

Professor Rachel Cichowski  
Office: Gowen Hall 127  
rcichows@uw.edu  
Office Hours: Tuesdays and Thursdays 10-11am

Class Location: OUG ALC 136  
Lectures: T, Th 1:30-3:20pm

Teaching Assistants:

- Erin Adam, emadam@uw.edu  
Office and Hours: Thursdays, 11am-1pm, Gowen Hall 30
- JP Anderson, jpha@uw.edu  
Office and Hours: Tuesdays, 11am-1pm, Gowen Hall 28

**COURSE SYLLABUS**  
**POLS/LSJ 327: Women's Rights as Human Rights**

**COURSE DESCRIPTION**

This course is an elective course for the comparative legal institutions and human rights track of the Law, Society and Justice Program. There are no pre-requisites for the course. The course is both interdisciplinary and comparative rather than having a United States focus. The purpose of the course is to expose students to the complex issues - social, political, economic and legal - that characterize women's rights around the globe. Students will be asked to think critically about women's rights while thinking comparatively about the varying domestic and international settings that can alter the meaning and practical application of these rights. The course will focus on various substantive areas of rights - from reproductive rights to health rights - at the domestic level. And we will also focus on women's rights at the international level - in such areas as the issue of rape as a war crime and sex trafficking.

Further, students will be asked to conduct research on a women's rights topic of their choice and to present their findings to class participants. The course will provide students with an introduction to and assistance in utilizing the web as a tool for conducting research on women's rights.

**COURSE LEARNING GOALS AND OBJECTIVES**

- Analyze and examine global women's right issues
- Assess policy approaches to women's rights issues and provide policy recommendations
- Critically assess policy approaches and solutions for global women's rights issues
- Construct and conduct an independent research project on a global women's rights issue of your choice
- Acquire and apply skills to share your research analysis including writing a Research Paper and designing and presenting a Research Presentation.

**COURSE MATERIALS**

**Required Readings**

There are two types of required readings for this course. First, there are two required books. These include, *Half the Sky* by Kristoff and WuDunn and *Girls Like Us* by Rachel Lloyd. Second, a set of required readings will be available through the Course website.

**Course Website**

The course website is a hub of information for the course. Please check back frequently. It can be located at: <https://canvas.uw.edu/courses/1067329>

**Research Resources**

You will find extensive research resources on the course website. These include how-to tips and videos on conducting social science research using library resources and web based resources. You also will find information on research specific to the course's topic on women's human rights.

## COURSE ASSESSMENT AND ASSIGNMENTS

### Assessment

25%	Class Discussion/Reading and In Class Writing Assignments (1-2pp.)
25%	Short Paper (5 pp.)
20%	Power Point Presentation
30%	Research Paper (10pp.)

### Class participation and Short Paper:

Students are expected to have read and thought about the assigned readings in advance of each class session. Diligence in keeping up with the reading is essential for a good overall class experience and to your grade. 25% of your total grade will be based on class participation, this includes coming to class, participating in the discussion, and importantly turning in Reading and Writing Assignments. You will be asked to write *Reading Response Briefs* for some class sessions, dates are noted on the syllabus, and there will also maybe *In Class Writing Reflections* throughout the quarter. Students will be assigned to write a Short Paper pertaining to a particular Lesson and the assigned readings. Students will be asked to respond to a provided prompt. 25% of your total grade will be based on the Short Paper.

### Writing, Research and Presenting:

This course aims to develop writing, research and presentation skills. Throughout the quarter you will be working on a research topic, and this research work will culminate in a Power Point Presentation (20% of your final grade) and Final Research Paper (30% of your final grade) towards the end of the quarter. A detailed assignment will be handed out, but generally this paper will be on a specific topic of women's rights in a foreign country or at the international level. Your assignment will be: 1) to select additional books or journal articles not assigned in this class to read on this specific women's rights issue; 2) utilize at least one web-based resource; and 3) to develop an argument that connects themes in the assigned readings we discuss in class with the specific issue studied in your paper. You will be required to turn in a one-page proposal of this paper earlier in the quarter. If you choose to do the Service Learning option (see below), along with the 3-5 hour a week volunteer experience, your research paper and presentation assignment would be slightly different. Your research paper would consist of 5 pages describing your organization/your work there, and then another 5 pages of critical reflection/research on a related women's rights issue. Further the presentation would include information from your volunteer experience/organization and the women's rights issue you examine in your paper. This is a great opportunity to work with some fascinating local organizations.

