POLI 122: The Politics of Human Rights
Fall 2013

Professor: Maureen Feeley
Office: SSB #383
E-mail: mfeeley@ucsd.edu
Phone: 858.534-5605

Class Meetings: MWF, 10:00 – 10:50
Lecture Hall: Center Hall #109
Office Hours: MWF, after class, 10:50 – 11:30; Mondays, 11:30 – 1:30; and by appt.

Teaching Assistants:
Elaine Denny
E-mail: ekdenny@ucsd.edu
Heidi Hall
E-mail: h1hall@ucsd.edu

Office: IRPS #1410
Office Hours: Mondays, 3 – 5 p.m.
Office: SSB #343
Office Hours: Thursdays, 11 – 1 p.m.

Course materials are available on TED at https://ted.ucsd.edu. From the main TED page for poli122, click on “Content” in the upper left menu. This will bring you to the course syllabus, research guides, rubrics, TII.com and PeerMark access.

Rights are inescapably political because they tacitly imply a conflict between a rights holder and a rights ‘withholder,’ some authority against which the rights holder can make justified claims...Human rights exist to adjudicate these conflicts, to define the irreducible minimum beyond which group and collective claims must not go in constraining the lives of individuals.

--Michael Ignatieff, "Human Rights as Politics"

Course Description:
What do we mean by “international human rights”? Are these rights universal? How are they legitimated by victims and their advocates? Under what conditions have human rights been most systematically violated since the drafting of the United Nations Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR) in 1948? Who were the primary violators, and who were the victims? What types of international, state, and/or local institutions have been most effective in addressing these violations, and why? What have been, or should have been, the respective roles of international institutions, states, citizens and non-governmental organizations and actors in promoting international human rights? Why should “we” (in the United States) care about promoting human rights abroad, or should we? What are the trade-offs between national sovereignty and international action in compelling respect for human rights?

These are some of the central questions that we will explore over the course of the quarter through select case studies of human rights abuse and redress since the drafting of the UDHR. For each case study, we will consider the following questions: How, and why, did demands for human rights protection first emerge? Who were its primary advocates? What types of resources did these advocates mobilize in their defense, or in the defense of others? Were their claims valid? What was the response of state actors? What was the response of international actors? What types of institutions were activated or introduced at local, state, and/or international levels to address international human rights violations? Were these institutions effective? Why, or why not? Should different actions have been taken to address abuses? Why, or why not?

As we consider these questions in light of empirical evidence from our case studies, the course has four central objectives: (1) to familiarize ourselves with dominant international human rights conventions, policies, and institutions; (2) to think critically about the impact of human rights claims in our world, and whether (and how) these claims are justified; (3) to compare and critique patterns of abuse and redress over time, and across regions of the world; and (4) to critically evaluate contemporary human rights theories and practices from this empirically-grounded perspective.
Course Requirements:

Summary:
(1) Class participation: peer instruction/clickers 10%
(2) Policy proposals due: week 3 5%
  • E-copy due to TED by 11:59 p.m., Thursday, 17 October
  • Hard copy due by end of class, Friday, 18 October
  • Both deadlines must be met to avoid minus 1/3 of grade for each 24 hr. period late.
(3) Midterm exam: week 4, Friday, 25 October (in class) 15%
(4) First draft policy brief (1500 word min.) to TED: week 7, Wed., 11/13 by 11:59 p.m. 5%
  • These can be uploaded any time prior to deadline, but no late papers can be accepted.
(5) Feedback to two peers due to TED: week 8, Monday, 11/18 by 11:59 p.m. 5%
  • These can be uploaded any time prior to deadline, but no late papers can be accepted.
(6) Final policy papers (8 – 10 pgs.) due: week 9: Monday, 25 November 35%
  • Hard copy due by end of class 11/25 (minus 1/3 grade for each 24 period late)
  • E-copy due to TED by 11:59 pm on 11/25 (minus 1/3 grade for each 24 period late)
(7) Final exam: Friday, 13 December, 8 – 11 a.m. 25%

Exams:
There will be two exams in this course: a midterm and a final. The midterm exam will constitute 15% of your final grade and the final exam is worth 25%. For both exams, you will be given a list of key concepts or terms drawn from course readings, lectures, and/or films, and you will be asked to define the term, analyze its significance for human rights, and provide an empirical example of this significance. For the (cumulative) final, but not the midterm, you will also have an essay question. Study guides for your midterm and final exams will be posted on TED the week prior to exams. (See course schedule below for exact dates.) Please note that exams cannot be made up without exceedingly well-documented evidence of an emergency, or prior approval by the professor.

