Summary

The course is a study of international and local responses to human rights abuses in the contexts of economic globalization and proliferation of armed violence. It examines major debates on international human rights. It also deals with specific human rights situations in the developing/transitional countries. Topics include: universalism and cultural relativism, global economic justice, rights to food and health, women's and children's rights, the rights of displaced civilians, human rights and R2P, prospects for transitional justice.

Textbooks:


Requirements:

Class Participation: 50%

Consistent attendance and participation in discussion by all students is necessary to the success of this seminar class. Students may not miss class except for illness, inclement
weather, religious obligation, or compassionate reasons. If they are going to miss class, students must inform Dr. Thompson beforehand via email, unless this is not possible.

**Research paper: 40%**

Students must write a research paper on the human rights topic of their choice, using the methodology of their choice (i.e., a historical approach or a sociological approach, etc.) The objective is to write a paper that makes an original contribution to the field of human rights scholarship, and that is of the caliber found in leading academic journals. Students must consult with Dr. Thompson before beginning their research. Students must submit a first draft, which will be read by the class prior to the in-class presentations. The final draft is due afterwards, and is the version that will be assigned a grade.

Length: 5000 words
First Draft Due Date: Tuesday, November 22, 9:00 A.M., via email.
Final Draft Due Date: Friday, December 9, 9:00 A.M., via email.

**In-class presentation: 10%**

At the end of term, students must present their papers to the class as if they were presenting at an academic conference. One of the purposes of the presentation is to practice giving a paper. The other is to receive constructive peer review, which can then be used to improve the essay. Presentations should be no longer than fifteen (15) minutes in length.

**Please Note:**

**Legibility of Assigned Material:** All assigned material must be submitted double-spaced, one side of page only, in legible Times Roman 12 font.

**Extensions:** There will be no extensions on assignments except for illness or severe personal extenuating circumstances. In the event of a weather emergency, students who cannot attend class will be expected to submit their assignments via email. Otherwise, three percent of the total possible mark will be deducted from assignments for each day they are late, not including weekends and holidays. Students whose religious holidays may interfere with fulfillment of the requirements for this course on the dates they are due are expected to notify Dr. Thompson of this fact by the second week of class.

**Computer Failure:** Students are expected to take account of the possibility of computer failure in planning their time.

**Cellphones, Laptops etc.:** Students are expected to turn off their cellphones, blackberries, and other electronic equipment during class, except during emergencies; in case of emergency, students must alert Dr. Thompson before class that they will be
obliged to leave their equipment on. Laptops and notepads are to be used only to make notes on class discussions, or for quick research when requested by Dr. Thompson.

**University Rules:** Students will be expected to adhere to University of Waterloo rules regarding academic dishonesty, religious holidays, and accommodations for disabilities.

**WEEKLY SCHEDULE**

**Week 1, September 13, Introduction: Human Rights in a Globalized World**

No Readings

**Week 2, September 20, Issues and Ideas**


**Week 3, September 27, Human Rights in History**


Week 4, October 4, Generational Divides


Amnesty International’s Demand Dignity Campaign:

The International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights:
http://www2.ohchr.org/english/law/ccpr.htm

The International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights:
http://www2.ohchr.org/english/law/cescr.htm

Week 5, October 11, “Southern Rights”


**Week 6, October 18, Cultural Relativism, Equality Rights, and Authoritarianism**


1993 Vienna Declaration and Programme of Action: http://www.unhchr.ch/huridocda/huridoca.nsf%28symbol%29/a.conf.157.23.en

**Week 7, October 25, Ethics, Human Rights and Civil Society**


Steven Weir, “Transformational Development as the Key to Housing Rights,” *Ethics in Action*, chapter 3.

Week 8, November 1, Confronting the Threats of Terrorism and Mass Human Rights Violations


Week 9, November 8, Confronting the Past


Week 10, November 15, “New” Rights


**Week 11, November 22: Private Wrongs**


**Week 12, November 29: Essay Presentations**

Essay Presentations.

**Academic Integrity**

**Academic Integrity:** In order to maintain a culture of academic integrity, members of the University of Waterloo are expected to promote honesty, trust, fairness, respect and responsibility.

**Discipline:** A student is expected to know what constitutes academic integrity, to avoid committing academic offences, and to take responsibility for his/her actions. A student who is unsure whether an action constitutes an offence, or who needs help in learning how to avoid offences (e.g., plagiarism, cheating) or about “rules” for group work/collaboration should seek guidance from the course professor, academic advisor, or the Undergraduate Associate Dean. When misconduct has been found to have occurred, disciplinary penalties will be imposed under Policy 71 – Student Discipline. For information on categories of offenses and types of penalties, students should refer to Policy 71 - Student Discipline, [http://www.adm.uwaterloo.ca/infosec/Policies/policy71.htm](http://www.adm.uwaterloo.ca/infosec/Policies/policy71.htm)

**Grievance:** A student who believes that a decision affecting some aspect of his/her university life has been unfair or unreasonable may have grounds for initiating a grievance. Read Policy 70 - Student Petitions and Grievances, Section 4, [http://www.adm.uwaterloo.ca/infosec/Policies/policy70.htm](http://www.adm.uwaterloo.ca/infosec/Policies/policy70.htm)
Appeals: A student may appeal the finding and/or penalty in a decision made under Policy 70 - Student Petitions and Grievances (other than regarding a petition) or Policy 71 - Student Discipline if a ground for an appeal can be established. Read Policy 72 - Student Appeals, [http://www.adm.uwaterloo.ca/infosec/Policies/policy72.htm](http://www.adm.uwaterloo.ca/infosec/Policies/policy72.htm)

Academic Integrity website (Arts): [http://arts.uwaterloo.ca/arts/ugrad/academic_responsibility.html](http://arts.uwaterloo.ca/arts/ugrad/academic_responsibility.html)

Academic Integrity Office (University): [http://uwaterloo.ca/academicintegrity/](http://uwaterloo.ca/academicintegrity/)

Accommodation for Students with Disabilities: Note for students with disabilities: The Office for Persons with Disabilities (OPD), located in Needles Hall, Room 1132, collaborates with all academic departments to arrange appropriate accommodations for students with disabilities without compromising the academic integrity of the curriculum. If you require academic accommodations to lessen the impact of your disability, please register with the OPD at the beginning of each academic term.