

Human Rights: Politics and Policy
POLSC 413W/513
Dr. Clifford Bob

Spring 2009, T 6:00 – 8:40
Off. Hrs: T 10-11 AM; Th 1:45-2:45 PM; by
apptmt.

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Human rights are a central part of contemporary international politics. Yet much about human rights remains controversial. Some argue that rights are inherent in our humanity; others, that rights are a hard fought and continually threatened political invention. In some regions, governments vigorously protect individuals against threats to their rights; in other countries, governments pose the biggest danger to human rights. While individuals and governments are the prime actors in human rights issues, the idea of human rights has also inspired the formation of thousands of nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) around the world. These NGOs are now critical carriers and enforcers of human rights ideals, midwives to an ever expanding family of new rights—yet frequently NGOs are neither democratically run nor accountable to their claimed constituencies.

This course will introduce you to human rights politics and policy. We will start by exploring philosophical, legal, and moral foundations of human rights, both well-established civil/political rights and more controversial economic, social, and cultural rights. Next we move to debates about whether human rights are universal or culturally relative. On this basis, we examine a variety of human rights enforcement processes, involving states, international organizations, international tribunals, truth commissions, NGOs and the media. Throughout, key concepts are illustrated with materials concerning important contemporary issues in human rights policy. By the end of the course, you should gain an understanding of basic laws, policies, institutions, processes, and debates in the evolving international human rights “regime.”

READINGS

Henry J. Steiner, Philip Alston, and Ryan Goodman (SAG), *International Human Rights in Context: Law, Politics, Morals*, 3rd ed. (designated as SAG in the course schedule)

SAG website: includes access to excerpted versions of key human rights documents:
<http://www.oup.com/uk/orc/bin/9780199279425/resources/documents/>

Clifford Bob, *The Marketing of Rebellion: Insurgents, Media, and International Activism*

Additional readings, marked by asterisks in the schedule, are available at the course’s Blackboard website or may be downloaded at the url noted. Since scholarship and practice of human rights has evolved quickly in recent years, I will also make substantial use of in-class handouts and the Web. In addition you should familiarize yourself with the following human rights portal available through the University of Denver <http://www.du.edu/humanrights/advocacycenter/links.htm>. You should also visit the websites for Human Rights Watch (<http://www.hrw.org/>), Amnesty International (<http://www.amnesty.org/>), and the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (<http://www.unhchr.ch/>). Please note that the schedule of readings includes substantially more required material for graduate students than for undergraduates.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

Discussion participation – 20%
Midterm examination – 20%
Policy Memo draft (undergrads only)– 10%

Policy Memo final – 20% (or grads: 30%)

Final examination – 30%

Attendance – Mandatory; see below for policies concerning effect of absences on final grade

GRADING

I will use different standards in assessing your work, depending on your status as a graduate student or undergraduate. I will expect graduate students both to participate and write at a substantially more sophisticated level than undergraduates and to include references not only to the general readings but also to the additional readings specific to graduate students. For both sets of students, the plus/minus system will be used in calculating your final grade according to the following numerical scale:

A = 100-94

B+ = 87-89

C+ = 77-79

D = 65-69

A- = 90-93

B = 84-86

C = 70-76

F = < 64

B- = 80-83

SAVE ALL OF YOUR GRADED WORK in case of controversy over your final grade. If you cannot show me the work in question, there will be no possibility of a grade adjustment.

Class Attendance/Participation: Attendance is mandatory and will count for 20% of your final class grade. I expect you to be in your seat at the start of the class period and to remain in your seat throughout the period, except in case of dire emergency. **Late class entry or early leaving disturbs fellow students, disrupts the learning environment, and will lower your attendance grade, unless you provide a legitimate excuse to me beforehand.** There will be significant opportunities for in-class questions, debate, and discussion on an informal, voluntary basis. I encourage quality participation, but speaking simply for the sake of speaking will not improve your participation grade. **Texting or other use of cell phones or other electronic equipment is prohibited in class, disturbs fellow students, and will reduce your participation grade.** In addition, I will occasionally pose questions on the class's Blackboard discussion board. I will track class attendance and participation, as well as entries on the Blackboard discussion board. Over the course of the semester, regular, on-time class attendance pursuant to the foregoing rules will earn a C grade; on-time attendance pursuant to the foregoing rules + modest, quality participation = B grade; on-time attendance pursuant to the foregoing rules + significant, quality participation = A grade. **In class and on the discussion board, I insist on civil communication, even if you strongly disagree with the views of your fellow students.**

Midterm: This will be an in-class essay. THERE WILL BE NO MAKEUPS without a signed, written excuse from a doctor on letterhead paper specifying time, date, and reason for your absence.

