**POLS\*4740**  **Advanced Topics in Rights and Liberties**  **Fall Only**  **(LEC: 3)**  **[1.00]**

**Instructor**: Professor Candace Johnson

**Description:** In this seminar course we will consider the ways in which rights and liberties both ensure individual freedom and provide a means to social change. The former ensure that the individual is protected against encroachments by other individuals and by governments and the latter enable progress, development, and revision. The course will be divided into three main sections: a theoretical section, in which we will consider the idea of rights and liberties. What do these mean in philosophical terms and how do they support or undermine political projects? What do people mean when they assert their rights? What are the different types of rights? How are rights different from liberties? Are there any rights (in theoretical terms)? Jeremy Bentham called rights, “nonsense upon stilts”?! In the second section we will examine rights that are established through court cases. The cases we will examine will be those that have brought about significant social change concerning race, LGBTQ issues, women’s rights, and abortion. In the third section of the course, we will re-examine many of those same issues, but look at the ways in which rights can be attained or shaped by non-judicial actors, such as activists.

Details on assignments and grading are still TBD, but will likely include a presentation, participation, a paper that will prepared/ submitted and graded in sections throughout the course, and a book review.

Readings are also TBD and will be available through the library. Students will be required to read one full book to complete the book review assignment.