This course will be centered around the causes and prevention of human rights abuses. After an introduction to philosophical and historical underpinnings of modern international human rights law, we will turn our attention to the political, economic and behavioral causes of human rights abuses. Case examples will be drawn from armed conflict situations and repressive regimes. We also will look at cases of chronic abuse (e.g. violations of women's rights). During the second half of the semester we will examine prevention strategies including strengthening democracy and developing the institutions of civil society, accountability measures, and the impact of external pressure from non-governmental organizations, other states (including U.S. foreign policy) and intergovernmental organizations.

Texts:

1. Center for the Study of Human Rights, Columbia University, *Twenty-four Human Rights Documents* ("Documents")

There also will be a selection of required photocopied readings. Copies of these readings will be on reserve in Tisch Library, or they may be purchased from Gnomen Copy for individual use. Students are expected to read a major newspaper (e.g., Boston Globe, New York Times, etc.) or listen to a major radio news program (e.g., NPR, BBC) on a daily basis.

The course requirements consist of a mid-term research memorandum and a final examination. Regular attendance as well as preparation for and participation in class will also contribute to the final grade. Final grades will be calculated as follows: 40% on the final exam; 40% on the research memorandum; 20% on class participation.

**Preliminary Syllabus**

**Part I: Introduction to International Human Rights [Reader I]**

**January 15**

Introduction to course

- Human Rights Watch World Report 1997 - Introduction (Handout)

**January 20**
Foundations of contemporary notions of human rights


**January 22**

Introduction to international law concepts relevant to human rights

Documents:

- Universal Declaration of Human Rights
- International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights
- International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights

**Part II: Causes of Human Rights Abuses [Reader I]**

**January 27**

Political and Economic Causes of Human Rights Abuses

- Kenneth Quinn, "Explaining the Terror," in Jackson, *Cambodia 1975-1978: Rendezvous with Death*

**January 29**

Ideological and Psychological Explanations for Group Responsiveness to Human Rights Abuses


**February 3**

Ideological and Psychological Explanations for Individual Participation in Human Rights Abuses

- Ron Rosenbaum, "Explaining Hitler," *The New Yorker*

**February 5**

Case Study I -- Bosnia


**February 10**

Case Study I continued

**February 12**

Case Study II -- Uruguay
February 17
Case Study III -- Poland
   o Tina Rosenberg, *The Haunted Land*, pp. 125-258

February 19
NO CLASS (Substitute Monday's Schedule)

February 24
Chronic human rights abuses and abuses by non-state actors
   o C. Dugger, "A Refugee's Body is Intact but Her Family is Torn," *New York Times*, Sept. 11, 1996
   o Documents: Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women

February 26
Chronic human rights abuses continued -- Mid-term Research Assignment handout

Part III: Prevention of Human Rights Abuses [Reader II]

March 3
Accountability

March 5
The Value of Truth -- Mid-term Research Assignment Due
   o Priscilla Hayner, "Fifteen Truth Commissions -- 1974-1993: A Comparative Study"

March 10
Trials

March 12
Trials continued

March 17
No Class --- Spring Recess

March 19

No Class --- Spring Recess

March 24

Reparations and other accountability measures

- Theo van Boven, "Proposed Basic Principles and Guidelines Concerning Reparation to Victims of Gross Violations of Human Rights"

March 26

Development of the Institutions of Civil Society -- Freedom of Speech and Expression


March 31

Democracy

- Tina Rosenberg, "Beyond Elections," *Foreign Policy*

April 2

Democracy continued

April 7

Independence of the Judiciary


April 9

External Pressure -- Efforts of Nongovernmental Organizations


April 14
U.S. Foreign Policy


April 16

U.S. Foreign Policy continued; the influence of other states

- Human Rights Watch World Report 1997 - Introduction (From Reader I)

April 21

The role of the United Nations and Other Intergovernmental Organizations in Preventing Rights Abuses

- B.G. Ramcharan, "Strategies for the International Protection of Human Rights in the 1990s"

April 23

Role of the UN, other IGOs, continued

- Tom Farer, "A Paradigm of Legitimate Intervention," in Damrosch, supra