International Human Rights, Fall 2010

Department of Political Science & Department of Criminology/Criminal Justice
Southern Illinois University

1 Instructor Information

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2 Course Overview & Objectives

Following the atrocities of the two great wars, the ethno-nationalist conflicts of the 1950s and 1960s and the proxy wars fought during the Cold War, America hoped for a New World Order characterized by international cooperation and respect for human rights. While conventional war has declined, civil war, terrorism, and the deliberate targeting of civilians has increased unabated. At the same time, an unprecedented emergence of a body of human rights laws, norms, and conventions has occurred. This course explores the emergence, dissemination, and enforcement of an international human rights regime. We will discuss the many ways that academics attempt to explain human rights violations, and how people try to end these abuses. In order to gain a deeper understanding of these effects on people who experience rights violations, we use biographies, literature, art, primary documents, and film. We will compare and contrast the experiences of South Africa, Rwanda, Argentina, Israel, Palestine, China, Kosovo, the United States and Chile. Finally, we will debate the potential for the future of an international human rights regime. The course also includes a service learning component aimed at putting a commitment to human rights into practice.

3 Course Format

The course is structured differently than most courses taught at SIUC for a number of important reasons. First, it is inherently interdisciplinary. The topic of human rights is important to political science, law, history, anthropology, sociology, philosophy, religious studies, and many other disciplines. For example, political scientists are interested in why some states violate rights while others do not, while law scholars are interested in the development of a body of conventions, customs, and domestic law that serves as a foundation for a human rights regime. We read selections across these disciplines and use insights from each to build a more coherent picture of human rights today. Second, the course utilizes a variety of pedagogical tools to stimulate learning. We will engage in a variety of activities including personal writing exercises, partner and group work, class discussions, video clips, demonstrations, problem-solving activities, debates, and other critical thinking exercises. Additionally, the capstone project is a service learning project with an extensive writing component. Third, the course offers an international perspective or one that transcends a simply domestic lens.
4 Requirements

Required Texts


Assessment

1. **Attendance and Participation (25%)**

   Attendance and participation are required. I may call on you randomly so you need to be prepared each day. You will be assessed based upon your contribution to class discussion using the following rubric:

   A (outstanding) your comments were insightful and contributed to collective understanding of the material across the readings
   A-/B+ (strong) your comments were sometimes insightful and sometimes average but were not consistent across the readings
   B+/B (good) your comments demonstrated that you understood the material but did not extend the discussion or offer new insights
   C+/C (average) you participated but did not seem to fully grasp the material
   C/C- (poor) you spoke, but your comments were not germane to the material
   D/F (unacceptable) you didn’t say anything...

2. **Final Exam (25%)**

   The Final Exam will be a series of essays. These essays will ask you to analyze the course materials and compare and contrast across the cases. The questions will mirror some of the questions posed each week.

3. **Service Learning Project (25%)**

   This semester you are required to engage in a service-learning project. This project must have the following components:

   (a) 30 hour minimum commitment over the course of the semester
   (b) If you are volunteering for a the community-based organization, it must provide a structured experiential learning experience for you
(c) A ten page reflective paper on the your experiences throughout the semester (I will provide a more detailed rubric about the paper expectations). This paper will demonstrate your understanding of classroom theories applied to your experiences.

I have coordinated with the staff of the Saluki Volunteer Corps (SVC) and have a list of organizations that students can choose to work with for their projects. Students will receive community service hours as well as a certificate from the SVC detailing their involvement and time spent on service. This document can be used as a supporting material for graduate, law, or medical school application or during the job application process.

4. Reflective Journal (25%)

Each week, you will be asked to write a short electronic journal entry that answers the question posed for that week. For example, Week 1 asks: What are human rights? Your first assignment is to write a 2 to 4 page paper answering this question using the course readings as a guide. You may also incorporate your own analysis/opinions but these papers do not require that you do research outside of the required reading. You will also respond to points raised by other people in your group of three respondents. Your entry will then consist of 1-2 pages of your journal entry and 1-2 pages of responding directly to issues raised by others in your group. These papers are due each Thursday. I will provide a detailed rubric explaining how these essays are scored.

5 Course and Reading Schedule

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Week 1–What are Human Rights?

Tues. Aug. 24

- Introductions, Discuss syllabus
- Donnelly, Chapter 1

Thurs. Aug. 26


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Week 2–Are Human Rights Universal or Relative?

