



**Janusz Korczak's Legacy: Children's Rights are Human Rights**  
**An Interdisciplinary Foundation Course**  
**INDS 502**  
**Fall Semester, September – December 2021**

<b>Mode of Delivery</b>	Online
<b>Time &amp; Location</b>	Mondays, 12:00 - 15:00
<b>Syllabus Last Revised</b>	6 August 2021
<b>Instructor</b>	Dr. Nancy Bell, Adjunct Professor Faculty of Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies   Interdisciplinary Studies Graduate Program, University of British Columbia <i>Email:</i> nanbell84@gmail.com Dr. Lauryn Oates, Adjunct Professor Faculty of Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies   Interdisciplinary Studies Graduate Program, University of British Columbia <i>Email:</i> lauryn.oates@gmail.com

## Course Overview

### Description

Recognizing children as 'rights holders' - as social agents in their own right - has historical origins in the work of Dr. Janusz Korczak, an early 20<sup>th</sup> century pioneering child rights advocate. Dr. Korczak, a Polish-Jewish author, pediatrician and humanitarian, was an orphanage director from 1912 to 1942 who put his children's human rights beliefs into practice. In 1942, Dr. Korczak died, as he lived, alongside his orphanage children in the Treblinka death camp. Today, Dr. Korczak's 'child rights' are human rights - evolving concepts, laws and practices requiring adherence to such principles as inherent dignity, justice and equality for all. Yet, full implementation of children's human rights, which includes remedying human rights violations children experience in their everyday lives, remains a challenge.

Featuring Dr. Korczak's legacy, this course introduces students to the foundations of children's human rights by examining contexts within which those rights are situated. This course offers interdisciplinary graduate students an opportunity to advance their knowledge and identify research opportunities by exploring children's human rights' historical, socio-cultural, legal and institutional contexts as well as Korczak's enduring contributions to improving children's lives. The course proposes to critically examine relevant scholarly debates across disciplines, current

issues, and implementation approaches, including those intended to remedy children’s human rights violations while considering ‘real world’ practices and child-centred, rights-based approaches to domestic and global issues across disciplines. Course content includes lectures, case study analysis, discussion, guest speakers including scholars and practitioners, films and diverse readings. Students are encouraged to reflect upon children’s embeddedness within all aspects of society and how child-centred research, policy and practice agendas, addressing critical societal issues, might take account of human rights and children’s everyday world intersections with the ultimate goal of improving children’s lives.

**Learning Objectives**

Students will have the opportunity to:

- develop foundational understandings about Dr. Korczak’s influence and the historical, legal, institutional and cultural contexts within which children’s human rights are situated
- gain critical knowledge about the interdisciplinary nature of children’s human rights and their complexities
- learn about domestic/global challenges children face in realizing their human rights
- learn about various processes for remedies to children’s human rights violations, and their strengths and weaknesses
- acquire knowledge about integrated, collaborative children’s human rights approaches to research, policy and practice that contribute to improving children’s lives within domestic and global contexts

**Unit Descriptions & Schedule**

<b>Unit</b>	September 13, 2021
<p><b>Introduction</b>          This unit offers instructors/students the opportunity to meet each other and share expectations for the class. Instructors will provide students with a course overview and offer guidance on how to maximize course learning. Students will be introduced to Dr. Korczak, considered the ‘father of children’s rights’, along with the broader subject of children’s human rights. Topics such as how children’s human rights are defined and words/phrases common to human rights discourse will be discussed. Students will have the opportunity to ask questions and discuss topics as they arise.</p>	
<b>Unit 1</b>	September 20, 2021
<p><b>Dr. Janusz Korczak, Concepts of Childhood, and Children’s Human Rights</b>          This unit expands on Dr. Korchak’s writings, exploring the relationship between Dr. Korczak’s philosophical, pedagogical approaches to children and subsequent shifting concepts of children/childhood as reflected in westernized, global north academic literature. The unit also examines the relationship between Dr. Korczak’s writings on children’s human rights and the emerging 20th century focus on children’s human rights as requiring codification.</p>	

<b>Unit 2</b>	September 27, 2021
<p><b>Children’s Human Rights within Developing Human Rights Legal Frameworks</b>  This unit provides students with a foundational, socio-legal and critical overview of the history of children’s human rights, including how those rights are situated within broader historical and developing human rights legal frameworks. The unit explores cross-cultural and various interdisciplinary perspectives related to this topic.</p>	
<b>Unit 3</b>	October 4, 2021
<p><b>Introduction to UN Convention on the Rights of the Child</b>  This unit introduces students to the <i>UN Convention on the Rights of the Child</i>, covering topics such as the UNCRC’s core themes and principles with references made to the UNCRC’s Optional Protocols, the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child, and various mechanisms associated with UNCRC implementation, monitoring and accountability. The unit will also consider interdisciplinary UNCRC critiques within the children’s human rights literature along with Dr. Korczak’s influence as an early child rights advocate.</p>	
<b>Unit 4</b>	October 11, 2021
<p><b>Children’s Human Rights: Violations, Remedies, Justice</b>  Building on Unit 3, this unit critically explores themes related to children claiming human rights violations and domestic/international processes for seeking remedies, with an emphasis on children’s access to justice. The UN describes access to justice as a ‘fundamental right and an essential prerequisite for the protection and promotion of all other human rights.’ The unit will also focus on ‘real life situations’ in which children claimed human rights violations and obtained remedies through a human rights commission process.</p>	
<b>Unit 5</b>	October 18, 2021
<p><b>Children’s Human Rights: Seeking Realization in ‘Real World’ Situations</b>  This unit highlights a ‘real world’ situation in which Indigenous children, as a group, made a ‘complaint’ to the Canadian Human Rights Commission about their human rights violations while they lived on reserves throughout Canada. Drawing from interdisciplinary, child-centred perspectives, students will have the opportunity to use a rights-based analysis to explore the multiple efforts made to claim and remedy Indigenous children’s human rights violations and to consider, as well, the Federal government’s role as respondent and ‘duty bearer.’ Relevant themes to explore may include: access to justice; advocacy; the human rights framework; specific human rights violations; evidence; arguments made/responses; process effectiveness; remedies sought; outcomes for Indigenous children; and practice/policy/research implications.</p>	
<b>Unit 6</b>	October 25, 2021
<p><b>Children’s Human Rights in Action: Children in Emergency Situations</b>  This unit examines human rights issues pertaining to groups of children in emergency situations, such as children in conflict zones, children involved in forced migration, children affected by natural disasters, and children requiring ‘special protections.’ ‘Special protections’ consist of a children’s human rights approach requiring the granting of ‘special privileges’ to children to ensure children are protected from threats to their safety and well-being. The unit considers the role of primary and secondary ‘duty bearers’ including state and non-state actors</p>	

with responsibilities for protecting the rights of children to education, healthcare, family, healthy environments, safety and other human rights identified in human rights law.

**Unit 7**

November 1, 2021

**Children’s Human Rights in Action: Inequities and Exclusion**

This unit focuses on rights issues and violations facing specific groups of children, including sex and gender-based human rights issues, children in minority populations who face identity-based exclusions, and children in conditions that render them especially vulnerable such as children without parents, out-of-school children, child labourers and more.

**Unit 8**

November 8, 2021

**Children’s Human Rights in Action: Violence Against Children**

This unit examines case studies related to children’s human rights violations such as violence against children, defined as ‘all forms of physical or mental violence, injury and abuse, neglect or negligent treatment, maltreatment or exploitation, including sexual abuse (UNCRC article 19) as well as ‘the intentional use of physical force or power, threatened or actual, against a child, by an individual or group, that either results in or has a high likelihood of resulting in actual or potential harm to the child’s health, survival, development or dignity’ (World Report on Violence and Health, 2002). The unit also explores the emergence of a civil sector focused on protecting children’s human rights within international development and effective practices within this sector.

**Class Presentations**

November 15, 2021

*See Assignment 2 description.*

**Class Presentations**

November 22, 2021

*See Assignment 2 description.*

**Unit 9**

November 29, 2021

**Future Directions in Children’s Human Rights**

This unit provides opportunities for students to discuss future directions in children’s human rights and where opportunities might exist to better address problems relating to children’s human rights realization. The unit will highlight how research can inform practice and, conversely, how practice ‘unknowns’ or challenges can inform what research is needed. It will also consider interdisciplinary collaborations whereby researchers, practitioners and policy makers successfully worked together toward a common goal of improving children’s lives, and how such cases offer models for future application.

**Unit 10**

December 6, 2021

**Synthesis**

In this last unit students review and synthesize key course themes and discuss how course learning might be applied within students’ own specialized areas of interest. Space will be made for questions and discussion about any unit topic. At the end of this class, course evaluation forms will be distributed for students’ completion.

## Assignment Descriptions and Due Dates

### Assignment 1: Proposal

This assignment requires students to submit a written proposal for their final paper (see instructions for the final paper under Assignment #3 below). This proposal should:

- introduce the final paper's topic
- identify the final paper's main objectives and guiding questions
- provide relevant contextual information or background
- highlight key literature that will inform the topic
- describe the topic's potential value to scholarship and/or to practice/policy

The paper proposal should be between 1,000 to 2,000 words in length, excluding the references list.

