

# Human Rights

**Director: Tina K. Reuter (UAB Institute for Human Rights, College of Arts and Sciences)**

The BA in Human Rights builds on Birmingham's history and legacy as the cradle of the Civil Rights Movement and works towards establishing Alabama as a destination for scholars and practitioners interested in human rights and civil rights. An increasing number of topics of societal concern are viewed through a human rights lens. These include global issues – the unprecedented numbers of refugees, the “backsliding” into authoritarian government in many countries, and efforts to better respect the rights of women and children – as well as local issues such as human trafficking and access to education and healthcare.

Upon completing the requirements of the Major in Human Rights, students will be able to:

1. Define human rights and identify main characteristics, theories, opportunities, and challenges relating to human rights.
2. Demonstrate awareness and knowledge of human rights concerns that impact communities, states, and nations.
3. Analyze and assess key issues and controversies relating to human rights, including cultural relativism, the role of the state in protecting (and violating) human rights, genocide and crimes against humanity, rights and protections of underrepresented and marginalized groups, the groups and institutions related to the promotion of human rights, and the advocacy and promotion of global human rights.
4. Demonstrate understanding of different disciplinary perspectives and approaches to human rights, including in ethical and moral reasoning, law, historical review, policy analyses, social science, and anthropological.
5. Analyze and evaluate the connection between human rights in general and Birmingham's history and legacy relating to the civil rights movement, define current urban policy challenges as they relate to equity and social justice, and participate in the city as a classroom for applied active learning opportunities such as service-learning and internships.
6. Communicate scientific information effectively in written and oral form and learn how to apply the scientific method as it pertains to interdisciplinary social science research.
7. Develop the key quantitative and qualitative skills necessary to conduct research relating to human rights, and demonstrate the skills and competencies associated with career readiness.

As human rights touch on multiple dimensions of the human experience, including social and political rights as well as education, health, and economic opportunities, expertise in this area positions graduates for work in a broad variety of career paths. For example, much of the nonprofit sector – a vibrant and rapidly growing part of the economy – deals directly with protecting and advocating for human rights. Similarly, global humanitarian organizations as well as many state, local and federal agencies focus on human rights-related topics such as housing, access to healthcare, equity in employment, human trafficking, and voting rights, just to name a few. Training in human rights can also be an asset to graduates who aspire to work in a wide variety of service-oriented fields related to human rights, including the legal and healthcare professions.

The Human Rights BA is an interdisciplinary major. The program is administered by the College of Arts and Sciences. Students interested in the major may contact Dr. Tina Kempin Reuter through the UAB Institute for Human Rights, or their academic advisor.

## Bachelor of Arts with a Major in Human Rights

Requirements	Hours
<b>Blazer Core Curriculum</b>	<b>41</b>
<b>Human Rights Requirements</b>	
HRT 100 Introduction to Human Rights	3
HRT 400 Skills and Methods in Human Rights	3
PSC 316 Human Rights	3
<b>Philosophical Foundations</b>	<b>3</b>
PHL 115 Contemporary Moral Issues	
PHL 230 Social and Political Philosophy	
PHL 315 Ethics: Theories of Good and Evil	
<b>Civil Rights</b>	<b>3</b>
HY 304 U.S. Civil Rights Movement	
PSC 319 Civil Liberties and Civil Rights	
PSC 418 Politics and Race in America	
<b>Capstone or Internship</b>	<b>3</b>
HRT 485 Human Rights Professional Internship	
HRT 490 Capstone in Human Rights	
<b>Major Electives <sup>1</sup></b>	<b>18</b>
<b>General Electives</b>	<b>43</b>
<b>Total Hours</b>	<b>120</b>

- <sup>1</sup> Major electives must be selected from at least two different disciplines - AAS 200, AAS 346, AAS 420, AAS 442, ANTH 292, ANTH 330, ANTH 404, ANTH 424, ANTH 432, CJ 334, CJ 403, CJ 442, CJ 443, CMST 324, EH 424, EH 444, HY 239, HY 274, HY 279, HY 344, HY 339, HY 373, HY 374, HY 379, HY 422, HY 430, HY 439, HY 440, HY 444, HY 459, PHL 225, PHL 318, PHL 390, PSC 266, PSC 335, PSC 358, PSC 372, PSC 444, PSC 458, PSC 459, PSC 465, PSC 466, PUH 202, PUH 204, PUH 322, PUH 403, PUH 441, PY 417, SOC 245, SOC 250, SOC 278, SOC 431, SW 207, WLL 121
- <sup>2</sup> Students must graduate with 9 hours at the 400 level
- <sup>3</sup> A grade of C or better is required for all courses applied to the major.

## Minor in Human Rights

Requirements	Hours
HRT 100 Introduction to Human Rights	3
PSC 316 Human Rights	3
HRT 485 Human Rights Professional Internship	3
or HRT 482 Directed Research in Human Rights	
<b>Electives <sup>1, 2</sup></b>	<b>9</b>
<b>At least 9 hours at the 300-400 level</b>	
AAS 200 Introduction to African-American Studies	
ANTH 404 Anthropology of Peace and Human Rights	
ANTH 424 Anthropology of Transitional Justice	
ANTH 441 Anthropology of Human Rights	
ANTH 443 Propaganda, Misinformation, and Hate Speech	
HRT 400 Skills and Methods in Human Rights	
HRT 490 Capstone in Human Rights	
HY 239 The Holocaust in History and Literature	

or HY 339	The Holocaust in History and Literature		
HY 304	U.S. Civil Rights Movement		
HY 422	Ethnic Cleansing & Genocide 1912-2012		
CJ 442	Race, Crime, and Social Policy		
CJ 403	Restorative Justice		
EDF 362	Foundations of Education I: Social, Historical, Philosophical		
GCLH 150	Burning Issues		
PHL 318	Ethics of War		
PSC 266	The United Nations		
or PSC 366	The United Nations		
PSC 319	Civil Liberties and Civil Rights		
PSC 335	Memory Politics: Monuments, Museums and Human Rights		
PSC 359	Genocide and Crimes Against Humanity		
PSC 444	Human Rights and Technology		
PSC 458	Human Trafficking		
PSC 459	Politics of Transitional Justice		
PSC 465	International Law		
PUH 204	Social and Behavioral Determinants of Health		
PUH 275	Health Equity, Disparities, and Social Justice in Alabama		
PUH 322	Environmental Justice and Ethics		
PUH 403	Immigrant, Migrant, and Refugee Health		
PUH 404	LGBTQ Health and Wellbeing Service Learning		
SOC 245	A Society in Flux: Contemporary Social Problems in the United States		
SOC 220	Gendered Lives: Sociology of Sex and Gender		
SOC 250	Beyond Black and White: Exploring Race and Ethnicity		
SOC 278	Global Lives: Sociology of Our Interconnected World		
SOC 318	Struggle for Change: U.S. Social Movements		
SW 207	Racism, Sexism and Other Isms		
<b>Total Hours</b>		<b>18</b>	

<sup>1</sup> Courses from at least two different disciplines must be represented in the minor.

<sup>2</sup> Courses offered at two levels may only be used once.

**Freshman**

First Term	Hours	Second Term	Hours
PHL 115		3 Blazer Core Curriculum (Thinking Broadly: Humans and Their Societies)	3
EH 101		3 EH 102	3
MA 110		3 HRT 100	3
Blazer Core Curriculum (Local Beginnings)		3 Blazer Core Curriculum (Academic Foundations: Communicating in Modern World)	3
General Elective		3 Blazer Core Curriculum (Thinking Broadly: Scientific Inquiry)	4
			<b>15</b>

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**Sophomore**

First Term	Hours	Second Term	Hours
Human Rights Major Course (Civil Rights)		3 PSC 316	3
Blazer Core Curriculum (Thinking Broadly: Scientific Inquiry)		4 Blazer Core Curriculum: City as a Classroom	3
Blazer Core Curriculum (Thinking Broadly: Creative Arts)		3 General Electives	6
Blazer Core Curriculum (Thinking Broadly: History and Meaning)		3 Human Rights Major Course	3
General Elective		3	
		<b>16</b>	<b>15</b>

**Junior**

First Term	Hours	Second Term	Hours
ITS 470		3 Human Rights Major Courses	6
Human Rights Major Course		3 General Electives	9
General Electives		9	
		<b>15</b>	<b>15</b>

**Senior**

First Term	Hours	Second Term	Hours
Human Rights Major Course (300 level or above; Cultural Literacy)		3 HRT 485	1-3
HRT 400		3 Human Rights Major Course	3
General Electives		9 General Electives	9
		<b>15</b>	<b>13-15</b>

**Total credit hours: 120-122**

**Courses**

**HRT 100. Introduction to Human Rights. 3 Hours.**

Serving as a first step in understanding human rights, this course is designed to make students both consumers of state-of-the-art research in human rights at the international and national levels and producers of advocacy projects for human rights improvement at the local level. As such, by the end of this course, students should (1) justify their preferred definition of human rights based on a strong grasp of the various definitions of human rights, including comparisons between universal and culturally contingent perspectives; (2) understand the evolution of human rights and the implications for the three generations of human rights; (3) identify the ways in which human rights may be violated and the cross-national extent of human rights violations; (4) be able to list and discuss several types of efforts aimed at improving respect for human rights, including the efforts associated with inter-governmental organizations, powerful states, and non-governmental organizations; and (5) be capable to advocate for the changes in local human rights. This course meets Blazer Core Curriculum City as a Classroom with flags in Justice and Service/Community-based Learning.

**HRT 395. Special Topics in Human Rights. 3 Hours.**

This upper-level human rights course is designed for students with prior coursework or strong interest in global issues, social justice, or public policy. Each semester, the course focuses on a different theme, allowing students to explore a specific area of human rights in greater depth. Topics may include - but are not limited to - human rights and technology, environmental and climate justice, migration and mobility, transitional justice, or rights-based approaches to development and public health. Using an interdisciplinary approach that draws on political science, international law, history, anthropology, and sociology, students will critically examine how human rights are defined, practiced, and contested across cultural and political contexts. The course emphasizes analytical writing, critical discussion, and applied engagement with contemporary issues through case studies, multimedia materials, and independent research. It is particularly well-suited for students in human rights, political science, international studies, sociology, anthropology, public health, and related fields who are looking to deepen their understanding of human rights through a focused and topical lens.

**HRT 400. Skills and Methods in Human Rights. 3 Hours.**

This undergraduate course introduces students to the research process in human rights with a focus on mixed, qualitative, and community-based participatory research (CBPR) methods. After a short introduction to human rights principles and concepts, students will learn the basics of study design and human subjects research, interview and focus group preparation and implementation, data collection, qualitative content analysis, and working with underrepresented communities for scholarly purposes. Using a combination of didactic, interactive, and applied approaches, this class will leave students with a deeper understanding of how qualitative, mixed methods, and CBPR research can center the voices of marginalized groups, how researchers can best collaborate and co-create with community partners, and how human rights research can provide agency to involved participants and inform advocacy and policy.

**HRT 481. Human Rights Independent Studies. 3 Hours.**

Individualized course to explore a Human Rights topic and develop an integrative research portfolio or project. Requires instructor approval.

**Prerequisites:** PSC 316 [Min Grade: C]

**HRT 482. Directed Research in Human Rights. 1-6 Hour.**

Directed research on Human Rights. Open to Human Rights minors only. Requires instructor approval.

**Prerequisites:** PSC 316 [Min Grade: C]

**HRT 483. Honors Directed Research in Human Rights. 1-6 Hour.**

Directed research on Human Rights, for students enrolled in the Honors College. Open to Human Rights minors and Honors College students only. Requires instructor approval.

**Prerequisites:** PSC 316 [Min Grade: C]

**HRT 485. Human Rights Professional Internship. 1-3 Hour.**

Experiential learning in the field of human rights, allowing students to gain valuable professional experience and develop a reflective professional activity portfolio related to human rights work and advocacy. Instructor permission required.

**HRT 490. Capstone in Human Rights. 3 Hours.**

This seminar course is designed as a capstone academic experience in which each student is expected to demonstrate independent research skills, prepare and present a formal paper, and participate in the discussion and analysis of presentations by other members of the seminar. The formal paper should be a significant example of the student's academic credentials in terms of knowledge, skills, and abilities.

**Prerequisites:** HRT 100 [Min Grade: C] and HRT 400 [Min Grade: C] and PSC 316 [Min Grade: C]

**HRT 495. Special Topics in Human Rights. 3 Hours.**

This advanced upper-level human rights course is designed for students with prior coursework or strong interest in global issues, social justice, or public policy. Each semester, the course focuses on a different theme, allowing students to explore a specific area of human rights in greater depth. Topics may include - but are not limited to - human rights and technology, environmental and climate justice, migration and mobility, transitional justice, or rights-based approaches to development and public health. Using an interdisciplinary approach that draws on political science, international law, history, anthropology, and sociology, students will critically examine how human rights are defined, practiced, and contested across cultural and political contexts. The course emphasizes analytical writing, critical discussion, and applied engagement with contemporary issues through case studies, multimedia materials, and independent research. It is particularly well-suited for students in human rights, political science, international studies, sociology, anthropology, public health, and related fields who are looking to deepen their understanding of human rights through a focused and topical lens.