

IDS 2935: Human Rights from a Latin American Perspective

Quest 1: Justice and Power

I. General Information

Class Meetings

- Spring 2023
- T periods 7-8 and R period 7
- TBA

Instructor

- Carmen Martínez Novo
- 382 Grinter Hall
- Office phone 352-2734716
- Office hours: T 4-5 pm, R 3-4 pm or by appointment
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Course Description

What are the rights that all humans are expected to share? When, where and how did the idea of human rights start and how did it evolve? What are some of the challenges that Latin Americans have confronted to claim these rights? This class explores theoretical and empirical debates on human rights from the perspectives of history, anthropology, literary theory and political science. Once students acquire a solid foundation on the topic, they apply it to a team based mini ethnography on a human rights problem of their choice affecting Latin America or the Latinx community. They identify a researchable question that pertains to human rights in these communities and use qualitative and interpretive methods to gather evidence and reach reasoned conclusions. Students learn through first-hand experience the ethical dimensions of doing research and how research can have an impact on society. Finally, they compare Latin American and Latinx understandings and struggles for human rights with US perspectives.

More specifically, we will explore first the historical and conceptual foundations of the doctrine of human rights as it originated in 18th century Europe and the United States. We will learn about the history of exclusions, limitations, and difficulties for the implementation of human rights in a global context. We will then discuss the terminologies of universalism and cultural relativism, individual and group rights, as well as the different types and generations of rights. We will subsequently explore Latin American and Latinx centered experiences with human rights abuses and analyze how Latin American populations have interpreted human rights and dealt with

violence and suffering in their daily lives. These understandings and experiences will be contrasted with those found in the United States. Additionally, we will learn how anthropologists and other scholars have contributed to documenting human rights abuses and engaging in human rights activism. Finally, using the concepts and methods of the anthropology of human rights as well as those of other disciplines and taking as research model Latin American/Latinx based scholarship, students will conduct group research on a human rights problem of their choice affecting Latin America or Latinx communities. The research will be presented to the class in oral form and registered in a personal written document.

Quest and General Education Credit

- Quest 1
- Humanities
- International (N)
- Writing Requirement (WR) 4000 words

This course accomplishes the [Quest](#) and [General Education](#) objectives of the subject areas listed above. A minimum grade of C is required for Quest and General Education credit. Courses intended to satisfy Quest and General Education requirements cannot be taken S-U.

Required Readings and Works

Lynn Hunt. 2007. *Inventing Human Rights: A History*. New York: Norton. (required).

Jason de León. 2015. *The land of open graves: Living and Dying on the Migrant Trail*. University of California Press. (recommended).

Fiction resources (recommended):

Karla Cornejo Villavicencio. 2020. *The Undocumented Americans*. New York: One World.

Junot Díaz. 2007. *The Brief, Wondrous Life of Oscar Wao*. New York: Riverhead Books.

All other readings and works are available in Canvas

Materials and Supplies Fees: n/a

Recommended Writing Guide and Information on Citations:

Strunk, William, and Elwyn B. White. 2014. *The Elements of Style*. Pearson, Boston.

Citation Management Guide from UF Libraries:
<http://guides.uflib.ufl.edu/citationsoftware>.

II. Graded Work

Description of Graded Work

-Class attendance and participation: 10 %, 6% for attendance and 4% for participation. The instructor will take attendance every day via a signature page. Student absences will be recorded in canvas. Students will get 6 points for perfect attendance. They may miss up to two classes without a point penalty. Two points will be taken from the 6 attendance points per additional class missed without reasonable justification.

Every thursday the Professor will take note of the students who have participated in class that week. Participation should be informed by the required readings. The professor will encourage those who have remained quiet to participate the following week. A student with regular and high quality class participation will get 4 points for participation. A student with scattered and medium quality participation will get 3 points, a student with less participation or participation that is not informed by the materials will get 2 or less points (see rubric for a definition of quality in participation). The instructor will accommodate students who find it difficult to speak in public. Opportunities will be provided for those students to practice in smaller groups.

-In-Class group facilitation of discussion on the readings for one day: 10% (due on a day of choice throughout the Spring 2023 Semester).

-In-Class group presentation of research on human rights: 20% (due one day between 4/11 and 4/20).

