This course will examine the foundations of international human rights theory and law, and the role of the international and national mechanisms for the protection of human rights, judicial or otherwise. This will be a broad review and analysis of the development of international human rights law, including the basic international documents that constitute human rights practice: the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, and International Covenant on Economic, Social, and Cultural Rights. We will also review the theories and critiques of the idea of human rights and the contestation and practices of universal human rights. The current challenges in the protection of human rights in various regions of the world will be examined, including International and cross-border dimensions of violations; responsibility of nation-states, international organizations, and other actors; effective monitoring and implementation; and human rights imperialism and exceptionalism.

This course is an undergraduate level, open entry with no prerequisite required. Students interested in international law, international politics, comparative politics, political violence, and the use of force are encouraged to enroll in this class.

There will be one in-class, open-book midterm exam. Students will be allowed to use their books, and notes, and access the internet. The final exam will be a take-home on a current human rights law topic.