

HUMAN RIGHTS AND CRIMINAL JUSTICE SYSTEMS

Responsible Faculty Instructor:

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Assistant Professor

Instructor's connection to Human Rights:

During his internships and subsequent part-time work at the Human Rights Advocacy and Research Foundation, Chennai, the instructor had been part of Fact-finding investigation of alleged encounter death, alleged custodial death, alleged dowry death, alleged gang-rape of a girl child, alleged death of a young woman in suspicious circumstances, and an alleged suicide of a school girl in hostel premises. He also has experience and expertise in Right to Information process in India seeking information and thus conducting social audit seeking accountability from public authorities and from private bodies through public authorities. The Instructor also possesses the educational qualification of M. A. Human Rights and Duties Education from Institute of Distance Education, University of Madras.

Credits: 4

Credits Type: Non-Law (Elective)

Cross-registration: Yes (subject to JGLS/institutional requirements)

Pre-requisites: None

COURSE DESCRIPTION (COURSE VISION):

Human rights issues in criminal legal systems take central place in understanding the functioning of rule of law in a democracy. These issues involve a wide range of stakeholders, including victims of crime and abuse of power, legislators, political and administrative executives, prosecutors, legal representatives, judges, the accused, convicted persons, and others such as correctional authorities and the society.

This elective aims to familiarize students with key human rights dimensions in the criminal legal processes and beyond. The course will cover modules such as the recognition of victimization as a crime; human rights and victims' rights; the rights of the accused and convicted persons; key international and national instruments and institutions; human rights violations by the authorities at CJS; international and national instruments for human rights; human rights and semi-judicial institutions; role of NGOs in protection of human rights; protecting human rights defenders; role of Fact finding investigations and how to do fact finding investigations; human rights violations faced by marginalized communities.

TEACHING METHODOLOGY:

Teaching methodology will include making students to engage with research on human rights related concerns and issues, among others. Interactive lectures will be the primary mode of teaching apart from demonstration in topics such

as how to file a complaint in a Human Rights Commission, etc. The students will be provided activities in groups (students not comfortable to work in groups will be provided individual activities). The students will be provided Kahoot Quizzes for reinforcement, revision and overall learning. The teaching methodology will work to ensure that the skillsets such as remembering, understanding, applying, analysing, evaluating and creating are acquired by the participating students in the elective.

INTENDED LEARNING OUTCOMES:

- Understanding human rights
- Grasping human rights issues in law-making, recognition of crime victimization and labelling of offences
- Understanding the complexities involved in human rights violations by public authorities in the lens of kaleidoscopic justice
- Examining the role of Human Rights Commissions in protection of human rights
- Understanding the role of NGOs, human rights defenders in protection of human rights and challenges faced by them, and their protection
- Evaluation of Criminal Justice Systems: Observations of various bodies including Law Commissions in connection to human rights
- Ability to file and assist meaningfully in filing complaint with appropriate authorities for human rights violations
- Role of Fact Finding Investigations in Human Rights Violations
- Important International and National Instruments for Human Rights
- Evaluating the Protection of Human Rights Act, 1993 to identify gaps and to strengthen the protection framework
- Human rights violations faced by marginalized communities.

Course Intended Learning Outcomes	Weightage	Teaching and Learning Activities	Assessment Tasks/Activities
By the end of the course, students should be able to:			Students will be required to complete two internal assessments with the focus on measuring skillset (remember, understand, apply, analyze, evaluate and create) in connection with the learning objectives. The parameters for the rubrics are <i>hyphenated with the Grade Description</i> (to be provided in sub-section
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Understanding human rights • Grasping human rights issues in law-making, recognition of crime victimization and labelling of offences 	30%	Lectures, reading of relevant articles, individual/group activities such as participation in	

Course Intended Learning Outcomes	Weightage	Teaching and Learning Activities	Assessment Tasks/Activities
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Understanding the complexities involved in human rights violations by public authorities in the lens of kaleidoscopic justice Examining the role of Human Rights Commissions in protection of human rights 		<p>discussions, and carrying out presentations, group activity through collaborative worksheets, carrying out a relevant pilot study or case-study, quizzes, etc. Students to be encouraged to have conversations with Practitioners on matters related to the course.</p>	<p>under the title ‘Grading of Student Achievement’ in the course manual) would include</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Clarity in understanding, Critical thinking, Using relevant examples/best practices Presenting content relevant to the question and Incorporation of appropriate current affairs.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Examining the role of Human Rights Commissions in protection of human rights Understanding the role of NGOs, human rights defenders in protection of human rights and challenges faced by them, and their protection Evaluation of Criminal Justice Systems: Observations of various bodies including Law Commissions in connection to human rights Ability to file and assist meaningfully in filing complaint with appropriate authorities for human rights violations. 	<p>40%</p>		<p>(i)End-semester examination (30%). (ii)Internal assessment (70%).</p> <p>1st Internal Assessment – 30 marks 2nd Internal Assessment – 30 marks Class Participation – 10 marks</p> <p>Internal assessments would be conducted also in formats other than written exam to facilitate more effective and comfortable expression of students’ ideas and understanding.</p>

