This seminar aims to provide students with a broad working knowledge of human rights as both an intellectual discourse and a realm of political action. The first part of the course deals with the emergence and institutionalization of human rights in the 20th century. We begin with a consideration of its roots in political theory (rights of man, sovereignty, conventional and customary international law), which gave rise to the "first generation" of human rights: political and civil rights. We also examine the transformations and extensions of human rights into the social and economic realms, "second generation" rights, and the emergence of a "third generation" pertaining to the rights of peoples (i.e., social collectivities). We also examine the debates over the universality of existing human rights instruments and the substance of critiques that human rights standards are biased in favor of Western socio-political formations. In this regard, we highlight the issue of women's human rights, which tends to be central to the debates over universalism versus cultural relativism.

In the second part of the course, we consider some of the practical (and practicable) dimensions of human rights from a variety of angles. We examine human rights as a form of international politics, and the difficulties in enforcing international standards and protections in the state-centered international order. We also consider the cooptation of human rights discourse by state governments to serve political ends, and the ways in which international politics shape the articulation of criticisms by international human rights organizations in the format of published reports.

In the final part of the semester, we will engage in a more in-depth examination of several distinct human rights issues: torture, genocide, humanitarian intervention, and prosecution of perpetrators. We also look at human rights as a genre in literature and cinema.

Writing assignments and projects

Two seminar papers (approx. 1500 words/6 pages), one on the readings for one of the weeks in Part I, and one on a topic covered in Part III.

Two short essays (approx. 750 words/3 pages) reflecting on the readings for 2/23 (human rights and politics) and 3/2 (monitoring, reporting, advocating).

Two group projects, one for 3/16 (an analysis of the content and context of several recent human rights reports), and the other "guided tour" of internet resources on human rights.

Final assignment involves revising and resubmitting one of your two seminar papers.

Readings
The following books have been ordered in the bookstore. There is also a copy of each on reserve.

1. Austin Sarat and Thomas Kearns, eds., *Identities, Politics and Rights*
2. Louis Henkin, *The Age of Rights*
3. Margaret Keck and Kathryn Sikkink, *Activists beyond Borders*
4. Lawrence Weschler, *A Miracle, a Universe*
5. Allen Feldman, *Formations of Violence*
7. George Andreopoulos, ed., *Genocide: Conceptual and Historical Dimensions*
8. Stanley Cohen, *Denial and Acknowledgement: The Impact of Information about Human Rights Violations*
10. Human Rights Watch, *Torture and Ill-Treatment: Israel's Interrogation of Palestinians from the Occupied Territories*
12. Ian Brownlie, ed., *Basic Documents on Human Rights* [note: this book is not assigned reading; it was ordered as a resource for research and writing]

All of the readings marked with an asterix are available in the reserve binders. The number of asterisks indicates which volume holds that particular reading (Vols. I - III). Suggested readings are in Vol. IV, but are not indicated by asterixes.

**January 19**

**Introduction**

We will discuss Michel Foucault, *Discipline and Punish*

**Part I: Human Rights in Theory**

**January 26**

**Normative and Political Issues**

- *Richard Falk, "Theoretical Foundations of Human Rights" (Chapt. 3), in Human Rights and State Sovereignty*

Suggested:

- Paul Sieghart, *The Lawful Rights of Mankind*.

**February 3**

**Who Is the "Human" in Human Rights?**
February 9

Universalism versus Relativism: The Debate

- * Raimundo Panikkar, "Is the Notion of Human Rights a Western Concept?" *Diogenes* 120 (1982).

Suggested:


February 16

Women's Rights as Human Rights

- Radhika Coomaraswamy, "To Bellow Like a Cow: Women, Ethnicity and the Discourse of Rights," in *Human Rights of Women*.

Suggested:
Part II: Human Rights in Practice

February 23

Human Rights as/and International Politics

- Lawrence Weschler, A Miracle, a Universe.

Suggested:


March 2

Monitoring, Reporting, Advocating: Trafficking in Information

- Stanley Cohen, Denial and Acknowledgement: The Impact of Information about Human Rights Violations, chaps 1, 4, 5, 6.
- Margaret Keck and Kathryn Sikkink, Activists beyond Borders, chaps. 1-3.

Suggested:

- Jonathan Powers, Amnesty International: The Human Rights Story
- Mahnaz Afkhami and Haleh Vaziri, Claiming Our Rights: A Manual for Women's Human Rights Education in Muslim Societies.

March 16


Do a comparative analysis of the contents and context of three of the following reports:

- Children of Sudan: Slaves, Street Children and Child Soldiers (Human Rights Watch/Africa).
- Final Justice: Police and Death Squad Homicides of Adolescents in Brazil (HRW/Americas).
- Genocide in Iraq: The Anfal Campaign against the Kurds (HRW/Middle East).
- A Modern Form of Slavery: Trafficking of Burmese Women and Girls into Brothels in Thailand (HRW/Asia Watch and Women's Rights Project).
- Playing the "Communal Card": Communal Violence and Human Rights (HRW).
- Death by Default: A Policy of Fetal Neglect in China's State Orphanages (HRW/Asia).
- Modern Capital of Human Rights?: Abuses in the State of Georgia (US) (HRW).

Project: report on internet resources.
Part III: Topics in Human Rights

March 23

Torture in Theory and Practice

- ** Edward Peters, *Torture*, Intro, chapt. 3-5.

March 30

Torture and Security: The Case of Israel

- *** Alan Dershowitz, "Is It Necessary to Apply 'Physical Pressure' to Terrorists--and to Lie about It?" *Israel Law Review* 23/2-3 (1989).
- Human Rights Watch/Middle East, *Israel's Interrogation of Palestinians from the Occupied Territories*, chapt. 1, 3, 4, 5, 7, 13, 15, 19.

Suggested:


April 6

Humanitarian Intervention: How Humanitarian?

- "Humanitarian Intervention and North-South Politics in the '90s," special issue of *Middle East Report* 187-88 (March-April/May-June 1994).

Suggested:


April 13

Genocide: The Ultimate Violation

- Israel Charny, "Toward a Generic Definition of Genocide," in *Genocide*. 

Suggested:
- Isidor Wallimann and Michael Dobkowski, eds., *Genocide and the Modern Age*.

**April 20**

**Accountability and Enforcement**


Possibility of more readings, as suggested by guest speaker.

Suggested:
- *War Crimes: Brutality, Genocide, Terror, and the Struggle for Justice*

**April 27**

**Human Rights as a Genre in Literature and Film**

The class will select a novel to read and a film to watch, and we will discuss them in class.