Human Rights in Theory and Practice: 
Political Science 4028

Summer “B” Term, July 7 - August 7, 2009
Class Meets: MUEN E417, Monday-Friday, 11:00am - 12:35pm
Instructor: Eamon Aloyo
Email: aloyo@colorado.edu
Office Hours: Monday and Wednesday 12:35-1:35pm
Office: Ketchum 5B

Human rights are increasingly the contested language through which claims of justice are made, victims denounce wrongs, and practitioners pursue reform. Despite the pervasive use of human rights discourse, the concept of human rights, and its attempted implementation, are still deeply controversial. This class provides an introduction to and explores two broad aspects of those controversies. The first examines some of the leading theories and theoretical dilemmas of human rights while the second turns to applications. It aims to introduce the main debates concerning how human rights are theoretically conceived, if they can truly be universal given cultural diversity, how and why they are criticized, and whose responsibility it is to secure them. Applications include foreign policy, humanitarian intervention, global poverty, women’s rights, LGBTQ rights, environmental issues, punishment, and international law. Some of the main causes of abuses of human rights, who benefits from these abuses, and which are intentional or unintentional, will be examined.

There are thus four main goals to this class, including
1. Critically examining theories of human rights
2. Critically examining some important contemporary human rights issues
3. Gaining a better understanding of the human costs of abuses of human rights
4. Improving your writing skills

Expectations and Grading

Readings and Reading Quizzes: You are expected to have carefully read all assigned readings before each class. The reading load is heavy, so be prepared to spend probably at least three hours every day, outside of class, on class related work. There will be brief reading quizzes sporadically throughout the semester, accounting for 20% of your final grade, and these can be given any day without notice.

Journals: You are expected to keep a journal for every day we have a reading assignment due, and these are explained in more detail in another document.
Journals amount to 20% of your final grade. These will only be accepted in hard copy handed in during class, and will not be accepted late or via email.

Class Participation: You are expected to participate regularly. Much of the class will be discussions of the readings, and the 20% of the final grade that is allocated to discussion is based on quality as much as quantity.

Final Paper: An 8-10 page final paper is due in class on our last day, and at least a 5 page draft is due one week before. This is 40% of your total grade. In this paper you would ideally offer an original argument, though you may also critically assess any area of human rights that interests you. Before beginning to write, you must clear you paper topic with me. Throughout the class I suggest keeping in mind which topic(s) seem most interesting or problematic so you can more easily choose a topic, and you may even want to jot down ideas for the paper as they come to you. More specific guidelines will later be provided.

Attendance: Attendance is mandatory, though everyone is permitted one absence without penalty. Because reading quizzes, journals, and class participation (totaling 60% of your grade) can only be earned by attending class, the more classes you miss the worse your final grade will be.

Readings
All readings that are not required books will be distributed via the internet. Additionally, a reserve copy of Patrick Hayden’s (Ed.) The Philosophy of Human Rights is available at Norlin Library. You should bring each day’s assigned readings to class.

Required Books

Optional Books:
2. Levi, Primo. 1958. If This is a Man (aka Survival In Auschwitz). Multiple Publishers
Readings and Due Dates

Levi, Primo. 1958 [2000]. If This Is A Man. Everyman’s Library: London. 6 pages / day


1. Introduction, Syllabus and Journal Review, Tuesday July 7

2. Introduction to Human Rights and the Importance of Writing, Wednesday, July 8

3. Rights and Human Rights: What are They and Why do they Matter?, Thursday July 9

4. Capability and Institutional Accounts of Human Rights, Friday July 10

5. The Universal Declaration Model and Its Justification, Monday July 13

6. *Explaining Violations of Human Rights, Tuesday July 14*

7. *Universalism and Cultural Relativism, Wednesday July 15*

8. *Challenges to Rights and Human Rights, Thursday July 16*
   a. Marx, Karl. 1844. “On The Jewish Question.” In Hayden (Ed.)

9. *Film, Friday July 17*
   a. To be announced

10. *Types of Human Rights, Monday July 20*


11. **Duties and Obligations, Tuesday July 21**


12. **Primo Levi and Tracy Kidder Discussion, Wednesday July 22**

a. Be prepared to discuss the first half of both books

b. Bring to class at least five questions for each book

13. **Genocide, Humanitarian Intervention and Human Rights, Thursday July 23**


14. **Sudan Case Study, Friday July 24**

a. Guest Lecture by Scott Wisor. Readings to be announced.

15. **Foreign Policy and the Challenge of Westphalian Sovereignty, Monday July 27**


16. **International Law, The International Criminal Court (ICC), and Human Rights, Tuesday July 28**


17. Punishment Dilemmas For Abuses of Human Rights, Wednesday July 29

18. Women and Human Rights, Thursday July 30
   a. Guest lecture by Ozge Celik. Readings to be announced.

19. LGBTQ Issues and Human Rights, Friday July 31
   a. **Paper Draft Due.** Peer review of paper draft (at least 5 pages is required)

20. Democracy, the Environment, and Human Rights, Monday August 3
   c. Hayward, Tim. 2007. 'Human Rights Vs. Emissions Rights'. Ethics and International Affairs. Vol. 21, No. 4

21. Labor and Human Rights, Tuesday August 4

22. Torture and Human Rights, Wednesday August 5

23. Reforms, Thursday August 6

b. Instead of a journal, write and bring to class a single spaced one page proposal for individuals, NGOs, corporations, states, international organizations, or another actor that would realistically better defend human rights and explain how this would work and why.

24. Primo Levi and Tracy Kidder Discussion, Friday August 7

a. Be prepared to discuss all of both books
b. Bring to class at least five questions for each book
c. Final Paper Due
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Students and faculty each have responsibility for maintaining an appropriate learning environment. Students who fail to adhere to such behavioral standards may be subject to discipline. Faculty have the professional responsibility to treat all students with understanding, dignity and respect, to guide classroom discussion and to set reasonable limits on the manner in which they and their students express opinions. Professional courtesy and sensitivity are especially important with respect to individuals and topics dealing with differences of race, culture, religion, politics, sexual orientation, gender variance, and nationalities.

Class rosters are provided to the instructor with the student's legal name. I will gladly honor your request to address you by an alternate name or gender pronoun. Please advise me of this preference early in the semester so that I may make appropriate changes to my records. See polices at http://www.colorado.edu/policies/classbehavior.html and at http://www.colorado.edu/studentaffairs/judicialaffairs/code.html#student_code.

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