

SYLLABUS

Political Science 4820: International Law: Human Rights

Spring 2004

TR 11:00-12:20PM, Wooten Hall Room 119

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Office Hours: Tues. 12:30AM-2:00PM, Thurs. 2:00-3:00PM, or by appointment

Course Description:

Political Science 4820 is an International Law course with a focus on human rights. The course is designed to be reading and writing intensive. I have chosen to focus on contemporary issues concerning human rights throughout the world especially the laws related to implementation in both the international community and regional communities. Some of the material may be less than pleasant, as it deals with practices and actions which result in harm to individuals. We will focus on the nature of human rights in general, human rights violations, responses to human rights violations by the world community, and specific examples of human rights concerns throughout the world. While much of the material will assess violations in other countries and regions, it is important to remember that the United States= history has not been free from human rights violations. The big picture question for the course is how have human rights concerns lead to the internationalization of government/politics.

Course Requirements:

Required Readings:

- 1) *Human Rights in World Politics.*
Seyom Brown
Addison Wesley Longman, Inc. (2000)
- 2) *NGOs and the Universal Declaration of Human Rights: A Curious Grapevine.*
William Korey
Palgrave Publishing (1998)
- 3) Class hand-outs.

Assignments & Grading: Your grade in this course will be based on four criteria:

Class Participation	20%
Quizzes	20%
Research Paper	30%
Final Exam	30%

Class Participation: As much of the course will be taught using discussion and interactive activities, participation is essential to the learning process. In class participation is worth 20% of your grade. It is very important for you to talk in class. If you are absent, you can not participate and thus your grade will suffer. I will not require participation in class activities, but failure to do so will result in a reduction of your grade. Participation can be as simple as asking me to explain something you do not understand, or engaging in the class activity for the day.

Quizzes: There will also be 6 in class quizzes of which you can drop the lowest score. So the total grade for quizzes is also 20% of your course grade. These should be easy points if you simply attend and are engaged in the course.

Research Paper: There will be one research paper of approximately 15-20 pages which will make up 30% of your grade for the course. 5% of the paper assignment grade will be informing me of your paper topic (NGO and issue) on Tuesday _____ in class (you may inform me prior to this date if you wish to begin working on it earlier). **Papers are due Tuesday, April 20 by 5PM.** The paper is designed to look at two separate aspects of human rights. One aspect will be on Non-Governmental Organizations; the other aspect will be on a human right of your choosing with a comparison of the responses of at least two countries to that human rights issues and the role of international law. Some helpful information has been included in the reader as an Appendix. The full paper assignment is listed below so you can begin work as soon as you would like.

Final Exam: A final exam will make up 30% of your course grade. The exam will be comprehensive of the entire course material. Questions are drawn from in class discussions and lectures, the textbook, and the reading packet. The exam consists of essay questions. You will find the actual examination questions below. The exam is a take home exam which you can begin at any time and which is due at the end of the regularly scheduled exam time (**Noon, Tuesday, May 4, 2004**).

No assignments, including the paper and final exam, will be accepted for full credit outside scheduled class times without prior approval of the instructor or evidence of serious personal or medical extenuating circumstances. Any paper not following these guidelines will result in a reduction of grade on the assignment of 10 points (out of 100) per day. No finals will be accepted late under any circumstances (its take home and you already have it so there is no excuse for a late final). All make-ups for quizzes must be completed within 1 week of the missed assignment unless serious personal or medical extenuating circumstances exist.

Academic Honesty: All of the work you do in this course is expected to be your own. Cheating and plagiarism will not be tolerated. Plagiarism is the use of another person=s words without giving credit to the other person. Any cases of cheating or plagiarism will be reported to the university committee on academic misconduct and handled according to university policy as defined in the Code of Student Conduct.

Disability: Any student who feels that they may need assistance should inform the instructor at the beginning of the quarter so that adequate arrangements can be made.

Paper Assignment:

Much of the enforcement of human rights principles comes from the actions of non-governmental organizations. These include Amnesty International, Human Rights Watch, and the American Civil Liberties Union. A list of the primary organizations is included in the reader.

Your assignment is to pick one organization explain their mission, how they work to achieve their mission and at least two current enforcement actions they have been pursuing. You can use information from their web pages, phone calls to organization members, newspaper and magazine articles, and books with research on the organization. This paper should include some research on your part beyond simply looking up their web page. In order to avoid having 50 papers on Amnesty International, I am limiting the selection of any one organization to 5 people.

There are more issues of human rights than can be covered in a ten week course. You may have an interest in a specific area of human rights. In the hand-out is a list with descriptions of many of the Non-Governmental Organizations and current human rights issues throughout the world. Use these lists (although other organizations can be selected if they meet the requirements) to select one Non-governmental organization (or two that are working closely together) and one human rights issue being addressed by your chosen non-governmental organization. You can use information from a web page dealing with the issue, phone calls to non-governmental organizations addressing the issue, newspaper and magazine articles, and books with research on the issue. This paper should include some research on your part beyond simply looking up the issue and summarizing the information. I also want you to express your opinion about the issue, and provide a comparison of two countries, at least one non-English Speaking, and how those countries are addressing the issues. A maximum of five people will be allowed to research any one issue.

Once you have selected your non-governmental organization and the human rights issue in which you are interested, you need provide me with a 15-20 page paper addressing the following concerns:

- * What is the mission of the organization?
- * Provide some history and background on the NGO.
- * How have they set out to achieve that mission?
- * Do they work with governments, other NGO=s, or international organizations, or are they generally opposed to such groups?
- * Describe the Human right you have chosen, including the international law related to the right.
- * Explain how the NGO is working to combat human rights violations of that specific human right, including references to the international law.
- * Describe the human rights environment/violations in at least two countries where the NGO has an enforcement action in progress.
- * Describe at least two enforcement actions around the world comparing at least two countries, at least one of which must be non-English speaking.
- * Give your opinion about the success or failures of the enforcement action, and the efforts generally to combat the human rights violation, both at the international level and within the countries. Your opinion should be more than a one or two sentence rant, but should use information learned in the course to explain what is occurring and why and then explaining why it has failed or succeeded, and finally indicating other reasonable options or steps which could be taken to address the problem.

Final Exam: You are to answer questions 1 (30 points), 2 (25 points) and 3 (25 points) below. You then can choose any one question from numbers 4 through 7 (20 points). Type your answers with 1 inch margins, double-spaced in 12 point font [Times New Roman]. Your answers should not exceed 5 pages per question and can be as little as 1 page if you feel that you have sufficiently answered the question. You will not be penalized for going under the 5 page maximum. The exam is **open book** and **open note**, and does not require any additional research beyond course materials.

Think about your answer before you write, and make sure to cite relevant material from the course materials to support your answers. The answers should be your own and not simply quotes or summaries of the reading materials. Think about the readings and class discussions and then present an argument of your own. [Noon, Tuesday, May 4, 2004]

1. (30 points) Views on which human rights are the most important vary depending on country or region of the world. China and many Third world countries view rights to development and other economic and cultural rights as paramount, while Europe and North American countries tend to view political rights and civil liberties as the most important. This also relates to whether community rights or individual rights should take prominence. Explain the debate. Why is there such a difference of opinion on economic/community rights v. political and civil/individual rights? How have these differences affected international laws or covenants.

2. (25 points) Non-governmental organizations have been given a primary role in the discovery, publication and prosecution of human rights violations. Explain all of the functions and roles of an NGO and how they achieve them. What is the rationale for their role in the international law of human rights. Are there other groups governmental or otherwise which have similar roles and how do they work with NGOs?

3. (25 points) The law of human rights has changed in large part due to the efforts of Non-governmental organizations. Describe at least two of these changes/efforts as depicted in the William Korey book. What are the implications in national and international law for the role played by the Non-governmental organizations?

4. International law, primarily through the actions of the United Nations, has become increasingly important. What is the threat to the autonomy of nations of the increase in international law? Are there benefits to internationalizing human rights law which can outweigh the concerns about a nation's autonomy.