Mid-term essay (2000 words, an analysis of the theory and history of human rights): 20 % (counts towards WR), due on February 21.

-Final essay (2000 words, an analysis of a human rights problem of choice that includes bibliography and qualitative research): 30 % (counts towards WR), due on May 2. This final essay will take into account peer and instructor feedback collected in the group presentation. The professor will return additional feedback to students via canvas speed grader.

-Class exercises: 10 % (due throughout the Spring 2023 semester as listed in the schedule).

-For group projects (facilitation of discussion and presentation of group research) the group should make clear the contribution of each individual student to the overall project. Individual students will not be penalized for other students who are less active or act as free riders. Less active students or free riders will receive a lower or failing grade in the group project depending on their performance.

-Facilitation of discussion: students will be graded based on the following elements: knowledge and analysis of the reading, aesthetics of the visual presentation, effectiveness of the oral presentation.

-Research presentation: students will be graded based on quantity and quality of bibliography consulted, quality and coherence of research methods, depth of analysis, relevance of the findings, quality of reasoned conclusions, self reflection component focusing on how doing this research relates to student's previous life-experiences and how the research has changed or not their thinking .

Grading Scale

For information on how UF assigns grade points, visit: <https://catalog.ufl.edu/UGRD/academic-regulations/grades-grading-policies/>

A	94 – 100%		C	74 – 76%
A-	90 – 93%		C-	70 – 73%
B+	87 – 89%		D+	67 – 69%
B	84 – 86%		D	64 – 66%
B-	80 – 83%		D-	60 – 63%
C+	77 – 79%		E	<60

Grading Rubric(s)

Writing Assessment Rubric and Statements

	SATISFACTORY (Y)	UNSATISFACTORY (N)
CONTENT	Papers exhibit at least some evidence of ideas that respond to the topic with complexity, critically evaluating and synthesizing sources, and provide at least an adequate discussion with basic understanding of sources.	Papers either include a central idea(s) that is unclear or off-topic or provide only minimal or inadequate discussion of ideas. Papers may also lack sufficient or appropriate sources.
ORGANIZATION AND COHERENCE	Documents and paragraphs exhibit at least some identifiable structure for topics, including a clear thesis statement but may require readers to work to follow progression of ideas.	Documents and paragraphs lack clearly identifiable organization, may lack any coherent sense of logic in associating and organizing ideas, and may also lack transitions and coherence to guide the reader.
ARGUMENT AND SUPPORT	Documents use persuasive and confident presentation of ideas, strongly supported with evidence. At the weak end of the Satisfactory range, documents may provide only generalized discussion of ideas or may provide adequate discussion but rely on weak support for arguments.	Documents make only weak generalizations, providing little or no support, as in summaries or narratives that fail to provide critical analysis.
STYLE	Documents use a writing style with word choice appropriate to the context, genre, and discipline. Sentences should display complexity and logical sentence structure. At a minimum, documents will display a less precise use of vocabulary and an uneven use of sentence structure or a writing style that occasionally veers away from word choice or tone appropriate to the context, genre, and discipline.	Documents rely on word usage that is inappropriate for the context, genre, or discipline. Sentences may be overly long or short with awkward construction. Documents may also use words incorrectly.

MECHANICS	Papers will feature correct or error-free presentation of ideas. At the weak end of the Satisfactory range, papers may contain some spelling, punctuation, or grammatical errors that remain unobtrusive, so they do not muddy the paper's argument or points.	Papers contain so many mechanical or grammatical errors that they impede the reader's understanding or severely undermine the writer's credibility.
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- The Writing Requirement (WR) ensures students both maintain their fluency in writing and use writing as a tool to facilitate learning.
- The instructor will evaluate and provide feedback before the end of the course on all of the student's written assignments with respect to grammar, punctuation, clarity, coherence, and organization.
- WR course grades have two components. To receive writing requirement credit, a student must receive a grade of C or higher and a satisfactory completion of the writing component of the course.

