POLI 122: The Politics of Human Rights
Fall 2016

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Course materials are available on TritonEd at https://TritonEd.ucsd.edu. From the main TritonEd page for poli122, click on “Content” in the upper left menu. This will bring you to the course syllabus, lecture slides, 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 Universal 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’ll 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? Why, or why not? 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.
Summary of Course Requirements:

(1) Class participation: peer instruction/clickers  
(2) Human rights memos (4 total - one paragraph each): 10/1; 10/15; 10/29; 11/12)  
(3) Policy proposals due: week 3 (both deadlines must be met to avoid late penalty)  
  • Hard copy due by end of class, Thursday, 10/12  
  • E-copy due to TritonEd by 11:59 p.m., Thursday, 10/12  
(4) Midterm exam: week 4, Thursday, 10/20 (in class)  
(5) First draft policy brief (1500 word min.) to TritonEd: week 6, Thurs., 11/3 by 11:59 p.m.  
  • Please upload early: PeerMark features on TritonEd do not allow late uploads.  
(6) Feedback to two peers due to TritonEd: week 7, Thurs., 11/10 by 11:59 p.m.  
  • Please upload early: PeerMark features on TritonEd do not allow late uploads.  
(7) Final policy papers due: week 8 (both deadlines must be met to avoid late penalty)  
  • Hard copy due by end of class 11/17 (minus 5 pts. for each 24-hr period late)  
  • E-copy due to TritonEd by 11:59 pm on 11/17 (minus 5 pts. for each 24-hr period late)  
(8) Final exam: Friday, 9 December, 7 - 10 p.m.  

Exams:  
There are two exams in this course: a midterm and a final. Both include short answer identification questions and an in-class essay. The midterm covers weeks 1 - 4, and the final exam is cumulative. Please note that exams cannot be made up without well-documented evidence of an emergency, or prior approval by the instructor.

Research Project:  
This course also requires that you research and write a short (8 - 10 page, double-spaced, 12 pt. font, 1 inch margins) a 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. 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 the 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. For your case study, you may choose any country in the world (including the United States), or a state, province, or city within this country. The only requirement is that you choose a case study not covered in the course and that you have not already written about previously. You will need to research both the organization you represent and the organization(s) you target (i.e., especially the leader(s) of these organizations to whom your policy brief is addressed) in order to better understand their organizational histories, perspectives, and policy stances.

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 5 pts. 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 by the end of class, and (2) submission of e-version to TritonEd (course content page) before midnight that evening. 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. If you have missed a deadline, please bring a hard copy to class or to my office as soon as possible after the deadline, and attach a note explaining the extenuating circumstance. A detailed guide and grading rubric are posted to TritonEd, course content page, and a guide to library resources can be found here: http://ucsd.libguides.com/humanrights. 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. Evidence-based research on teaching and learning has documented a strong causal relationship between active participation/discussion and student learning. The risk of large courses like ours is that students miss out on the opportunity to meaningfully discuss course materials, and thus learn less. For this reason, I will use a relatively new pedagogy in Political Science, “Peer Instruction” (used with clickers), developed by Harvard physicist, Eric Mazur, to facilitate both small and large group discussions. Research has documented statistically significant learning gains for students who have used Peer Instruction (PI).

We will begin experimenting with PI and clickers during week 1, but the “official” counting period will not begin until week 2 (Oct. 4). This should give you time to find a clicker to borrow or purchase (can buy used online and sell back after the course). Questions will be geared toward enhancing your understanding of course readings and lectures, and will help you prepare for exams and policy paper projects. In general, we will ask two types of questions: factual and discussion questions. Factual questions focus on a central point from your readings, or a point covered in lectures. Pedagogically, these questions are used to strengthen critical reading and thinking skills, and ensure that central concepts are generally understood before moving to a new topic. One point is given for correct answers, and .7 for participating. Discussion questions ask that you take a stand on a particular human rights problem or issue using course materials as evidence. These questions are used to hone critical thinking and speaking skills, and specifically, your ability to put forth persuasive arguments based on logic and compelling evidence. For discussion questions, you will receive full points (1 pt) simply for participating. In assessing your grade for this component of the course, you’re allowed to miss 20%. This should provide sufficient buffer in case you forget your clicker, or you need to miss class for whatever reason. So, for example, if we ask 40 questions total over the quarter, and you receive 30 points, you can still earn an “A” (20% of 40 is 32, and 30/32 = 93.75%).

**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 empirical case studies. A significant body of literature provides evidence of the value of film to deepen understanding and retention of course materials. If you’d like to watch any of these films in their entirety, they are on reserve for the class at the Film and Video Library at Geisel.

**E-mail policy:**
Please use the designated forums on the TritonEd 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 email for personal emergencies, etc.** Instead, I’m always available after class and we’ll keep office hours 4 days/week, so let’s try to get to know each other 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, however, 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:**
- The book 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, and **the first three chapters have been scanned into e-reserves to allow you time to purchase the book.** 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: https://reserves.ucsd.edu.
Course Schedule:
*Note: Although it is rare that readings are revised during the quarter, occasionally I may do this to respond to a current human rights event, or important emergent interests in the class. If there is a revision, I will always provide a minimum advanced notice of one week, and notify everyone in class and by email.