Students are asked to do a significant amount of writing and your ability to formulate and express a rigorous argument will be central to your success. You are encouraged to speak with the TAs as well as the professor about your writing and to use the Political Science Writing Center. The Writing Center is located in Gowen Hall 105; they have handouts on their door and on their website (<http://depts.washington.edu/pswrite/index.html>). Subsequently, students are expected to produce polished papers that are thoroughly revised, proofread, and spell-checked. Students are expected to cite their sources properly.

## SERVICE LEARNING OPPORTUNITY

### What is service-learning?

Service-learning provides a unique experience to connect coursework with engagement in and with the local community. Offered as an integral part of many University of Washington courses, service-learning provides students an opportunity to reflect on their in-class learning in tandem with an on-going commitment to a local non-profit or community-based organization. Service-learning opportunities address concerns that are identified and articulated by community partner organizations. Service-learning combines community-based service with structured preparation and reflection opportunities. The Carlson Leadership & Public Service Center coordinates service-learning opportunities for undergraduate students and is a resource as you connect to community-based opportunities.

### Commitment expectations

Service-learning opportunities generally expect a minimum weekly commitment of at least three hours. Students are expected to commit from the second week of the quarter through the last week of classes. Service-learning is seen as an essential “text” of your class – you are expected to regularly engage with, reflect on, and integrate the service-learning into your classroom experience through structured classroom reflection and assignments. Building authentic relationships and consistent, weekly engagement with your community organization are essential components of successfully completing your service-learning.

### How do I select a service-learning position?

Instructions for reviewing a list of service-learning opportunities matched with this course will be presented during the first day of classes. You can also visit [uw.edu/carlson](http://uw.edu/carlson) and follow the service learning link on the website.

Registration for a service-learning position takes place online. Please check the Carlson Center web site for the specific date and time registration will open for this class. Most courses will register for service learning positions during the latter half of the first week of classes.

### Service-learning orientations

All students are expected to complete an orientation with their selected service-learning organization as soon as possible after registering for service-learning. As soon as you register for your position online and receive a confirmation email from the Carlson Center, contact your organization by phone and email to either 1) confirm your attendance at an already scheduled orientation or 2) to schedule an orientation if no specific date/time was listed in your position description. Ideally, orientations should occur during the second week of the quarter and no later than the third week.

### Service-learning workshops

The Carlson Center offers the following workshops for service-learning students:

- Service-learning workshop for International Students: Geared toward international students with limited experience with volunteering or service-learning in the U.S. Focused on exploring the concept of service, expectations for engaging in service-learning, and how to make the most of your experience.
- Pre-Service Workshops: Focused on engaging in critical self-reflection, utilizing a strengths-based perspective in service, exploring motivations for service and building authentic relationships.

Workshops are offered at the Carlson Center in Mary Gates Hall 171. Check the Carlson Center’s website for specific dates and times.

### Questions

The staff of the Carlson Center is available to answer any questions about service-learning or assist you in registering or connecting with an organization. Stop by the Carlson Center weekdays between 9:00 AM – 5:00 PM to speak with a member of our team. You may also email at [serve@uw.edu](mailto:serve@uw.edu) or call (206)543- 4282.

## ACADEMIC INTEGRITY AND ACCESSIBILITY

**Academic Conduct.** We will enforce strictly the University of Washington's Student Conduct Code, including the policy on plagiarism. Violations of the Student Conduct Code, including plagiarism, can result in a variety of disciplinary actions, including suspension or permanent dismissal from the University. The entire code can be found at <http://www.washington.edu/cssc/student-conduct-overview/student-code-of-conduct/>

### Access and Accommodations

Your experience in this class is important to us, and it is the policy and practice of the University of Washington to create inclusive and accessible learning environments consistent with federal and state law. If you experience barriers based on disability, please seek a meeting with DRS to discuss and address them. If you have already established accommodations with DRS, please communicate your approved accommodations to your instructor at your earliest convenience so we can discuss your needs in this course. Disability Resources for Students (DRS) offers resources and coordinates reasonable accommodations for students with disabilities. Reasonable accommodations are established through an interactive process between you, your instructor(s) and DRS. If you have not yet established services through DRS, but have a temporary or permanent disability that requires accommodations (this can include but not limited to; mental health, attention-related, learning, vision, hearing, physical or health impacts), you are welcome to contact DRS at 206-543-8924, Mary Gates Hall 011, [uwdrs@uw.edu](mailto:uwdrs@uw.edu) or [disability.uw.edu](http://disability.uw.edu)