Participation Rubric

	High Quality	Average	Needs Improvement
1. Informed: Shows evidence of having done the assigned work.	Shows evidence of having read and understood all the assigned readings.	Shows evidence of having read part of the materials.	Does not participate or participates but their comments are off the point.
2. Thoughtful: Shows evidence of having understood and considered issues raised.	Demonstrates understanding of the main issues in the assigned materials and is able to connect and compare readings.	Shows partial understanding of the main issues or has difficulty making connections.	Does not identify the main ideas and is not able to connect different materials.
3. Considerate: Takes the perspective others into account.	The student listens to others and acknowledges and considers their point of view.	The student is only partially able to listen or consider the point of view of their peers.	The student is unpolite or disruptive with classmates.
4. Frequency of participation:	Participates every week at least once in each session	Participates every week at least once (every two sessions)	Scattered participation (less than once a week or less)
Points are based on a combination of quality (first 3 dimensions) and frequency of	4 points	3 points	2 points or less

participation (4th dimension). Other combinations are possible.			
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Group Research Project Rubric

	High quality	Average	Needs improvement
Bibliographic research	Students in the group use adequate number of high-quality academic sources	Students use less sources or the sources are of mixed quality	Students use few sources or the sources are not of enough academic quality
Methods	The methods are well thought and appropriate to answer the research questions and the strategy is feasible	The methods only partially answer the research questions or are not completely feasible.	The methods fail to answer the research question or have not been put into practice effectively
Analysis and findings	Students use the bibliography and qualitative research to perform thoughtful analysis and reach insightful findings	Students' make efforts to connect the readings and qualitative research and to find answers to their questions.	Students are not able to link their bibliographic research and qualitative methods to reasonable answers for their research questions.
Conclusions	Conclusions are interesting	Conclusions are relatively interesting	Conclusions do not seem to increase student knowledge on the subject of research
Aesthetics and effectiveness of presentation	The audience (professor and peers) find the presentation effective and pleasant	The audience finds the presentation relatively effective and pleasant	The presentation is not effective: it has too much writing, is too long, does not use visuals well, etc.

Self-reflection	Students relate the research to their own life experiences and detail how their thinking has evolved after doing the research	Students partially relate the research to their own experience and thought process	Students are not able to make connections between the research and their own previous life-experiences and thought processes
Points (will be assigned to each individual student)	20	18	16 or less

III. Annotated Weekly Schedule

1st Topic: Historical and Conceptual Foundations of Human Rights

Description: In this section we learn the origins of the human rights concept in 18th century Europe and the United States, how it developed historically and what and whom it came to include and exclude.

1/10

Introduction to the class

1/12

Lynn Hunt. 2007. *Inventing Human Rights: A History*. Norton.

Introduction (15-34)

1/17

Hunt, Chapter 1: “Torrents of Emotion.” p. 35-69. This reading focuses on the development of the concept of empathy through literature, and particularly through the novel, in 18th century Europe and the United States.

1/19

Chapter 2: “Bone of their Bone: Abolishing Torture” 70-92. This reading focuses on the development of distaste for torture and respect for the body in Europe and the United States.

Assignment: Organization of the class in groups of four or five students for presentation and research.

1/24

Chapter 2: “The Public Spectacle of Pain.” p. 92-112.

1/26

Chapter 3: “They have set a great example: Declaring Rights.” P. 113-145. This reading focuses on human rights declarations in the French and American Revolutions.

1/31

Chapter 4: "There will be no end of it: The consequences of declaring." P. 146-175

2nd Topic: Limits and Difficulties for the Implementation of Human Rights

Description: This section explores the difficulties for the implementation of human rights, who was excluded from them and how they came to claim their rights. We will consider how ideologies such as nationalism and authoritarianism conflicted with human rights doctrine in certain circumstances.

2/2

Chapter 5 "The Soft Power of Humanity." p. 176-196. This reading focuses on the development of scientific racism in early twentieth century Europe and the United States.

2/7

Chapter 5 "Socialism and Communism, World Wars and the Limits of Empathy" p. 196-214. This reading examines the development of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights in a context of US influence but with participation of the socialist and nonaligned blocks.

3rd topic: Generations and types of Rights

Description: In this section we learn the terminology of human rights, what is included in the concept, generations of rights and kinds of rights. We also consider the tensions between universalism and cultural relativism and individual and group rights.

2/9

Ellen Messer. "Anthropology, Human Rights and Social Transformation." From M. Goodale. *Human Rights: An Anthropological Reader*, p. 103-134.

2/14

Will Kymlicka. "The Good, the Bad, and the Intolerable: Minority Group Rights" From Mark Goodale. 2009. *Human Rights: An Anthropological Reader*, p. 58-67. This reading looks at group rights in a North American context.

