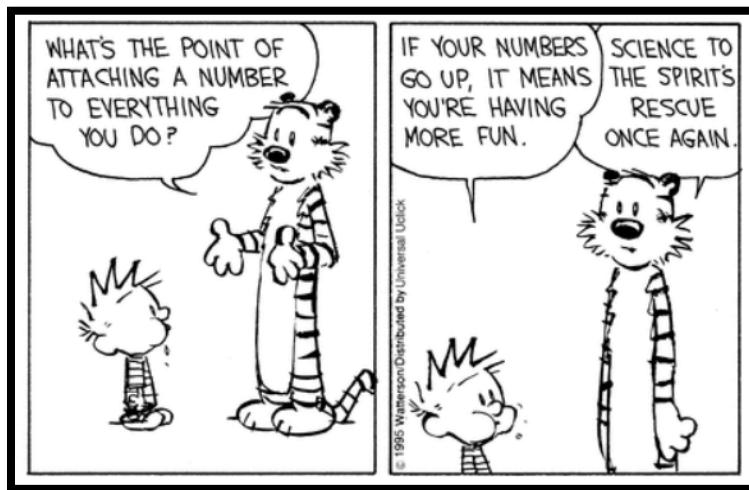
Office:

Zoom (link automatically provided upon scheduling)

Office Hours:

Mondays: 9:00am-12:00pm

[Click Here to Book Time With Me](#)



In this course, graduate students will be introduced to several modes of human rights research and practice through a workshop approach. What this means is that the bulk of course time, in and out of class, will be spent actively learning widely-used skills.

REQUIRED BOOK

- *Research Methods in Human Rights*; Andreassen, Sano & McInerney-Lankford;
 - Available as an e-book via UConn Library at:
<https://doi-org.ezproxy.lib.uconn.edu/10.4337/9781785367793>

GRADED COMPONENTS

These projects have been chosen to provide an experiential introduction to several foundational research skills used in the field of human rights. For each project, you will receive a grade from 0 to 100.

1. Research Gap Project (30%): Due Thursday, October 26th by 2:30pm

Most simply, a research gap is the difference between what we already know/have studied and what remains to be known/studied. There are many types of research gaps, and identifying them is a foundational skill for researchers:

The identification of gaps from systematic reviews [of existing research] is essential to the practice of “evidence-based research.” ... research should begin and end with a systematic review. A comprehensive and explicit consideration of the existing evidence is necessary for the identification and development of an unanswered and answerable question, for the design of a study most likely to answer that question, and for the interpretation of the results of the study (pg 1).¹

Working from a research gap taxonomy (found in one of the required readings for this class), you will conduct a systematic study of research gaps in a human rights literature of your choice²

2. Measurement Group Project (30%): Due Thursday, November 30th, by 2:30pm

Data play an important part in enabling human rights practices of governments to be evaluated. For policymakers, data facilitate evidence-based policy making. For activists, data-based research and reports can generate a good deal of public pressure to improve human rights practices by mobilizing discussion about, and drawing attention to, human rights issues. For scholars, data-based evaluation helps understand the causes and consequences of respect for --and violations of-- human rights. The [CIRIGHTS](#) Human Rights Data Project annually rates governments' level of respect for over 20+ internationally-recognized human rights. You will be working in groups to improve the reliability and validity of the CIRIGHTS measurement system used to rate ten types of employment discrimination.

3. Survey Project (30%): Due Wednesday, December 13th by 2:30pm

You will be creating a survey instrument, putting it out in the field for responses, and analyzing the results. You'll use [Qualtrics](#) to code your survey. While [Institutional Review Board](#) review/approval is not required for classwork surveys, you'll be introduced to the process and its forms and complete the [CITI certification process](#) so that you may make IRB submissions moving forward, should you wish. You'll use the <https://surveyswap.io> respondent-swapping service to get respondents for your survey. You'll need [at least 30](#) full-completed responses for your survey, but the more the better.

4. Attendance of Two HRTS Events (10%)

You are required to attend two HRTS-sponsored events during the semester, *including one Graduate Research Forum presentation*. This is graded pass (100%) for attending two qualifying events or fail (0%) for attending fewer than two qualifying events. No extra or partial credit is possible.

¹ Robinson KA, Akinyede O, Dutta T, et al. *Framework for Determining Research Gaps During Systematic Review: Evaluation* [Internet]. Rockville (MD): Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality (US); 2013 Feb.

Introduction. Available from: <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/books/NBK126702/>

² The terms “the literature” and “a literature” refer to the existing body of written work on a particular subject.

SEMESTER SCHEDULE / READINGS

Below is the approximate outline of our semester together.

