

INTRODUCTION TO HUMAN RIGHTS (POLS 125)
Autumn 2006

Location: CLAS 110
Tuesday/Thursday 11:00 am-12:15 pm

Professor Shareen Hertel (Political Science)
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Professor Serena Parekh McGushin (Philosophy)
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Purposes. Human rights is a powerful idea in our time, but it is also the focus of numerous controversies: it is not only an ideal but also a political tool, which different forces try to bend to their own ends. This course will open with a focus on the structural elements of human rights – basic human rights concepts and institutions. We will then turn to a number of contemporary debates in the field. Throughout the course, we will address the challenge of contemporary human rights advocacy. By the end of the semester, students will have developed a thorough understanding of the institutions and processes related to human rights; familiarity with key intellectual debates; and their own views on the political and social implications of differing policy and advocacy strategies.

Requirements. The course grade will be based upon: three in-class examinations, quizzes, and course participation. Overall course grade weighted as follows:

Midterm Exam (October 12): 30%
Final Exam (December 15): 40%
Paper (due October 31): 15%
Quizzes (throughout the semester): 15%

Academic (Mis)Conduct and Plagiarism. *Academic Misconduct in any form is in violation of the University of Connecticut Student Code and will not be tolerated.* This includes, but is not limited to: copying or sharing answers on tests or assignments,

plagiarism, and having someone else do your academic work. Depending on the act, a student could receive an F grade on the test/assignment, F grade for the course, and could be suspended or expelled from the University. Please see the Student Code at <http://web.uconn.edu/mcb201/misconduct.html> for more details and a full explanation of the Academic Misconduct policies.

Please turn down the volume on pagers and turn off cell phones before class begins.

If there are any students in this class who have special needs because of learning disabilities, it is your responsibility to discuss this with one of the instructors during the first *two weeks* of class.

Make-Up Policy. Exams must be taken at the date and time that is given for the exam. Exceptions will only be made under the following conditions: (i) you contact the Professors *before* the exam to discuss the circumstances of your absence, and (ii) you supply the proper documentation *immediately* upon your return (proper documentation includes doctors notes stating explicitly that you had to miss an exam or a note from the Dean in the case of personal emergencies). Failure to comply with the above conditions will result in an automatic zero on the exam.

Quizzes are given once a week in class. If you miss a quiz due to illness or emergency, we will drop the quiz *only* if you are able to supply official documentation (i.e., doctor's note or letter from the Dean). In all other circumstances, you will receive a zero on the quiz. If you are late for class, you will *not* be allowed to take the quiz.

Readings. There are three books that are required for this course:

1. Center for the Study of Human Rights, Columbia University, *25+ Human Rights Documents* (NY: CSHR, 2001).
2. David P. Forsythe, *Human Rights in International Relations, Second Edition* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006).
3. Patrick Hayden, *The Philosophy of Human Rights* (St. Paul, MN: Paragon House, 2001).

They are available to be purchased at the UConn Co-op. All other readings will appear on the VISTA page for this class. It is your responsibility to find the appropriate reading on-line. If you have any problems accessing VISTA, contact the help desk (6-1187).

In addition, you are responsible for reading newspaper articles that will be posted to VISTA at the beginning of the week on Monday. The information from these articles may appear on quizzes and exams.

E-mail. All the professors of this course can be contacted via email. However, if you have questions about the material we are covering, it is highly recommended that you visit us in person at one of our office hours. Please note that we will NOT reply to substantial questions (that is, questions asking us to explain the material) sent by email prior to the exams. Questions that arise in preparation for the exams should be asked either in class or in one of our office hours.

CLASS SCHEDULE

August 29

INTRODUCTION (Shareen Hertel, Serena Parekh, Kathryn Libal)

- Introduction, general comments, welcome, review of logistics.

PART I: FOUNDATIONS

August 31

THEORETICAL FOUNDATIONS

- Hayden, "Introduction to Part I," pp. 3-10.
- Thomas Pogge, "How Should Human Rights Be Conceived?" in Hayden, pp. 187-199. (Only sections I - III.)

September 5

REPRESENTING IMAGES OF HUMAN RIGHTS (Kathryn Libal)

- Arthur and Joan Kleinman, "The Appeal of Experience, the Dismay of Images: The Cultural Appropriation of Suffering in our Times," pp. 1-23. (VISTA)

September 7

HUMAN RIGHTS LAW (Shareen Hertel)

Read all of the following documents in the 25+ *Human Rights Documents*:

- *Universal Declaration of Human Rights*
- *International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights*
- *International Covenant on Economic, Social and Culture Rights*

September 12

THE INTERNATIONAL BILL OF RIGHTS (Shareen Hertel)

- Louis Henkin, "Human Rights: Ideology and Aspiration, Reality and Prospect," pp. 3-38. (VISTA)

September 14

STRUCTURE OF THE HUMAN RIGHTS SYSTEM (Shareen Hertel)

- Forsythe, Chapter 3, pp. 57-88.
- Fully review the website of the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights, particularly the section "About OHCHR" and within it "Structure" at: <http://www.ohchr.org/english/structure.htm>
- Read "The United Nations Human Rights System" at the website of Human Rights Education Associates: <http://www.hrea.org/learn/guides/UN.html>

September 19

THE SHAME AND BLAME GAME: STATE AND NGO ROLES (Shareen Hertel)

- Forsythe, Chapter 6, pp. 152-187.
- Recommended: Forsythe, Chapter 7

September 21

AN OVERVIEW OF THE US PARTICIPATION IN THE HUMAN RIGHTS SYSTEM (Kathryn Libal)

- Louis Henkin, “U.S. Ratification of Human Rights Conventions: The Ghost of Senator Bricker,” pp. 241-250. (VISTA)
- Recommended: Forsythe, Chapter 6, read pp. 160-172 again to reinforce learning about the US participation in the human rights system

PART II: KEY DEBATES

September 26

ARE HUMAN RIGHTS TRULY UNIVERSAL? THE RELATIVISM DEBATE (Serena Parekh)

- James Rachels, “The Challenge of Cultural Relativism,” pp. 16-31. (VISTA)

September 28

GENOCIDE: DEFINITION AND HISTORY (Serena Parekh)

- *Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide*. In 25+ *Human Rights Documents*
- Samantha Power, “Never Again: The World’s Most Unfulfilled Promise” (VISTA)
- Gerard Prunier, “Did Somebody Say Genocide?” pp. 15-20 (VISTA)

October 3

GENOCIDE: WHAT IS TO BE DONE? (Serena Parekh)

- Michael J. Smith, “Humanitarian Intervention: An Overview of the Ethical Issues” in Hayden, pp. 478-501.

October 5

THE TORTURE QUESTION (Serena Parekh)

- Henry Mark Holzer, “In Defense of Torture,” pp. 1-3 (VISTA)
- David Luban, “Liberalism, Torture, and the Ticking Bomb,” pp. 1-28 (pages 28-37 are recommended) (VISTA)
- *Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment*. In 25+ *Human Rights Documents*.

October 10

REVIEW SESSION FOR MIDTERM EXAM

- Come prepared with questions and a list of things you want to review

October 12

MIDTERM EXAM

PART III: THE RIGHTS OF THE MOST VULNERABLE

October 17

HUMAN RIGHTS AND DEMOCRATIC TRANSITION: INSIGHTS FROM POLAND (Guest Lecturer: Wiktor Osiatynski)

- Wiktor Osiatynski, “Rights in New Constitutions of East Central Europe,” pp. 1-23 (VISTA)

October 19

WOMEN’S RIGHTS AS HUMAN RIGHTS—PART I (Serena Parekh)

- Arati Rao, “Rights in the Home: Feminist Theoretical Perspectives on International Human Rights,” in Hayden, pp. 505-525
- *The Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women* (CEDAW). In *25+ Human Rights Documents*.

October 24

WOMEN’S RIGHTS AS HUMAN RIGHTS—PART II (Kathryn Libal)

- Charlotte Bunch, “Women’s Rights as Human Rights: Toward a Re-vision of Human Rights,” pp. 486-498. (VISTA)
- The *Declaration on the Elimination of Violence against Women* (DEVAW) – available electronically via:
<http://www.ohchr.org/english/law/eliminationvaw.htm>

October 26

CHILDREN’S RIGHTS (Kathryn Libal)

- Mark Ensalaco, “The Rights to the Child in Development,” pp. 9-29. (VISTA)
- *The Convention on the Rights of the Child*. In *25+ Human Rights Documents*.

October 31

REFUGEES AND DISPLACED PEOPLE (Serena Parekh)

- Sharon Stanton Russell, “Refugees: Risks and Challenges Worldwide,” pp. 1-4. (VISTA)
- **PAPER DUE IN CLASS**

November 2

ENVIRONMENTAL RIGHTS AND INTERGENERATIONAL EQUITY (Guest Lecturer: Richard Hiskes)

- Richard Hiskes, “The Right to a Green Future: Human Rights, Environmentalism, and Intergenerational Justice,” pp. 1346-1364. (VISTA)

PART IV: CONTROVERSIES IN HUMAN RIGHTS

November 7

ECONOMIC & LABOR RIGHTS—Part I (Shareen Hertel)

Required:

- Virginia Leary, “The Paradox of Workers' Rights as Human Rights,” pp. 22-47. (VISTA)
- Recommended: Forsythe, Chapter 8

November 9

ECONOMIC & LABOR RIGHTS—Part II (Shareen Hertel)

- Shareen Hertel, “New Moves in Transnational Advocacy: Getting Labor and Economic Rights on the Table in Unexpected Ways,” pp. 263-281.

November 14

HEALTH AS A HUMAN RIGHT (Kathryn Libal)

- Consortium for Health and Human Rights, “Health and Human Rights: A Call to Action on the 50th Anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights,” pp. 462-464. (VISTA)
- Jonathan Mann et al, “Health and Human Rights,” pp. 7-20. (VISTA)

November 16

CONFLICT & TRANSITIONAL JUSTICE (Shareen Hertel)

- Forsythe, Chapter 4, pp. 88-120.
- Priscilla Hayner, *Unspeakable Truths: Confronting State Terror and Atrocity*, pp. 1-31. (VISTA)

November 21 & 23 **THANKSGIVING BREAK**

November 28

SEXUALITY AND HUMAN RIGHTS (Serena Parekh and Kathryn Libal)

- Jack Donnelly, “Non-Discrimination and Sexual Orientation: Making a Place for Sexual Minorities in the Global Human Rights Regime,” in Hayden, pp. 547-573.

November 30

TOPIC TO BE ANNOUNCED

December 5 & 7

REVIEW FOR FINAL EXAM AND COURSE EVALUATIONS

FINAL EXAM: December 15, 2006, 6-8 p.m.

- **Location: To be announced**