Course Intended Learning Outcomes	Weightage	Teaching and Learning Activities	Assessment and Activities	Tasks/
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Role of Fact Finding Investigations in Human Rights Violations • Important International and National Instruments for Human Rights • Evaluating the Protection of Human Rights Act, 1993 to identify gaps and to strengthen the protection framework • Human rights violations faced by marginalized communities. 	30%			

READING LIST (upto 10 select readings):

1. Kumar, R., Kumari, R. The Ontology of Rights: A Study of Searle’s Social Reality and Human Rights Frameworks. *Int J Semiot Law* (2026). <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11196-026-10428-7>
2. Syzdykov, A., Iskakova, Z., Karazhan, B. et al. The Role of National Human Rights Institutions in the Protection of Human Rights. *J. Hum. Rights Soc. Work* 10, 836–850 (2025). <https://doi.org/10.1007/s41134-025-00403-w>
3. Koula, AC. Human Rights Violations Committed Against Human Rights Defenders Through the Use of Legal System: A Trend in Europe and Beyond. *Hum Rights Rev* 25, 99–122 (2024). <https://doi.org/10.1007/s12142-024-00717-8>
4. The Protection of Human Rights Act, 1993
5. Komath, A. (2020). State Behaviour at the Universal Periodic Review: An Examination of India’s Third Review at the United Nations Human Rights Council. *India Quarterly: A Journal of International Affairs*, 76(2), 185-206.
6. Nazim, S., & Haider, K. (2023). Historical Analysis of the Development of Prisons in India: Human Rights in Retrospect. *History and Sociology of South Asia*, 17(2), 190-205.

7. Meron, T. (1982). Norm making and supervision in international human rights: Reflections on institutional order. *American Journal of International Law*, 76(4), 754–778. <https://doi.org/10.2307/2201552>
8. Economic and Political Weekly. (2020). *Who is responsible for custodial violence?* *Economic and Political Weekly*, 55(26–27)
9. Sezgin, Y. (2010). How to Integrate Universal Human Rights into Customary and Religious Legal Systems? *The Journal of Legal Pluralism and Unofficial Law*, 42(60), 5–40. <https://doi.org/10.1080/07329113.2010.10756635>
10. Ekeløve-Slydal, G. M. (2014). Quality control in fact-finding. *Nordic Journal of Human Rights*, 32(2), 192–195. <https://doi.org/10.1080/18918131.2014.897454>
11. Nowak, M. (2014). The Right of Victims of Human Rights Violations to a Remedy: The Need for a World Court of Human Rights. *Nordic Journal of Human Rights*, 32(1), 3–17. <https://doi.org/10.1080/18918131.2013.877552>

WEEKLY READING PLAN (WEEKLY OUTLINE):

A weekly plan is provided below:

MODULES	WEEK(S)
MODULE 1: UNDERSTANDING HUMAN RIGHTS	1
MODULE 2: LAW MAKING AND RIGHTS ISSUES	2
MODULE 3: INTERNATIONAL INSTRUMENTS FOR HUMAN RIGHTS - I	3
MODULE 4: INTERNATIONAL INSTRUMENTS FOR HUMAN RIGHTS - II	4
MODULE 5: NATIONAL INSTRUMENTS FOR HUMAN RIGHTS	5
MODULE 6: OBSERVATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS OF COMMITTEES ON HUMAN RIGHTS AT CJS	6
MODULE 7: FILING COMPLAINT WITH NHRC, SHRCs	7
MODULE 8: ROLE OF HUMAN RIGHTS COMMISSIONS AND OTHER SEMI-JUDICIAL INSTITUTIONS	8
MODULE 9: EXAMINING HUMAN RIGHTS COMMISSIONS AND OTHER SEMI-JUDICIAL INSTITUTIONS	9
MODULE 10: HUMAN RIGHTS VIOLATIONS BY AUTHORITIES AT CJS AND CHALLENGES	10
MODULE 11: HUMAN RIGHTS DEFENDERS	11
MODULE 12: CONDUCTING FACT FINDING INVESTIGATIONS	12
MODULE 13: ROLE OF FACT FINDING INVESTIGATIONS	13
MODULE 14: HUMAN RIGHTS AND MARGINALISED COMMUNITIES	14
REVISION WEEK	Week 15