- Readings marked “RMHR” refer to the *Research Methods in Human Rights* e-book.
- Readings and materials below without a URL can be found in HUSKY CT → Course Content

Week 1 (8/31): Basics

I will unfortunately be away on business this week. In my absence:

- The readings for this week are:
 - RMHR: Chpt 1: “Human rights research method”
 - RMHR: Chpt 8 “Interdisciplinarity and multimethod research”
 - The Universal Declaration of Human Rights (1948)
<http://www.un.org/en/documents/udhr/>

(B) I will have some access to email while away, so please send me any questions.

Week 2 (9/7): Finding Literature & Identifying Research Gaps

Your first project is to find and study research gaps in a human rights literature of your choice. We'll address some foundational questions, including: How does one find “literature” appropriate for professional research? What are the types of research gaps? How does one identify them?

- Lingard, Lorelei. 2018. "Writing an Effective Literature Review: Part I: Mapping the Gap." *Perspectives on Medical Education; Perspect Med Educ* 7 (1):47-9.
- Miles, D. Anthony. 2017. "A Taxonomy of Research Gaps: Identifying and Defining the Seven Research Gaps"
- Rewhorn, Sonja. 2018. "Writing Your Successful Literature Review." *Journal of Geography in Higher Education* 42 (1):143-7.

Week 3 (9/14): Managing Literature & Finding Gaps

(A) Class Visit by Hilary Kraus, Research Services Librarian. She will be introducing you to the Zotero citations management system, a professional software supported by UConn Libraries and used by researchers to organize their literature.

Before arriving at class, please make sure you have done the following four steps:

Step 1: Register for a Zotero account

- Go to <https://www.zotero.org/user/register>
- You can use whatever email address you prefer to set it up.
- After registering, be sure to go to your email and activate your account.

Step 2: Install Zotero

- Go to <https://www.zotero.org/download/>
- Download Zotero 6.0 for your computer.
- Open the downloaded file and install Zotero. It will open automatically once installed.
- *Please note!* At this point your default web browser will open. Close or minimize your browser and complete the final part of Step 2 before you move on to Step 3.
- In Zotero, you'll see a Welcome to Zotero! message. Click on the blue "Set up syncing" link in the message and login with your Zotero username and password, then click OK.
- If you use a Mac, quit Zotero and restart it to ensure the Microsoft Word integration takes effect

Step 3: Install Zotero Connector for your browser

- If you use Chrome, Firefox, or Edge:
 - Return to the <https://www.zotero.org/download/> page in your preferred web browser
 - Click the button to install the Zotero Connector
 - If you then don't see the Connector in your toolbar, follow your browser's instructions to pin it there
 - If you attempt to add the Zotero Connector in Chrome, and receive an error message saying that IT has locked the Chrome Store for security purposes, you need to [opt in to Google Workspace Public Services at UConn](#)
- If you use Safari:
 - Go to Safari --> Preferences --> Extensions --> Check the box next to the Zotero Connector to enable it
 - Go to View --> Customize toolbar and drag the Zotero Connector extension to your toolbar
 - If you do not see the Zotero Connector in your available extensions, you may need to remove the Zotero application and reinstall it; this is a known issue with Safari, so if you run into trouble, consider using Chrome or Firefox instead

Step 4: Bookmark the Zotero guide: <https://guides.lib.uconn.edu/zotero>

(B) After the Zotero session, we will be doing research-gap identification exercises and going over the research gap assignment due on 10/19.

Week 4 (9/21): CITI / IRB Process

This is the start of five weeks dedicated to training you to propose, write, code, field, and analyze a survey and its responses. This first week will focus on survey ethics and proposals, as well as finding a survey topic.

- RMHR: Chpt 9: "Research ethics for human rights researchers"
- Hlavka, Heather R., and Kristin C. Carbone-López. 2007. "Revictimizing the Victims? Interviewing Women About Interpersonal Violence" *Journal of Interpersonal Violence* 22(7): 894-920.

Week 5 (9/28): The Survey Instrument / Survey Swap

This week, we will focus on writing methodologically sound survey items. As well, you will be introduced to Survey Swap, from which you will be able to obtain respondents for your survey.

- Bhattacherjee, Anol. 2019. "Chpt 9: Survey Research" in *Social Science Research: Principles, Methods and Practices (Revised Edition)* <https://usq.pressbooks.pub/socialscienceresearch/chapter/chapter-9-survey-research/>
- Qualtrics. "Writing Survey Questions" <https://www.qualtrics.com/blog/writing-survey-questions/>
- A few survey questionnaires to look at and see how items are written (files in HuskyCT):
 - World Values Survey
 - LatinoBarometer
 - UN Rights Side of Live Survey (questionnaire starts pg70)

Week 6 (10/5): Coding the Survey Instrument in Qualtrics

Once the survey has been written, it needs to be coded into an online platform, Qualtrics in this case, from which it can be sent out into the field for respondents to take.

- Qualtrics "Survey Basic Overview" <https://www.qualtrics.com/support/survey-platform/survey-module/survey-module-overview/>

Week 7 (10/12): Organizing & Analyzing Results I

This is the first of two weeks in which we address what one does with survey results once they are in. They must be organized, cleaned, and analyzed. You'll learn the basics of doing this.

- Examples of survey write-ups (files in HuskyCT):
 - Koo, Jeong-Woo. 2017. "The Construction of Human Rights Actorhood: Findings from the Korean General Social Survey." *Journal of Human Rights* 16 (3):261-75.
 - Ricks, Joni L., Susan D. Cochran, Onyebuchi A. Arah, John K. Williams, and Teresa E. Seeman. 2016. "Food Insecurity and Intimate Partner Violence Against Women: Results from the California Women's Health Survey." *Public Health Nutrition; Public Health Nutr* 19 (5):914-23.

Week 8 (10/19): Organizing & Analyzing Results II

Research Gap Project Due by 2:30pm

Week 9 (10/26): Conceptualization / Operationalization I

From this point, the semester will focus on training you to critique and improve a set of existing human rights indicators of employment discrimination from the CIRIGHTS human rights data project. Any valid, useful numeric indicator rests upon a solid conceptual foundation, and learning to develop such a foundation is our work this week.

- RMHR: Chpt 13: "Challenges of human rights measurement"
- United Nations. 2012. "Chpt 2. Conceptualizing Indicators for Human Rights" New York: United Nations {Pages 27-44}

Week 10 (11/2): Conceptualization / Operationalization II

Once we've learned how to develop a solid conceptual foundation, we must create a methodologically sound system for attaching numbers to various levels or attributes of our concepts. There are many ways to do this. We'll focus on the standards-based method.

- Organization of American States and Follow-up Mechanism to the Belém do Pará Convention (ME SECVI). 2015. *Practical Guide to the System of Progress Indicators for Measuring Implementation of the Belém do Pará Convention*.
- Richards, David L. and Jillienne Haglund. *Violence Against Women and the Law*. 2015. London: Routledge. [Chpt 4] eBook available online via Babbidge Library at <https://doi-org.ezproxy.lib.uconn.edu/10.4324/9781315631295>

Week 11 (11/9):

I will be away on business this week. You are to use this time to work on your survey project. The classroom is yours to use during our normal class time should you wish to support each other.

Week 12 (11/16): CIRI / Assessing Discrimination I

This week we take a look at the CIRI Human Rights Data project (progenitor of CIRIGHTS) as an example of a public-facing research project involved in international data-based advocacy. As part of your group project, we also begin dissecting the CIRIGHTS employment discriminations coding schemes.

- Satterthwaite, Margaret. 2016. "[Coding Personal Integrity Rights: Assessing Standards-Based Measures Against Human Rights Law and Practice](#)," 48 *N.Y.U. J. Int'l L. & Pol.* 513.
- RMHR: Chpt 16: "Researching Discrimination"
- The Convention concerning Discrimination in Respect of Employment and Occupation (1958) <https://www.ohchr.org/en/instruments-mechanisms/instruments/discrimination-employment-and-occupation-convention-1958-no-111>

Week 13 (11/23): No Class: Thanksgiving Recess**Week 14 (11/30): Assessing Discrimination II / Group Work**

More work on the CIRIGHTS employment discriminations coding schemes, but also a debriefing on the results of your survey projects.

Survey Project Due by 2:30pm

Week 15 (12/7): Group Work Session

This class session is held open for your group to be able to meet and work together in person. The professor will float between groups, helping as necessary.

Week 16 (12/13):

Measurement Group Project Due via email to professor by 2:30pm

CLASS RULES:

Notes/Photos/Videos/Sound Recording, Etc.

1. You do not have permission to photograph or video/audio record *any* sounds or images from or during class; on any device, at any time unless expressly authorized by the instructor.
 - a. For example:
 - i. Capturing still images of lecture slides, the instructor, class guests, or students is prohibited.
 - ii. Capturing audio of lecture slides, the instructor, class guests, or students is prohibited.
 - iii. Capturing video of lecture slides, the instructor, class guests, or students is prohibited.
2. You do not have permission to make publicly available any class notes or materials – complete, partial, or summarized -- for paid or unpaid access by any other persons via any forum and/or via any medium unless expressly authorized by the instructor.

Any and all violations of the above will be reported to the Dean of Students Office.

Lateness

Habitual lateness to class is unprofessional and disrespectful to other students and to the professor. Habitual lateness to class is disruptive and will be handled as such.

Phones / Other Electronic Devices:

- **Use of earbuds/earphones during class is strictly prohibited.**
- Turn off the ringer of your phone/electronic devices BEFORE class begins. You will not be in trouble for a single accident of forgetting to turn off your phone and having it ring in class -- once in a while, everyone (*including the professor*) forgets to turn off his/her phone. So, if your phone rings in class, *please have the decency to turn it off and not let it ring* and ring until the caller hangs up or voicemail kicks in.
- Chronic cases of disruption via electronic devices will be referred to the Office of Student Services & Advocacy.
- You MAY use a laptop/tablet, etc during lectures.
 - If the professor sees that too much laptop activity is being devoted to non-course activities (e.g., social media, etc), permission to use laptops/tablets/etc. will be revoked.
- **NO electronic devices of any kind are to be powered up or on during an exam/quiz.** Violation of this rule will result in a zero on the exam/quiz.
- **NO electronic devices of any kind are to be visible during an exam/quiz.** Violation of this rule will result in a zero on the exam/quiz.
- If you are caught using *any* kind of electronic device during an exam, you will automatically receive a zero on the exam.

E-Mail:

You are responsible for checking your UCONN-registered e-mail every day, especially before classes and exams. Notices, important dates, reading changes, and the like will be announced via e-mail.

Makeup Exams:

Makeup exams present *severe* equity problems for everyone involved in the course. Makeup exams will ONLY be scheduled for those with DOCUMENTED medical, University-sanctioned required activity, or direct family member's death- associated excuses.

There are NO exceptions to the makeup exam rule. For example, exams missed because of vacation, weddings, oversleeping, sickness not bad enough to get a doctor's excuse, etc., cannot be made up.

Excused Absences:

Excused absences are limited to absences where there is a documented medical excuse for that/those date(s) missed, a University-sanctioned event directly affecting the student, or the documented death of an immediate family member. Examples of things that do not count as excused are job interviews, weddings, work-related conflicts, and vacations.

Late Penalty

Late penalties begin accruing immediately after I have collected work from all those in attendance at the beginning of class, rounded up to the hour, at a penalty of 2 points per hour.

Academic Integrity

In this course we aim to conduct ourselves as a community of scholars, recognizing that academic study is both an intellectual and ethical enterprise. You are encouraged to build on the ideas and texts of others; that is a vital part of academic life. You are also obligated to document every occasion when you use another's ideas, language, or syntax. You are encouraged to study together, discuss readings outside of class, share your drafts during peer review and outside of class, and go to the Writing Center with your drafts. In this course, those activities are well within the bounds of academic honesty. However, when you use another's ideas or language—whether through direct quotation, summary, or paraphrase—you must formally acknowledge that debt by signaling it with a standard form of academic citation. Even one occasion of academic dishonesty, large or small, on *any* assignment, large or small, will result in failure for the entire course and referral to Student Judicial Affairs. For University policies on academic honesty, please see UConn's *Responsibilities of Community Life: The Student Code* and the Office of Community Standards: <http://www.community.uconn.edu>

Students With Disabilities

Please contact me during office hours to discuss academic accommodations that may be needed during the semester due to a documented disability. The Center for Students with Disabilities (CSD) engages in an interactive process with each student and reviews requests for accommodations on an individualized, case-by-case basis. Depending on the nature and functional limitations of a student's documented disability, he/she may be eligible for academic accommodations. CSD collaborates with students and their faculty to coordinate approved accommodations and services for qualified students with disabilities. If you have a documented disability for which you wish to request academic accommodations and have not contacted the CSD, please do so as soon as possible. The CSD is located in Wilbur Cross, Room 204 and can be reached at (860) 486-2020 or at csd@uconn.edu. Detailed information regarding the process to request accommodations is available on the CSD website at www.csd.uconn.edu.

Policy Against Discrimination, Harassment and Inappropriate Romantic Relationships

The University is committed to maintaining an environment free of discrimination or discriminatory harassment directed toward any person or group within its community – students, employees, or visitors. Academic and professional excellence can flourish only when each member of our community is assured an atmosphere of mutual respect. All members of the University community are responsible for the maintenance of an academic and work environment in which people are free to learn and work without fear of discrimination or discriminatory harassment. In addition, inappropriate Romantic relationships can undermine the University's mission when those in positions of authority abuse or appear to abuse their authority. To that end, and in accordance with federal and state law, the University prohibits discrimination and discriminatory harassment, as well as inappropriate Romantic relationships, and such behavior will be met with appropriate disciplinary action, up to and including dismissal from the University. More information is available at <http://policy.uconn.edu/?p=2884> .

Sexual Assault Reporting Policy

To protect the campus community, all non-confidential University employees (including faculty) are required to report assaults they witness or are told about to the Office of Diversity & Equity under the Sexual Assault Response Policy. The University takes all reports with the utmost seriousness. Please be aware that while the information you provide will remain private, it will not be confidential and will be shared with University officials who can help. More information is available at <http://sexualviolence.uconn.edu/> .