

Introduction to Human Rights

187:080 Spring 2009

Tue. 4:00 – 6:30 p.m., 218 PH

University of Iowa

International Studies

COURSE SYLLABUS

Instructor: Brian Farrell
Office: 189 Boyd Law Building
Office Hours: Tues. 10:00-11:30 a.m. & Thu. 2:00-3:00 p.m. or by appointment
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Course Description

The international human rights program is described, analyzed, and evaluated in this course. The relationship between human rights and international law is given special emphasis due to international law's capacity to shape shared expectations among peoples from around the planet of what constitutes appropriate and permissible conduct. These shared expectations also bear importantly on the quality of life worldwide.

The primary goals of the seminar are for students to learn how to clarify or bring into better focus the features and dynamics of the international human rights program, and to develop their ability to evaluate and offer suggestions for improving the program and/or specific facets of it. To address the latter task, students will explore ways in which international law can be modulated to help bring about more desirable futures.

In addition to providing an overview of how human rights are established, maintained, and changed, we will examine and analyze a range of particular topics, including issues that pertain to self-determination, development, national security and individual freedom, humanitarian intervention, post-conflict reconstruction, health, and so on. Students are welcomed to raise subjects of interest that are not included in the course syllabus.

Course Policies

Course policies are governed by the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences.

Instructor Availability

I will be glad to meet with you if you need to discuss any aspect of this course. You may schedule an appointment or come by my office at the law school during drop-in office hours. E-mail is the best way to contact me, as I am in my Cedar Rapids office several days a week and may not be able to promptly listen to voice mail messages.

Evaluation

Grades for the course will be based on the following components:

20% (100 pts.) Participation: You are expected to read assignments and be prepared to participate in class discussions. You will also be responsible for an in-class presentation on a human rights situation which will be part of the participation grade component. Details regarding this presentation will be provided during class. Inappropriate classroom conduct and unexcused absences can negatively impact this grade component.

25% (125 pts.) Midterm Exam

15% (75 pts.) Writing Assignment: You will complete a writing assignment. Details of this writing assignment will be provided during class.

40% (200) Comprehensive Final Exam

Late or incomplete assignments will not be accepted and no extra credit will be offered. Final grades will be calculated as follows:

<u>Points</u>	<u>Grade</u>	<u>Points</u>	<u>Grade</u>
490-500	A+	390-399	C+
460-489	A	360-389	C
450-459	A-	350-359	C-
440-449	B+	340-349	D+
410-439	B	310-339	D
400-409	B-	300-309	D-
		299 & below	F

Classroom Conduct

You are expected to help maintain a classroom environment conducive to learning. You should treat others in the classroom with courtesy and respect at all times, particularly during discussions. Please avoid actions that might disrupt classmates or me. Cell phones should be turned off during class. Laptop computers may be used only for taking notes. Other electronic devices should not be used.

Attendance

Attendance is required. Absences due to university activities, documented illness, or unavoidable circumstances will be excused. Other absences will only be excused if you contact me and secure my approval *prior* to the absence. Scheduled exams and presentations can only be made up if an absence is excused. Unexcused absences from any part of a class will negatively impact the participation grade component.

Means of Communication

In the event that I need to contact you regarding assignments, class meetings, or other matters, I will do so using your University of Iowa e-mail address (“@uiowa.edu”). Pursuant to University policy, you are responsible for any correspondence sent to this address, and I will assume that you will read messages sent to this address within a reasonable time. In the event that unavoidable circumstances require class to be cancelled, you I will inform you via your University e-mail account.

Accommodations

If you have a disability that may require modification of seating, testing, or other course requirements, please contact me so that appropriate arrangements can be made.

Academic Fraud

Plagiarism, cheating, and any other activities that result in a student presenting work that is not his or her own are academic fraud. Pursuant to University policy, academic fraud is reported to the Associate Director of International Programs and then to the Associate Dean for Academic Programs and Services in the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences. In addition, incidents of academic fraud may result in severe grade consequences.

Student Complaints

If you have an issue, concern, or complaint about this course, please bring it to my attention so that we can work together to resolve the problem. If you remain unsatisfied, you may contact Kristine Fitch, Associate Dean for International Programs, at 353-2264. If your concerns are still not resolved, you may submit a written complaint to the Associate Dean for Academic Programs, 120 Schaeffer Hall (335-2633).

