



Western University
Department of History
History 2110B [001]



"Rights Revolution" or "Fragile Freedoms"? : Human Rights History in Canada



Discover how & why
human rights
emerged & evolved in **Canada**

This course surveys Canadian human rights from Aboriginal views of liberty to contemporary views on ethnic, gender, language, class and other rights. Study of human rights history in Canada reveals forces promoting and challenging liberties. Rights remain controversial, as becomes evident through examination of impacts of Canada's Charter of Rights, which both protects Canadians and creates more complexities as our Courts interpret its meanings. Lectures combined with discussion will hopefully show that Canada's so-called "Rights Revolution" has deep roots; it also indicates the often fragile nature of rights too often taken for granted. Ultimately, increased historical awareness should provide better understanding of our ongoing search for a more rights-oriented society.

Class / Contact Information:

Wednesday 6:00-8:00 pm

Instructor: Dr. Peter V. Krats

Telephone: 661-2111 (x84983)//Messages: 661-3645

Location: SSC 3018

Office: STvH 2123

e-mail: pkrats@uwo.ca

Office Hours / Contacting Me:

Office Hours: Wed. 4:30-5:45 & Thurs. 12:30- 2:15. I will be in *some* Tuesday afternoons [2:00-4:30] and at other times; feel free to speak with me about appointments. If you "catch" me at my office, I will gladly discuss matters time permitting. I make an effort to respond to e-mails within 24 hours. Please include a clear subject heading. Phone mail messages face a longer "turn-around." Or, speak to me at class – I usually have time before or after !!

Course Learning Outcomes:

- ✓ identify key developments in the history of Human Rights in Canada, including issues surrounding gender, ethnicity, belief, class and more;
- ✓ explain patterns of continuity and change
- ✓ recognize strengths and weaknesses in historical assessment – the utility of “knowing” the past blended with an awareness of subjective and other potential errors
- ✓ improve ability to assess written historical work and to summarize and evaluate lectures
- ✓ synthesizing issues within an essay examination
- ✓ elaborate on the relevance of history in dealing with contemporary views of rights
- ✓ improve communication skills, both written and verbal

Course Evaluation: [Details Below]

Participation	20	%
Online Group Discussion	10	
Reaction to “Pre-1929” Contexts	15	[Due 25 Feb. 2016]
Commentary on Rights “Case”	20	[Due 23 March 2016]
Group Presentation : Rights Today Built Yesterday ?	5	[6 April 2016 (last class)]
Final Exam	30	

Given the brevity of the writing tasks, extensions will need to meet the formal University criteria. Suggestions about “good” writing practice are on OWL under “Resources.”



Course Work

Class Participation: [20 %]

History is inherently interpretive, so student groups will discuss issues arising from lectures, ideas then shared with the whole class. Discussions evaluated as follows: ** postings due by noon Saturday of the week assigned. *

Overall quality of shared classroom discussion :	4 %	
Four (4) Individual Website assignments (randomly assigned) :	12 %	[3 % each]
“Group comments” sheets handed in weekly :	4 %	

Group Discussion on OWL : [10 %]

Each Participation Group will use OWL to post comments on the evolution of Canadian Rights as “unravelling” in the course or as revealed in your lives. The point is to discuss rights issues, past and present, on a regular, albeit casual basis. The postings are the responsibility of all group members.

Reaction to "Pre-1929" Rights Contexts: [15 %]

What do you see as the major Rights issues/themes emerging prior to the "Persons Case" of 1929? Consider issues raised thus far in the course in answering. Be concise -- the discussion need only be 3 double spaced pages. No outside research required, but if used, it must be properly cited. Proper English is expected. Hints on writing available on Resources page in OWL. Due : 25 Feb. 2016; must be submitted in class and to Turnitin.

Commentary on Rights "Element" [20 %]

Students are expected to provide a brief, well written discussion on ONE Rights "element." You might consider a theme emerging from the course. Or a specific event/series of events that you deem "crucial" in the history of Canadian rights. Or perhaps key "player(s)" – a person, persons or a group that helped shape Canadian human rights. The "impact" can be negative, if that is of interest. Other possibilities abound – a key law or regulation; a key idea; a particular "moment" that shaped Canadian human rights. **If in doubt** about your topic choice, be sure to check with me.

Four pages, double spaced. You will need to do some research to supplement lecture materials. Proper citations (any standard format) are expected. Your writing should meet university standards. Due: in class and on Turnitin -- 23 March 2016.

Group Presentation : Rights Today Built Yesterday ? [5 %] [6 April 2016 (last class)]

Each of the Participation Groups will provide a *brief* presentation in the last class – maximum of **10 minutes**. The presentation should take one of "today's" human rights issues (as playing out in Canada) and link it to the past. One might look at earlier laws, decisions, attitudes, socio-economic factors (or various other issues) in showing that we can learn about today's issues by understanding the past. Remember that this presentation *must* be *brief!!* Keep your presentations fairly straightforward – we will not have very much time to "battle" technology. *Ask* in advance about using Powerpoints or online links. The goal is not "the last word" – just a genuine attempt at linking the past to the present.

Final Examination : [30 %] [2 hours][predominantly essay format]

- ◆ emphasizes broad issues, not the minutia of history
- ◆ Date : during the time period set by the University Registrar

Suggestions:

- a) I set the exam, so going to class is an excellent means of gaining insights into exam issues
- b) trying to "catch up" at the last minute only creates substantial stress

c) memorizing “all data” is also ineffective. History exams assess student understanding: do you know why events occurred, what events led up to/ followed from events? The degree of continuity and/or change?

Tentative Outline

*** this course is new & will be “under construction” throughout the term, not least (hopefully) through your feedback ***

Each class includes 1.5 hours of lecture and 20 minutes of discussion.

Colonial Contexts

Week 1: Introductions // “Worlds” of Rights

Week 2: Indigenous & European Notions of Rights to 1500

Week 3: Rights in New France & Northernmost British North America to 1760

“British Liberties” – Rights 1760-1860s

Week 4: New Rights Thinking; “Race” & Rights”: First Nations and Afri-Canadians

Week 5: More Barriers to Rights: Gender, Class, Identity & other Issues

Preserving *British Liberties* in a Canadian setting: Confederation to the 1930s

Week 6: “Canadian Rights” for “Persons”? : Gender & Those Deemed “Others”

Week 7: Nations within: Indigenous & Francophone Rights

Week 8: “Politics & Money Matter”: Class Rights, Rights of Expression & more

Legislative & Practical Changes: Rights from World War II to Today

Week 9: Legislating & Manipulating Rights – meandering toward the Charter

Week 10: New Times, Old Issues: Gender, Orientation & Identity/Regional Rights

Week 11: Those Lacking Power – Visible Minority Struggles & Class Rights

Week 12: Fulfilling Old Promises? : Indigenous People & Modern Rights Contexts

Week 13: *Presentations* / More Rights? / Conclusions & Review