

Course Title	: Culture, Power & Government
Course Code	: CUS3213
Recommended Study Year*	: 3-4
No. of Credits/Term	: 3
Mode of Tuition	: Lectures and Tutorials
Class Contact Hours	: 42 hours (3 hours per week)
Category in Major Prog.	: Elective
Prerequisite(s)	: Nil
Co-requisite(s)	: Nil
Exclusion(s);	: Nil
Exemption Requirement(s)	: Nil
Brief Course Description	: This course introduces students to a number of key themes, problematics and issues in connection with the relationships among culture, power and forms of governance. It highlights the theoretical conceptions of power as developed in cultural studies, and links them to contemporary international debates about governance, legitimation, culture, oppression, hegemony, civil society, law, and empowerment. Specifically, the course focuses on the <i>human rights movement</i> as a moral-legal discourse and a real-life practice in order to examine global and local governance as a cultural practice of power.  Students will be introduced to a parallel set of materials drawn upon the major contemporary theories of power on the one hand (such as that of Michel Foucault) and the contemporary international human rights movement on the other. For instance, Foucault's conception of power, subjugation, discipline, and governmentality can be explored alongside the international human rights movement and its emphasis on rights and obligations, civil society, power, sovereignty, legality, and empowerment. Concrete cases will be drawn upon from human rights discourse and mass media to examine how cultural forms and institutions are involved in the exercising of social power.
Aims	: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. To master a body of knowledge regarding the interplay between "power" and "government" as developed in cultural studies;</li> <li>2. To apply the body of knowledge learned in 1 above to real-life local and non-local situations, so as to examine the specific practices of governance in domestic and international terms.</li> </ol>

Learning Outcomes	: 1. On completion of this course, students will be able to: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>2. Explain the basic concepts and applications associated with modern forms of “power” and “government,” e.g. as theorized in Michel Foucault’s work (as well as in the work of those who think along with Foucault).</li> <li>3. Describe the basic tenets of “human rights” as a moral and juridical discourse, by critically examining the various international instruments used to defend and promote human rights.</li> <li>4. Explain the relationship among rights, governance, and power, as well as the problems that this relationship produces, including the creation of the modern “liberal subjects” and the linkage of governmental institutions of power exercised in cultural modes.</li> <li>5. Apply the above to organize and conduct a vivid discussion of specific human rights issues in class.</li> </ol>
Indicative Content	: 1. <i>The Other Politics</i> : Introduction of Michel Foucault’s work, including his concepts of politics, knowledge and power in post-Enlightenment times in the Western context <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>2. <i>The Subjects of Power</i>: Focus is on the creation of the modern liberal subjects by new forms of governance, the “liberal” nature of modern subjectivity and citizenship, and the theories and practices associated with new forms of (self-)disciplining</li> <li>3. <i>Forms (and Promises) of Governing</i>: Introduction to human rights history; Discourse of liberalism concerning the power and limitation of government</li> <li>4. <i>Global and Local Engagements</i>: Analysis of specific human rights instruments (e.g. treaties and conventions), their applications in legal and cultural settings, and their problems</li> <li>5. <i>Social and Economic Rights</i>: Introduction to the concept of cultural rights, and its relation to the entire human rights regime</li> <li>6. <i>‘Disciplining’ Women</i>: Special focus on women’s rights as articulated in international law, in international feminist movements, and in NGO work</li> <li>7. <i>Rethinking Cultural Studies and Social Justice</i>: A self-reflexive consideration of the strengths and limitations of cultural studies when confronting social justice problems; Consideration of the possible theoretical convergence between cultural theory of power and subject formation and real-life human rights violations by state and non-state actors</li> </ol>
Teaching Method	: 1. Lectures will introduce key concepts and help articulate

relevant context. Class activities will include Student-led discussion, response exercises (individual or in team), and workshops. Those response exercises and workshops will utilize role-playing, informal debates, etc. A high level of student participation in the classes is required.

Measurement of Learning Outcomes

- : 1. Active oral class participation engages critically with assigned weekly readings, unpacking key concepts in them. Final examination assesses comprehension and reflection of issues covered in the readings.
- 2. Problem based continuous assessment, in the forms of response exercise and workshop, where students work individually or in teams to apply key concepts in various human rights instruments (e.g. treaties) to real life or hypothetical scenarios.
- 3. Problem based continuous assessment in which students examine various speaking positions of subjects seeking rights (e.g. women and racial minorities), while confronting forms of governmental and governance-oriented institutions. Final examination assesses students' ability to articulate their self-reflective and informed opinions on human rights issues.
- 4. A Student-led Discussion Group in which an applied case study is presented and discussed, and meaningful interaction with the rest of the class is conducted.

Assessment

: Students will be graded on the basis of 70% Continuous Assessment and 30% Final Examination.

In-class Exercises / Quizzes	[20%]
Student-led Discussion	[20%]
Class participation (including class attendance)	[30%]
Final Examination	[30%]

Student-led Discussion (suggested instructions)

*Purpose:*

To provide students with the opportunity to study 1-2 assigned readings in depth. Working in a team, students are expected to present the central arguments in the assigned readings coherently, effectively, and critically; present and discuss an applied case study relevant to human rights concerns; and conduct a meaningful interaction with the rest of the class.

*Guidelines:*

- 1. Students will form small teams of 2-3 members.
- 2. It is the responsibility of the team to pose in-depth discussion questions to the class from the assigned reading(s) through an effective – and hopefully creative – method of presentation (e.g. debate format, workshop format, visual study, role play, or a combination of some of them). A simple didactic method will not be appropriate.
- 3. The focus of the discussion in whatever format should:
  - 3.1 explore the basic meaning of the texts and any comprehension difficulties;
  - 3.2 attend to both relevant theoretical concepts and practical

issues;

3.3 invite the classmates to express and debate their views;  
and

3.4 apply the concepts to a human rights problem (about either a local problem or one outside of Hong Kong)

4. This last item requires moderate research, in which the team will identify at least 2 additional readings offering background and/or analysis of the chosen case study. These additional readings should be from a mix of academic and non-academic sources.
5. The team is expected to produce a draft of their discussion at least one week before the presentation for consultation with the instructor. A written summary of their presentation, including any visual materials or powerpoint, will be submitted one week after the discussion.
6. On the day of the discussion, the team will essentially take over one hour of class time and lead a meaningful discussion, while the rest of the class is expected to participate actively.

*Marking Criteria:*

1. Explaining key concepts clearly and effectively?
2. Setting up context of the assigned reading(s) adequately?
3. Presentation format was effective, creative, and stimulating?
4. Case study well chosen? Its background adequately provided through self-selected readings? Its connection to the assigned readings adequately illuminated and discussed?
5. Interaction with the rest of the class was of high quality?

Required / Essential Readings:

Danaher, Geoff, Schirato, Tony & Webb, Jen. *Understanding Foucault*. London: Sage, 2000.

Reichert, Elisabeth. *Understanding Human Rights*. London: Sage, 2006.

A selection of international human rights covenants, conventions, and treaties.

Recommended / Supplementary Readings:

Alison des Forges. "Leave None To Tell the Story": *Genocide in Rwanda*. New York: Human Rights Watch, 1999.

Balakrishnan, Gopal. Ed. *Debating Empire*. London & New York: Verso, 2003.

Brown, Wendy. 'Neoliberalism and the end of liberal democracy', *Theory and Event* (online journal). 7.1 (2003) Website: [http://muse.jhu.edu/journals/theory\\_and\\_event/v007/7.1brown.html](http://muse.jhu.edu/journals/theory_and_event/v007/7.1brown.html).

Barry, Christian & Pogge, Thomas. Eds. *Global Institutions and Responsibilities: Achieving Global Justice*. Oxford: Blackwell Publishing, 2005.

Douzinas, Costas. *Human Rights and Empire: The Political philosophy of Cosmopolitanism*. New York: Routledge-Cavendish, 2007.

Hardt, Michael & Negri, Antonio. *Empire*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2000.

Hardt, Michael & Negri, Antonio. *Multitude: War and Democracy in the Age of Empire*. New York: Penguin Press, 2004.

Slaughter, Anne-Marie. *A New World Order*. Princeton and Oxford: Princeton University Press, 2004.

## Important Notes:

1. Students are expected to spend a total of 9 hours (i.e. 2 hours of class contact and 7 hours of personal study) per week to achieve the course learning outcomes.
2. Students shall be aware of the University regulations about dishonest practice in course work, tests and examinations, and the possible consequences as stipulated in the Regulations Governing University Examinations. In particular, plagiarism, being a kind of dishonest practice, is “the presentation of another person’s work without proper acknowledgement of the source, including exact phrases, or summarised ideas, or even footnotes/citations, whether protected by copyright or not, as the student’s own work”. Students are required to strictly follow university regulations governing academic integrity and honesty.
3. Students are required to submit writing assignment(s) using Turnitin.
4. To enhance students’ understanding of plagiarism, a mini-course “Online Tutorial on Plagiarism Awareness” is available on <https://pla.ln.edu.hk/>.