The Global Politics of Human Rights
Meets: Tuesday and Thursday 1:30-2:45 p.m.
Location: Farmer Education Building, Room 130

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Office Hours: Tuesday and Thursday, 12:00-1:00 p.m.

Human rights are inscribed in the hearts of people; they were there long before lawmakers drafted their first proclamation
- Mary Robinson, United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, 1997-2002

I. Course description:

The development of a global human rights regime is one of the most significant achievements of the 20th Century. However, the continuing evolution of a system of norms, rules and institutions that protect individual and group rights against the predatory and destructive actions of state and non-state actors remains one the greatest challenges of the 21st Century. Less than 150 years ago, slavery was practiced in the United States. Much of the world lived under colonial rule, and discrimination--based on race, religion, ethnicity and gender--was widespread. Governments could repress their populations without fear of sanction. Mass murder, genocide, torture, systematic deprivation and economic plunder were tolerated in silence and enabled by increasingly destructive technologies and zealotry. While grave violations of human dignity have not disappeared, a paradigmatic shift in how states are expected to treat their citizenry and each other has occurred since the adoption of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights after World War II.

This course examines the political forces that have shaped gradual construction of an international human rights regime and a universal culture of rights, not only civil and political rights, but also economic, social and cultural rights. It is designed to give students a greater understanding of the process of expanding human rights protections, which has been fraught with conflict. The struggle for human rights has been characterized by a tense and difficult dynamic of advances and setbacks, in which an increasingly diverse network of actors--international institutions, governments, non-governmental organizations and individuals--participate. The course will introduce students to international human rights, including the widely accepted norms upon which they are based; binding treaties and implementation mechanisms; related national, regional and international institutions; and transnational networks of activists, who—in
part because of greater awareness afforded by new communication technologies--are less willing to accept the limitations of traditional claims of national sovereignty and political necessity.

While this course introduces students to cutting-edge legal cases and the importance of technological change in fostering new notions of rights, it focuses primarily on analyzing the political forces propelling, opposing, and altering this rights regime over time. The course will begin by exploring the emergence and creation of the concept “human rights.” It will then review the historical emergence of struggles for human rights, and the subsequent construction of the international human rights regime. Next, we will take a more in-depth sociological look at specific types of rights--civil, political, economic, social, cultural, and collective--paying special attention to social struggles over their realization.

This course will help students gain insight into a number of key questions: Are human rights universal, or are they culturally bound? Are they individual or collective? Should civil and political rights take precedence over basic human needs? What is the relationship between rights and national sovereignty? Between human rights and human security? What is the role of non-governmental organizations and social movements in changing conceptions of rights and human protections? How should new democracies cope with the legacies of authoritarian rule and war, especially with murderers and torturers? When is humanitarian intervention justified, and when is it necessary? What are the human rights responsibilities of multinational corporations? How should conflicts between rights be resolved, for example, property rights versus environmental protections or religious freedom versus discrimination against women? What role should human rights play in U.S. domestic and foreign policy? This course fulfills the core “global politics of human rights” requirement for the ASU undergraduate Certificate in Human Rights, and will prepare students for work with international governmental or non-governmental organizations, social movement organizations, or other institutions with an international focus.

II. Course requirements and grading policy:

A wide variety of issues will be covered during the semester, and the workload will be fairly demanding. Both attendance and participation are vital to the success of the class and to your grade. Lectures will diverge from assigned readings, so it is imperative that you attend all lectures. If you are unable to attend class on a particular day or turn in an assignment on time, please let me know as soon as possible. Late work will not be accepted unless you have cleared it with me.

Your grade will be based on the following:
Attendance, class participation: 15%
Quizzes: 20%
Memos: 35%
Final group project/presentation: 30%

Attendance and class participation: This course is organized primarily around class discussion of, and assessments based on, assigned readings and video materials. Please note that readings are not optional! Students are expected to read assigned materials carefully and thoughtfully prior to the lecture for which they are due. You may also be asked to watch 1-2 films outside of
class if necessary (on reserve at Hayden). You are required to participate meaningfully in class discussions by contributing relevant information, addressing controversial issues, and raising probing questions based on readings and films. Attendance will be tracked and grades lowered for excessive absences (defined as more than four absences for any reason).

**Study suggestion:** You should take notes on the readings and films to help you prepare for discussions, quizzes, and memos. In particular:

1. note the main points of each source, and if there is more than one source, consider how they are related (with one main point from each work as an example);
2. consider what is new to you about the topics discussed and how (if at all) they have changed your conception of the global politics of human rights; and
3. develop an understanding of how the week’s readings, films, and lecture material apply to current events.

I want you to engage the readings, so you should have questions ready each week regarding how they relate to modern life and/or current events. Each week in class, you should be able, if called upon, to cite at least one news article relevant to the week’s readings from an alternative media source (see below, “supplemental materials”). Take note of the article’s title, source, and date.

**Quizzes:** I reserve the right at any time, without warning, to give a quiz. If you stay caught up on your readings and assignments, you should not have any difficulties with pop quizzes. There will be one scheduled quiz during Week 7. Please use your notes to prepare for this. There will be no make-up quiz unless you have a documented and dire emergency that precludes you from taking the original.

**Memos:** Memos of 4-5 pages (typed, double-spaced, 12-pt. font, one inch margins) will be required for three (3) topical areas of the course. (“Political and Civil Rights;” “Economic, Social, Cultural, and Collective Rights;” and “The Indivisibility of Human Rights”). Memos should incorporate:

1) Analysis of the group of readings on each theme in light of questions I will provide later.
2) A concise summary of main arguments of at least four key readings (not short articles)
3) Your scholarly (not personal) reactions to or reflections on the readings (noting the strongest points of each reading before critiquing it)

I encourage you to have discussions with your classmates, but your memo must be your own work, and in your own words. Memos must be submitted to SafeAssignment Friday of the week due by 5:00 p.m.

**Term Project:** Your final project will be to incorporate what you have learned during the semester to analyze a topic not explicitly covered in the class. You will 1) research the history of the issue, 2) gather information (empirical data) for a public presentation on the current reality, and 3) interview someone from at least one organization or agency that is working to improve the situation (you should plan to present the results of this interview to your group at your second meeting). You will then prepare presentations of 10-15 minutes (total) in collaboration with 2-4 of your peers, designed to educate the general public on the topic. You will present your group reports as part of the Third Annual ASU Human Rights Film Festival (April 5-7). This assignment will give students the opportunity to explore in greater depth human rights topic that interests you, to develop and practice presentation skills, to coordinate with others on specific
tasks, and to communicate your results in a way that the public can understand. You will be expected to meet with your team at least three times before your presentation, first (in late Feb.) to decide on how to divide the research; second (in mid-March) to coordinate findings, see what is still needed, and divide presentation responsibilities mid-way through the project; and third (before April 5), to practice your presentation to make sure it flows well, is concise, and doesn’t exceed allotted time. THESE MEETINGS ARE NOT OPTIONAL. You should keep “minutes” of the meeting (documenting who was present, what was discussed, and what each person’s responsibilities are) and turn these into me on the Monday following the meeting.

III. Required texts (you may be able to buy used – and thus cheaper – on Amazon.com):

IV. Supplementary materials
- There is a required reader for this course (it should be ready by Friday of Week 1 or Monday of Week 2). It can be obtained at Alternative Copy Shop (1004 S. Mill Ave., 480-829-7992). Items on the schedule that appear in the reader will be preceded by “R:”
- A few materials will be posted on Blackboard (preceded by “BB” on the syllabus)
- You may be asked to watch 1-2 films outside of class. They will be on reserve at Hayden.
- You should check “alternative” (i.e., non-mainstream) sources of news regularly for items that relate to course readings. Some good examples of such sources include:
  - http://therealnews.com/t2/
  - http://www.alternet.org
  - http://www.commondreams.org
  - http://www.oneworld.net
  - http://www.opendemocracy.net

V. Miscellaneous course information:

Obvious courtesies:
- Arrive on time
- Turn off your cell phone
- Let me know in advance if you must leave early

ASU e-mail and Blackboard: You will need to be sure that your e-mail is working in order to keep up with course information disseminated by e-mail. If your e-mail account rejects my messages, it is not my problem. If you send me something and I do not respond within 48 hours, you should assume that I did not receive it. If it is an assignment, I suggest you bring a hard copy and put it into my mailbox instead of relying on e-mail, to ensure that you receive credit. We will be using Blackboard extensively, so please familiarize yourself with this interface if you have not done so already. It can be reached through MyASU.

Incompletes: “A mark of ‘I’ (incomplete) is given by the instructor only when a student who is otherwise doing acceptable work is unable to complete a course because of illness or other conditions beyond the student’s control” (from the ASU General Catalog).
Academic integrity: Students must be aware that cheating or plagiarism will be dealt with severely. This includes failing to cite sources that you use for your work, representing others’ work as your own, allowing others to represent your work as theirs, falsifying records, and inappropriate collaboration. If you have doubts about what constitutes academic dishonesty, ask me. The School of Justice and Social Inquiry adheres to university policies regarding academic integrity, which you are encouraged to read and take very seriously: http://provost.asu.edu/academicintegrity/policy.

Writing assistance: The ASU Writing Center is available to all enrolled students to help them improve their writing skills through online and in-person tutoring: http://studentsuccess.asu.edu/home/writingcenters. The Writing Center website also contains handouts and services that can help you write better papers. You are strongly encouraged to use this service for your final paper, especially if you receive feedback on your memos regarding the need to improve your writing.

Disability Services: ASU’s Disability Resource Center (DRC) is the entity that provides services to students with disabilities. If you desire accommodation for this course, contact DRC at http://www.asu.edu/studentaffairs/ed/drc to establish your eligibility and make sure they can provide you with the services you will need for this course. Students with disabilities must meet the same standards, deadlines, etc. as any other student in the course. All information regarding disability is confidential.

