

# Evaluating Human Rights

HRTS/POLS 3430

Tuesdays & Thursdays 12:30pm-1:45pm

MCHU 206

**Professor:**

Dr. David L. Richards ([david.richards@uconn.edu](mailto:david.richards@uconn.edu))

**Office:**

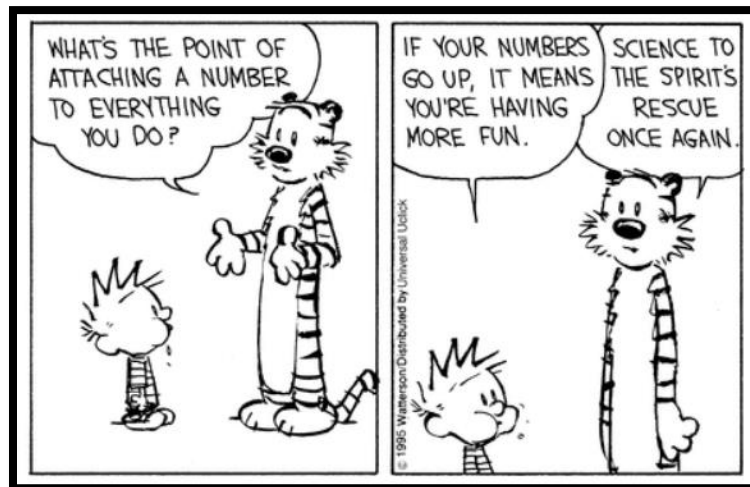
Zoom (link automatically provided upon scheduling)

**Office Hours:**

Mondays: 8:30am-11:30am

Appts are scheduled via Nexus in 15-minute increments and must be made in advance.

Use the QR below to go directly to my appointments page.



Data play an important part in enabling us to evaluate respect for human rights. For policymakers, data facilitate evidence-based policy making, which is the making of policy decisions based on careful and rigorous analyses using sound and transparent data. For activists, data-based research and reports can generate a good deal of public pressure to improve human rights conditions by mobilizing discussion about, and draw attention to, human rights issues. For scholars, data-based evaluation helps understand the causes and consequences of respect for human rights.

Even for those not looking forward to a career in human rights, the capabilities to create, understand, and use data are in-demand job skills. And basic data literacy is necessary to be an informed citizen and consumer in the world as it is. It is intended then that this course will help you understand, create, and use data not only for evaluating respect for human rights but, rather, across your scholarly and personal interests / studies.

**Coding Practicum (40%):**

Most countries have ratified one or more treaties pledging to respect, protect, and fulfill human rights (“words”). You will be engaging in important and public-facing human rights research by helping assess to what extent these countries actually respect the human rights of their citizens (“deeds”) in practice. That is, you’ll be assessing how well their deeds match with their words.

Your work will be coding for the CIRights project, a new and expanded version of the CIRI Human Rights Data Project which, when put on pause in 2014, was the most-widely used human rights data set in the world.<sup>1</sup> You will be trained to code one human right (T.B.D.) and assigned a list of countries for which to score that right for one year. The training will be done in class, the coding will be done on your own schedule (except for meeting the deadline). You’ll have one meeting with me after your coding is complete, to review the data you’ve created.

*How Will I Be Graded?*

Your overall grade on this activity, on a scale from 0-100, will be based on the following components:

- Attending in-class training sessions
- Qualification<sup>2</sup> for coding one of the rights for which training is provided.
- Quality of your codes (e.g., attention to details in information source, careful application of coding guidelines, taking careful notes, etc.)
- Turning in scores and notes on time
- Attendance of mandatory coding resolution session

---

<sup>1</sup> CIRI data were used for evidence-based policy making in over 170 countries by over 500 total governments/organizations, including the U.S. Governments’ Millennium Challenge Corporation (MCC), the World Bank, the United Nations Development Programme, the European Commission, the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID), and many others.

<sup>2</sup> This means your training scores meet the necessary competence threshold.

## **Group Research Paper Project (60%):**

### **The Project**

You will be part of a small group that will produce a data-based report evaluating human rights conditions for two human rights from an international human rights instrument, for five assigned countries for a three-year period anywhere between 2010 and the present.

### **I know that...**

*...most students hate, no, detest, no, LOATHE, group work.* I realize students are aware of, and upset by, the free-rider problem inherent in group work.<sup>3</sup> However, decades of experience dictate that a great deal of professional work in this world is done by teams. And, because I am trying to give you something more than the average “read-this-book, take-this-test” experience, it would be presenting you with a false experience to put you each on your own with a measurement-related research task.<sup>4</sup> So, *my* challenge was to construct a fair, engaging, group project. The students who frequently contact me years later about how this project helped them in the working world tell me I’ve done that. *Your* challenge is to now make the most of this opportunity and excel at your given tasks, despite normal obstacles inherent in group work that you will encounter for the rest of your working lives.

## **GROUP RESEARCH PAPER PROJECT FAQ**

### ***How Will I Be Assigned to a Group/Human Rights Instrument?***

At the start of class on **1/26** I will be asking each of you -- using a randomized re-ordering of the class roster (to make it fair) -- to pick one of the treaties listed below. This choice will determine the rest of your semester (and 50% of your grade), so seriously consider your choices. Sometimes, one treaty is more popular than others and so its group may fill up before your turn.<sup>5</sup> Therefore, make sure to have second and third choices ready, as you may need them.

### ***What Legally Binding Instruments Are Available?***

1. [International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights](#) (1966)
2. [International Covenant on Economic, Social, and Cultural Rights](#) (1966)
3. [Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women](#) (1979)
4. [Convention on the Rights of the Child](#) (1989)
5. [Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons Especially Women and Children](#) (2000)

### ***What Are the Five Countries We Will Be Researching?***

Each group will choose five states parties to its treaty; either five from a single UN-designated region or one from each of the five UN-designated regions listed in the “Regions” spreadsheet.

---

<sup>3</sup> The free rider problem happens when one or more group members do little or no work but still receive the same credit for an assignment as those who worked diligently. Note: Some people turn into free riders when something doesn’t go their way in a group setting. Many decisions will be made at the group level throughout the production of this report and probability dictates that not every decision will be the outcome you desire as an individual. Do not let that negatively affect your performance, because I will come to know what’s going on and your final grade will be affected. When it’s your turn to lose a decision, be gracious.

<sup>4</sup> In the past, I’ve tried assigning individual research papers for this course, but students found measurement much too alien and difficult to do well on their own, and so became discouraged about their abilities when they did pretty well for beginners. I prefer you leave the semester with a good feeling about human rights measurement, rather than with a bad feeling about it.

<sup>5</sup> The exact number of students per group depends upon overall course enrollment but is typically around five or six students.

***What Data Will We Use In Our Report?***

You may create your own data, or you may use existing data to tell your stories about government respect for your two rights. A single human right may require several data sources to really describe it well, or it may require only one. That will depend on the treaty/rights you are working with. No matter what you do, you will have to discuss the conceptualization and operationalization of your chosen data, as well as use these data properly to tell your stories about these five countries. As well, you'll need to discuss what, if any, alternative sources of data were available and why you chose not to use those.

***What Do You Mean by "...since 2010?"***

I used to assign a particular year to evaluate, but that doesn't work well because some data aren't available for some years/countries/rights. So, I'm giving you a window of "since 2010". Thus, you'll find data that describes some set of three years from 2010 to now. This allows you to have more data choices as well as to talk about change wherever possible, which makes it easier to write up an evaluation of these five countries with respect to the rights you choose from your treaty.

***Will We Get Class Time to Work on This?***

Yes. There will be three full-classtime workshops dedicated to doing project work and I will also be giving a few minutes of class time here and there through the semester for groups to connect in person as well as to consult with me.

***How Long Does This Report Need to Be?***

As long as it needs to be. What you are doing, essentially, is storytelling. Data tell stories. You are using data to tell your readers about human rights conditions for two human rights in five countries. At some point your story is still incomplete and, at some point, it will become complete. You are the author, you will know. Of course, I am available to you throughout the process to discuss these matters. However, I will not box you in with an arbitrary page number.

***What Will Be the Style and Format of Our Report?***

The mandatory formatting and style guidelines can be found in this syllabus.

***When Is it Due, and In What Manner?***

Each group's report is to be submitted a PDF via HuskyCT, by 12:30pm on Tuesday 5/2.

***Will We Need to Make Tables and/or Figures?***

Given that you will be working with quantitative data, yes, as these things are instrumental in telling stories with such data. Right away, find someone in your group who knows how to make tables and/or figures or is willing to learn how to do this from me, and have that be a key assignment for her or him. I am a resource for help in this regard, as well.

