

POL 412H/2212H(F): Human Rights Politics and International Relations
Summer 2012
Monday and Wednesday, 10-12
315 Bloor St. W. B019

Professor: W. Wong
wendyh.wong@utoronto.ca
315 Bloor St. W. #214
Office hours: W 2-3

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 approximately 70-100 pages of reading for each meeting. 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 must.

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 in the second part of the term. The knowledge of international and domestic 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:

For purchase @ University of Toronto (St. George) Bookstore:

Bob, Clifford. 2012. *The Global Right Wing and the Clash of World Politics*. New York: Cambridge University Press.

Other readings are either 1) hyperlinked in this document or 2) can be found on Blackboard under “Readings.”

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 an in-class presentation, two five-page papers, a take home final, and your participation in class. The breakdown of your course grade is as follows:

One five-page paper (by June 10)	25%
In-class presentation (varies)	15%
Term paper	40%
Attendance and Participation	20%

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 an In-class Presentation, you will receive a 0% for that assignment. Missing more than ONE seminar will result in a 0% for Attendance and Participation. You cannot make up missed class time.

All assignments are *absolutely necessary*. You should not take the course if you do not think you can successfully complete these 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*, prior to the *beginning* of class or before the stated deadline, via email in PDF format in order to avoid penalty. There are no exceptions. No assignments will be accepted on paper unless otherwise noted.
- 2) The penalty for work turned in after the stated deadline will be 4 points per day or fraction of a day. If you email your paper at the end of class, you will lose 2 points, and if

you submit it by 5pm the day it is due, it will be marked down 4 points. If you turn in a paper the day after it is due, you lose 8 points, and so on. The late penalty includes holidays and weekends. No grace period, unless you have been granted an extension, as explained in #3.

- a. Late work will be collected upon agreement with instructor – DO NOT shove papers under doors.
 - b. Five-pager papers are exempt from the late policy. Any papers turned in after the beginning of class will not be accepted. *You will get a zero on this assignment unless you email it before the beginning of class.*
- 3) Extensions on course assignments are rarely granted, and only under unavoidable and unforeseeable extenuating circumstances. To seek an extension you must submit a hard copy of a one page explanation justifying your request prior to the due date to the instructor. This document should indicate how the circumstances surrounding your request were both unavoidable and unforeseeable. You must contact the instructor to schedule a meeting in which you will submit this document and make your case. In some instances, the instructor may request additional supporting documentation, in accordance with University policy before any extension is granted. Extensions will not be granted unless such a meeting has been held. Unless informed otherwise, doctors' notes are not required.
- 4) 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.
- 5) **ACADEMIC HONESTY: All written assignments must follow basic academic citation rules.** 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. I WILL REPORT ANY AND ALL CASES OF SUSPECTED PLAGIARISM. "Not understanding" or "I did not mean to" will not be suitable defenses for cases of plagiarism. In order to promote an environment of academic integrity, these following procedures will hold for all written work submitted in class.
- a. Students must attach a signed copy of the Academic Integrity Checklist to each paper assignment. The Integrity Checklist form is available on Blackboard. Please note that papers will NOT be accepted without this form. Accordingly, I will apply late penalties to your paper (see #2) until the Checklist is submitted.
 - b. Students are strongly advised to keep rough draft-work and hard copies of their essays and assignments. These should be kept until the marked assignments have been returned.
- 6) Photography, audio recording, and video recording of lecture and lecture materials (i.e. slides) are NOT permitted.
- 7) There are no exceptions to the absence from class rules stated above. If you do not think you can commit to attending the required number of classes this term, I advise against taking this course.
- 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:

Five-page paper

You will write one five-page paper in response to either the discussion questions provided below or in response to any question you have in mind. The papers are each in response to one day’s readings. You will turn in your paper on the day those readings are due to be discussed (e.g. if you are writing an essay on the May 15 readings, you bring your essay to class that day). You cannot write a response paper after the fact; that is, you cannot turn in a paper after May 15 in response to readings assigned for May 15. These assignments will NOT be accepted after the beginning of the class meeting.

That is, there is no late penalty on this assignment – they will not be marked if they are turned in after the beginning of class.