Tues. Aug. 30

- Declaration of the Rights of Man. [http://www.yale.edu/lawweb/avalon/rightsof.htm](http://www.yale.edu/lawweb/avalon/rightsof.htm)
• Donnelly, Chapter 2
• Animated Universal Declaration of Human Rights [http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=epVZrYbDVls]

Thurs. Sept. 2

Week 3–How do States Abuse Human Rights?
Personal Narrative and Holocaust Case Study

Tues. Sept. 6
• Wiesel, Night, 1-60

Thurs. Sept. 8
• Wiesel, Night 61-109
• Recommended: Schindler’s List

Week 4–Do the Abused become the Abusers?
Personal Narrative and Palestine Case Study

Tues. Sept. 14
• Hass, Drinking the Sea at Gaza

Thurs. Sept. 16
• Hass, Drinking the Sea at Gaza
• Film: To Die in Jerusalem

Week 5–Can the Global Community Stop Human Rights Abuses?
Simulation and Rwanda Case Study

Tues. Sept. 21
• Gourevitch, We Wish to Inform you..., p. 1-227.

Thurs. Sept. 23
• Gourevitch, We Wish to Inform you..., p. 228-353
Week 6—Why do States Torture and Disappear?
Personal Narrative, Argentine Case Study, and Simulation

Tues. Sept. 28
- Timerman, *Prisoner Without a Name*...
- Donnelly, Chapter 3

Thurs. Sept. 30
- Timerman, *Prisoner Without a Name*...
- Simulation—Enhanced Interrogation

Week 7—What is the Effect that Abuse has on the Victims?
Play and Chilean and Peruvian Case Studies

Tues. Oct. 5
- Dorfman, *Death of a Maiden*

Thurs. Oct. 5
- Dorfman, *Death of a Maiden*
- Film: *State of Fear*

Week 8—Should the World Punish the Abusers?
The Case of the International Criminal Court

Tues. Oct. 11

*Some of these readings are on BB*

- Neier, “Rethinking Truth, Justice, and Guilt after Bosnia and Rwanda”
- Krasner, “A World Court That Could Backfire”
- Helms, “We Must Slay this Monster”

Thurs. Oct. 13
- Richardson, “Americas Interest in an International Court”
- Anderson, “What to do with Bin Laden and Al Qaeda Terrorists”
Week 9—Why do States (sometimes) Intervene to Stop the Killing?  
China, Sudan & Kosovo

Tues. Oct. 19

- Donnelly, Chapter 6 & 7

Thurs. Oct. 21

- Simulation–Intervening in Mass Killing (Sudan)

Week 10—Should Rights for Women Differ from those for Men?  
The Case of the Modern Middle East and Islam

Tues. Oct. 26

- Brooks, *Nine Parts of Desire*
- Read about Women’s Human Rights [http://www.cwgl.rutgers.edu/globalcenter/whr.html](http://www.cwgl.rutgers.edu/globalcenter/whr.html)

Thurs. Oct. 28

- Brooks, *Nine Parts of Desire*

Week 11—Should Human Rights Guide US Foreign Policy?

Tues. Nov. 2

These readings are available on BB

- Donnelly, Chapter 5
- Neier, “The New Double Standard”
- Garten, “Comment: The Need for Pragmatism”

Thurs. Nov. 4

- Rice, “Promoting the National Interest”
- Nye, “Redefining the National Interest”
- Film: *Ghosts of Abu Ghraib*
Week 12–Does Collecting Data on Human Rights Violations Help Stop the Violence?

Tues. Nov. 9

- Peruse the CIRI website: [http://ciri.binghamton.edu/](http://ciri.binghamton.edu/)
- Peruse the PTS website: [http://www.politicalterrorscale.org](http://www.politicalterrorscale.org)

Thurs. Nov. 11–No Class, Veterans Day

Week 13–Do Democratic States Abuse Their Citizens Less?

Tues. Nov. 16


Tues. Nov. 16

- Rejali, *Torture and Democracy*, Chapters 1 & 2

Week 14–Do Reparations or Truth and Reconciliation Commissions Adequately Address the Victim’s Grievances? Case Comparison between the US and South Africa

Tues. Nov. 30

- Selections below are from *When Sorry Isn’t Enough*, edited by Roy L. Brooks.
- Laurence Armand French, “Native American Reparations: Five Hundred Years and Counting.”
• Roy L. Brooks, “Not Even An Apology?: The Slave and Free Black Experience.”
• Clinton Opposes Slavery Apology

Thurs. Dec. 2
• African National Congress Statement tot the Truth and Reconciliation Commission.”
• Alexander Boraine “Alternative and Adjuncts to Criminal Prosecutions.”

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Week 15–Do International Treaties Make a Difference?

Tues. Dec. 6

• Donnelly, Chapter 8

Thurs. Dec. 8


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Week 16–The End

Thurs. Dec. 16, 8:00 PM to 10:00 PM

• Final Exam, Final Paper Due