2/16

James Anaya. 2009. "The Right of Indigenous Peoples to Self-Determination in the Post-Declaration Era." From *Making the Declaration Work. The United Nations Declaration of the Rights of Indigenous Peoples.* P. 184-198. This reading looks at group rights in a global context.

Assignment: Questions for first essay distributed (2000 words analyzing the theory and history of the human rights concept).

2/21 **Class does not meet. First essay due.**

2/23

Assignment: in class group work and tutorials aimed to find a researchable human rights question based on Latin America or Latinx Communities.

2/28

Assignment: bring a 1 page proposal draft per group with the question, its relevance and your proposed qualitative methods.

Brief class presentations and collective discussion of group research questions. Discussion of the difficulties of finding a relevant and genuine research question on human rights. Exploration of the feasibility of the proposed projects in terms of bibliography, methods, access to subjects or sources, and so on.

4th topic: Human Rights, the Latin American Experience

Description: In this section we discuss the challenges to human rights that Latin American populations have confronted, how they have responded and how they have understood and claimed their rights. We will consider the impact of the enlightenment in Latin America as well as what is specific to the region in terms of understandings and application or not of human rights. These understandings will be contrasted to how rights are commonly understood and enforced in the United States.

3/2

Jean Franco. 2006. "Alien to Modernity: The Rationalization of Discrimination." *Journal of Latin American Cultural Studies* 15(2): 171-181.

3/7

Victoria Sanford. 2008. "From Genocide to Femicide: Impunity and Human Rights in 21st Century Guatemala." *Journal of Human Rights* 7: 104-122.

3/9

Jo Marie Burt and Lorena Balardini. 2012. "Mapping Perpetrator prosecutions in Latin America." *The International Journal of Transitional Justice*. P. 1-21.

Assignment: bring a literature review on your research topic (read 2-3 academic articles, write 1-2 pages per person).

Spring Break

3/21

Andrés Antillano et al. 2016. "The Venezuelan Prison. From Neoliberalism to the Bolivarian Revolution." *Crime, Law and Social Change* 65: 195-211.

5th topic: Human Rights: The Latinx Undocumented Experience

Description: In this section we learn about human rights issues that affect Latinx immigrants to the United States. More specifically, we focus on the undocumented experience.

3/23

Roberto Gonzales and Leo Chavez. 2012. "Awakening to a nightmare: abjectivity and illegality in the lives of undocumented 1.5 generation Latino immigrants in the United States." *Current Anthropology* 53(3): 255-281.

3/28

Jason de Leon. 2015. *The Land of Open Graves: Living and Dying on the Migrant Trail*. "Introduction." P. 1-19. This book is about the human rights of those who cross illegally the Mexico-US border.

Assignment: bring a summary of your interview(s) or observations on your research topic (1-2 pages).

3/30

De Leon. The Land of Open Graves. Chapter 4, "Memo and Lucho." P. 89-107.

6th topic: Human Rights: Back to the Caribbean

Description: This section discusses current issues affecting the Spanish Caribbean. We consider human rights in Cuba and environmental rights in Puerto Rico.

4/4

In class screening of video Patria y Vida (with Yotuel, Gente de Zona, Maikel Osorbo and El Funky) (5 minutes).

Lilian Guerra. 2021. The Return of Cuba's Security State. New York Times. Opinion Section. Guest Essay, May 27, 2021 (2 pages).

Michael Bustamante. 2021. "11 J, Patria y Vida, and the not so new Cuban culture wars." American University, Center for Latin American and Latino Studies, p. 1-7.

4/6

Assignment: watch documentary "Landfall" by director Cecilia Aldarondo (1 hour 31 minutes).

Jason Cortés. 2018. "Puerto Rico. Hurricane Maria and the Promise of Disposability." Capitalism, Nature, Socialism. 29(3): 1-8.

7th topic: Student Presentations

Description: In this section we learn collectively from and discuss student research, including the research process, the difficulties encountered in the process, the findings, the lessons learned.

Students are expected to provide feedback to their peers and to integrate peer feedback to their own project in their final essay. Instructor's feedback on student presentations regarding the bibliography, the research process, the analysis and the findings should also be integrated in the final papers. Students will be given guidelines and a rubric for conducting peer feedback.

