



Western  
UNIVERSITY-CANADA  
Department of History  
History 2110A [Summer Days]  
2017



“Rights Revolution” or “Fragile Freedoms”?  
Human Rights History in Canada [TENTATIVE]



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:**

**Tues. & Thurs. 9:30-12:30**

Instructor: Dr. Peter V. Krats

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

**Location: SSC 3006**

Office: STvH 2123

e-mail: pkrats@uwo.ca

**Office Hours / Contacting Me:**

Office Hours: tba; feel free to speak with me about appointments. I am also teaching afternoons, so my time will be limited after class. 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.”

**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” Rights Contexts	15	
Commentary on Rights “Element”	20	
Final Exam	35	

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.”



There is no assigned Textbook for the course. If you wish a basic source, a brief work that focusses on the 20<sup>th</sup> century is: Dominique Clément. *Human Rights In Canada: A History*. Wilfrid Laurier Press, 2016.

**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 each class :	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, but marks are earned individually, so if you post regularly and others do not – you will prosper and they will not !

## Reaction to “Pre-1929” Rights Contexts: [15 %]

What do you see as **the** major Rights issue/theme emerging up to Confederation (1867) ? 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 : tba

## 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 -- tba

## Final Examination : [35 %] [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, **especially in summer**.
- 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?

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## **Tentative** Outline

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

Colonial Contexts

- 1: Introductions // “Worlds” of Rights
- 2: Indigenous & European Notions of Rights to 1500
- 3: Rights in New France & Northernmost British North America to 1760

“*British Liberties*” – Rights 1760-1860s

- 4: New Rights Thinking; “Race” & Rights”: First Nations and Afri-Canadians
- 5: More Barriers to Rights: Gender, Class, Identity & other Issues

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

- 6: “Canadian Rights” for “Persons”? : Gender & Those Deemed “Others”
- 7: Nations within: Indigenous & Francophone Rights
- 8: “Politics & Money Matter”: Class Rights, Rights of Expression & more

Legislative & Practical Changes: Rights from the 1930s to Today

- 9: Legislating & Manipulating Rights – Rights in Depression & War
- 10: Postwar Rights to 1960
- 11: Toward Modern Rights 1960-1982
- 12: Fulfilling the Promise of Rights ? : Rights since the Charter // Review