**Metropolitan Business Academy**

**International Issues Course Syllabus 2019-2020**

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*After School Tutorial: Tuesday, Wednesday, & Thursday by appointment*

How has the Universal Declaration of Human Rights existed for over 70 years and human rights struggles persist? How do human created systems perpetuate these human rights struggles? How can we cultivate a collective response to address human rights struggles? What is the role of the student, the writer, the teacher, and the protestor in human rights struggles? Using global current events, art & media, history, statistics, and poetry, we will explore dominant narratives and counternarratives within the fields of international relations and human rights. We will analyze these ideas and contradictions using the following critical lenses:

* Capitalism
* Climate Crisis
* Patriarchy
* Racism and Imperialism
* War

We will study global, national, and local issues while examining and evaluating people’s responses. We will assess the impact of human rights violations and the defenders’ actions. We will unpack the impact of racism, sexism, homophobia, xenophobia, capitalism, and nationalism while seeking concrete ways for communities to heal and take control of their own lives.

In addition to studying, sharing, and learning from these stories, we will improve our research, writing, and discussion skills. We will find and analyze sources and use evidence to support our thinking. We will uncover bias and seek multiple perspectives. We will share our findings with each other and learn through close listening. We will use research and writing to identify and assess problems and present potential solutions.

You will raise awareness about real issues and you will offer potential solutions to complex human problems. You will write for real audiences: Your classmates, other students at MBA and in New Haven, concerned citizens, and members of the international human rights community. As a culmination of our work, our class, and Ms. Nataliya’s African American and Latinx History classes, will plan, host and facilitate a Social Justice Symposium on May 22, 2020. At this event, you will present your final research papers to an audience of MBA community members and other interested community partners.

**Overview of Units**

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| **Unit** | **Month** | **Guiding Questions** | **Projects** |
| **Unit 1:**  *Intro to Human Rights* | Sept | What are human rights? Who decides? How do human created systems impact human rights? What do the contradictions within the study of human rights tell us? | Analysis Paper and Reflection: Does the Universal Declaration of Human Rights Matter? |
| **Unit 2:**  *Moderation Study* | Oct | Should the national minimum wage be increased to $15/hour? | Mini-Argument Essay: Should the national minimum wage be increased to $15/hour? |
| **Unit** | **Month** | **Guiding Questions** | **Projects** |
| **Unit 3:**  *Borders,  Nation States, & Migration* | Oct-Nov | Are borders necessary? To what extent is the U.S. responsible for the current migrant crisis? How does the history of U.S. involvement in Central America connect to human rights issues today? | Museum of the Americas Installation and Reflection |
| **Unit 4:**  *Multinational Corporations: The Attack on Labor and Land* | Dec-Jan | How does capitalism affect the human rights of workers and children? How does capitalism affect the global climate crisis? What other possibilities exist for the distribution of global and local resources? | Human Rights Defender Research Project and Reflection |
| **Unit 5:**  *War, Protest, and Democracy* | Jan-Feb | Should the United States be the world’s policeman? What are the most useful tools to protect human rights and democratic participation? What is the role of writers, students, teachers, and protestors in the human rights struggle? | Creative Writing and Poster Making Project and Reflection |
| **Unit 6:**  *Final Research Project* | Feb-May | What are the narratives and counter narratives of a specific human rights issue? How does the issue connect history and the current context? How can we use our research to “disrupt inevitabilities, dig out lost alternatives, and widen the horizons of empathy”? | College Level Research Paper, Social Justice Symposium Presentation, and Reflection |

**Overview of Assignments**

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| **Assignment** | **Description** | **Percentage** |
| Projects | This class is project-based, and each of the above units concludes with a project. Our last project is a college level research paper and presentation, which we will work on throughout the third trimester. | 50% |
| Classwork | By engaging with classwork such as openings, analysis handouts, and small group discussions, you will practice research and writing skills and develop important background knowledge. This skill practice and knowledge building will support your work on bigger projects throughout the year. | 25% |
| Seminar Shares | The Seminar Share is another tool to support your growth. By sharing your research and analysis informally with fellow students, you will be able to clarify your thinking, communicate with confidence, and improve your written work . | 25% |