4/11

Student presentations.

4/13

Student presentations.

4/18

Student presentations.

Assignment: please upload a preliminary draft of your final essay.

4/20

Student presentations.

4/25

Summary discussion: What we have learned and where we go from here.

5/2 Final research essay that includes previous instructor and peer feedback due.

Students will receive a grade and feedback on their writing via canvas before or by the end of finals week. The writing will be evaluated on the basis of content, organization, coherence, effectiveness, style, grammar and punctuation.

IV. Student Learning Outcomes (SLOs)

At the end of this course, students will be expected to have achieved the [Quest](#) and [General Education](#) learning outcomes as follows:

Content: *Students demonstrate competence in the terminology, concepts, theories and methodologies used within the discipline(s).*

- Identify, describe, and explain the history and theory of human rights as it originated in Europe in the second half of the 18th century and as it has been appropriated, transformed, and experienced by Latin Americans.
- Evaluate the challenges for the implementation of human rights globally and in a Latin American and Latinx context.
- Examine how anthropology, history, and cultural studies tackle human rights issues theoretically and methodologically.
- Assignments that address this objective: Class readings, class discussions, midterm essay, final essay.

Critical Thinking: *Students carefully and logically analyze information from multiple perspectives and develop reasoned solutions to problems within the discipline(s).*

- Develop a clear research question that pertains to human rights and that affects Latin American or Latinx populations. Investigate your question using ethnographic and interpretive methods appropriate for the humanistic social sciences and humanities. Reach reasoned and documented conclusions that aim to understand and solve the problem.
- Assignment: Team based mini ethnography on human rights question of choice. Final essay discussing the question, bibliography, methods, findings, conclusions that link the research findings with the bibliography.

Communication: *Students communicate knowledge, ideas and reasoning clearly and effectively in written and oral forms appropriate to the discipline(s).*

- Develop a team based oral presentation analyzing the research question, methods, process of doing research, and findings.
- Produce a written document that conveys the research question, the background, the research process, the findings, and the conclusions reached.
- Produce a written document that examines the history, theory and terminology of the concept of human rights.
- Assignments: final essay, mid-term essay, presentation of team research, oral facilitation of discussion of readings.

Connection: *Students connect course content with meaningful critical reflection on their intellectual, personal, and professional development at UF and beyond.*

- Connect the course material and activities with critical reflection on the following aspects:
- How do human rights issues affect our everyday lives as well as distant locales? Consider and practice the concept of empathy near and far.
- Consider the ethical dilemmas and difficulties of doing research on sensitive, controversial issues.

- Understand how academic debates and activism on human rights have influenced policy and human well-being in Latin America and the United States.
- Assignments: readings, discussions, team-based research on human rights in Latin America, mid-term paper and final paper.

V. Quest Learning Experiences

1. Details of Experiential Learning Component

Students in this class, organized in small groups of four or five students and informed by class readings and discussions, will choose a research question that pertains to human rights in Latin America or in Latinx communities. They will read a few academic pieces to create a background for their question. Then, they will come up with feasible qualitative methods to answer their question (observation, interviews, written narratives, other sources). They will connect the findings from their qualitative data with the background bibliography and will come up with reasoned and documented analysis, findings and conclusions. As noted in the schedule, two classes will be dedicated to present student proposals for research question and methods. The instructor and peers will provide feedback to each group. On the basis of this feedback students will submit a written proposal in the date stated in the schedule. Students will receive additional instructor feedback on this proposal and will have to change it as necessary. If needed, groups are welcome to make an appointment with the instructor to talk about their proposed research and methods.

The assignment is scaffolded during the semester. First, each student in a group reads two articles on the topic and they put together a mini-literature review. Then, they design and conduct an experience of participant observation, one or two interviews, locating and finding narratives or other sources and summarize these findings. Subsequently, they put together the whole project in an oral presentation that receives feedback from the class. Finally, they write a personal draft of the final essay using the bibliography (should also include class readings), qualitative data, analysis, and conclusions. After receiving instructor feedback on this draft they turn in a final product via canvas. The final paper must consider the professor's and class' feedback to the oral presentation and to the first draft. The professor will provide useful feedback on content and writing style to students via the canvas speedgrader.

