

LA381-15 Writing Human Rights

20/21

Department

School of Law

Level

Undergraduate Level 3

Module leader

Andrew Williams

Credit value

15

Module duration

10 weeks

Assessment

100% coursework

Study location

University of Warwick main campus, Coventry

Description

Introductory description

People from many and diverse occupations feel compelled to write in response to past and present injustices and about human rights; journalists, creative writers, lawyers, historians, philosophers and sociologists. They may write to seek redress or policy change, or they may simply want to bring wrongs to public attention. But to do so, they face common problems of representation. What forms of writing are appropriate? Which are possible? What ethical and political sensitivities and sensibilities are constraining? Are any liberating? What skills do they need to develop to write effectively and well? How is the matter of 'truth' addressed in different media and how does this affect the nature and content of representing wrongs?

On this module, we will examine the ethical and practical elements of writing about human rights or social injustice in varying contexts and media, looking at classic and contemporary non-fiction and fiction as well as other forms of creative writing forms and expression.

PLEASE NOTE: THIS MODULE IS OPEN TO STUDENTS IN ENGLISH AND ALL OTHER DEPARTMENTS

[Module web page](#)

Module aims

This module will introduce students to the interdisciplinary study of human rights and creative

writing. In particular, the module will explore: (1) how we might read literary texts and other forms of media from the perspective of human rights discourse; (2) what literary and other critique can add to the study of human rights; and (3), the explanatory power of different modes of writing in the context of the law and politics of human rights.

The module will be self-reflexively critical, posing the question of whether human rights offer an efficacious and ethical framework that might yet revitalize the moral vision and political hopes of those committed to the autonomy, dignity, and liberation of peoples.

You will have the opportunity to investigate and write about human rights related topics of your own choosing, working towards producing an assessment that is part creative writing and part critical analysis. We shall begin to think about these projects when we meet for our first seminar, and we shall use subsequent seminars in part to work towards final drafts.

Along the way, we shall also examine writing on selected contemporary crises and issues with the help of a professional journalist to illustrate questions of technique, competing political and media agendas, ethical dilemmas and legal constraints that those writing about injustice/human rights commonly face.

Outline syllabus

This is an indicative module outline only to give an indication of the sort of topics that may be covered. Actual sessions held may differ.

Each week through different themes (such as slavery, treatment of the 'other', enduring conflicts etc) we will develop our understanding of human rights and how writing can respond to injustice. We will look at journalism, non-fiction, blogs, fiction, poetry, even academic work and consider how they relate to human rights as a potential unified concept. Readings are provided on moodle for you to see how others have written about these subjects.

We will also look at different writing conundrums in the context of these themes:

- How can we understand human rights?
- How can we define an injustice?
- What evidence can we accept?
- What's the distinction between truth, lies, perspective and argument?
- How can we write about it?
- What barriers to writing about injustice will we face and how can we overcome them?

Throughout, I will give as much space and time as I can for you to explore your possibilities for writing, setting weekly writing assignments to help you develop your work. We will discuss these in seminars or one-to-one sessions.

Learning outcomes

By the end of the module, students should be able to:

- Demonstrate enhanced key skills including written and oral communication, self-reflective research, independent and group working.
- Demonstrate an advanced knowledge of the interdisciplinary study of human rights.
- Demonstrate an advanced ability to undertake interdisciplinary study in the context of literary

appreciation, criticism and other forms of writing as appropriate.

Indicative reading list

To be confirmed each year

Interdisciplinary

This module will introduce students to the interdisciplinary study of human rights and creative writing. In particular, the module will explore: (1) how we might read literary texts from the perspective of human rights discourse; (2) what literary critique can add to the study of human rights; and (3), the explanatory power of different modes of writing in the context of the law and politics of human rights.

International

texts and themes of human rights cross borders at all times

Subject specific skills

Critical analysis, creative writing, oral presentation, research

Transferable skills

as above

Study

Study time

Type	Required
Lectures	18 sessions of 1 hour (12%)
Seminars	7 sessions of 1 hour (5%)
Private study	125 hours (83%)
Total	150 hours

Private study description

No private study requirements defined for this module.

Costs

No further costs have been identified for this module.

Assessment

You do not need to pass all assessment components to pass the module.

Students can register for this module without taking any assessment.

Assessment group A2

	Weighting	Study time
2500 word essay	50%	
2500 word creative work on a topic of your choice relating to any theme of the module: everything we do in lectures and seminars is designed to help you compose this creative piece. You can write in any style you wish: fiction, creative non-fiction, poetry, screenplay, stage script etc but you should speak with the module convenor first.		
Reflective Diary	50%	
Diary of no more than 2500 words that reflects on what you have learned on the module, both in terms of the weekly work in seminars, lectures, readings and in your writing exercises and, ultimately, during your composition of your final submitted creative piece.		