**Due Date:** October 5, 2021

### Assignment 2: Group Presentation

Students will form interdisciplinary groups. Each group will identify a 'real world' situation in which children's human rights violations have occurred, and will develop a presentation on that topic informed by the course content, including Dr. Korczak's influences, and other relevant literature.

The presentation should include elements such as the:

- Description of the children impacted by the violations
- Context and/or background to the issue
- Applicable human rights framework(s)
- Identify the specific alleged human rights violations

This presentation should also incorporate a critical analysis, interdisciplinary perspectives, and formulate an evidence-supported argument for how the alleged violations could best be remedied. Student presentations should include time for questions and answers.

Presentations should be between 20 and 30 minutes in length.

**Due Date:** Presentations will be delivered in class on November 15 and 22, 2021.

### Assignment 3: Final Paper

In this paper students adopt a child-centred, rights-based approach to a domestic and/or international **case study** or to a crosscutting children's rights **issue** pertinent to children and with human rights implications. The paper should introduce the children; contextualize their circumstances and issue/s; identify the human rights framework; and critically analyze the selected case, drawing from relevant literature and course content. Optionally, the paper may also identify opportunities for future research.

Instructors can provide students with a list of possible case studies to select from, or students may want to propose their own case study, particularly if it relates to students' individual interests or planned research agenda.

The paper should be between 2,000 and 4,000 words in length.

**Due Date:** December 6, 2021

## **Course Evaluation**

<b>Assignment</b>	<b>Grade (%)</b>
Assignment 1: Paper proposal (individual)	20%
Assignment 2: Presentation (group)	15%
Assignment 3: Final paper - (individual)	40%
Participation (individual)	25%
<b>Total %</b>	<b>100%</b>

### ***Papers***

Assignments will be evaluated for: demonstration of issue/s comprehension; clarity of ideas; quality of critical analysis; overall coherence; integration of course readings and other published literature; understanding of course content; organization; and quality of academic writing skills.

Use APA referencing (for in-text citations and annex a references list in APA format). Submit assignments electronically, either by email to the Instructors or on Canvas, by 11:59pm on the due date.

Format papers in a serif or sans serif font, size 11 or 12, regular margins, with 1.0 line spacing.

### ***Presentation***

Presentations will be evaluated for clarity, thoroughness and comprehension of information presented; level of critical reflection; use of supporting evidence; communication skills; and interdisciplinary, collaborative team coherence.

### ***Participation***

Assessment of student participation is based on individual contributions to class discussions and case study analyses, including relevance to applicable unit content; synthesis of knowledge; use of references to course content such as scholars from the reading list, guest speakers, legal

frameworks examined and the work of Janusz Korczak; as well as originality of contributions and demonstration of analytical and critical thinking. Emphasis is placed on quality over quantity.

## **University Policies**

UBC provides resources to support student learning and to maintain healthy lifestyles but recognizes that sometimes crises arise and so there are additional resources to access including those for survivors of sexual violence. UBC values respect for the person and ideas of all members of the academic community. Harassment and discrimination are not tolerated nor is suppression of academic freedom. UBC provides appropriate accommodation for students with disabilities and for religious and cultural observances. UBC values academic honesty and students are expected to acknowledge the ideas generated by others and to uphold the highest academic standards in all of their actions. Details of the policies and how to access support are available [here](https://senate.ubc.ca/policies-resources-support-student-success) (<https://senate.ubc.ca/policies-resources-support-student-success>).

## **Academic Integrity**

Students are expected to follow UBC policies for academic integrity and academic misconduct, which includes practices around plagiarism, referencing and citation, and copyright. For more see, UBC's [Learning Commons Academic Integrity resources](#).

## **Accessibility**

If you have any challenges accessing materials that will impact your success in this course, UBC's Centre for Accessibility can support your needs by providing appropriate accommodations to support you.

- Web: UBC's [Centre for Accessibility website](#)
- Email: [accessibility@ubc.ca](mailto:accessibility@ubc.ca)

## **Grading**

UBC's grading matrix is found [here](#). The instructor cannot read drafts or sections of assignments prior to submission. Extensions for the due date for assignments will only be granted in exceptional circumstances and when an instructor is notified in advance of the assignment due date. Exceptional circumstances include a medical emergency or a family emergency (i.e. death in the family), and require documentation such as a doctor's note. Except in cases of documented exceptional circumstances for which the instructor was notified in advance, all other late assignments will be penalized by a reduction in full letter grade (i.e. A- to B-) for each 24-hour period beyond the submission timeline. Rewriting of any assignments are only permitted in exceptional circumstances, with prior approval from the instructor.