**Week 0:**

**Thursday, 22 September:** Course Introduction: What Do We Mean By Human Rights?

**Readings:** None.

**Week 1:**

**Tuesday, 27 September:** What Do We Mean By Human Rights? Are Human Rights Universal?


**Discussion:** Are human rights universal?

**Readings:**


**Thursday, 29 September:** Are Human Rights Universal? (Cont.) The Development of International Human Rights Law: Does It Matter? (First human rights memo due by Sat., 10/1, 11:59 pm to TritonEd.)

**Discussion:** Does international human rights law matter?

**Readings:**


**Week 2:**

**Tuesday, 4 October:** The Development of International Human Rights Law: Does International Human Rights Law Matter? (Second human rights memo due by Sat., 11/8, 11:59 pm to TritonEd.)

**Discussion:** Does international human rights law matter?

*Political Science Research Librarian Annelise Sklar visits. Please bring your laptops and log-on to the UCSD-PROTECTED network for an in-class research workshop.*

**Readings:**

1. Read through policy paper guides and generate ideas for tutorial.
2. Read 2 – 3 policy papers from previous poli122 students (on TritonEd), and come to class with 1 – 2 ideas for your paper to discuss with seatmates.

**Thursday, 6 October:** Political and Civil Rights, and National Security: The Politics of Terrorism and Torture: Argentina, Chile and the United States

**Film Excerpts:** *Las Madres*
Readings:

**Week 3:**

**Tuesday, 11 October:** State Repression and Resistance in Latin America, and U.S. Foreign Policy in the Southern Cone
Readings:

**Thursday, 13 October:** The Domestic and International Politics of Apartheid in South Africa
*Hard copy of research proposal due at end of class. Submit e-version to TritonEd by 11:59 p.m.*
(Remember that both deadlines need to be met to avoid late penalties, and that you can always submit early.) Midterm review sheet posted by midnight, Friday, 10/13.
**Film Excerpts:** Have you heard from Johannesburg?
Readings:

**Week 4:**

**Tuesday, 18 October:** International Politics of Apartheid in South Africa
**Film Excerpts:** Have you heard from Johannesburg? (cont.)
Readings:

**Thursday, 20 October:** Midterm Exam
Policy proposals handed back as you submit your exams.

**Week 5:**

**Tuesday, 25 October:** Human Rights as Collective Rights: The U.N. and the 1994 Genocide in Rwanda *(Third human rights memo due by Sat., 10/29, 11:59 pm to TritonEd.)*
**Film Excerpts:** *Ghosts of Rwanda*
Readings:

**Thursday, 27 October:** Top Down Promotion of Human Rights: International Organizations and States

Discussion: Could the 1994 Rwandan genocide have been prevented?

Readings:


**Week 6:**

**Tuesday, 1 November:** International Politics of Genocide: Rwanda and Darfur Compared

Film Excerpts: *The Politics of Genocide in Darfur*

Readings:


**Thursday, 3 November:** Transitional Justice: Punitive Justice and Criminal Tribunals or Restorative Justice and Truth Commissions?

*First draft of policy paper (1500 word minimum)* Please upload early/do not miss this deadline: PeerMark features on TritonEd do not allow late uploads. 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 – Thursday, 17 Nov.).* They are the most important deadlines in the class.

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

Discussion: Punitive vs. Restorative Justice

Readings:

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

**Week 7:**

**Tuesday, 8 November:** Economic, Social and Cultural Rights: The Right to Development as a Human Right? (Election Day – Don’t forget to vote!)

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.).

**Thursday, 10 November:** Access to Health Care as a Human Right? Patents, Profits, and People

Film Excerpt: Health for Sale. (2007)

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

(Fourth human rights memo due by Sat., 11/12, 11:59 pm to TritonEd.)

Readings:


**Week 8:**

**Tuesday, 15 November:** Economic Globalization and Human Rights: Labor Rights and the Role of MNCs

Readings:


**Thursday, 17 November: Human Rights and Human Trafficking**

Submit hard copies of policy papers at the end of class today, and e-versions to TII.com on TritonEd 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.)


**Week 9:**

**Tuesday, 22 November:**

**Human Rights and the Right to a Healthy Environment**

Film Excerpts: Crude Impact, 2006

Discussion: Oil, human rights and the environment

Readings:


**Thursday, 24 November:** Thanksgiving Holiday (Bask in the glory of having submitted your policy brief before Thanksgiving break! 😊)

**Week 10:**

**Tuesday, 29 November:** Children’s Rights as Human Rights

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

**Readings:**


**Thursday, 1 December:** Where Do/Should We Go From Here? Int’l Human Rights in the Early 21st Century

**Final exam study guide posted Wednesday, 30 November by midnight.**

**Readings:**

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

**Final Exam:** Friday, 9 December, 7-10 p.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. Thank you!

**Further reading: Weeks 0 – 2:**


**Further reading: Weeks 3 and 4:**

2. National Security Archives: Chile [www.gwu.edu/~nsarchiv/latin_america/chile.htm](http://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](http://www.gwu.edu/~nsarchiv/NSAEBB/NSAEBB8/nsaebb8i.htm)

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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


7. SaveDarfur: http://www.savedarfur.org/


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: