

**POL 412Y/2212Y: Human Rights Politics and International Relations**  
**Fall/Winter 2010-11**  
**Tuesday, 2-4, UC 65**

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Office hours: Tu 4-5 and by appointment

**Prerequisites:**

This is an advanced course on the theories and politics of human rights in international and domestic politics. In addition to the requirements stated in the Calendar, you should be able to complete and understand 70-100 pages of reading each week. The course will proceed quickly through a wide range of topics, some of which are analytically and conceptually difficult (and most of the time, important). Although an intimate knowledge of case(s) is not required, an interest in learning about human rights violations and/or resolutions to violations is an absolute.

The course will be taught seminar-style. It is student-driven, and therefore anyone who wants to take the course should be prepared to actively engage with others in the course, and prepare to discuss the readings and topics in class. As instructor, I will be giving a few introductory remarks to begin the course and facilitating discussion. Take advantage! This will be one of few classes in which there is no lecture, and you can analyze the readings with your peers.

**Purpose of the Course:**

This course is designed to provide a theoretical and analytical overview of major issues in the study and practice of human rights with a mix of international, systems perspectives and domestically-focused research. The course is geared for those who want a broad knowledge of human rights throughout the world, but students will have the opportunity to pursue a case of their choice for the Winter Term Research Paper. The knowledge of international constraints that students are exposed to in the first half of the course will help them grapple with the applications of human rights in the second term. The goal here is to introduce students to ways of thinking about human rights as a product and limitation of state action, and how human rights have become dominant in international politics since the end of World War II. The process of creating and implementing human rights is political. Students will also be exposed to how international ideals are applied on the ground by countries, non-state actors, and individuals. The course is also designed to force students to question their priors, and justify their arguments for or against action in the name of human rights. As such, students should feel welcome to express their views, and engage in lively discussions as appropriate.

**Readings:**

It is expected that students will complete the assigned readings *before* coming to class. Books are expensive, but they are also necessary. I have made every effort to make this course economical.

Goodale, Mark and Sarah Engle Merry, eds. 2007. *The Practice of Human Rights: Tracking Law Between the Global and the Local*. New York: Cambridge University Press.

Osiatynski, Wiktor. 2009. *Human Rights and Their Limits*. New York: Cambridge University Press.

Mortenson, Greg. 2010. *Stones into Schools*. New York: Penguin. (Available in October)

Simmons, Beth A. 2009. *Mobilizing for Human Rights: International Law in Domestic Politics*. New York: Cambridge University Press.

Other readings: anything without a hyperlink in this document will be posted on Blackboard.

**Blackboard:**

This will be the primary way through which announcements and assignments will be distributed. You are REQUIRED to check this site regularly. ALL handouts and assignments will be distributed through Blackboard.

You must have a utoronto.ca account to access this service (please go to Robarts Library if you do not already have an account). It is your responsibility to log into Blackboard to access the information posted regarding the course (portal.utoronto.ca).

**Course Requirements:**

In this course, you will be evaluated on the basis of a midterm, a term research paper, a project presentation, weekly summaries, and your participation in class. The breakdown of your course grade is as follows:

Midterm (December 7)	20%
Research Paper Prospectus (February 15)	10%
Winter Term Research Paper (April 6)	25%
Project Presentation:	10%
Weekly Summaries (2-3x for year):	10%
Attendance and Participation	25%

All students' course grades will be given based on his/her performance on the assignments in the course, according to the above percentages. There are NO exceptions.

Your attendance in seminar is absolutely crucial to your success in this course. If you do not show up the week for which you have a Weekly Summary, you will receive a 0% for the Weekly Summaries grade. Missing more than FIVE seminars will result in a 0% for Attendance and Participation. You cannot make up missed class time.

The Winter Term Research Paper and the Project Presentation are *absolutely necessary*. You should not take the course if you do not think you can successfully complete those two assignments.

**Grade Appeals:**

Changes to student grades on assignments will only be considered if there is *demonstrable* clerical error in the calculation of a particular score. You must submit a written appeal, upon approval by the course instructor, in order to have a grade reevaluated.

**Rules and Regulations:** Please read the following carefully. By registering in this course, you agree to abide by the rules below:

- 1) All work must be submitted *on time*, on paper in order to avoid penalty. There are no exceptions. No assignments will be accepted via email or fax. You must come to in-person to turn in your assignments.
- 2) The penalty for work turned in after the stated deadline will be 4 points per day. This includes holidays and weekends. No grace period, unless you have been granted an extension, as explained in #3.
- 3) Extensions will only be granted with “good reason,” and only with permission of the instructor of the course in advance of the assignment due date. Having work responsibilities, multiple assignments/exams in this and other classes, or “being stressed” are not “good reasons.” Extensions are rarely granted, and only under extreme circumstances. *You must show documentation of your reason for requesting an extension* (e.g, doctor’s note, hospital records).
- 4) If you are ill or have a family emergency and must miss class, you will have to provide formal documentation to the instructor *and* you must declare your absence on ROSI (and provide evidence that you did so).
- 5) All at-home assignments are to be typed, 12-point Times New Roman, double-spaced, 1” (2.5 cm) margins. DO NOT fudge these measurements. Staple your assignment in the upper left-hand corner.
- 6) **ACADEMIC HONESTY:** When you use other people’s words and ideas, you must properly cite them, whether these words come from the readings, the Internet, or in class. Failing to do so constitutes plagiarism, and is a very serious academic offense. Please consult me if you are unsure about what constitutes plagiarism. See also: [www.writing.utoronto.ca/advice/using-sources](http://www.writing.utoronto.ca/advice/using-sources). I WILL REPORT ANY AND ALL CASES OF SUSPECTED PLAGIARISM.
- 7) There are no exceptions to the absence from seminar rules stated above. If you do not think you can commit to attending 19 of 24 seminars this semester, I advise against taking this class.
- 8) **Final grades are final.** Please do not try to negotiate your grade with the instructor. Grades are calculated according to the above percentages, assessing your performance on all of the class assignments. **THEY ARE NOT ARBITRARY.** You should ask for help *before* an assignment – I am always happy to answer your questions and make sure you understand what’s expected of you. Making the effort before the grades are turned in will always be more beneficial to you than making the case afterward for why you need two extra points.

### **Assignment Descriptions:**

#### Midterm

Format TBA, will be held in-class.

### Winter Term Research Paper

This will be a long essay (15-20 pages/20-25 pages graduate students) in response to a prompt that requires outside research. This prompt will be distributed in the final weeks of the Fall term. You will be required to critically engage the semester's readings and apply them to your chosen case. A separate Research Abstract will be due as well – you must do both the Abstract and the Paper to get credit for this assignment. Details to follow.

The University of Toronto offers a number of options for student writing support. See [www.writing.utoronto.ca](http://www.writing.utoronto.ca) for details.

### Weekly Summaries

Students will be expected to present readings weekly, writing up one-page summaries (following format outlined below) and distributing these summaries to their fellow students. They will also be expected to be able to give a brief (5 minute) presentation of the reading and its connection to other themes of the week and/or broader course topics.

The English Language Learning Centre ([www.newcollege.utoronto.ca/ell](http://www.newcollege.utoronto.ca/ell)) offers opportunities to practice oral skills and sharpen reading comprehension for both native and non-native English speakers.

### Project Presentation

These presentations will allow students to get critical feedback on their projects from their peers prior to turning in the Winter Term Research Paper. Student presentations will be 5-7 minutes long, followed by a brief question and answer period to help improve the project. Presentations are also a way for fellow students to learn about your research and find mutual interests. You will be grouped into panels of related projects. Details to follow.

### Participation

Mostly self-explanatory. In such a small class, if I do not know your name and what you have contributed to the seminar by the end of the course, this part of your grade will suffer. You should plan to speak up at least once per class meeting to maintain a B+ mark or higher in this category.

## **Schedule of Topics and Readings:**

### **Fall Term**

#### *Basic Concepts and Philosophical Viewpoints*

#### Week 1, September 14: Introduction

Wilford, John Noble. "Almost Human, and Sometimes Smarter." *New York Times*. April 7, 2007. <http://www.nytimes.com/2007/04/17/science/17chimp.html?scp=1&sq=almost%20human,%20sometimes%20smarter&st=cse>

#### Week 2, September 20: What are Human Rights?

Osiatynski, chapter 1.

Hunt, Lynn. 2007. *Making Up Rights*. New York: W.W. Norton, p. 15-34.

Week 3, September 27: Reflections on Human Rights from Cultural and Philosophical Views  
Osiatynski, chapter 4.

[An-Nai'im, Abdullahi](#). 1990. "Human Rights in the Muslim World: Socio-Political Conditions and Scriptural Imperatives, A Preliminary Inquiry." *Harvard Human Rights Journal* 3: 701-732.

[Ignatieff, Michael](#). 2001. "The Attack on Human Rights." *Foreign Affairs* 80 (6): 102-116.

[Sen, Amartya](#). 1999. "Democracy as a Universal Value." *Journal of Democracy* 10 (3): 3-17.

Week 4, October 5: The Universal and International Idea in the 20<sup>th</sup> Century

[Donnelly, Jack](#). 2007. "The Relative Universality of Human Rights." *Human Rights Quarterly* 29 (2): 281-306.

[Glendon, Mary Ann](#). 1998. "Knowing the Universal Declaration of Human Rights." *Notre Dame Law Review* 73 (5): 1153-1182.

Ghai, Yash. 2009 (2001). "Universalism and Relativism: Human Rights as a Framework for Negotiating Interethnic Claims" in *Human Rights, Southern Voices*. Ed. William Twining. New York: Cambridge University Press. p. 109-120.

[Waltz, Susan](#). 2001. "Universalizing Human Rights: The Role of Small States in the Construction of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights." *Human Rights Quarterly* 23: 44-72.

Week 5, October 12: Universality in the World Today? Finding Evidence of Human Rights

[Keith, Linda Camp](#). 1999. "The United Nations International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights: Does it Make a Difference in Human Rights Behavior?" *Journal of Peace Research* 36 (1): 95-118.

[Elliott, Michael A](#). 2007. "Human Rights and the Triumph of the Individual in World Culture." *Cultural Sociology* 1 (3): 343-363.

[Pogge, Thomas](#). 2005. "World Poverty and Human Rights." *Ethics and International Affairs* 19 (1): 1-7.

Freedman, Sandra. 2008. *Human Rights Transformed: Positive Rights and Positive Duties*. New York: Oxford University Press, p. 9-30.

*Issues at the International Level*

Week 6, October 19: Defining Rights? The Relevance of Typologies

Osiatynski, chapter 3.

[Merón, Theodor](#). 1986. "On a Hierarchy of International Human Rights." *The American Journal of International Law* 80 (1): 1-23.

[Whelan, Daniel J. and Jack Donnelly](#). 2007. "The West, Economic and Social Rights, and the Global Human Rights Regime: Setting the Record Straight." *Human Rights Quarterly* 29 (4): 980-949.

Week 7, October 26: Collective Rights: Minorities, Ethnicities, and the Indigenous  
Kymlicka, Will. 1995. *Multicultural Citizenship*. Oxford: Oxford University Press. Chapters 1 and 2.

[Thompson, Richard](#). 1997. "Ethnic Minorities and the Case for Collective Rights." *American Anthropologist* 99 (4): 786-798.

Goodale and Merry, p. 204-241.

Week 8, November 2: Humanitarian Intervention  
[Carpenter, R. Charli](#). 2003. "'Women and Children First': Gender, Norms, and Humanitarian Evacuation in the Balkans 1991-95." *International Organization* 57 (4): 661-694.

[Barnett, Michael](#). 2005. "Humanitarianism Transformed." *Perspectives on Politics* 3 (4): 723-740.

Levi, Ron and John Hagan. 2010. "Lawyers, Humanitarian Emergencies, and the Politics of Large Numbers" in *Lawyers and the Construction of Transnational Justice*. Eds. Yves Dezalay and Bryant Garth.

RECOMMENDED: [Power, Samantha](#). 2001. "Bystanders to Genocide: Why the United States let the Rwandan Tragedy Happen." *The Atlantic Monthly* 288 (2): 84-108.

Week 9, November 9: Private versus Public: Gender and Rights  
[Hawkins, Darren and Melissa Humes](#). 2002. "Human Rights and Domestic Violence." *Political Science Quarterly* 117 (2): 231-257.

[Joachim, Jutta](#). 2003. "Framing Issues and Seizing Opportunities: The UN, NGOs, and Women's Rights." *International Studies Quarterly* 47 (2): 247-274.

[Mackie, Gerry](#). 1996. "Ending Footbinding and Infibulation: A Convention Account." *American Sociological Review* 61 (6): 999-1017.

Week 10, November 16: NO CLASS

Week 11: November 23: NGOs and IGOs

Keck, Margaret and Kathryn Sikkink. 1998. *Activists Beyond Borders*. Ithaca: Cornell University Press. p. 8-29.

[An-Na'im, Abdullahi](#). 2001. "Human Rights in the Arab World: A Regional Perspective." *Human Rights Quarterly* 23: 701-732.

[Price, Richard](#). 1998. "Transnational Civil Society and Advocacy in World Politics." *World Politics* 55 (4): 579-606.

[Ron, James, Howard Ramos, and Kathleen Rodgers](#). 2005. "Transnational Information Politics: NGO Human Rights Reporting, 1986-2000." *International Studies Quarterly* 49 (3): 557-588.

Week 12, December 7:

In-class term test

### **Winter Term**

Week 13, January 11: The New Slavery?

[Quirk, Joel](#). 2006. "The Anti-Slavery Project: Linking the Historical and Contemporary." *Human Rights Quarterly* 28 (3): 565-598.

Bales, Kevin. *Understanding Global Slavery: A Reader*. Berkeley: University of California Press. p. 40-68.

Smith, Charles Anthony and Heather M. Smith. 2011. "Human Trafficking: The Unintended Effects of United Nations Intervention." *International Political Science Review* 1-21.

*The Domestic Level*

Week 14, January 18: Sovereignty I

Simmons, p. 3-22

[Sikkink, Kathryn](#). 1993. "Human Rights, Principled Issue-Networks, and Sovereignty in Latin America." *International Organization* 47 (3): 411-428, 435-441.

[Reus-Smit, Christian](#). 2001. "Human Rights and the Social Construction of Sovereignty." *Review of International Studies* 27: 519-538.

[Hafner-Burton, Emilie M. and Kyoteru Tsutsui](#). "Justice Lost! The Failure of International Human Rights Law To Matter Where Needed Most" *Journal of Peace Research* 44 (4): 407-425.

Week 15, January 25: Sovereignty II

Simmons, p. 57-155.

*And either*

Bass, Gary Jonathan. 2000. *Stay the Hand of Vengeance*. Princeton: Princeton University Press. p. 3-36

OR

Minow, Martha. 1998. *Between Vengeance and Forgiveness: Facing History After Genocide and Mass Violence*. Boston: Beacon Press. 9-24, 118-147.

Week 16, February 1: Are Democracies Better?

Osiatynski, chapter 2.

[Poe, Stephen C. and C. Neal Tate](#). 1999. "Repression of the Human Right to Personal Integrity Revisited: A Global Cross-National Study Covering the Years 1976–1993." *International Studies Quarterly* 43 (2): 291-313.

[Vreeland, James Raymond](#). 2008. "Political Institutions and Human Rights: Why Dictatorships Enter into the United Nations Convention Against Torture." *International Organization* 62 (1): 65-101.

Week 17, February 8: Local Applications, Theoretical Challenges

Goodale and Merry, p. 1-38, 285-341

Week 18, February 15: Local Applications, Empirical Challenges

Goodale and Merry, p. 49-77, 130-162, 342-369

Reading Week: February 22

Enjoy your week off!

Week 19, March 1: Applications from the Outside World

**DUE: Research Project Propectus at the BEGINNING of class**

Mortenson, Greg. 2010. *Stones into Schools*. New York: Penguin.

RECOMMENDED: Bumiller, Elisabeth. "Unlikely Tutor Giving Military Afghan Advice." *New York Times*. July 17, 2010.

[http://www.nytimes.com/2010/07/18/world/asia/18tea.html?\\_r=1&scp=1&sq=mortenson&st=cse](http://www.nytimes.com/2010/07/18/world/asia/18tea.html?_r=1&scp=1&sq=mortenson&st=cse)

Wong, Wendy H. and Cullen S. Hendrix. "The Pen is Truly Mighty: Direct Communication, Amnesty International's Urgent Action Campaigns, and Human Rights Practices in States." Working paper.

Week 20, March 8: The State Strikes Back? Torture and Security

Danner, Mark. 2004. *Torture and Truth: America, Abu Ghraib, and the War on Terror*. New York: New York Review of Books. p. 1-48.

[Cole, David](#). 2002. "Enemy Aliens." *Stanford Law Review* 54 (5): 953-1004.

[Ignatieff, Michael](#). "Lesser Evils." *The New York Times Magazine*. May 2, 2004.



[Sontag, Susan](#). "Regarding the Torture of Others." *The New York Times Magazine*. May 23, 2004.

Week 21, March 15: Presentations

Week 22, March 22: Presentations

Week 23, March 29: Presentations

Week 24, April 5: No formal class meeting  
Your papers are due by 5pm on April 6 to SS 3047.

## Writing Summaries and Making Presentations – A Guide

### Weekly Summaries

Reading summaries are designed to help you with your comprehension and extension of the course reading. They are both brief summaries of the reading(s) and analytical assignments in the sense that you are trying to understand the significance of the piece as a whole for the course and the study of human rights. They should help guide in-class discussion and provide a roadmap of what each piece assigned for the week is trying to contribute. At the end of the course, you should have a comprehensive portfolio of summaries written by your peers in order to aid in writing your research papers.

Summaries should be posted to Blackboard in the appropriate spot no later than midnight the night *before* seminar each week (12a.m. Tuesday). This is to facilitate the ability of your peers to read them over before attending class in order to foster discussion and supplement the reading assignments.

Format of summaries: please follow this format for your reading summaries so that each summary looks similar. Summaries should *never* go beyond 1 page, single-spaced.

- I. Title, author, year
- II. Main argument (no more than 3 sentences)
- III. Evidence? What does the author offer as support for his/her claims in II?
- IV. Do you buy it? Why or why not? What are the strengths/weaknesses?
- V. Significance of piece 1) to the study of human rights; 2) to the study of politics?

Do not stress – these are meant to be helpful, and do not have to be perfect (you don't need to get the argument "right"). That being said, you must put in minimal effort. Anything less than half a page will not count towards your grade.

### Presentations

It is always hard to put your ideas forth, especially if you do not feel confident in your assessment of a particular work. **DO NOT BE AFRAID.** Most of the time, there are no correct answers, especially when it comes to the discussion of politics. Don't be afraid to defend your ideas, and don't be worried if you don't have all of the answers. **The idea behind these presentations is not for the group to have figured everything out, but to point out some of the theoretical highlights of each piece and spark conversation with ideas about how the essays and chapters fit together.**

Some tips:

1) How does this reading fit into things you know? Things we've read in the class previously? A good way to start thinking about the piece might be what you liked/didn't like about it...and *why*.

2) Don't just read from your summary. Remember, you can't get to everything in 5 minutes. Give us the highlights, and then use the discussion questions as a way to raise some of the more difficult points in each reading.

3) Presenting is hard for everyone. If you get stuck, or can't remember a point, consult with your group. If everyone is stuck, presumably it's a difficult point, so we'll figure it out as a class together.

4) Offer some good questions that we can ponder over after you finish presenting your reading. There should be room for discussion, and making links between readings.