Final Exam: The final will be a comprehensive, take-home essay examination. THERE WILL BE NO MAKEUPS OR EXTENSIONS without a signed, written excuse from a doctor on letterhead paper specifying time, date, and reason for your absence. Exams not submitted by the deadline will lose one letter grade (A → B) per day late.

Policy Memo: A policy memo following the format discussed below is required for all undergraduates and recommended for graduate students. Graduate students who would prefer to write a research paper that will form the basis for a thesis should see me as soon as possible to discuss.

Deadline: Undergrads should take note of the required deadline for submitting a policy memo draft, as well as the final memo. For all students, memos/drafts not turned in on time will lose one letter grade (A → B) per day late.

Page requirements: undergraduates: 10-12 pp; graduate students: 12-15 pp. The draft and final paper must all be typed, double-spaced, in 12-pt type.

Meeting requirement : All students must meet with me during my office hours ASAP (and no later than Feb. 3) to discuss research paper topics and approaches. Begin thinking about a rights issue that concerns/interests you ASAP!

Format: The policy memo will be a structured research assignment, focusing on a contemporary human rights issue of interest to you. The issue may be regionally or thematically focused and should have a prominent policy component. While individual papers may vary somewhat in structure, all should be written in the format of a policy recommendation to a decision-maker of your choice. The recommended structure of the paper is as follows:

To: Your chosen decisionmaker (i.e, U.S. President, U.N. Secretary-General, Amnesty International Secretary-General, etc.)

From: Your name

Issue: A 1-2 sentence statement of the issue/problem to which your memo will propose a solution.

Recommendation: A 2-4 sentence statement of your policy recommendation.

Discussion: This will be the lengthiest part of your paper. Although its structure will vary depending on the question you pose, it should include:

A detailed statement of the issue/problem

Relevant human rights law, policy, actors, etc.

Analysis of recent events/developments relating to the issue.

The Discussion section should read much like a research paper. You should present materials in an objective fashion, even if in the memo overall, you are trying to support a particular policy option. The decisionmaker needs to have a clear picture of the facts to understand the strength of the argument you are making. Organize this section using subheadings to ease the decisionmakers reading of your memo.

Recommended Action: a detailed recommendation grounded in an assessment of current factual, legal, and political realities--and a detailed discussion of how the recommendation can be achieved.

Conclusion: 1-2 paragraphs.

Bibliography

In this paper, you will be expected to make an argument for a particular policy outcome in an effective and convincing manner. This will require substantial support for your points and an ability to separate your “feelings” about an issue from a hard-nosed assessment of what is politically possible. It will also require you both to present an objective view of the issue and a reasonable argument supporting your preferred recommendation.

Writing Workshop: At the writing workshop, fellow class members will read your draft and provide comments. I will collect these materials and provide comments to you as well. Because this is an undergraduate “W” (writing intensive) course, I will provide more extensive comments to undergraduates than graduates. While there are no page requirements for the draft, the more detailed and lengthy it is, the more help I can provide you at this critical stage in your work. I do not expect that your draft will be polished, but it should not be a “first draft.” You must show me and your readers that you have done substantial work on the draft. I will provide comments on your draft by the next class meeting after you submit it. While I will be happy to meet with you to discuss your work both before and after you submit your draft, I will not do a full review again until you submit your final paper.

Sources: at least five books or scholarly articles. You are not permitted to use sources older than 1980, nor are you permitted to rely only on newspapers, popular magazines, or Internet sources unless you discuss this with me in advance. Familiarize yourself with Gumberg Library's EZ Borrow system which permits you to receive books from any University Library in Pennsylvania within two-three days. Also familiarize yourself with the ILLIAD interlibrary loan system which provides even broader access to books and scholarly articles. These great resources eliminate any limitations on student research at Duquesne ; you now have easy access to tens of millions of volumes and scholarly articles. You may also use the Law School's library. I expect you to use these resources in writing your papers; do not rely on the Internet alone.

Citations: Draft and final version must be fully cited. The precise citation format you use is not important to me. However, every citation must include author, title, publisher, date, url if applicable—and page numbers for the reference or quote you use. Do not omit any of these elements, and be especially careful to include page numbers for books, articles, chapters in print. As noted in the grading rubric below, completeness of citations will affect your grade.

Oral Policy Briefing (5 points). At the final class meeting, all students will make a brief oral presentation focusing on policy recommendations/implications of their research. These reports must be concise -- no longer than 5-8 minutes. I will provide further details about the format of this report later in the semester.

