

GENERAL EDUCATION COURSE ENHANCEMENT GRANT COMPETITION

1. *Principal Investigator Name(s) and Academic Title(s):* César Ernesto Abadía-Barrero, DMD. DMSc. Assistant Professor, Department of Anthropology and Human Rights Institute.
2. *Email Address(es)* cesar.abadia@uconn.edu
3. *Is this a new course or a currently existing course?* New Course
4. *List the course title and course number of the proposed/enhanced course and name of the sponsoring department or program.* HRTS 2XXX: Human Rights and Social Movements.
5. *Describe your project and the work that will be done during the grant period on course content, course design, and/or teaching approach. Provide a clear statement of the objectives of the project in terms of student learning.*

Human Rights and Social Movements are interdisciplinary areas in which history, theory, and practice have coevolved. Although the scholarly trajectories of Human Rights and Social Movements have rarely intersected, they both try to explain how aspirations towards justice and equality can become a reality. Also, both fields of engaged scholarship are interested in how structures of power resist transformation or coopt emancipatory language and group ideals. Human Rights, which originated in the field of international law, is now understood in interdisciplinary circles as a social practice in which accountability, empowerment, advocacy and participation are fundamental for the fulfillment of human rights. Social Movements, which center on collective action, group organization, and the politics of contestation, pay close attention to how group strategies and identities achieve social goals. In both Human Rights and Social Movements scholarship, the historical context in which social justice mobilization takes place is as important as the effectiveness of strategies and mechanisms in transgressing and transforming the structures of power that sustain injustices and inequalities.

The objective of this project is to bring together scholarship in Human Rights and Social Movements in a Gen Ed course format (content areas 2, 4 int, and W). With the help of this grant, I will find key theoretical and historical sources that connect or help us to connect Human Rights with Social Movements scholarship and find areas of contrast, complementarity, or incompatibility. In addition, I will look for specific international examples in which human rights language and frameworks have been incorporated as part of social movements and examples of social movements that have promoted, intentionally or not, the protection and fulfillment of human rights. Through this project, I will select the content, think about the sequence of readings, and give further thought to the assignments for a Gen Ed course that centers on the following questions: What are the key conceptual frameworks that facilitate a dialogue between Human Rights and Social Movements scholarship? Have social movements incorporated the human rights framework in their struggles and in what specific ways? How has the incorporation of human rights frameworks enhanced, complemented, or hindered social movements agendas? How can Human Rights facilitate and promote the incorporation of individual demands into collective social justice struggles?

6. *How do you intend to evaluate project objectives once the course, as proposed, is offered? Please identify intended learning outcomes and assessment tools.*

The course is proposed as a seminar style format to allow for constant feedback on and evaluation of critical thinking skills and clear, purposeful, and effective writing. Guidelines for presentations, weekly responses and a final paper will integrate learning outcomes and assessment tools.

	Assessment Tools				
Learning Outcomes	Presentations. Presenting students should:	Class Participation. All students should:	Weekly Responses. Due the day before class. All	Mid-term and final exams. Will	Final Paper. Step by step assignments include:

			students should:	include:	
1. Introduce Theories and Concepts that connect HR with SM	Offer clear definitions of the theories and concepts	Use theories and concepts adequately	Extract key concepts and key arguments	Questions about key theories and concepts	Select the HR and SM theories and concepts
2. Develop a critical perspective on HR and SM articulations.	Extract critical points of HR and SM intersection	Demonstrate a progressively critical perspective on class topics	Write about the integration or lack thereof between HR and SM and why.	Essay questions to demonstrate a critical perspective	Develop an argument that integrates or challenges HR and SM
3. Integrate key theories and concepts in their topics of interest		Use their own interests to explain theories and concepts.			Use theories and concepts to enhance their own argument.
4. Enhance writing skills (effective and powerful use of concepts, arguments and narrative)	Provide a useful handout with notes elaborated in a narrative form.	Discuss what makes a clear, purposeful, compelling and effective writing.	Offer concrete suggestions and recommendations to improve argumentation and style.	Through the writing of powerful essay questions	Constant redrafting and editing based on detailed feedback from peers and professor.