2. Details of Self-Reflection Component

Students will consider the role of the individual in working toward informed solutions to human rights problems. To that end, the study of humanities/social sciences would equip students to assume such a role.

In addition, students will examine the difficulties of doing research on sensitive topics and the importance of the humanities and social sciences in creating the necessary environment of empathy to strengthen human well-being. They will also understand the conditions under which understandings of human rights have excluded sectors of the population or have been difficult to implement. They will work towards informed solutions or reasonable strategies to solve or ameliorate these problems. Finally, students will reflect on their own life-experiences and personal points of view and whether and how the course materials have changed their thinking.

VI. Required Policies

Attendance Policy

Requirements for class attendance and make-up exams, assignments, and other work in this course are consistent with university policies that can be found at:

<https://catalog.ufl.edu/ugrad/current/regulations/info/attendance.aspx>

Students Requiring Accommodation

Students with disabilities who experience learning barriers and would like to request academic accommodations should connect with the disability Resource Center by visiting <https://disability.ufl.edu/students/get-started/>. It is important for students to share their accommodation letter with their instructor and discuss their access needs, as early as possible in the semester.

UF Evaluations Process

Students are expected to provide professional and respectful feedback on the quality of instruction in this course by completing course evaluations online via GatorEvals. Guidance on how to give feedback in a professional and respectful manner is available at <https://gatorevals.aa.ufl.edu/students/>. Students will be notified when the evaluation period opens, and can complete evaluations through the email they receive from GatorEvals, in their Canvas course menu under GatorEvals, or via <https://ufl.bluera.com/ufl/>. Summaries of course evaluation results are available to students at <https://gatorevals.aa.ufl.edu/public-results/>.

University Honesty Policy

UF students are bound by The Honor Pledge which states, “We, the members of the University of Florida community, pledge to hold ourselves and our peers to the highest standards of honor and integrity by abiding by the Honor Code. On all work submitted for credit by students at the University of Florida, the following pledge is either required or implied: “On my honor, I have neither given nor received unauthorized aid in doing this assignment.” The Honor Code (<https://www.dso.ufl.edu/sccr/process/student-conduct-honor-code/>) specifies a number of behaviors that are in violation of this code and the possible sanctions. Furthermore, you are obligated to report any condition that facilitates academic misconduct to appropriate personnel. If you have any questions or concerns, please consult with the instructor or TAs in this class.

Counseling and Wellness Center

Contact information for the Counseling and Wellness Center: <http://www.counseling.ufl.edu/>, 392-1575; and the University Police Department: 392-1111 or 9-1-1 for emergencies.

The Writing Studio

The writing studio is committed to helping University of Florida students meet their academic and professional goals by becoming better writers. Visit the writing studio online at

<http://writing.ufl.edu/writing-studio/> or in 2215 Turlington Hall for one-on-one consultations and workshops.

In-Class Recordings

Students are allowed to record video or audio of class lectures. However, the purposes for which these recordings may be used are strictly controlled. The only allowable purposes are (1) for personal educational use, (2) in connection with a complaint to the university, or (3) as evidence in, or in preparation for, a criminal or civil proceeding. All other purposes are prohibited. Specifically, students may not publish recorded lectures without the written consent of the instructor.

A “class lecture” is an educational presentation intended to inform or teach enrolled students about a particular subject, including any instructor-led discussions that form part of the presentation, and delivered by any instructor hired or appointed by the University, or by a guest instructor, as part of a University of Florida course. A class lecture does not include lab sessions, student presentations, clinical presentations such as patient history, academic exercises involving solely student participation, assessments (quizzes, tests, exams), field trips, private conversations between students in the class or between a student and the faculty or lecturer during a class session.

Publication without permission of the instructor is prohibited. To “publish” means to share, transmit, circulate, distribute, or provide access to a recording, regardless of format or medium, to another person (or persons), including but not limited to another student within the same class section. Additionally, a recording, or transcript of a recording, is considered published if it is posted on or uploaded to, in whole or in part, any media platform, including but not limited to social media, book, magazine, newspaper, leaflet, or third party note/tutoring services. A student who publishes a recording without written consent may be subject to a civil cause of action instituted by a person injured by the publication and/or discipline under UF Regulation 4.040 Student Honor Code and Student Conduct Code.