Departmental Information

This course is offered through International Studies and the course coordinator is Martha Greer. For your convenience, Martha Greer and Jenna Burns in the International Programs office in the University Capitol Center are authorized to sign drop slips for this course, and can be contacted at 335-0368. The Associate Dean for International Programs is Kristine Fitch.

Course Materials

The textbook for this course is HUMAN RIGHTS IN THE WORLD COMMUNITY: ISSUES AND ACTION (2006), edited by Richard Pierre Claude and Burns H. Weston. The book is available at University Book Store. *If you purchase the book from another source, you should ensure that you are purchasing the third edition.* Students are expected to read the entire book, including the “Questions for Reflection and Discussion” sections following each chapter. Additional primary materials and articles may be assigned.

Schedule

This schedule is tentative. It is your responsibility to stay informed of any changes.

January 20: SOURCES OF HUMAN RIGHTS; THE U.N. SYSTEM

Readings: Preface

Ch. 1 Overview – International Human Rights: Issues Overviews

Sec. 1 – Human Rights: Concept and Content

Sec. 3 – The Universality of Human Rights in a Multicultural World

January 27: THE INTERNATIONAL BILL OF RIGHTS

Readings: Ch. 5 Overview – International Human Rights: Action Overviews

Sec. 23 – Human Rights: Prescription and Enforcement

Sec. 24 – How Is International Human Rights Law Enforced?

February 3: U.N. TREATIES & ENFORCEMENT; REGIONAL SYSTEMS

Readings: Sec. 25 – Making the Human Rights Treaties Work

Ch. 6 Overview – Int’l Approaches to Human Rights Implementation

Sec. 26 – The United Nations and Human Rights

Sec. 27 – The Promise of Regional Human Rights Systems

February 10: LOCALIZING HUMAN RIGHTS; DOMESTIC ENFORCEMENT

Readings: Ch. 7 Overview – National Approaches to Human Rights Implementation
Sec. 28 – No Exceptions? The U.S. Pick-and-Choose Approach to H.Rts.
Sec. 29 – Civil Remedies for Gross Human Rights Violations

February 17: THE RIGHT TO LIFE

Readings: Sec. 5 – Genocide
Sec. 22 – Peace: “A Sacred Right”
Sec. 30 – Humanitarian Intervention

February 24: RIGHT TO LIBERTY AND SECURITY; STATES OF EXCEPTION

Readings: Ch. 2 Overview – Basic Decencies and Participatory Rights
Sec. 6 – Torture and the Future

March 3: MORE CIVIL AND POLITICAL RIGHTS

Readings: Sec. 7 – Civil Rights
Sec. 8 – Human Rights and Crime

March 10: **MIDTERM EXAM**; RIGHTS OF REFUGEES

Readings: Sec. 11 – The International and National Protection of Refugees

March 24: THE RIGHT TO EQUALITY

Readings: Sec. 9 – First Principles of Racial Equality
Sec. 10 – Protecting the Rights of Women

March 31: ECONOMIC, SOCIAL & CULTURAL RIGHTS

Readings: Ch. 3 Overview – Basic Human Needs as Security Rights
Sec. 13 – Economic, Social & Cultural Rights as Human Rights
Sec. 14 – Worker Rights are Human Rights
Sec. 15 – Food Is a Human Right

April 7: ECONOMIC SOCIAL & CULTURAL RIGHTS (continued)

Readings: Sec. 16 – The Right to Health: Key Objectives, Themes & Interventions
Sec. 17 – The Right to Education and Human Rights Education
Sec. 18 – The Right to Take Part in Cultural Life

April 14: SELF-DETERMINATION; RIGHTS OF INDIGENOUS PEOPLES

Readings: Sec. 12 – Indigenous Peoples' Rts. to Self-Determination & Territoriality
Sec. 19 – The Right to Self-Determination in the Twenty-First Century
Sec. 33 – The Human Right to Revolution

April 21: MORE GROUP RIGHTS

Readings: Ch. 4 Overview – Community or Solidarity Rights-Group Rights
Sec. 20 – The Right to Development
Sec. 21 Is the Human Right to Environment Recognized Under Int'l Law?

April 28: HUMAN RIGHTS AND GLOBALIZATION; HUMAN RIGHTS ACTION

Readings: Sec. 4 – The Second Great Transformation: Human Rights Leap-Frogging
Sec. 32 – Multinational Corps. and the Ethics of Global Responsibility
Sec. 31 – What Do Human Rights NGOs Do?

May 5: **FINAL EXAM**