

INTRODUCTION TO HUMAN RIGHTS: IDEAS AND PRACTICE HRTS G4020

Fall 2008; Thursdays 6:10-8:00 p.m.
Prof. Joseph Chuman

This course will provide a wide-ranging survey of conceptual foundations and issues in contemporary human rights. The class will examine the philosophical origins of human rights, their explication in the evolving series of international documents, as well as questions of enforcement through international law and treaty arrangements.

The course will also examine contemporary topics that are in the forefront of concern, among them - the status of women, refugees, children, the use of torture and the horrors of genocide. Though the course emphasizes political rights, it also recognizes the evolution of the human rights culture, the growing importance of economic rights and tensions related to globalization and multiculturalism.

The broad range of subjects covered in the course is intended to assist students in honing their interests and making future course selections in the human rights field.

In addition to the instructor, the class will invite guest lecturers to speak on specific topics.

Syllabus

Class 1 and 2

Introduction to the course; The nature of rights; the emergence of human rights out of the Enlightenment; the debate over foundations.

Donnelly, pp. 7-21

Course packet, articles by Minogue, Cranston, Enlightenment figures, Shestack, Stackhouse, Henkin, Rorty.

Class 3

Human Rights Documents and the Origins of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights

Donnelly, pp. 22-37

Human Right Documents, pp. 1-95.

Class 4 and 5

Current philosophical debates: universalism vs. ethnic particularism, the East Asian challenge, Islam and human rights, group rights?, are human rights merely aspirational?

Donnelly, pp. 71-123; 204-224.

Course packet, articles by Bell, Perry, Ignatieff, An-Naim,

Human Rights Documents, "Cairo Declaration of Human Rights in Islam", pp. 174-177.

Recommended, Sen, Chapter 10, pp. 225-248.

Class 6

Economic and social rights; development, globalization

Donnelly, pp. 185-203.

Course packet, articles by Henkin Baehr, Sengupta, Drinan,
Recommended, Sen, introduction, pp. 3-34, chapter 6, pp. 146-159.

Also

Course packet, articles by McCorquodale and Fairbrother, Freeman, Barber, Spar,
Monshipouri et. al., Englehart et. al.,.

Class 7

Women and human rights

Course packet, articles by Rao, Miller.

Class 8

Genocide and Humanitarian Intervention

Donnelly, pp. 242-260. Course packet, articles by Falk, Anna, Ignatieff, *Nation* magazine,
Recommended, Power, chapter 10, pp.329-389.

Class 9

Children, international trafficking, refugees, political asylum

Course packet, articles by Coalition to Stop the Use of Child Soldiers, Human Rights
Watch, Henkin, Loescher, The UN Refugee Agency, Human Rights First,

Class 10

Torture

Course packet, articles by Dershowitz and Roth, Luban.

Class 11

**The United States and human rights I; foreign policy, the death penalty, economic
exceptionalism, church/state relations**

Course packet, articles by Henkin, Forsythe (2 articles) the Death Penalty Information
Center, Steicker, Sunstein, Joseph Lieberman, Kramnick and Moore

Class 12

**The United States and human rights II; terrorism; civil liberties, the International
Criminal Court**

Course packet, articles by Ignatieff, The Lawyers Committee for Human Rights
(currently Human Rights First), Schulz, Freeman, U. S. State Department, Human Rights
Watch.

Class 13

The evolution and future of human rights

Donnelly, pp. 151-154.

Course packet, articles by Lauren, Robinson, Booth and Dunne,

Texts

1. *Universal Human Rights* (second edition) by Donnelly, Jack; Cornell University Press: 2003. This can be purchased through the Columbia University bookstore
2. *25+ Human Rights Documents* published by the Center for the Study of Human Rights. This can be purchased through the Human Rights Center.
2. Course packet, two volumes. This can be purchased through The Village Copier, Broadway between 111th and 112th streets

Also recommended are:

Development as Freedom by Amartya Sen; Anchor Books: 2000.

A Problem From Hell by Samantha Power; Perennial: 2003

Course Requirements

There will be two papers, 12-15 pages. The second paper replaces a final exam. The papers will each comprise 40% of the grade. Class participation will count for 20% of the grade.

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