A. Instructor, Office Hours, & Contact Information
Paul T. Jaeger, Ph.D., J.D.
Associate Professor and Diversity Officer, College of Information Studies
Office hours: Wednesdays and Thursdays 12-2 pm, HBK 4121D
Via phone (301-405-1741) or email (pjaeger@umd.edu).

Please allow for email responses within 24-hours Mon-Fri and 48 hours on weekends and holidays.

B. Description of Course
The concept of human rights is the belief that all individuals deserve certain equal rights as members of society. This course examines information as a human right, including topics on the relationship of information to human rights; social, cultural, economic, legal, and political forces shaping information rights; the impacts of information rights on information professions, standards, and cultural institutions; and disadvantaged populations. While this course will focus on the United States, cases and examples will be drawn from international events.

C. Details & Goals of Course
"People lack many things: jobs, shelter, food, health care, and drinkable water. Today, being cut off from basic telecommunications services is a hardship almost as acute as these other deprivations, and may indeed reduce the chances of finding remedies to them."
~Kofi Annan, Seventh Secretary General of the United Nations (1999)

Information professions are guided by many principles that are also embodied in the concept of human rights. As information and related technologies have become increasingly essential to education, employment, social interaction, and civic participation, greater focus has been placed on the idea that information can be seen as a necessary human right. Arguments have been made that information access, information literacy, intellectual freedom, freedom of expression, and other information behaviors fall under the category of key human rights in the age of the Internet.

This course will explore the intersections of information and human rights – often identified as information rights – from a range of perspectives, including cultural institutions (libraries, archives, and museums), professional organizations, governments, and members of the public. This course will address key aspects of information rights; information equalities and disadvantaged populations; professional opportunities and challenges; implications for and
This course will prepare students to understand:

- Information and human rights in social, cultural, economic, legal, and political contexts.
- The impacts of law and policy on information as a right.
- Conceptions of intellectual freedom, freedom of expression, information literacy.
- The impacts of technological development and change on information as a right.
- Information access and use as potential information rights.
- Factors that create information inequalities.
- Information rights and disadvantaged populations.
- Information rights in the context of information institutions (libraries, archives, and museums).
- The impacts of professional codes and standards on information as a right.
- The professional challenges presented by information as a human right.
- The processes of designing and assessing programs to promote information access.

D. Course Approach & Expectations of Student Participation
This course meets once a week on Wednesdays from 2:00-4:45 in room JMZ 0125. The course will be conducted as a seminar. It is essential that every student participates in the discussions of course materials. Participation means active involvement in class discussions. Students are expected to have read the assigned readings for each week PRIOR TO THAT WEEK. Students are expected to question, challenge, argue, and discuss issues and topics related to that session's readings. Students are invited to bring in additional resources, literature, and experiences that can further shape the class discussions. Failure to participate in the course will result in a letter grade of F for this component.

E. Classroom Environment
As a graduate seminar, the classroom environment should be professional and respectful. Discussions should be based on course readings and critical thinking. Human rights issues can involve strongly held beliefs and current controversies. Remember, your classmates may have different perspectives on issues than you, but they still deserve your respect. As another aspect of respect in the classroom environment, turn off or mute all phones and other communication devices during each class session. If you use your laptop or mobile device in the classroom, limit the usage to course-related purposes (i.e., taking notes).

F. Students with Disabilities
Students with disabilities needing academic accommodation should: (1) register with and provide documentation to the Disability Support Services office, and (2) discuss any necessary academic accommodation with their teachers at the beginning of the semester.
G. Extensions
Timeliness is an essential component of graduate work, and extensions will only be available during personal emergencies. Students who need to request an extension should discuss the matter in advance with the professor. If an extension is granted, the work must be submitted within the extension period to avoid grade penalties. Unexcused delays in submission of the paper will result in a deduction of 10% for each day the paper is late.

H. Academic Honesty
Work submitted in this course will be individual and original, in line with the University’s Academic Honor Code and Honor Pledge. Engaging in any academic dishonesty will result in consequences in line with university policies. Academic dishonesty includes but is not limited to plagiarism, cheating, buying work, multiple submissions of the same paper, forging signatures, submitting fraudulent documents, and facilitating the academic dishonesty of others. When writing papers, be sure to carefully and thoroughly cite all materials you use in writing your paper and make sure all ideas and quotations are properly acknowledged. Please visit http://www.studenthonorcouncil.umd.edu/code.html for more information on the University’s Code of Academic Integrity.

I. Syllabus Change Policy
This syllabus is a guide for the course and is subject to change with advance notice.

J. CourseEvalUM
Participation in the evaluation of courses through CourseEvalUM is a responsibility that students hold as members of our academic community. Student feedback is confidential and important to the improvement of teaching and learning at the University. Please use http://www.courseevalum.umd.edu to complete course evaluations that the end of the semester.

K. Course Materials
There is no required textbook for the course. All readings will be available to students online or in another accessible format.

L. Assignments & Grading
Your grade in this course will be based on four items:
1. Class participation (30%)
2. Rights in Practice paper (20%)
3. Research Paper Proposal (15%)
4. Final Research Paper (35%)
Guidelines for written materials for the course include:
- Full name and paper title at the top of the paper
- Single-spaced
- 12-point Arial or Calibri font
- 1-inch margins
- In-text citations and references section in APA style (http://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/560/01/).
- Numbered pages
- Consistent formatting
- Free of grammatical errors and erroneous typos

All papers are due via electronic submission to inst613@gmail.com by midnight on the date they are due. Late submissions will receive an automatic 10% deduction for every day late.

1. Classroom participation (30% of final grade)
DUE: WEEKLY DURING CLASS SESSIONS
This seminar is a discussion-based course. Students are expected to complete all readings, to think through the issues raised in the readings, and to articulate thoughts on the materials in class. Clearly, you need to attend class to participate in the discussions. Attendance will be taken every week, with absences being excused in cases of illness, religious observances, and other reasons in line with university policies, or if the university is closed due to inclement weather. In order to receive an excused absence, you must notify the instructors in advance of the class meeting.

Assessment: Your classroom participation will be graded based on the insightfulness of your comments; your careful consideration of other students’ comments; and your ability to draw on the course readings, external resources, and personal experiences to justify and support your claims.

2. Rights in Practice Paper (20% of final grade)
DUE: OCTOBER 1 BY MIDNIGHT
This short paper of 1,200-1,500 words should explore one specific information right, such as information access, information literacy, receiving information, freedom of expression, intellectual freedom, or Internet access, among others. The paper should identify and describe the ways in which this right is addressed (or not addressed) in international declarations, national laws, and the statements of information professional organizations by providing concrete examples. From these sources, the paper should discuss the overall themes of the ways in which the information is conceptualized, acknowledged, and approached.

Assessment: Your paper will be graded based on the appropriateness of your selected information right; your description of the ways in which that right is addressed in a variety of declarations, laws, and professional organizations; your adherence to the length requirement; your adherence to the formatting and citation requirements; evidence of critical thinking; and clarity and precision of thought in your writing. Writing should avoid passive voice, opinionated sentences, erroneous typos and grammar issues, and cite works appropriately in line with APA standards.
3. Research Paper Proposal (15% of final grade)
DUE: OCTOBER 29 BY MIDNIGHT
Due six weeks before the Final Research Paper (detailed below), the proposal should explain in the topic and approach of the Final Research Paper. This assignment is intended to help students to identify and articulate a topic, as well as ensure that the topic selected fits the requirements for the paper. Your proposal should consist of the following components:

- A working title (~5-10 words)
- A description of the information right(s) you plan to address and the specific population you plan to consider (~50-100 words)
- A description of why this research is important/relevant to information and human rights (~50-100 words)
- A description of what you hope to learn or a driving question that you wish to answer (~50-100 words)
- A list of six resources (formatted in APA style)
- Brief annotations for each of your resources that express its key points and/or make it clear how it will support your research paper (~15-30 words each)

Assessment: Your proposal will be graded on the completeness of your proposal submission; the timeliness of your submission; and the clarity and precision of your writing. Writing should be succinct yet explanatory, free of erroneous typos and grammar issues, and should cite works appropriately.

4. Research Paper (35% of final grade)
DUE: DEC 3 BY MIDNIGHT
This longer research paper of 6,000-8,000 words will explore the research and practice related to information rights and a specific population in a specific type of information organization. The topic is of the student’s choosing, and the focus can be on the U.S. or another nation. Drawing from research literature, professional literature, and policies and practices of information organizations, this paper will review and summarize the information rights issues related to the selected population and context. The paper will then evaluate the different approaches identified. Finally, the paper will propose an approach to facilitating information rights in terms of the selected population and context.

Assessment: Your paper will be graded based on your description and synthesis of the ways in which the information rights issue related to your selected population and context; your adherence to the length requirement; your adherence to the formatting and citation requirements; evidence of critical thinking; and clarity and precision of thought in your writing. Writing should avoid passive voice, opinionated sentences, erroneous typos and grammar issues, and cite works appropriately.

M. Letter Grades:

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N. Course Schedule & Readings

Sept 4: Introduction and the Development of Human Rights
Readings:
  - Course syllabus

Sept 11: Information and the Context of Human Rights
Readings:

Sept 18: Law, Democracy, and Information Rights
Readings:

Sept 25: Information Literacy
Guest Speaker: Natalie Taylor, PhD Candidate, UMD
Readings:


Purdue Online Writing Lab, APA Style Formatting and Citations
[http://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/560/01/](http://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/560/01/)

**Oct 1: Rights in Practice Paper DUE by midnight**

**Oct 2: Information Inequality**

Guest Speaker: Susan Wilson, PhD Candidate, UMD

Readings:


**Oct 9: Expression, Openness, and Transparency**

Readings:


**Oct 16: Internet Access and the Right to Communicate**

Guest Speaker: Jes Koepfler, PhD Candidate, UMD

Readings:


**Oct 23: Technological Change, Political Change, and Social Media**

Guest Speaker: Ursula Gorham, PhD Candidate, UMD

Readings:


**Oct 29: Research Paper Proposal DUE by midnight**

**Oct 30: Information Professions and Human Rights**

Readings:


**Nov 6: Information Rights in Professional Activities**

Guest Speaker: Lloyd Beers, PhD Candidate, UMD

Readings:


**Nov 13: Services and Information Rights**

Readings:


**Nov 20: Presentations, Exhibitions, and Information Rights**

Readings:


**Nov 27: No Class in honor of Thanksgiving and Hanukkah (and writing your final papers)**

**Dec 3: Final Research Paper DUE by midnight**

**Dec 4: Information Rights, Education, and Advocacy**

Readings:


