POLI 122: The Politics of Human Rights
Spring Quarter 2012

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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, turnitin.com and PeerMark access.

E-mail policy: Please use the designated forums on the TED discussion board for all course and assignment related questions. Given the size of the class, this will be the most efficient way for us to communicate. Please also note that due to childcare responsibilities, I will not have Internet access on weekends (Friday after 5 p.m. – Sunday.) If you should urgently need to reach me on the weekend, you can call me at home: 858.552.9264

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) Midterm Exam: week 4 20%
(3) Research Project: (See policy project handouts for detailed guidelines on these components.)
   (1) Research proposal (one paragraph, single-spaced) (week 3: Thurs., 19 April) 5%
   (2) Summary (150 words), annotated bib. 5 sources (week 6: Tues., 8 May) (pass/fail) 3%
   (3) Peer review of summary/annotated bib. (week 6: Thurs., 10 May) (pass/fail) 2%
   (4) First draft (4 – 5 double-spaced pgs.) (week 8: Tues., 22 May) (pass/fail) 3%
   (5) Peer review of first draft (week 8: Thurs., 24 May) (pass/fail) 2%
   (6) Final research project (6 - 8 double-spaced pgs.) (week 9: Thurs., 31 May) 30%
(4) Final Exam: Monday, 11 June, 3 – 6 p.m. 25%

Exams:
There will be two exams in this course: a midterm and a final. The midterm exam will constitute 20% 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 a short 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 (6 - 8 page, double-spaced, 12 pt. font, 1 inch margins) policy brief focused on a specific human rights violation of your choice. 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 problem and 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 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 turnitin.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 about this, 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. On these guides you will find links to sample policy briefs (e.g. http://www.brookings.edu/series/Brookings-Policy-Brief.aspx), as well as student published policy briefs on Prospect, UCSD’s undergraduate journal of international affairs (http://prospectjournal.ucsd.edu). The political science research library at Geisel, Annelise Sklar, has also put together a terrific research guide and materials for your projects: 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 2, 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 knowledge of the politics of human rights. I will often show short film excerpts in class to highlight both theoretical points and their empirical applications. If you would like to watch these films in their entirety, they have been digitized by the library and can be accessed via: http://reserves.ucsd.edu/eres/documentview.aspx?cid=19021&associd=88040#. The password for the course is: MF122. (The password is not case sensitive.) If you have problems accessing the course link off-campus (or connecting to the UCSD network), go to: http://libraries.ucsd.edu/services/remote.html. (You need to be connected to the UCSD network access the course reserve page.)

Course Texts:
There is only one book required for this course:


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 any problems obtaining a reserve copy, please let me know. All additional course readings (articles, etc.) are available via electronic reserves from Geisel Library.

Course Schedule:
Week 1:

**Tuesday, 3 April**: General Introduction to the Course:
Readings: None.

**Thursday, 5 April**: What Do We Mean By Human Rights? Are Human Rights Universal?
Discussion: Are international human rights universal?
Readings:


Further reading:

Week 2:

**Tuesday, 10 April:** The Development of International Human Rights Law: Does International Human Rights Law Matter?

_World Rights Librarian Annelise Sklar visits. Please bring your laptops and log-on to the UCSD protected network for an in-class research workshop._

Discussion: Does international human rights law matter?

Readings:


Further Reading:


**Thursday, 12 April:** Political and Civil Rights, and National Security: The Politics of Terrorism and Torture: Argentina, Chile and the United States

_Film Excerpts: Las Madres_

Readings:

1. International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights [http://www2.ohchr.org/english/law/ccpr.htm](http://www2.ohchr.org/english/law/ccpr.htm)
5. Begin reading Margaret E. Keck and Kathryn Sikkink, Chapter 3, “Human Rights Advocacy Networks in Latin America,” _Activists Beyond Borders_, pp. 79 – 102 (23 pgs.).

Further Reading:


Week 3:

**Tuesday, 17 April:** State Repression and Resistance in Latin America, and U.S. Foreign Policy in the Southern Cone

_Film Excerpts: School of the Americas_

Readings:

1. Finish reading: Margaret E. Keck and Kathryn Sikkink, Chapter 3, “Human Rights Advocacy Networks in Latin America,” _Activists Beyond Borders_, pp. 102 – 120 (18 pgs.)

Further reading:

1. National Security Archives: Chile [www.gwu.edu/~nsarchiv/latin_america/chile.htm](http://www.gwu.edu/~nsarchiv/latin_america/chile.htm)
2. 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)
4. Lars Schoultz, “U. S. Foreign Policy and Human Rights Violations in Latin America: A
Comparative Analysis of Foreign Aid Distributions,” Comparative Politics, v. 13, n. 2,
January 1981, pp. 149-170 (19 pgs.).

Thursday, 19 April: The Domestic and International Politics of Apartheid in South Africa
Hard copy of research proposal due at beginning of class (1/3 grade penalty for each 24 hr. period late).
Submit e-version to TED by midnight (1/3 grade penalty for each 24 hr. period late).
Midterm review sheet posted Friday, 20 April by midnight.
Film Excerpts: Bishop Desmond Tutu at UCSD.
Readings:
1. Peter Ackermann and Jack DuVall, Chapter 9, “South Africa: Campaign Against Apartheid,”
in A Force More Powerful: A Century of Nonviolent Conflict, New York: St. Martin’s Press,

Week 4:
Tuesday, 24 April: International Politics of Apartheid in South Africa
Film Excerpts: Have you heard from Johannesburg?
Readings:
129 – 132 (4 pgs.).
2. Audie Klotz, “The International Politics of Apartheid,” in Norms in International Relations:
The Struggle Against Apartheid, pp. 3 – 12; (10 pages), and Chapter 3, “The United Nations,”

Further Reading:
1. David Black, “The Long and Winding Road: International Norms and Domestic Political
Change in South Africa,” in The Power of Human Rights: International Norms and Domestic
Change, Thomas Risse, Stephen C. Ropp, and Kathryn Sikkink, eds., pp. 78 – 108. (30 pgs.)
pages).

Thursday, 26 April: Midterm Exam
Readings: None.

Week 5:
Tuesday, 1 May: Human Rights as Collective Rights: The U.N. and the 1994 Genocide in Rwanda
Film Excerpts: Ghosts of Rwanda
Readings:
1. International Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide:
http://www.preventgenocide.org/law/convention/text.htm
(18 pgs.).
Rwanda,” Cultural Anthropology, v. 12, no. 4, November 1997, pp. 551 – 578. (Try to read
approximately 10 pages.)
Thursday, 3 May:  Top Down Promotion of Human Rights: International Organizations and States

Film Excerpts: *Ghosts of Rwanda*

Discussion: Could the 1994 Rwandan genocide have been prevented?

Readings:

Further Reading on Rwanda:
2. Philip Gourevitch, *We Wish to Inform You That Tomorrow We Will Be Killed With Our Families: Stories from Rwanda*.

Week 6:

Tuesday, 8 May:  International Politics of Genocide: Rwanda and Darfur Compared

Project summary (150 words), annotated bibliography of 5 sources due to TED by midnight. (No late assignments accepted without medical or other emergency. This is because of the peer review process.)

Film Excerpts: *The Politics of Genocide in Darfur*

Readings:

Further Reading on Darfur:

Thursday, 10 May:  Transitional Justice: Punitive Justice and Criminal Tribunals or Restorative Justice and Truth Commissions?

Peer review of summary and annotated bib. due no later than midnight. (No late reviews accepted without medical or other emergency. This is because of the peer review process.)

Film excerpt: YouTube clips of 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.).
Further Reading:

**Week 7:**

**Tuesday, 15 May:** Economic, Social and Cultural Rights: The Right to Development as a Human Right?

*Film Excerpt:* Poverty and Human Rights

*Readings:*
1. International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights
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

*Further Reading:*

**Thursday, 17 May:** Access to Health Care as a Human Rights? Patents, Profits, and People

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

*Readings:*

*Further Reading:*
Week 8:

**Tuesday, 22 May:** Economic Globalization and Human Rights: Labor Rights and the Role of MNCs
Submit first draft of policy paper (4 – 5 pages) for peer review no later than midnight. (No late drafts accepted without medical or other emergency. This is because of the peer review process.)

Skype with Alta Gracia, Dominican Republic

Readings:

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

**Thursday, 24 May:** Human Rights and Human Trafficking
Submit peer review for policy paper draft no later than midnight. No late reviews accepted without medical or other emergency. This is because of the peer review process.)

Film Excerpts:


Further Readings:


Week 9:

**Tuesday, 29 May:** Human Rights and the Right to a Healthy Environment

Film Excerpts: *Crude Impact, 2006*

Discussion: Oil, human rights and the environment

Readings:


Further Reading:


**Thursday, 31 May:** Children’s Rights as Human Rights

*Hard copies of research projects due at the beginning of class today (1/3 grade penalty for each 24 hr. period late). Submit e-version to TED by midnight (1/3 grade penalty for each 24 hr. period late).*

**Film Excerpts:** I Am a Child

**Readings:**


**Further Reading:**


**Week 10:**

**Tuesday, 5 June:** Contemporary Challenges: A Post 9/11 World

**Readings:**

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

**Further Readings:**


**Thursday, 7 June:** Where Do/Should We Go From Here? Int’l Human Rights in the Early 21st Century

**Final Exam Study Guide posted Wednesday, 6 June by midnight.**

**Course review**

**Readings:**


**Final Exam:** Monday, 11 June, 3 – 6 p.m.