The deadline for this paper is rolling – you MUST submit a paper by June 10, but there is no requirement that you do any particular week.

Term paper

Question TBA. You will receive the prompt on June 17, and it will be due as described below.

In-class presentation

The point of these is to get people thinking about the readings as “the spark.” You will be signing up for in-class presentations in which you offer a five-minute synthesis (NOT SUMMARY) of the week’s readings and discuss 1) what themes emerge from the readings and 2) what questions the readings raise about human rights. You may elect to pick one of the discussion questions, or come up with one of your own in order to start the conversation. Depending on the size of the class, this assignment could be individually or group based.

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.

I reserve the right to have reading quizzes if it becomes clear that the class is not keeping up with the reading.

Schedule of Topics and Readings:

Week 1: What are Human Rights?

May 13: Welcome!

[Carpenter, R. Charli](#). 2012. “You Talk of Terrible Things so Matter-of-Factly in this Language of Science’: Constructing Human Rights in the Academy.” *Perspectives on Politics* 10 (2): 363-383.

[Wilford, John Noble](#). “Almost Human, and Sometimes Smarter.” *New York Times*. April 7, 2007.

May 15: DeLaet, Debra L. 2006. *The Global Struggle for Human Rights*. Toronto: Thomson Wadsworth. Introduction and Chapter 1.

Tully, James. 2010. “Rethinking Human Rights and Enlightenment: A View from the Twenty-first Century.” Oxford Amnesty Lecture Series.

Simmons, Beth. 2009. *Mobilizing for Human Rights*. New York: Cambridge University Press. Chapter 2.

[Watters, Ethan](#). “We Aren’t the World.” *Pacific Standard*. February 5, 2013.

Recommended: [Henrich, Joseph, Steven J. Heine, and Ara Norenzayan](#). 2010. “The Weirdest People in the World?” *Behavioral and Brain Sciences*: 1-23.

Discussion Questions

How can we define a human being?

How do we know when something is a right versus an ideal?

What is the role of human rights in international politics? How can we guarantee them domestically?

Does law enable or disable discussion? Why?

Week 2: What’s the Difference between Human Rights and Humanitarianism?

May 20: Victoria Day

May 22: [Barnett, Michael](#). 2009. “Evolution without Progress? Humanitarianism in a World of Hurt.” *International Organization* 63 (4): 621-663.

[Leebaw, Bronwyn](#). 2007. “The Politics of Impartial Activism: Humanitarianism and Human Rights.” *Perspectives on Politics* 5 (2): 223-239.

[Macfarlane, S. Neil, Carolin J. Thielking, and Thomas G. Weiss](#). 2004. “The Responsibility to Protect: Is Anyone Interested in Humanitarian Intervention?” *Third World Quarterly* 25 (5): 977-992.

[Pease, Kelly Kate and David Forsythe](#). 1993. “Human Rights, Humanitarian Intervention, and World Politics.” *Human Rights Quarterly* 15 (2): 290-314.

Discussion Questions

Do human rights and humanitarianism deal with the same thing?

Should we think about humanitarianism in the same terms as human rights?
Does the success of R2P hinge on protecting human rights or humanitarian values?

Week 3: Defending Human Rights: Different Mechanisms

May 27: [Hafner-Burton, Emilie M.](#) 2005. "Trading Human Rights: How Preferential Trade Agreements Influence Government Repression." *International Organization* 59 (3): 593-629.

[Conrad, Courtenay R. and Emily Hencken Ritter.](#) Forthcoming. "Treaties, Tenure, and Torture: The Conflicting Domestic Effects of International Law." *Journal of Politics*.

[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.

Oesterich, Joel. 2007. *Power and Principle: Human Rights Programming in International Organizations*. Washington, D.C.: Georgetown University Press. Chapter 3.

May 29: [Helfer, Laurence R. and Erik Voeten.](#) 2013. "International Courts as Agents of Legal Change: Evidence from LGBT Rights in Europe." *International Organization* 67.

Sikkink, Kathryn. 2011. *The Justice Cascade: How Human Rights Prosecutions are Changing World Politics*. New York: W.W. Norton. Chapters 5-6.

[Simmons, Beth A. and Allison Danner.](#) 2010. "Credible Commitments and the International Criminal Court." *International Organization* 64 (2): 225-256.

Discussion Questions

- Can human rights ever be effectively enforced? Why or why not?
- Can the threat of punishment dissuade the commitment of atrocity?
- Is human rights enforcement fundamentally about international or domestic law?
- Should human rights be legalized globally? What is the reasoning behind it?
- What's the relationship between international and domestic legal developments? Is international-level development the same as domestic change?
- What is the role of courts? How are they different from other mechanisms?
- What are some sovereignty concerns for allowing IGOs to define human rights?
- Which sources are more legitimate in terms of defining human rights, IGOs, states?

Week 4: Re-defining Rights? The Role of NGOs and Networks

June 3: [Bob, Clifford.](#) 2002. "Merchants of Morality." *Foreign Policy* 129: 36-45.

[Cooley, Alexander and James Ron.](#) 2002. "The NGO Scramble: Organizational Insecurity and the Political Economy of Transnational Action." *International Security* 27 (1): 5-39.

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

Stroup, Sarah S. 2012. *Borders Among Activists: International NGOs in the United States, Britain, and France*. Ithaca: Cornell University Press. Chapter 3.

June 5: [Carpenter, R. Charli](#). 2007. "Studying Issue (Non)-Adoption in Transnational Advocacy Networks." *International Organization* 61 (3): 643-667.

[Murdie, Amanda and David R. Davis](#). 2012. "Shaming and Blaming: Using Events Data to Assess the Impact of Human Rights INGOs." *International Studies Quarterly* 56 (1): 1-16.

[Hendrix, Cullen S. and Wendy H. Wong](#). 2012. "When is the Pen Truly Mighty? Regime Type and the Efficacy of Naming and Shaming in Curbing Human Rights Abuses." *British Journal of Political Science* Firstview: 1-22.

Discussion Questions

To what extent do NGOs represent collective interests? To what extent do they represent their own?

What is the power of networks or non-state actors? How can we think about their power vis-à-vis states?

To whom are NGOs accountable? Is this an important concern, and why?

Should there be a global accountability mechanism for NGOs? Why or why not?

Week 5: On the Ground: Techniques of Change

June 10: [Busby, Joshua W](#). 2007. "Bono Made Jesse Helms Cry: Jubilee 2000, Debt Relief, and Moral Action in International Politics." *International Studies Quarterly* 51 (2): 247-275.

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

MacKinnon, Rebecca. 2012. *Consent of the Networked: The Worldwide Struggle for Internet Freedom*. New York: Basic Books. Chapter 2.

Wong, Wendy H. and Peter A. Brown. Forthcoming. "E-bandits in Global Activism: Wikileaks, Anonymous, and the Politics of No One." *Perspectives on Politics*.

June 12: Bob, Clifford. 2012. *The Global Right Wing and the Clash of World Politics*. New York: Cambridge University Press. Chapters 1, 2, 4, 5.

[Schwartz, Mattathias](#). "Pre-Occupied: The Origins and Future of Occupy Wall Street." *The New Yorker* November 28, 2011.

Discussion Questions

To what extent does activity "from below" shape politics?

What are some of the barriers to organization? What are some of the necessary things that political change needs?

How and why do people organize around certain issues and not others?

Week 6: Pursuing New Rights? Indigenous Rights as Human Rights

June 17: [Anaya, S. James](#). 1991. "Indigenous Rights Norms in Contemporary International Law." *Arizona Journal of International and Comparative Law*: 1-40.

[Arzey, Sylvia and Luke McNamara](#). 2011. "Invoking International Human Rights Law in a 'Rights-Free Zone': Indigenous Campaigns in Australia." *Human Rights Quarterly* 33 (3): 733-766.

[Brysk, Alison](#). 1996. "Turning Weakness into Strength: The Internationalization of Indian Rights." *Latin American Perspectives* 23 (2): 38-57.

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

Discussion Questions

Is there such thing as "group rights"?

Are ethnic groups and indigenous groups comparable? Why or why not?

What are the challenges posed in enforcement for group rights?

June 19: No class meeting, extra office hours.

TERM PAPER DUE June 20 at noon via email. No exceptions.