## COURSE SCHEDULE

Thursday, September 29: Course Introduction

### Lesson 1: Women's Rights as Human Rights: History and Theory

This lesson introduces women's rights as human rights: its origins as both a movement and a policy approach. The lesson identifies the key historical developments of the women's human rights movement and also a set of pre-requisite factors for attaining women's human rights. The lesson also describes the theoretical approaches to studying women's human rights. This discussion will provide a basis for questions and approaches we will continue to engage as we examine substantive areas of women's human rights throughout the course.

Tuesday, October 4

**Reading Assignment due: bring to class**

- Bunch, *Women's Rights as Human Rights*

Thursday, October 6

**Reading Response Brief due: bring to class**

- Engel, *International Human Rights and Feminisms: When Discourses Keep Meeting*
- United Nations, *Policy Brief #7: Recommendations on Women's Human Rights and Gender Equality*

### Lesson 2: Women's Rights as Human Rights: Legal Instruments

This lesson focuses on the international and transnational dimensions of women's human rights. In particular, we will explore international laws and conventions governing women's human rights and the movements that mobilized for these reforms. The last fifty years is marked by significant international legal reforms supporting women's rights, yet Millennium Development Goal 5 of Gender Equality emphasizes there is still much work to be done. This lesson enables us to critically reflect on past reforms so we might better understand the conditions necessary for future policy success.

Tuesday, October 11

**Reading Response Brief due: bring to class**

- Merry, *Constructing a Global Law: Violence Against Women and the Human Rights System*

Thursday, October 13

**Reading Response Brief due: bring to class**

- Charlesworth, *Not Waving But Drowning*

**Lesson 3: Women's Rights, Culture and Customs**

This lesson turns to the ways in which women, the status of women and women's bodies are often a site for tensions between varying cultural and religious practices and customs. We will explore the ways in which this shapes their experience with women's rights. As we begin to grapple with the power of culture and its effects on women's rights, we also can see the ways in which culture is not static. This more dynamic understanding of culture will enable us to explore reforms and policy developments that will continue to raise the status of girls and women in societies throughout the world. We will also examine Western concerns about women in Islam and I will emphasize the need to be wary of reducing women's issues, advocacy and identity to their religion. There are many recent equality and justice trends in Muslim societies fueled by the work of feminists and this lesson provides the foundation to evaluate how this may empower women now and in the future.

Tuesday, October 18:

**Reading Response Brief due: bring to class**

- al-Hibri, *Islam, Law and Custom*
- Aimen, *Dear Lady Gaga, 'Burqa' Sends the Wrong Message* (The Washington Post)
- Abu-Lughod, *Topless Protests Raise the Question: Who Can Speak for Muslim Women* (The Nation)
- BBC News articles online located at the following sites:  
*European Court Upholds French Full Veil Ban:* <http://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-28106900>  
*Islamic Veil Across Europe:* <http://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-13038095>

Thursday, October 20

**Research Paper 1-2 page Proposal due in class**

**No reading response due**

- Ewelukwa, *Post-Colonialism, Gender, Customary Injustice*

Friday, October 21

**Short Paper Assignment is posted on website it is due on 11/1**

**Lesson 4: Women's Rights and the Environment**

This lesson explores the connections between the environment, natural resource management, access to clean water and women's empowerment. Building on our discussion in the previous lessons, we focus on the basic needs and infrastructure and how these provide the foundation for women's attainment of rights and equal status. Clean water and sanitation are inextricably linked to women's empowerment. This lesson puts in stark relief the need to ground rights reforms firmly in a larger discussion of access to basic life needs. We cannot build one without the other.

Tuesday, October 25

**In Class Assignment no reading response due**

- United Nations, *Women and Water*
- MacDonald, *Women and the Right to Water* (speech United Nations Human Rights Council)

Thursday, October 27

**In Class Assignment no reading response due**

- Demetriades & Esplen, *The Gender Dimension of Poverty and Climate Change Adaptation*
- Arora-Jonsson, *Virtue and Vulnerability: Discourses on Women, Gender, and Climate Change*

### **Lesson 5: Women Rights and Health**

This lesson examines the ways in which women's health and access to healthcare can affect the status of women's rights. If girls are not surviving childhood and women are not surviving childbearing years, civil and political rights are meaningless.

