University of Waterloo  
Department of Political Science  
Winter 2009  

PSCI 658  
HUMAN RIGHTS IN THE GLOBALIZED WORLD  

T 9:30 - 12:20  
HH 123  

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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 and economic 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 required or additional 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, one or two questions for discussion, and references to the sources. 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 10, in class. A proposal should include: (i) brief outline of the research problem with references to the literature on the subject, (ii) your own research questions and tentative central argument; (iii) proposed structure of the paper; and (iv) preliminary bibliography. Research papers (15 pages, double-spaced, font size 12pt) are due March 31, in class. Late papers (submitted without a medical certificate) and papers that substantially exceed the size limit will be penalized. Penalty for late papers: 3 points per day.

**Evaluation**

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<tr>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
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<tr>
<td>Oral presentations</td>
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<td>Participation in class discussion</td>
<td>15%</td>
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<td>Research proposal</td>
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<td>Research paper</td>
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**Recommended texts**


**Topics and readings**

**Jan. 6. Introduction**

**Jan. 13. Human rights - norms and realities**

Human rights norms - origins and evolution; implementation problems; universality vs. cultural relativism; contextualization and inter-cultural dialogue.

Required readings

* Fortsythe, ch.2 (Establishing Human Rights Standards) and ch.3 (Global Application of Human Rights Norms).
* Horowitz and Schnabel, ch.3 (Universalism and Cultural Relativism: Lessons for Transitional States).

Additional readings

Jan. 20. Transnational civic activism and global economic justice

NGOs - service providers or civic activists? transnational movement for economic justice; globalization and global poverty.

Required readings
* Forthys, ch.7 (Non-governmental Organizations and Human Rights).
* J. Mandle, Global Justice, Polity, 2006, ch.7 (Poverty and Development) and ch.8 (Globalization).

Additional readings

Jan. 27. Community and labor rights

MNCs, labor standards, conflicts over natural resources - dilemmas for governments and human rights activists.

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

Feb. 3. The right to food

Food supplies and entitlements; the criminalization of famine; domestic accountability and international responsibilities.

Required readings
to Crime against Humanity), and ch.11 (Increased Rural Vulnerability in the Era of Globalization: Conflict and Famine in Sudan during the 1990s).
* Alston and Robinson, ch.4 (Democracy and the Right to Food).

Additional readings:

Feb. 10. The right to health. Research proposals due.

International campaign against AIDS - Southern governments and external donors; WTO and access to essential drugs.

Required readings
* Amy Patterson, The Politics of AIDS in Africa, Lynne Rienner, 2006, ch.2 (The African State and the AIDS Pandemic) and ch.5 (External Donors and Political Commitments);
* Andreopoulos, Non-State Actors, ch.10 (Affordable and Accessible Drugs for Developing Countries: Recent Developments).

Additional readings
* Alston and Robinson, Human Rights and Development, ch.5, Social Rights and Economics: Claims to Health Care and Education in Developing Countries.

Feb. 17 - no classes, reading week

Feb 24. The rights of the child

Education, poverty, and child labor; alternative concepts of childhood; children, drug trade, and armed violence.

Required readings
* Alston and Robinson, ch.9 (Child Labour, Education, and Children’s Rights).
* L. Dowdne, Children of the Drug Trade: A Case Study of Children in Organized Violence in Rio De Janeiro, 7 Letras, 2003 (online); part 4, Organized Armed Violence: Proposed Definitions and International Perspectives; and part 5, Local Solutions: Dealing with the Problem of Drug Trafficking in Rio de Janeiro.

Additional readings
* Dowdne, Children of the Drug Violence, the rest of the book.

March 3. Women’s rights
Violence against women and female children; land rights - reconciling international and local norms?

Required readings

Additional Readings
* Billet, the rest of the book.
* 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 10. The rights of refugees

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

Required readings

Additional readings
* Newman and van Selm, ch. 3 (Human Security and the Protection of Refugees) and ch. 10 (Post-Conflict Peace-Building and the Return of Refugees).

March 17. Human rights and R2P

Towards a global enforcement of human rights? from humanitarian intervention to responsibility to protect; civil society perspectives.

Required readings
* Horowitz and Schnabel, ch. 7 (International Efforts to Protect Human Rights in Societies: Rights, Duty, or Politics?).
* Civil Society Perspectives on the Responsibility to Protect, 2003 (online).

Additional readings
March 24. Transitional justice

TRCs - in search of truth and reconciliation; regional tribunals - between peace and retribution; ICC and national sovereignty.

Required readings
* Forthyse, ch.4 (Transitional Justice: Criminal Courts and alternatives).

Additional readings
* Horowitz and Schnabel, ch.6 (The Consequences of the War Tribunals and an International Criminal Court for Human Rights in Transition).

March 31. Conclusion. Papers due.

Required readings

NOTE ON AVOIDANCE OF ACADEMIC OFFENCES

**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

**Discipline**: A student is expected to know what constitutes academic integrity, to avoid committing academic offenses, and to take responsibility for his/her actions. A student who is unsure whether an action constitutes an offense, or who needs help in learning how to avoid offenses (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

**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