**COSM33 2021 Human Rights in Asia Course Outline**

**Course director: Dr. Elizabeth Rhoads**

**Course and Literature Introduction**

COSM33 is an elective course in the first semester of the MSc in Asian Studies. It is also a stand-alone course open to students from other departments. The aim of the course is to enable students to critically analyse the problems and future prospects of human rights work in Asia. Focus is placed on the cultural, social, economic and political factors that prevent or promote the protection for human rights in different societies in Asia. The course advocates and applies an interdisciplinary approach to the study of human rights which is reflected in the teaching, the choice of topics and the required reading.

The literature for the course covers the geographic area of East and Southeast Asia and is designed to highlight some of the key human rights concerns in the region and the region’s responses to historic and contemporary human rights violations. The course is divided by thematic area, with lectures using case studies from Asian contexts to explore themes in human rights including minority rights (including ethnic, religious, and sexual orientation and gender minorities), freedom of religion, women’s rights, transitional justice following genocide and mass atrocity crimes, forced evictions and land rights, refugees and migrants, and freedom of speech (including digital rights). The course will also examine human rights-related debates in the region, including ideas of ‘Asian values’ and non-intervention, ‘vernacularisation’ of human rights, and transnational human rights activism.

The course literature has been selected to provide a diversity of perspectives on experiences, challenges, and opportunities for human rights in the region. Many of the authors of course literature are themselves human rights advocates or were victims of human rights violations. Consideration has been taken to include gender, ethnic, and religious diversity in the reading list and to highlight underrepresented groups. Over half of the literature is authored or co-authored by scholars from Asia and approximately half of the articles are written by people who identify as women. All of the literature is available in the library or as e-resources through LUBsearch.

An additional 150 pages will be added later in order to be able to stay up-to-date with current issues.

**Literature**

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