Tuesday, November 1

**Short Paper Assignment due in class**

**No Reading Response due this day**

- Hellsten, *Rationalizing Circumcision*
- World Health Organization (WHO), *Fact Sheet No.41: Female Genital Mutilation*

Thursday, November 3

**Reading Response Brief due: bring to class**

- Cook and Dickens, *Human Rights Dynamics of Abortion Law Reform*
- Kristoff & WuDunn, *Half the Sky*, Introduction & pages 93-148 (*book*)
- World Health Organization (WHO), *Fact Sheet No.348: Maternal Mortality*

### **Lesson 6: Women's Rights and Global Trafficking**

This lesson focuses on the issue of global trafficking and the effects on women's rights. We will cover labor trafficking and sex trafficking and explore this phenomenon at the local, state and international level. Trafficking victims are all around us, we just might not know it. This lesson will provide the foundation to begin developing policies to bring change.

Tuesday, November 8

**Reading Response Brief due: bring to class**

- Lloyd, *Girls Like Us* (*book*)

Thursday, November 10

**Reading Response Brief due: bring to class**

- Guinn, *Defining the Problem of Trafficking*
- Kristof and WuDunn, *Half the Sky*, pp.3-60 (*book*)

### **Lesson 7: Women's Rights in Times of War**

This lesson will cover the ways in which war time has created rights violations that are particular to women. The lesson is both historical and contemporary covering major innovations in international laws governing women's rights violations during war. Gender violence has always played a role in wartime atrocities, but we are beginning to open the chapter on justice as both perpetrators and victims are better understood.

Tuesday, November 15

**Reading Response Brief due: bring to class**

- Cohen, Green & Wood, *Wartime Sexual Violence: Misconceptions, Implications and Ways Forward*
- Cohen, *Female Combatants and the Perpetuation of Violence*

Thursday, November 17

**Reading Response Brief due: bring to class**

- Kristoff & WuDunn, *Half the Sky*, pages 61-92 (*book*)
- Storr, *The Rape of Men* (news article)

**Tuesday, November 22 (No Class Meeting)**

- **Out of class assignment:** Work on your First Page of your Research Paper assignment due in class on Tuesday 11/29.

**Thursday, November 24: Thanksgiving Holiday (No Class Meeting)**

**Lesson 8: Women's Rights and the Global Economy**

This lesson examines women in the global economy. In particular, we will learn about the impact of global economic mechanisms such as structural adjustment programs have on the status of women. We will also cover micro credit programs and artisan cooperatives critically examining the way in which they can empower, but also present new challenges for equality. Together this lesson gives a basis for critically examining the global economic processes with an eye for women's rights.

Tuesday, November 29:

**Research Paper First Page Assignment due in class**

**No reading response due**

- Kristoff & WuDunn, *Half the Sky*, pages 149-254 (book)

Thursday, December 1

**In Class Assignment no reading response due**

- Sadasivam, *The Impact of Structural Adjustment on Women*
- Goetz & Gupta, *Who Takes the Credit: Gender, Power, and Control over Loan Use in Rural Credit Programs in Bangladesh*

**Friday, December 2**

- **Research Presentation Power Point** due to course website by 5pm.

**Lesson 9: Research Project and Presentations**

This final lesson of the course will focus on the research that students have conducted throughout the quarter. Social science analysis is an important component of this course and this gives all students the opportunity to share their findings and receive feedback as they complete the final research paper assignment. Whether in the book stacks or online, your research projects brought together various sources and perspectives. You will have the opportunity to showcase your research and also learn from the hard work of your classmates. As this course has emphasized, the future of women's human rights is firmly connected to this sharing of perspectives and dissemination of new approaches and

Tuesday, December 6

**In Class Assignment**

- In Class Research Power Point Presentations

Thursday, December 8

**In Class Assignment**

- In Class Research Power Point Presentations

**Friday, December 9**

- **Final Research Paper Due** by 3:00pm. Electronic and hardcopy required. Electronic copy is submitted to course website and the hardcopy is due to the Political Science Department office Gowen Hall 101 by 3:00pm. Please put your name, Professor Cichowski and the course number on the paper. Ask to have it turned into Professor Cichowski's mailbox.