Research Project:
In addition to midterm and final exams, this course also requires that you research and write a short (8 - 10 page, double-spaced, 12 pt. font, 1 inch margins) policy brief focused on a specific human rights violation of your choice. (The page count begins after your cover page.) For the purposes of this assignment, you will become a policy analyst employed by a human rights organization of your choice. This organization can either be a governmental organization (i.e. U.S. State Department), an intergovernmental organization (i.e. U.N. organization or agency), or a nongovernmental organization (i.e. Amnesty International, Human Rights Watch, Human Rights First, etc.). You will need to focus on a specific human rights violation or question, and reference (either in a footnote or in the text of your paper) the specific international human rights covenant and article that you are investigating (i.e. ICCPR, Article 8.3 (a) “No one shall be required to perform forced or compulsory labour”). You may use any of the international human rights covenants that we cover in this course. This should help focus and ground your study in a specific problem, as well as better familiarize you with specific human rights conventions, one of the course goals. This research assignment is designed to give you the opportunity to engage in more in-depth analysis of a human rights problem or question of particular interest to you, further hone your critical thinking and writing skills in defending the human rights position(s) you put forth, and enable you to investigate a case study not covered in the course. Because of the size of the class, and the importance of maintaining standards of fairness for all students, late assignments will be penalized one-third of a grade for each 24-hour period that they are late. Please note that there are two deadlines for the research proposal and final policy paper: (1) submission of hard copy at the beginning of class, and (2) submission of e-version to TII.com via TED (go to course content page). In order to avoid a late penalty, both parts of the assignment must be submitted by the deadlines. If you have any questions, please consult one of your TAs or me. Please also note that e-mailed versions of assignments cannot be accepted under any circumstances. Detailed guides and a grading rubric for your policy paper are posted on the course content page of TED. The research guide can be found here: http://libguides.ucsd.edu/poli122. If you need help narrowing your topic, or if you run into problems finding information on the topic you’ve chosen, please consult one of the TAs, a reference librarian at Geisel, or me.
**Class Participation:**
As an upper-division political science course, you are expected to come to class meetings prepared to discuss central questions, puzzles and concerns that arise from course readings assigned for that day. The most recent academic literature on teaching and learning has documented a strong causal relationship between active participation/discussion of course content and student learning. The risk of very large courses like ours is that students feel anonymous as they are deprived of an opportunity to meaningfully participate. In order to facilitate discussion given the size of our class, I will use a relatively new pedagogy, “Peer Instruction,” together with clicker technology, to facilitate both small and large group discussions. The academic literature on teaching and learning finds significantly increased learning gains among students who have participated in this pedagogical approach with the use of clickers.

We will begin experimenting with peer instruction and clickers during week 1, but the “official” counting period will not begin until week 3. Questions will be geared toward enhancing your understanding of course readings, lectures and films, and will help you prepare for your exams and your policy paper projects. In general, I will ask two different types of questions. One type will focus on a central point from your readings, or a point covered in lectures or course films. Pedagogically, these questions are used to strengthen our critical reading and thinking skills, and ensure that central concepts are generally understood before moving to a new topic. A second type of question will be a “polling” question, asking you to take a stand on a particular human rights problem or issue. These questions will be used to stimulate class discussion on different topics. The focus of these types of questions is also to hone our critical thinking skills and, specifically, our ability to articulate persuasive arguments to support our positions, based on logic and compelling evidence. For this second type of question, you will receive full points (1 pt.) simply for participating. For the first type of question, you will receive full points (1 pt.) for getting the question correct and .8 points simply for participating. In assessing your grade for this component of the course, you’re allowed to miss 20%. So, for example, if we ask 40 questions total over the quarter, and you receive 30 points, you will still get an “A” (20% of 40 is 32, and 30/32 = 93.75 = 94). But, if you have 35 points, you will get an A+. That is, the extra points will still count in your favor.

**Films:**
In addition to texts, articles, lectures, and class discussion, this course will also use film to deepen our understanding of the politics of human rights. I will often show short film excerpts in class to highlight both theoretical points and their empirical applications. A significant body of literature also provides evidence of the value of film to deepen understanding and retention. If you would like to watch these films in their entirety, all are on reserve for the class at the Film and Video Library at Geisel.

