A. Instructors, Office Hours, & Contact Information
Paul T. Jaeger, Ph.D., J.D., M.L.S., M.Ed.
Professor, Diversity & Inclusion Officer, and MLIS Program Co-Director
Office hours: Mondays and Wednesdays 12-2 pm, HBK 4121
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; the impacts of 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, human rights, and social justice 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 and human rights; information and social justice; information equalities and disadvantaged populations; professional opportunities and challenges; implications
for and assessment of information services; as well as the impacts of law, policy, technology, and professional standards on the development of human rights. These topics will be discussed through legal, policy, social, cultural, and economic lenses. This course will focus primarily on the United States, but many important cases and examples will be drawn from international events, such as the role of social media in political change and the role of archives in human rights commissions.

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 rights.
- Relationships between information, human rights, and social justice.
- Factors that create information inequalities.
- Rights and disadvantaged populations.
- 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 Mondays from 6:00-8:45 in room HBK 0105. 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.courserevalum.umd.edu to complete course evaluations that the end of the semester.

K. 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/](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 pjaeger@umd.edu by the end of the day on which 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
   Students will also need to discuss each week’s readings in depth during class sessions. 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 2 BY MIDNIGHT
   This short paper of 1,200-1,500 words should explore one specific 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 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 grammatical issues, and cite works appropriately in line with APA standards.

3. Research Paper Proposal (15% of final grade)
   DUE: OCTOBER 23 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 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: DECEMBER 4 BY MIDNIGHT
This longer research paper of 5,000-7,000 words will explore the research and practice related to
information and human 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 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 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 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 grammatical issues, and cite works
appropriately.

L. Letter Grades:
A+ 97-100  B+ 87-89  C+ 77-79  D+ 67-69  F 0-59
A  93-96    B  83-86  C  73-76  D  63-66
A-  90-92   B-  80-82  C-  70-72  D-  60-62
M. Course Materials
All readings will be available to students online or in another accessible format. While not required, students should consider acquiring the following book as a complement to and enhancement of course topics and discussions: Libraries, Human Rights, and Social Justice: Enabling Access and Promoting Inclusion by Paul T. Jaeger, Natalie Greene Taylor, & Ursula Gorham (2015, Rowman & Littlefield). You may also wish to pay particular attention to the articles published in the journals Political Librarian; Progressive Librarian; and the International Journal of Information, Diversity, & Inclusion.

N. Course Schedule & Readings

Aug 27: Introduction and the Development of Human Rights
Readings:

Sept 3: Labor Day – no class

Sept 10: Information and the Context of Human Rights
Readings:

Sept 17: Information, Human Rights, and Social Justice
Readings:


**Sept 24: Law, Democracy, and Human Rights**

Readings:


**Oct 1: Information Literacy**

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 2: Rights in Practice Paper DUE by midnight**

**Oct 8: Information Inequalities**

Readings:


Oct 15: Access to Information
Readings:


Oct 22: Online Participation
Readings:


Oct 23: Research Paper Proposal DUE by midnight
Oct 29: Expression, Openness, and Transparency
Readings:

Nov 5: Information Professions
Readings:

Nov 12: Professional Activities
Readings:
Nov 19: No class – Thanksgiving week (hint: work on your final paper)

Nov 26: Information Services
Readings:


Dec 3: Neutrality?
Readings:


Dec 4: Final Research Paper DUE by midnight

Dec 10: Education and Advocacy
Readings: