Instructions for the research paper

The research paper makes up for 15% of your course grade and will ideally be tied to your book review in terms of topic. The final version is to be submitted Thursday, 13 April at 11:00 – with each day (or part thereof) of delay resulting in a reduction of 10 % of the grade you receive for this work.

Research Proposal

The proposal for your paper has to be submitted by Thursday, 9 March at 11:00. While not graded, it is an indispensable part of the writing process: the more elaborate, the higher your chances to deliver an excellent paper down the road. A research proposal should consist at least of: (a) a problem statement (200-300 words), (b) a research question, (c) a tentative outline, (d) a bibliography (containing at least five relevant academic sources). A problem statement is supposed to highlight an issue that is worth analysing, *i.e.* an area of concern or a gap in the existing body of knowledge that your paper seeks to fill. As such, it serves as an introduction to, and explication of your research question.

Example: *The digital age has created a new platform that facilitates the rapid spread of both information and misinformation – social media. While the diffusion of non-factual or purposefully manipulated information has had a negative effect on many sectors, it has been notably harmful during the global COVID-19 pandemic, where it put at risk the lives of hundreds of millions of users. At the same time, governments around the world have struggled to find effective solutions to tackle this "infodemic" that would not also significantly curtail individuals' freedom of expression. For example, measures such as criminalizing the spread of misinformation have been criticized as excessive and prone to abuse, particularly by authoritarian governments.* Research question: *How can social media misinformation related to public health be minimized while respecting human rights standards, including the freedom of expression under Article 19 of the ICCPR?*

In choosing your topic, you are free to explore any human rights-related topic covered in this course as well as those that were left outside. The paper could also deal with the contemporary issues that we address in the second part (e.g., domestication, critiques, human rights and the environment etc.).

Feedback

There are at two feedback opportunities. During the spring break, you will receive email feedback on your proposal. The instructor will help you refine your topic and its scope and, where relevant, draw your attention to relevant literature. Optionally, a draft paper can be submitted by the evening of 30 March, which will likewise receive short email feedback by the instructor.

Evaluation

The final paper will be graded using the following assessment criteria:

	Sufficient (60%)	**Good (70%)**	**Excellent (> 80%)**
Quality of research effort (34%)	The paper identifies the legal instruments, principles, and/or debates at stake. It puts forward enough academically relevant sources to place it in the overall context of scholarship.	The paper describes the legal instruments, principles, and/or debates at stake. It engages directly with most of the relevant scholarship, thus taking a position vis-à-vis other works in the field.	The paper describes the legal instruments, principles, and/or debates at stake. It engages in a critical manner with all the relevant scholarship and makes a direct contribution to the field in question.

Structure and Cohesiveness (33%)	The line of thought is mostly clear, and an overall argument is discernible. The structure does not inhibit the legibility of text.	The line of thought and the argument are both clear. The structure supports the legibility of text.	The line of thought is easy to follow and fully supported by the structure. The argument is pointed and clear.
Language and Style (33%)	Grammar and style enable understanding of information. The text features only few spelling or grammar mistakes.	Grammar and style enable understanding of information. No errors can be detected by spellcheckers.	Grammar and style support the legibility of the document. The language used is correct and marked by conciseness.