### ***What Should Be Our Group's First Steps?***

1. Exchange schedules and contact information.
2. *Set up future group meetings now, and keep them faithfully.* Understand that it will almost certainly be the case that not every person can attend every single meeting. Having regular project meetings will, over the course of an entire semester, create space for equal involvement if everyone makes their best effort to attend all meetings.
3. Think about the kinds of work you'll be doing and: (i) think of leadership/organizer roles, and decide who will fill them; (ii) think about the work to be done and make a plan to divide it fairly among group members

### ***How Can I Let You know Some of My Group Members Aren't Participating?***

1. Certainly, throughout the semester, talk to me in class or email me. I can give you advice on how to handle free-rider situations and, in the rare necessity, can step in to help.
2. At the end of the semester, you will be filling out anonymous reviews of the other members of your group. I will be the only one seeing these reviews and they are shredded after I read them, so you can be fully honest.
  - a. History dictates that free-riding students will be revealed by these reviews.
  - b. Note: The peer-review process is meant to induce accountability in your group; it is *not* meant to induce Stalinesque levels of paranoia among your group members.

### ***What Happens to Free-Riders?***

Students found not to be pulling their weight in the group project will receive a grade that is lower than that received by the rest of their group. The extent of the grade reduction depends on the extent to which a student shirked his/her responsibilities. *Note to free riders: I will know who you are.*

### ***How Will I Be Graded?***

You will receive a grade from 0-100 for your work on this project. This grade will be based upon the overall quality of your group's final paper (60%) and your own, individual effort on the paper (40%) as judged by the instructor based on in-class paper workshop attendance/participation, talking with group members throughout the semester, and peer reviews.

### ***What Is Your Best Advice for Success?***

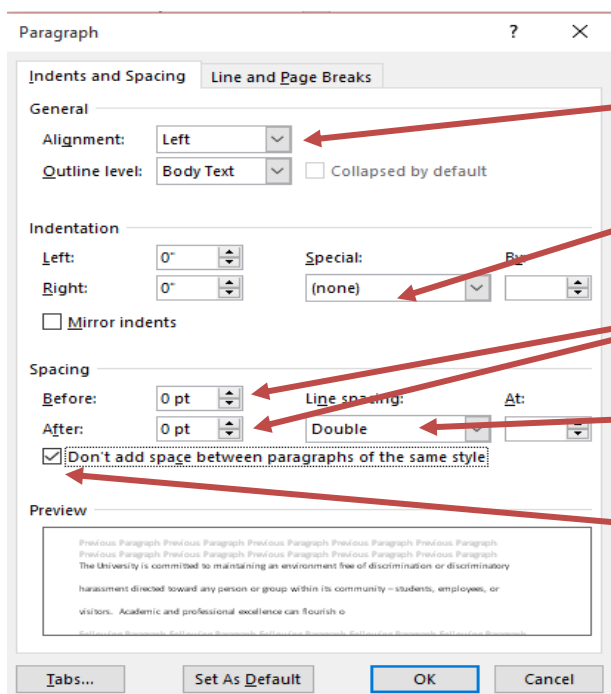
Start early, make a feasible workplan, meet regularly as a group, assign clear goals to individuals, and meet regularly with the professor.

## GROUP RESEARCH PAPER FORMAT

1. Title Page
  - a. Must include: Title of report, name of treaty, all group members' full names, date of submission, what part(s) of this report were worked on by which group members
2. Introduction
  - a. Background/basics of your treaty (e.g. How did it come to be? What countries are/aren't parties? Why? What all does it cover? How has it been used? etc).
3. Right #1
  - a. What right from the treaty are you examining in this section? How is it conceptualized?
  - b. Your operationalization of this right
    - i. Fully discuss source/availability/validity/transparency/reliability of all the data you chose and/or created for use in this paper.
  - c. *Description* of respect for this right *Using Data* in countries using the data you chose and/or created:
    - i. Country 1
    - ii. Country 2
    - iii. Country 3
    - iv. Country 4
    - v. Country 5
  - d. Explicit *comparison* of respect for this right across the five countries using the data you chose and/or created.
4. Right #2
  - a. What right from the treaty are you examining in this section? How is it conceptualized?
  - b. Your operationalization of this right
  - c. Fully discuss source/availability/validity/transparency/reliability of the data you chose and/or created for use in this paper.
  - d. *Description* of respect for this right *Using Data* in countries using the data you chose and/or created:
    - i. Country 1
    - ii. Country 2
    - iii. Country 3
    - iv. Country 4
    - v. Country 5
  - e. Explicit *comparison* of respect for this right across the five countries using the data you chose and/or created.
5. Discussion
  - a. What did you learn about gathering/making and using these human rights data?
  - b. What did you learn about respect for these two rights in these five countries?
  - c. What could be done in the future to make measurement/evaluation of respect for these two rights more reliable and/or valid?
6. Works Cited

## GROUP RESEARCH PAPER STYLE GUIDE

1. You will use 11pt or 12pt Calibri or Times New Roman fonts only.
2. You will use 1" margins all-around.
3. Use chapter/section headings, so the reader knows where they are in your paper with relation to the required format (see previous page)
4. Insert page numbers in the upper-right-hand corner, *starting with the first page of body text, not the title page*. If you need help with word processing, think ahead and ask me or someone else to help you well-before the due date.
5. Use parenthetical citations, not footnotes, to cite sources in your text.
6. For your works cited, you may use any established system (e.g., APA, MLA, APSA) that uses parenthetical citation.
7. Charts/figures go on separate pages of their own, not inserted directly among text
8. Charts/figures should have a number and name; e.g., "Figure 2. Disappearances in Umbrellastan, 1975" (minus the quote marks)
9. Works cited are to be organized alphabetically by first-author's surname, A to Z (I can't believe I have to put this here but, evidently, I do). Do not number entries.
  - a. A data source is no less deserving of citation than is a book. Make sure you properly cite data sources.
10. Do not cite the same source more than three times in a row.
11. In Word, this is what your Paragraph settings are to be:



Alignment is set to "Left"

Special is set to "(none)"

"0pt" both Before and After in the spacing settings.

Line Spacing set to "Double"

The "Don't add space between paragraphs of the same style" box IS checked.

## **COURSE SCHEDULE**

Other than where a URL is given, all reading materials are posted on HuskyCT.

### **Week 1 (1/17 -1/19): Welcome / Introduction to Data**

- Kelley, Judith. 2016. "The State Department just released its human trafficking report. Here's why it matters." *The Washington Post* <https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/monkey-cage/wp/2017/07/03/the-state-department-just-released-its-trafficking-in-persons-report-heres-why-that-matters/>
- Leiva Jaquelin, Pamela. 2017. "Securing Indigenous Rights through Data." *Equal Times* <https://www.equaltimes.org/securing-indigenous-rights-through-18038?lang=en>

### **Week 2 (1/24 – 1/26): Human Rights / Concepts I**

- **1/26: Pick paper topics**
- The Universal Declaration of Human Rights (1948) <http://www.un.org/en/documents/udhr/>
- United Nations. 2012. "Chpt 1. Human Rights and Indicators: Rationale and Some Concerns." New York: United Nations {Pages 9-26}

### **Week 3 (1/31 – 2/2): Concepts II**

- United Nations. 2012. "Chpt 2. Conceptualizing Indicators for Human Rights" New York: United Nations {Pages 27-44}

### **Week 4 (2/7 – 2/9): Concepts III**

- Spirer, Herbert F. 1990. "Violations of Human Rights, How Many? The Statistical Problems of Measuring Such Infractions Are Tough, but Statistical Science Is Equal to It." *American Journal of Economics and Sociology* 49(2): 199-210.

### **Week 5 (2/14 – 2/16): Research paper Workshop / Events Data**

- **2/14: In-Class paper Workshop. By this point, your two rights and five countries have been chosen and you are beginning data collection. Jobs have been assigned to team members.**
- Brysk, Alison. 1994. "The Politics of Measurement: The Contested Count of the Disappeared in Argentina" *Human Rights Quarterly* 16(4): 676-692.
- Kessler, Glenn. 2015. "Why you should be wary of statistics on 'modern slavery' and 'trafficking'." *The Washington Post* April 24.
- McCoy, Terrence. 2014. "Why many 'eyewitnesses' in the Darren Wilson investigation were wrong." *The Washington Post* November 25.
- Wade, Lizzie. 2017. "Mapping Mexico's Hidden Graves." *Science* June 26. <http://www.sciencemag.org/news/2017/06/mapping-mexico-s-hidden-graves>

### **Week 6 (2/21 – 2/23): Surveys**

- Hertel, Shareen, Lyle Scruggs, and C. Patrick Heidcamp. 2009. "Human Rights and Public Opinion: From Attitudes to Action." *Political Science Quarterly* 124(3): 443-459.
- Richards, David L., Mandy M. Morrill, and Mary R. Anderson. 2012. "Some Psycho-Social Correlates of US Citizen Support for Torture." *Nordic Journal of Human Rights* 30(1): 63-95.



**Week 7 (2/28 – 3/2): The CIRI Story/Method**

- Cingranelli, David L. and David L. Richards. 2010. "The Cingranelli and Richards (CIRI) Human Rights Data Project." *Human Rights Quarterly* 32.2: 401-424.
- Wood, Reed M. and Mark Gibney. 2010. "The Political Terror Scale (PTS): A Re-Introduction and a Comparison to CIRI." *Human Rights Quarterly* 32.2: 367-400.

**Week 8 (3/7 – 3/9): CIRights Coding Training**

- You will be given (via HuskyCT) training paperwork for these sessions. These materials will be available on HuskyCT.

**Week 13 (3/14 – 3/16): No Class: "Spring Break"****Week 9 (3/21 – 3/23): Research Paper Workshop / Critiques / New Data**

- **3/21: In-Class paper Workshop. By this point you have collected most all of the data you need; and, if you are making your own data, your measurement schemes are finished and you are beginning the coding process.**
- Clark, Ann Marie, and Kathryn Sikkink. 2013. "Information Effects and Human Rights Data: Is the Good News about Increased Human Rights Information Bad News for Human Rights Measures?" *Human Rights Quarterly*
- Richards, David L. 2016. "The Myth of Information Effects in Human Rights Data: Response to Ann Marie Clark and Kathryn Sikkink." *Human Rights Quarterly* 38.2: 477-492.
- Human Rights Measurement Initiative. 2019. "Measuring Civil and political Human Rights" <https://humanrightsmmeasurement.org/methodology/measuring-civil-political-rights/>

**Week 10 (3/28 – 3/30): Basic Training in Human Rights Data Analysis**

- Excel Basics: <https://youtu.be/e7xGuGgqp-Q>
  - <https://software.uconn.edu/microsoft-products-students/>
- Getting Started with Stata: <https://youtu.be/YAVq99iUTTI>
  - <https://software.uconn.edu/software/stata/>
- Data Wrapper: <https://www.datawrapper.de/>

**Week 11 (4/4 – 4/6): Gender & Law**

- Manjoo, Rashida. 2015. "Report of the Special Rapporteur on violence against women, its causes and consequences" Human Rights Council, Twenty-ninth session, United Nations, A/HRC/29/27
- Moeller, Kathryn. 2019. "The Ghost Statistic That Haunts Women's Empowerment." *The New Yorker* January 4.
- Richards, David L. and Jillienne Haglund. *Violence Against Women and the Law*. 2015. London: Routledge. [Chpts 3-4] **eBook available online via Babbidge Library at** <https://doi-org.ezproxy.lib.uconn.edu/10.4324/9781315631295>

**Week 12 (4/11 – 4/13): Paper Workshop**

- **4/14: All scores from CIRights coding must be turned in to instructor by 8:00am**
- In-Class paper Workshop. At this point you have all your data, it is in a single spreadsheet, and you have begun using it to write up your descriptions and comparisons.

**Week 14 (4/18 – 4/20): CIRights Coding Resolution Meetings**

- Coders will meet with the professor to review all of their scores for accuracy. The better the notes coders keep about why they assigned the scores that they did, the shorter the meeting. Meetings will occur throughout the week as participants' availability allows. Meeting signups will begin after spring break.

**Week 15 (4/25 – 4/27): CIRights Coding Resolution Meetings**

- Coders will meet with the professor to review all of their scores for accuracy. The better the notes coders keep about why they assigned the scores that they did, the shorter the meeting. Meetings will occur throughout the week as participants' availability allows. Meeting signups will begin after spring break.

**Week 16: Research Paper Due**

- **Tuesday 5/2: Group Research Paper Due by 12:30pm**

**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 (**this includes AI-based sources**). 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](mailto:csd@uconn.edu). Detailed information regarding the process to request accommodations is available on the CSD website at [www.csd.uconn.edu](http://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/> .

### **Grade Calculation:**

Your final grade will be calculated using the following formula:

$$\text{FINAL GRADE} = [.60 (\text{Coding}) + .40 (\text{Research Paper})]$$

Final class grades will be assigned as such:

A	93-100
A-	90-92
B+	87-89
B	83-86
B-	80-82
C+	77-79
C	73-76
C-	70-72
D+	67-69
D	60-66
F	59 or below