COURSE OUTLINE

PART I: INTRODUCTION AND OVERVIEW OF HUMAN RIGHTS

WEEK 1: Overview and Introduction to the Course
January 8-10
Assignment
- Plagiarism and cheating quiz on Blackboard (Due by Monday of Week 2)

WEEK 2: Conceptual issues
January 15-17: What are Human Rights?
Readings
- DeLaet, Introduction, Ch. 1 [25 pp.]

WEEK 3: Why human rights matter
January 22-24
Readings
- Danner, Mark. 1993. The Massacre at El Mozote. [This is on reserve for 2-hour checkout at Hayden, or you can purchase it online for $8]
Film
- Father Roy: Inside the School of Assassins

WEEK 4: Historical emergence of struggles for HR
January 29-31
- Keck and Sikkink, Ch. 2: “Historical Precursors to Modern Tntl. Advocacy Networks”
- Power, Samantha. A Problem From Hell. Ch. 1-3

Film
- White King, Red Rubber, Black Death (1:49:35; watch outside of class before January 29): http://topdocumentaryfilms.com/congo-white-king-red-rubber-black-death/ (or on YouTube: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wpibEk3lUg0)

WEEK 5: Construction of an International Human Rights Regime
February 5-7
Readings
- DeLaet, Ch. 2
- Power, Samantha. A Problem From Hell. Ch. 4-5
- Cheat sheet with key instruments and their precursors (become familiar with these): http://www1.umn.edu/humanrts/edumat/hreduseries/hereandnow/Part-1/short-history.htm

Film
- Nuremburg: Tyranny on Trial (50 min.)

WEEK 6: Mechanisms, Actors, and Pathways toward human rights realization
February 12-14
Readings
- DeLaet, Ch. 8 and Ch. 11
- Keck & Sikkink Ch. 1: “Transnational Advocacy Networks in International Politics”

UN Documents
- ICCPR (http://www2.ohchr.org/english/law/ccpr.htm)
- ICESCR (http://www2.ohchr.org/english/law/cescr.htm)

PART II: GLOBAL POLITICS OF POLITICAL AND CIVIL RIGHTS

WEEK 7: State Repression
February 19-21
Readings
• Keck and Sikkink, Ch. 3: “Human Rights Advocacy Networks in Latin America”

**Film**
• State of Fear: The Truth about Terrorism (1:34:04; Watch outside of class; avail. on Vimeo: [http://vimeo.com/9858481](http://vimeo.com/9858481))

QUIZ: Human Rights: concepts, mechanisms, and actors

**WEEK 8: Torture**
February 26-28:

**Readings**
• BB: U.S. Government Docs:
  - The so-called “Torture Memo” (Yoo)
  - Department of Justice Office of Legal Counsel Memos
  - Department of Defense Memo on Afghanistan Detainees

**WEEK 9: War Crimes and Genocide**
March 5-7

**Assignment**
• THIS WEEK: First meeting with peers to divide research for group projects

**Readings**
• DeLaet, Ch. 4, pp. 93-99
• Power, Samantha, Ch. 6 [Cambodia] & 10 [Rwanda]

**Films**
• TBD

MEMO 1 (DUE MARCH 7): Political and civil rights - concepts and struggles

**WEEK 10: March 12-14 - SPRING BREAK**

**No Classes**

PART III: GLOBAL POLITICS OF ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL RIGHTS

**WEEK 11: Structural Violence, Inequality, and Poverty**
March 19-21
Readings
- DeLaet, Ch. 6 (ESR)

Film
- Pixote: We will watch the first half in class; watch the rest on YouTube, starting from the last part we saw in class http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GPu_eQ11Tb0

WEEK 12: Labor Rights
March 26-28
Readings
- REVIEW: ICESCR (http://www.ohchr.org/EN/ProfessionalInterest/Pages/CESCR.aspx)

Film
- TBD

MEMO 2 (DUE MARCH 29): Economic and social rights - concepts and struggles

WEEK 13: Right to Development
April 2-4
Readings

PRESENTATIONS due this week at the Human Rights Film Festival (April 5-7)

WEEK 14: HRFF Follow-up: Three-Pronged Strategies to Solve Real-World Problems
April 9-11
PART IV: ACCOUNTABILITY AND RIGHTS REALIZATION

WEEK 15: Seeking Justice
April 16-18: Retributive Justice

Readings
- DeLaet, Ch. 9

Film
- The Trials of Henry Kissinger [79 min. Watch outside of class on YouTube: http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2bFOhAAYfqk]

WEEK 16: Seeking Justice (continued)
April 23-25: Restorative justice, truth commissions, and other non-criminal strategies

Readings
- DeLaet, Ch. 10

Films
- Facing the Truth (Bill Moyers)? [120 min. Available online through ASU library]

MEMO 3 (DUE APRIL 26): Seeking Justice

WEEK 17: What kind of society do we want?
April 30: (Last Day of Class)

Readings

Film

MAY 2 FINAL QUIZ - In class: 12:10 to 2:00 PM