7. Describe how the course will fit into UConn's General Education curriculum.

The intended Human Rights and Social Movements course will foster in students an intellectual and historical perspective by offering them concepts, theories, and examples that span across time, cultures, and topics. Through this process, students will develop a nuanced but sophisticated understanding of the complexity involved in social science analysis as we engage with the articulation between human rights and social movements. Furthermore, by strengthening critical thinking skills through the different pedagogical strategies, students will be able to assess when, how, and why the integration of human rights frameworks with social movements has been more or less successful in achieving its goals. Importantly, discussions around specific social justice struggles (i.e., issues around health, education, violence, environment, poverty, gender, race, and so on) should enable the students to dissect how each example illuminates connections, conflicts, and possibilities to advance human rights through social movements. The in-depth understanding of class material that is built through the different pedagogical strategies should build strong critical and analytical skills, which should support a broad range of students' future professional careers. Furthermore, by strengthening students' writing competencies, they should be able to deliver more effective ways of communication through writing, which are also fundamental to any career path.

8. For which content areas (CA1-4), competencies (W, Q), or literacies (Environmental – E) will the course be proposed and how will it address the specific criteria for courses in these content areas and/or competencies?

Content area 2: Social Sciences. The various conceptual, historical, and theoretical approaches should allow the students to understand how social scientists engage in an activist-oriented research while maintaining methodological rigor. Students will be exposed to the tools that social scientists use to unveil structures of power, denounce injustices, and participate in proposals

for social change. Such mix between academia and activism constitutes one of the most significant challenges that social scientists committed to human rights advocacy or social movements face.

Content Area 4: Diversity and Multiculturalism – International: The course will use examples from across the globe, which allows students to understand how different groups might approach a human rights and social justice mobilization. Students will study how collective organization vary depending on the kind of human right at stake and the particular political, social, economic and cultural history of each group that sees a right being violated or in need of protection.

Writing – W: Students are expected to demonstrate that they have mastered the course material through writing assignments every session. Students will also assess and make specific suggestions to their peers' writing, aiming for clarity and effectiveness. In every session, I will select an example of a peer review process that allows for discussions about style, grammar, structure, and composition so that students notice, reflect, and produce more powerful and effective ways to communicate social science findings and arguments through texts. Hence, a positive feedback between course content and writing quality is expected. The grading of the quality of writing will take into account writing improvement.

9. *How will the course add to and/or enhance existing course offerings? If applicable, which of the areas targeted by this year's competition does it address? Does it fill other important gaps? How does it compare to current offerings or pedagogy? What will be distinctive about the course?*

Initial ideas of the course were discussed with the Human Rights Institute's undergraduate committee. Faculty members thought that this course, both because of its integration of interdisciplinary fields and its proposed Gen Ed form, will be an important addition to our current offering and fill some gaps in our expanding major and minor. Importantly, HRI faculty felt that the course could be taught or co-taught by Faculty from different departments, aiding the student's interdisciplinary training and future engagement in human rights issues as professionals. The course will complement some social movement courses offered in sociology and political sciences, which do not have an inter-disciplinary or human rights emphasis. In addition, the seminar-based style and heavy emphasis on improving writing skills will stand as a distinctive pedagogy of the course.

10. *Will your course serve as a model to assist others in their efforts to improve the general education curriculum? If so, how?*

My pedagogical approach is heavily influenced by critical pedagogy, a proposal that originated in Latin America and aims to unveil the structural forces that shape a particular reality in order to propose actions that can transform that reality. Rather than relying on outside experts, critical pedagogy believes that everybody's knowledge and experience are the most valuable assets in learning, which is why critical pedagogy relies heavily on students' deep engagement and reflections, collaborations, and knowledge production. I have received several letters of commendation from the provost for my teaching and was nominated for the Outstanding Teaching Award. I would hope that this course can assist other efforts to effectively engage students in their own learning and create agents of change. Importantly, student's research papers are not seen merely as a course exercise, but as the outcome of a systematic process in which the student's own thinking, research, and writing skills are brought to light.

11. *Is your proposal linked to any others being submitted in this competition? If so, explain the added benefits that will accrue to students from taking the courses as a group.* No

12. *Has this course even been submitted for this grant in the past?* Yes

13. *Has this course been funded by this grant in the past?* No

14. *Has this course or will this course be funded by any other non-departmental source, e.g. CETL grant, non-university grants, etc?* No