

POSC 246: International Perspectives on Human Rights

Carleton College- Fall Term 2006

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Office Hours: Tuesday 3:15-4:15 pm; Wednesday 3:00-4:00 pm and by appointment

Course Description

This is an overview course focusing on the broad and diverse range of issues related to human rights and international human rights politics. We will study the modern human rights movement, civil and political rights, and economic and social rights. We will also examine the role of different actors in human rights politics. These actors include nation-states, international organizations and NGOs. In addition, we will discuss some of the controversies and dilemmas surrounding the pursuit of human rights at the domestic and international levels. The issue areas we will be discussing include: Transitional justice, gender and human rights, humanitarian intervention, and the plight of refugees.

Course Policies and Expectations

The course will combine reading assignments, writing assignments, and a requirement to attend class and participate regularly. The purpose of including different types of assignments/requirements is to accommodate different learning styles.

It is essential that you complete all of the assigned readings. You may find some of the assigned readings quite challenging. I will go over these readings in class and help you grasp them. Please do not hesitate to ask questions about any materials you have difficulties with.

The success of the class and your learning will to a large extent depend on your careful reading of all assigned materials and literature prior to our class meetings and on your eagerness to participate in class discussions.

Since class participation will be a very important component of the class, it is essential that all class discussions, debates and other activities take place in a very respectful and civil manner. We will be discussing very controversial and contentious issues throughout the term and there will inevitably be disagreements. For this reason it is important to maintain a civil classroom environment that is conducive to fruitful debates. Incivility in the classroom will not be tolerated. It is also essential that all readings be completed prior to the class meetings in which they will be discussed.

Late assignments will be penalized. You will lose half a letter grade for each day your assignment is late up to a maximum of two letter grades, which means that it is

ALWAYS worth it to submit a late paper. The only time when late assignments will be accepted without penalty is in the case of illness; in that case you will need to provide a note from your doctor.

Statement on Plagiarism and Academic Dishonesty:

While incorporating the thoughts of others into your work is expected, you must be sure to give credit where it is due. Any quotations must be clearly marked and correctly cited, and ideas, information or concepts you have gotten from the work of others must also be cited. If you are unsure how to properly cite sources in your work see me, and I will be glad to help you. Presenting the work of others as your own (without citation) is plagiarism – that is, cheating, and will result in a failing grade for the course.

Accommodation of Special Needs:

If you have a documented physical or learning disability that will affect your ability to complete the assignments in this class in a timely manner, I will make accommodations for you. If you need extra time or assistance in completing assignments, you must tell me during the first week of class.

Assignments and Grades

The final grade in this class will be based on four types of assignments/requirements. 25% of the final grade will be based on a class presentation and a written report on the topic of the presentation. You will also be asked to take two quizzes and write one memo; each of these assignments will make up 20% of the final grade. Finally, 15% of the final grade will be based on class participation.

Here is again a list of the requirements and percentages of the final grade:

Class Participation	150 points (15% of final grade)
Two Quizzes	200 points each; 400 points total (40% of final grade)
Memo	200 points (20% of final grade)
Presentation and report	250 points (25% of final grade)

Total **1000 points**

Here is a description of each of these requirements:

Participation

I intend to go beyond the traditional lectures in this class and to involve students as much as possible. There will be ample opportunity for you to actively participate in class. It is essential that you complete all readings prior to coming to class. 15% of the final grade will be based on participation. This portion of the grade is not intended to be simply an attendance grade; rather, it will be based on the performance of students in class discussions and the quality of their contribution to the discussions.

Several times during the term, I will be asking you to bring news stories to class and to present them and comment on their relevance to the issues we will be discussing during

the term (see schedule below). This will help us get a sense of the wide range of issues that pertain to the topic of the course and will introduce us to some of the many “real world” examples that illustrate the concepts and arguments we will discuss in class. Part of your participation grade will be based on your presentation of the news stories to the class.

Memos

Memos are designed to provide overviews on the assigned literature and to raise some questions for discussion. Each student will be responsible for writing one 2-3 page memo during the term and will briefly present it in class in order to initiate discussion. The quality of the discussions will depend in part on the quality of these reviews, and I expect you to devote time and attention to them and to e-mail them to me at least 24 hours prior to the class meeting in which they are due.

As far as the content of the reviews is concerned, the reviews should cover four areas:

1. The first part of the review should be a summary of the main ideas, concepts and arguments presented in the assigned readings. You need not and should not summarize each single piece of literature assigned; you should try and provide a general summary of all assigned materials focusing on their common themes. This part of the review should be not longer than 1 page.
2. The second part of the review should place the readings in a broader context and establish the connection between the topics that they focus on and the general topic of the class or other issues we have discussed.
3. The third part of the review should be concerned with generating discussion questions. In this part you should present some important questions that the assigned readings raised for you and that you would like to discuss in class. You could also generate a controversial statement based on the readings that the class can debate.

Quizzes

The quizzes will be taken during a regularly scheduled class meeting. They will cover the issues discussed in the readings, lectures and class discussions. You will be expected to demonstrate familiarity with the key concepts introduced in the readings and to be able to provide brief overviews of the main points in the assigned readings.

The first quiz will be on Tuesday, October 10th.

The second quiz will be on Thursday, November 9th.

Presentations and Reports

Several class presentations on selected topics are scheduled for some of our class meetings. These presentations serve as case studies that illustrate the topics and issues we discuss in class. I will ask each of you to sign up for a presentation at the beginning of the second class meeting of the term. Each presentation will be prepared and given by one or

two students. These presentations should not be longer than 15 minutes and are to be based on a 6-8 page written report (10-12 pages if written by two people). Please turn in a copy of the report the day that you are giving your presentation. I ask that you drop by and talk with me about your presentation/report at least two weeks beforehand. I will help you find good sources and get started. The grade, which makes up 25% of the final grade, will be based on the written report and the oral presentation.

Readings

Many of the readings for this course will be drawn from different sources and will be available on e-reserve. In addition to the readings on e-reserve we will use this book:

Jack Donnelly, *Universal Human Rights in Theory and Practice*. Cornell University Press: 2002

Week 1

Tuesday, September 12th: Introduction to the course

Thursday, September 14th: Human Rights in the 20th Century

- The Universal Declaration of Human Rights

- Donnelly, chapter 1 and chapter 2

Week 2

Tuesday, September 19th: First, Second and Third Generation Rights

- Rhona Smith, *Textbook on International Human Rights*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003, pp. 38-52

- United Nations Development Programme, *Human Development Report 2000: Human Rights and Human Development*. New York/Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000; Chapter 1, chapter 3 and chapter 4

Thursday, September 21st: Universalism vs. Relativism

- *Taking Sides: Clashing Views on Controversial Moral Issues*. Issue 1: Is Morality Relative to Culture? Dushkin and McGraw/Hill, 2003

- Donnelly, chapter 4 and chapter 5

Week 3

Tuesday, September 26th: Universalism vs. Relativism

- Donnelly, chapter 6 and chapter 7

Please bring a news story to class today!

Thursday, September 28th: The United Nations System

- Donnelly, chapter 8

- Seyom Brown, *Human Rights in World Politics*. Longman 2000, Chapter 5

Week 4

Tuesday, October 3rd: Human Rights and Foreign Policy

- Donnelly, chapter 9 and chapter 10

- Seyom Brown, *Human Rights in World Politics*. Longman 2000, Chapter 7

Please bring a news story to class today!

Thursday, October 5th: Human Rights and Non-state Actors

- Laurie Weiseberg, Human Rights and Nongovernmental Organizations, reprinted in: Richard Pierre Claude and Burns H. Weston, *Human Rights in the World Community. Issues and Action*. University of Pennsylvania Press: 1992, pp. 372-383

- Margaret E. Keck/Kathryn Sikkink, Transnational Advocacy Networks in International and Regional Politics, in: *International Social Science Journal* 51/1, 1999, pp. 89-101

- Felice Gaer, Reality Check: Human Rights Nongovernmental Organisations Confront Governments at the United Nations, in: *Third World Quarterly* 16/3, 1995, pp. 389-404

- *The Economist*, Sins of the Secular Missionaries. January 29th, 2000

Presentation: Amnesty International

Week 5

Tuesday, October 10th: Human Rights and Non-state Actors

- Marina Ottaway, Reluctant Missionaries, in: *Foreign Policy*, No. 125, 2001, pp. 44-49

- Big Oil's To-Do List, in: *Foreign Policy*, No. 125, 2001, p. 49

- Bennett Freeman, Drilling for Common Ground, in: *Foreign Policy*, No. 125, 2001, pp. 50-54

- Gary Gereffi, Ronie Garcia-Johnson, and Erika Sasser, The NGO-Industrial Complex, in: *Foreign Policy*, No. 125, 2001, pp. 56-65

Quiz 1 Today

Please bring a news story to class today!

Thursday, October 12th: Gender

- Sheila Dauer, Indivisible or Invisible: Women's Human Rights in the Public and Private Sphere, in: Marjorie Agosin (ed), *Women, Gender, and Human Rights*. New Brunswick and London: Rutgers University Press, 2001 pp. 65-82

- Sally Engle Merry, Women, Violence, and the Human Rights System, in: Marjorie Agosin (ed), *Women, Gender, and Human Rights*. New Brunswick and London: Rutgers University Press, 2001 pp. 83-97

Presentation: Violence against women

Week 6

Tuesday, October 17th: Transitional Justice: Truth Commissions

- Priscilla Hayner, *Unspeakable Truths. Confronting State Terror and Atrocity. How Truth Commissions Around the World are Challenging the Past and Shaping the Future*. New York and London: Routledge, 2001, pp. 10-31

- Stanley Cohen, State Crimes of Previous Regimes: Knowledge, Accountability, and the Policing of the Past, in: *Law and Social Inquiry* 20/1, 1995, pp. 7-50

Presentation: The Truth and Reconciliation Commission in South Africa

Thursday, October 19th: Transitional Justice: The International Criminal Court

- Spyros Economides, The International Criminal Court: Reforming the Politics of International Justice, in: *Government and Opposition* 38/1, 2003, pp. 29-51

Thomas Smith, Moral Hazard and Humanitarian Law: The International Criminal Court and the Limits of Legalism, in: *International Politics* 39, 2002, pp. 175-192

Presentation: The ICC and the crimes in Darfur

Week 7

Tuesday, October 24th: Humanitarian Intervention

- Donnelly, chapter 14

- Simon Duke, The State and Human Rights: Sovereignty versus Humanitarian Intervention, in: *International Relations* 12/2, 1994, pp. 25-48

- Adam Roberts, One Step Forward in the Search for the Impossible, in: *International Journal of Human Rights* 7/3, 2003, pp. 142-153

Please bring a news story to class today!

Thursday, October 26th: Humanitarian Intervention

- David Chandler, The Road to Military Humanitarianism: How the Human Rights NGOs Shaped A New Humanitarian Agenda, in: *Human Rights Quarterly* 23/3, 2001, pp. 678-700

- Edward N. Luttwak, Give War a Chance, in: *Foreign Affairs* 78/4, 1999, pp. 36-44

Presentation: Kosovo

Week 8

Tuesday, October 31st: International Humanitarian Law

- Basic Rules of International humanitarian Law in Armed Conflicts, available on the website of the International Committee of the Red Cross at www.icrc.org

- François Bugnion, The Geneva Conventions of 12 August 1949: from the 1949 Diplomatic Conference to the dawn of the new millennium, in: *International Affairs*, 76/1, 2000, pp. 41-50

Please bring a news story to class today!

Thursday, November 2nd: Refugees

- Laura Barnett, *Global Governance and the Evolution of the International Refugee Regime*, United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) Working Paper No. 54, February 2002, available at www.unhcr.ch

- Jeff Crisp, *A New Asylum Paradigm? Globalization, Migration and the Uncertain Future of the International Refugee Regime*, United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) Working Paper No. 100, December 2003, available at www.unhcr.ch

- Jeff Crisp, Forced displacement in Africa: dimensions, difficulties and policy directions. New Issues in Refugee Research, Research Paper No. 126, 2006, available at www.unhcr.org

Week 9

Tuesday, November 7th: Refugees

- Gil Loescher, Refugees: A Global Human Rights and Security Crisis, in: Tim Dunne and Nicholas Wheeler (eds.), *Human Rights in Global Politics*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999, pp. 233-258

- Ivor Jackson, Ensuring that the Exercise of UNHCR's Traditional Functions is Maintained and Reinforced in the 21st Century, in: *International Journal of Refugee Law* 12/4, 2000, pp. 589-596

Please bring a news story to class today!

Thursday, November 9th:

Conclusions: What have we learned?

Quiz 2 Today

Week 10

Tuesday, November 14th:

Conclusions: What have we learned?