**E-mail policy:**
Please use the designated forums on the TED discussion board for all course and assignment related questions so that everyone can benefit from information exchanged. The TAs and I will monitor the board M-F, but also feel free to help each other out, especially on weekends. Due to the size of our class, this will be the most efficient way for us to communicate. Because of the volume of email we all receive, let’s try to reserve this for personal emergencies, etc. Instead, I’m always available after class and we’ll keep office hours 4 days/week (M, W, Th, F), so let’s try to get to know each other in this way. Also, due to family obligations on weekends, I will not have Internet access after 5 pm on Fridays until Monday mornings. If you should need to urgently reach me on the weekend, you can call me at home: 858.552.9264. If you do need to send email M-F, please be sure to put the course number (poli122) in the subject line so that I can quickly locate it. Thanks!

**Course Text:**

This is available from the UCSD bookstore, but feel free to purchase it independently on-line or elsewhere. In addition, multiple copies of the text have been placed on print reserves at Geisel Library. If you choose not to purchase the DeLaet book, and experience problems obtaining a reserve copy, please let me know. All additional course readings (articles, etc.) are available (free!) via electronic reserves from Geisel Library.
Course Schedule:

Week 0:

**Friday, 26 September:** General Introduction to the Course;
Readings: None.

Week 1:

**Monday, 30 September:** What Do We Mean By Human Rights?
Readings:

**Wednesday, 2 October:** Are Human Rights Universal?
Discussion: Are international human rights universal?
- DeLaet, Chapter 3, “Are Human Rights Universal?” pp. 44 – 61 (17 pgs.).

**Friday, 4 October:** Research Tutorial
Annelise Sklar, Political Science Research Librarian at Geisel, visits for research tutorial. If you have a laptop you can bring to class, please do, and sign onto the UCSD-PROTECTED network.
Readings:
1. Read through policy paper guides and generate ideas for tutorial.

Week 2:

**Monday, 7 October:** The Development of International Human Rights Law: Does International Human Rights Law Matter?

**Wednesday, 9 October:** Political and Civil Rights: The Politics of Terrorism and Torture
Film Excerpts: *Las Madres*
Readings:

**Friday, 11 October:** The Politics of Terrorism and Torture: Argentina, Chile and the United States

Week 3:

**Monday, 14 October:** State Repression and Resistance in Latin America, and U.S. Foreign Policy in the Southern Cone
Film Excerpts: *School of the Americas*
Readings:

**Wednesday, 16 October:** The Domestic and International Politics of Apartheid in South Africa
*Upload e-version of policy proposal no later than 11:59 p.m. on Thursday, 17 Oct. (1/3 grade penalty for each 24 hr. period late).*

**Film Excerpts:** *Have you heard from Johannesburg?*

Readings:


**Friday, 18 October:** The Domestic and International Politics of Apartheid in South Africa


**Week 4:**

**Monday, 21 October:** International Politics of Apartheid in South Africa

**Film Excerpts:** *Have you heard from Johannesburg?*

Readings:


**Wednesday, 23 October:**

Readings:


**Friday, 25 October:** *Midterm Exam*

Readings: None.

**Week 5:**

**Monday, 28 October:** Human Rights as Collective Rights: The U.N. and the 1994 Genocide in Rwanda

**Film Excerpts:** *Ghosts of Rwanda*

Readings:


**Wednesday, 30 October:** Top Down Promotion of Human Rights: Int’l Organizations and States

**Film Excerpts:** *Ghosts of Rwanda*

Discussion: Could the 1994 Rwandan genocide have been prevented?
Readings:

**Friday, November 1:** Top Down Promotion of Human Rights: Int’l Organizations and States - Syria

Week 6:
**Monday, 4 November:** International Politics of Genocide: Rwanda and Darfur Compared

**Film Excerpts:** *The Politics of Genocide in Darfur*

**Readings:**

**Wednesday, 6 November:** Transitional Justice: Punitive Justice and Criminal Tribunals

**Film excerpt:** YouTube clips of ICTR and ICC; film excerpts TRC, South Africa

**Discussion:** Punitive vs. Restorative Justice

**Readings:**
- DeLaet, Chapter 9, “Punitive Justice and Human Rights,” pp. 159 – 167; 170 - 184 (22 pgs.).

**Friday, 8 November:** Transitional Justice: Restorative Justice and Truth Commissions

**Film excerpts:** TRC, South Africa

**Readings:**

Week 7:
**Monday, 11 November:** University closed for Veterans’ Day

**Wednesday, 13 November:** Economic, Social and Cultural Rights: The Right to Development as a Human Right?

*First draft of policy paper (1500 word minimum) due to TED no later than 11:59 p.m. Please do not miss this deadline. Late assignments cannot be accepted.* At midnight, the submission board “transforms” into a peer review board, and TII.com will randomly assign all students who have submitted drafts two peers’ papers to review. *If you do not submit a first draft, your paper will not be part of this process, so you will also miss out on peer review. Please do not miss this deadline (or the next one – Monday, 18 Nov.). They are the most important deadlines in the class.*

**Film Excerpt:** Poverty and Human Rights

**Readings:**
1. International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights
   [http://www.ohchr.org/EN/ProfessionalInterest/Pages/CESCR.aspx](http://www.ohchr.org/EN/ProfessionalInterest/Pages/CESCR.aspx)
2. DeLaet, Chapter 6, “Economic and Social Rights in a World of Sovereign States,” pp. 102 – 111; 116 -117 (10 pgs.).
3. Declaration on the Right to Development:
**Friday, 15 November:**
*Access to Health Care As a Human Right? Patents, Profits, and People*

**Film Excerpt:** *Health for Sale.* (2007)

**Readings:**

---

**Week 8:**

**Monday, 18 November:** *Economic Globalization and Human Rights: The Role of MNCs*

*Peer review comments due to two of your peers via TED no later than 11:59 p.m. this evening. Please do not miss this deadline. (5% of course grade…)*

*Skype with Alta Gracia, Dominican Republic*

**Readings:**
2. Case study materials on Alta Gracia:
   - 2 -pg. Word doc. on WebCT (course content): “AGBackgroundorgfinal.doc”

---

**Wednesday, 20 November:** *Human Trafficking and Human Rights*

**Film Excerpts:**

---

**Friday, 22 November:** *Human Trafficking and Human Rights*

*Skype call with NGO working on human trafficking in Thailand.*


---

**Week 9:**

**Monday, 25 November:** *Human Rights and the Right to a Healthy Environment*

*Please submit hard copies of policy papers no later than the end of class today and e-versions to TII.com on TED no later than 11:59 p.m. (Remember that both deadlines need to be met to avoid late penalties, and that you can always submit early.)*

**Film Excerpts:** *Crude Impact, 2006*

**Readings:**
**Wednesday, 27 November:** Children’s Rights as Human Rights (We can discuss this being an optional meeting, given the Thanksgiving Holiday.)

**Film Excerpts:** *I Am a Child*

**Readings:**
1. United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child:

**Friday, 29 November:** No class: Thanksgiving Holiday

---

**Week 10:**

**Monday, 2 December:** Contemporary Challenges in a Post 9/11 World

**Readings:**
1. Donnelly, Chapter 10, “Terrorism and Human Rights,” pp. 211 – 221 (10 pgs.).

**Wednesday, 4 December:** Promoting Human Rights from the Bottom Up

- DeLaet, Chapter 11, “Promoting Human Rights from the Bottom Up,” pp. 204 – 216 (13 pgs.).

**Friday, 6 December:** Where Do/Should We Go From Here? Human Rights in the 21st Century

**Readings:**
2. DeLaet, Conclusions, pp. 219 – 222 (3 pgs.)

**Final Exam:** Friday, 13 December, 8 – 11 a.m.

---

**Further reading on course topics:**

Listed below are additional readings you may want to consult if you have specific interests on some of the topics we cover in class. Please let me, or your TAs know, if you’d like additional recommendations, or if you find materials you think would be helpful to add to this list.

**Further reading: Weeks 0 – 2:**

**Further reading: Weeks 3 and 4:**
2. National Security Archives: Chile www.gwu.edu/~nsarchiv/latin_america/chile.htm
3. See also documents and summary of the role of the U.S. in the military coup:
   www.gwu.edu/~nsarchiv/NSAEBB/NSAEBB8/nsaebb8i.htm
Further reading: Week 5
2. Philip Gourevitch, *We Wish to Inform You That Tomorrow We Will Be Killed With Our Families: Stories from Rwanda*.

Further reading: Week 6
13. Samantha Power, *A Problem from Hell: America and the Age of Genocide*

**Further reading: Week 7**


**Further Reading: Week 8**


**Further reading: Week 9**


**Further reading: Week 10**


**Additional recent and helpful texts you may want to consult:**