University of Waterloo  
Department of Political Science  
Winter 2010  

PSCI 658  
HUMAN RIGHTS IN THE GLOBALIZED WORLD

T 9:30 - 12:20  
EV1 225

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office hours: M,W,F 2:30-3:30

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Description

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 discusses specific categories of human rights and explores human rights situations in particular countries. The focus is on the indivisibility of human rights and the growth of transnational civic activism.

The course starts with an analysis of the origins of human rights norms, obstacles to their implementation, controversies surrounding the principle of universalism, and the rise of a global economic justice movement. We then proceed to the discussion of fundamental social/economic and status-based rights. Topics include: labor and community rights, the rights to food and health, children’s and women’s rights. The human rights agenda in conflict and post-conflict situations (the rights of refugees, R2P, transitional justice) is also addressed. The course ends with a brief discussion of ethical dilemmas confronted by rights advocates.

Format

Seminar

Requirements

Oral presentations and participation in class discussion

Each student is expected to do two short oral presentations. The presentations should be based on some of the course readings and on independent research. Each presenter should prepare a handout (1 or 2 pages, single-spaced) with the statement of central argument, summary of major points (please use references to the sources), and two or three questions for discussion. All students are expected to do the required readings and participate in the class discussion.
Research proposal and research paper

Students are required to write a research proposal and a research paper on one of the topics covered in the course (or related topic). The research proposals (5 pages double-spaced) are due February 9, in class. A proposal should include: (i) a brief outline of the research problem with references to the sources, (ii) your own research questions and tentative central argument; (iii) the proposed structure of the paper; and (iv) preliminary bibliography. Research papers (appx 15 pages, double-spaced, font size 12pt) are due March 30, in class. Late proposal/papers submitted without a medical certificate and proposals/papers that substantially exceed the size limit will be penalized. Penalty for late proposals and papers: 3 points per day.

Evaluation

Oral presentations 15%
Participation in class discussion 15%
Research proposal 10%
Research paper 60%

Recommended texts


Topics and readings

Jan. 5. Introduction

Jan. 12. Human rights - norms and realities

Human rights origins – Western and non-Western views; universalism and cultural relativism – towards a cross-cultural dialogue? human rights and state sovereignty – conflicting or complementary concerns?

Required readings
* Forsythe, ch.1 (Introduction) and ch.2 (Establishing Human Rights Standards).
* Horowitz and Schnabel, ch.3 (Universalism and Cultural Relativism: Lessons for Transitional States).

Additional readings
* P. Zeleza and P. McConnaughay (eds.), Human Rights, The Rule of Law, and


Extreme poverty – positive and negative duties; transnational civic activism and economic justice movement – strategies, achievements, and limitations.

Required readings
* J. Mandle, Global Justice, Polity, 2006, ch.7 (Poverty and Development).

Additional readings
* Mandle, the rest of the book.

Jan. 26. Community and labor rights

MNCs and cheap labor – promise and problems; accountability - to whom? conflicts over natural resources – potential and limitations of the voluntary approach.

Required readings
* Andreopoulos, ch.4 (Realizing Rights in the Work Place), ch. 5 (Multinational Corporations as Non-State Actors in the Human Rights Arena), and ch. 6 (Royal Dutch Shell: How Deep the Changes?)

Additional readings
* O. De Schutter, Transnational Corporations and Human Rights, Hart, 2006, ch. 4 (Competing for Foreign Direct Investment through the Creation of EPZs); ch.6 (Corporate Codes of Conduct and the Human Rights Accountability of TNCs); ch.8 (The Illegal Exploitation of Natural Resources in the DRC).

Feb. 2. Right to food

Food supplies and entitlements; faminogenic policies and complex humanitarian emergencies – towards a criminalization of famine?
Required readings


Additional readings:


Feb. 9.  **Right to health. Research proposals due.**

International campaign against AIDS - Southern governments, civic actors, external donors; patents and access to essential drugs – pharmaceuticals and WTO.

Required readings

* Andreopoulos, *Non-State Actors*, ch.10 (Affordable and Accessible Drugs for Developing Countries: Recent Developments).

Additional readings


Feb. 16 - no classes, reading week

Feb 23. **Rights of the child**

Education, poverty, and child labor; children, armed violence and drug trade; alternative conceptions of childhood; potential autonomy?

Required readings

* Alston and Robinson, ch.9 (Child Labour, Education, and Children’s Rights).
Additional readings
* Alston and Robinson, ch. 10 (Child Labour, Education, and the Principle of Non-Discrimination) and ch. 11 (Human rights and public goods: Education as a Fundamental Right in India).

March 2. Women’s rights

Land rights, human trafficking, sex trade, domestic violence - causal factors; international and local strategies; women as protagonists?

Required readings
* Brysk, ch. 2 (Tourism, Sex Work and Women’s Rights in the Dominican Republic).

Additional readings
* Alston and Robinson, ch.7 (The Development Impact of Gender Equality in Land Rights) and ch.8 (Women’s Property Rights Violations in Kenya).

March 9. Rights of refugees

Refugees crisis - from asylum to containment and repatriation? protracted refugee situations; state security vs. human security perspectives on forced displacement.

Required readings

Additional readings
* S. Lischer, *Dangerous Sanctuaries: Refugee Camps, Civil War, and the Dilemmas of Humanitarian Aid*, Cornell, 2002, ch.3 (Afghan Refugees) and ch.6 (Collateral Damage).
March 16. Human rights, humanitarian intervention, and R2P

Military responses to gross violations of human rights – international and local dynamics; from humanitarian intervention to responsibility to protect?

Required readings
* Horowitz and Schnabel, ch. 7 (International Efforts to Protect Human Rights in Societies: Rights, Duty, or Politics?).

Additional readings
* *Civil Society Perspectives on the Responsibility to Protect*, 2003 (online).

March 23. Transitional justice

TRCs - in search of truth and reconciliation; ICC - between peace and retribution; legitimacy and effectiveness.

Required readings

Additional readings
* Forthys, ch.4 (Transitional Justice: Criminal Courts and Alternatives).


Required readings