Feedback on assessment

Feedback via Tabula and one-to-one formative feedback on composition of final assessment

Availability

Courses

This module is Optional for:

- UIBA-MN34 Law and Business Four Year (Qualifying Degree)
 - Year 3 of MN34 Law and Business Studies Four Year (Qualifying Degree)
 - Year 4 of MN34 Law and Business Studies Four Year (Qualifying Degree)
- ULAA-M300 Undergraduate Law
 - Year 2 of M300 Law
 - Year 3 of M300 Law
- ULAA-M105 Undergraduate Law (3 year) (Qualifying Degree)
 - Year 2 of M105 Law (3 year) (Qualifying Degree)
 - Year 2 of M105 Law (3 year) (Qualifying Degree)
 - Year 3 of M105 Law (3 year) (Qualifying Degree)
 - Year 3 of M105 Law (3 year) (Qualifying Degree)
- ULAA-M106 Undergraduate Law (4 year) (Qualifying Degree)

- Year 2 of M106 Law (4 year) (Qualifying Degree)
- Year 3 of M106 Law (4 year) (Qualifying Degree)
- Year 4 of M106 Law (4 year) (Qualifying Degree)
- ULAA-M104 Undergraduate Law (Year Abroad)
 - Year 2 of M104 Law (Year Abroad)
 - Year 4 of M104 Law (Year Abroad)
- ULAA-M108 Undergraduate Law (Year Abroad) (Qualifying Degree)
 - Year 2 of M108 Law (Year Abroad) (Qualifying Degree)
 - Year 2 of M108 Law (Year Abroad) (Qualifying Degree)
 - Year 4 of M108 Law (Year Abroad) (Qualifying Degree)
 - Year 4 of M108 Law (Year Abroad) (Qualifying Degree)
- Year 3 of UIBA-MN31 Undergraduate Law and Business Studies
- Year 3 of UIBA-MN32 Undergraduate Law and Business Studies
- UIBA-MN35 Undergraduate Law and Business Studies with Intercalated Year (3+1)
 - Year 3 of MN35 Law and Business Studies with Intercalated Year (3+1)
 - Year 4 of MN35 Law and Business Studies with Intercalated Year (3+1)
- Year 3 of ULAA-ML33 Undergraduate Law and Sociology
- Year 2 of ULAA-M10A Undergraduate Law with French Law (Qualifying Degree)
- Year 2 of ULAA-M10C Undergraduate Law with German Law (Qualifying Degree)
- Year 3 of ULAA-M110 Undergraduate Law with Humanities (3 Year)
- ULAA-M113 Undergraduate Law with Humanities (4 Year) (Qualifying Degree)
 - Year 2 of M113 Law with Humanities (4 year) (Qualifying Degree)
 - Year 3 of M113 Law with Humanities (4 year) (Qualifying Degree)
- ULAA-M115 Undergraduate Law with Social Sciences (3 Year) (Qualifying Degree)
 - Year 2 of M115 Law with Social Sciences (3 year) (Qualifying Degree)
 - Year 2 of M115 Law with Social Sciences (3 year) (Qualifying Degree)

This module is Option list A for:

- Year 4 of ULAA-M10A Undergraduate Law with French Law (Qualifying Degree)
- Year 4 of ULAA-M10C Undergraduate Law with German Law (Qualifying Degree)
- Year 4 of ULAA-M113 Undergraduate Law with Humanities (4 Year) (Qualifying Degree)
- ULAA-M115 Undergraduate Law with Social Sciences (3 Year) (Qualifying Degree)
 - Year 3 of M115 Law with Social Sciences (3 year) (Qualifying Degree)
 - Year 3 of M115 Law with Social Sciences (3 year) (Qualifying Degree)

This module is Option list B for:

- ULAA-ML34 BA in Law and Sociology (Qualifying Degree)
 - Year 3 of ML34 Law and Sociology (Qualifying Degree)
 - Year 4 of ML34 Law and Sociology (Qualifying Degree)
- Year 5 of ULAA-ML35 BA in Law and Sociology (Qualifying Degree) (with Intercalated year)
- Year 4 of ULAA-ML33 Undergraduate Law and Sociology

This module is Option list E for:

- UPHA-V7MW Undergraduate Politics, Philosophy and Law
 - Year 2 of V7MW Politics, Philosophy and Law

- Year 2 of V7MW Politics, Philosophy and Law