5. While international law has become increasingly more important, countries do individually attempt to address human rights concerns domestically. This can occur through the use of statutory law, common law principles established by the courts, and through constitutional provisions. Explain the different ways rights can be granted in a country. Compare the efforts by the United States to some examples of efforts of other countries throughout the world.

6. Compare and contrast the efforts to protect women with the efforts to protect racial and ethnic minorities. What is missing from each convention? How do NGOs fit in?

7. Genocide was one of the first human rights issues to be addressed. Why? How did this convention come about and what are some of the changing issues related to its implementation?

Reading and Assignment Schedule:

Week1: Course Introduction

Jan 13: Syllabus and Intro

Jan 15: What are Human Rights?

Brown: Chapter 1

Week 2: Foundations

Jan 20: What are Human Rights? (continued)

Jan 22: The Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

Handout: UDHR

Week 3: UDHR

Jan 27: UDHR (cont.)

Jan 29: UDHR (cont.)

Korey: Intro and Chapters 1 and 2

Week 4: Arguments

Feb 3: Which Rights to include?

Feb 5: Which Rights to include? (Cont.)

Brown: Chapter 2

Korey: Chapter 19

Week 5: Theory

Feb 10: Classical Theory of HR

Feb 12: Applying Theory to Today

Brown: Chapter 3

Week 6: NGOs

Feb 17: Who are the actors?

Feb 19: How do NGOs play a role?

Brown: Chapter 5

Korey: Chapter 3-5

Week 7: More NGOs and the Genocide Convention

Feb 24: How they work

Feb 26: What they are doing

Korey: Chapters 6, 7, 9, 10

Handout: Genocide Convention

Week 8: Creating International Law

Mar 2: The Instruments

Mar 4: Enforcement Mechanisms

Brown: Chapter 4

Korey: Chapters 11, 12, 15 & 20

Week 9: Country Responses

Mar 9: Constitutions

Mar 11: Working with the UN and NGOs

Handout: Comparative Constitutions

Korey: Chapters 13, 14, 16, 17

SPRING BREAK March 15-19.

Week 10: The US position and role

Mar 23: US Foreign Policy

Mar 25: Political and Civil Rights Convention

Brown: Chapter 7

Korey: Chapter 8

Handout: Civil Rights Covenant

Week 11: The Other Half

Mar 30: The Social and Economic Side

Apr 1: The Eastern Approach

Brown: Chapter 6

Handout: Social, Economic Covenant

Week 12: Other International Laws

Apr 6: Women

Apr 8: Ethnic Minorities

Handouts: Conventions on rights of Women and Racial Minorities

Week 13: Other International Laws (cont)

Apr 13: Children

Apr 15: Indigenous Peoples

Handouts: More Conventions

Week 14: The Future

Apr 20: The Fourth Generation

Apr 22: Changing Faces of the Law

Brown: Chapters 8

Korey: Chapters 18 and 21

Week 15: Wrap-up

Apr 27: Reparations and other fixes

Apr 29: The Big Picture

FINAL EXAM DUE BY NOON TUESDAY, MAY 4, 2004 IN MY MAILBOX, OR MY OFFICE.

Statement of Student Responsibility

I state that I have read and understand the course requirements as laid out in the syllabus for this course. I take responsibility for completing the assignments as required and take responsibility should I fail to comply with the guidelines for the course. I agree to abide by the Code of Student Conduct and understand that failure to do so will result in university academic misconduct proceedings.

I understand that if I need assistance with materials throughout the term the instructor is available to guide me, but that ultimately I am responsible for my own work, and for notifying the instructor if I do have problems. Finally, I understand that courses at the university are taught at a level which requires considerable work, and I am prepared to take on that responsibility.

Signature

Date

Print name: _____

Hometown: _____

Year in School: _____ Major/Minor: _____

E-mail Address: _____

Phone #: _____

Prior PoliSci/Govt Courses (H.S. and College): _____

Prior Political Experience: _____

Reason for taking Course: _____

Course Expectations: _____

Special Considerations (i.e. disability, graduating senior): _____

Interesting Tidbit About Myself: _____