Office Hours. I encourage students to visit with me during office hours or at another pre-arranged time to discuss the paper, the course, politics generally, and career issues.

Students with Disabilities. Please alert me within the first two weeks of classes about any special requirements due to learning or physical disability, or any other reason. Students with documented disabilities are entitled to reasonable accommodations if needed. If you need accommodations, please contact the Office of Freshman Development and Special Services in 309 Duquesne Union (412-396-6657) as soon as possible. Accommodations will not be granted retroactively.

Emergencies. If you can document a medical, family, or other emergency during the semester, contact me as soon as possible and I may be able to make an accommodation for you. If you do not contact me quickly, I will be unable to make any accommodation.

ACADEMIC INTEGRITY

This course is covered by the Duquesne University Academic Integrity Policy printed in "The Student Handbook and Code of Student Rights, Responsibilities and Conduct." Familiarize yourself with this policy! Cheating on the quizzes, midterm, or final examination or plagiarism on the paper WILL RESULT IN YOUR FAILING THE COURSE. Additional penalties: see Student Handbook. Please note that Web-based programs to detect plagiarism of both words and ideas are available and will be used if necessary. If you are unsure of what constitutes plagiarism, check the student handbook and talk to me ASAP. As a basic guide, plagiarism includes but is not limited to:

1. Failing to provide citation (including page reference) to a direct quotation.
2. Failing to place quotation marks around a direct quote, even if a citation is included.
3. Failing to cite another author's ideas even if you use no direct quotation.
4. Copying another student's paper or exam.
5. Obtaining a pre-written paper or parts of a paper from any source.

GENERAL CRITERIA FOR GRADING PAPERS

1. Does the paper have a clear introduction setting a context and laying out a map?
2. Does the paper have clear structure, logical organization, and good flow?
3. Has the author deployed key concepts clearly and accurately?
4. Does the paper have well-developed paragraphs including evidence backing key points?
5. Does the author demonstrate critical thinking (i.e., questioning assumptions, describing new alternatives, presenting a fresh argument)?
6. Does the author incorporate information from multiple sources?
7. Does the paper include a conclusion, synthesizing the argument and suggesting interesting implications?
8. Is the paper grammatically correct and free of punctuation and spelling errors?
9. Does the author footnote all ideas and factual materials taken from the works of others, including full citations including page numbers?
10. Does the paper include a bibliography?

GENERAL CRITERIA FOR GRADING ESSAY EXAMINATIONS

- F: No answer or answer demonstrates no knowledge gained from course.
- D: Answer demonstrates some general knowledge from course, BUT
Does not address question asked; OR Includes major conceptual/factual inaccuracies.
- C: Answer addresses the question adequately, BUT
Includes little evidence (examples) to support answer; OR
Includes some conceptual/factual inaccuracies
- B: Answer addresses the question well:
Significant factual detail supporting argument
Conceptual/factual materials generally accurate
- A: Answer directly, accurately, and comprehensively addresses the question:
Significant amount of factual material supporting answer
Conceptual/factual materials accurate
Well-organized essay, including conclusion, introduction, subpoints

CLASS SCHEDULE AND READINGS

	<i>Undergraduates and Graduates</i>	<i>Graduates: Additional Required Reading</i>
1. 1/13	<u>Introduction</u>	
2. 1/20	<u>Origins of Human Rights</u> SAG 58-61; 106-48 SAG Website: UN Charter; Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR)	SAG 71-84

9. 3/17	<p><u>Writing Workshop: Hand in Draft of Research Papers</u> <u>Human Rights Activism: NGOs and Media</u> SAG 1420-32 Bob, Marketing of Rebellion, Chs. 4-5 *Kuperman, "Strategic Victimhood," New York Times, May 31, 2006 *Andress, Response to Kuperman, <i>Sudan Tribune</i>, June 12, 2006 Skim: Save Darfur website, http://www.savedarfur.org/content</p>	
10. 3/24	<p><u>Group/Minority Rights</u> *Buchanan, "The Problem of Secession" *Ogoni Bill of Rights (for brief orientation on the Ogoni, read Bob, 54-65) Additional Reading TBA</p>	Additional Reading TBA
11. 3/31	<p><u>Human Rights Enforcement: Genocide and Humanitarian Intervention</u> SAG 835-43; 1288-90 *Michael J. Glennon, The New Interventionism, <i>Foreign Affairs</i>, May/June 1999 *Genocide Convention, http://www.hrweb.org/legal/genocide.html *Human Rights Watch, Introduction to "Leave None to Tell the Story: Genocide in Rwanda," http://hrw.org/reports/1999/rwanda/ *Report of the International Commission on Intervention and State Sovereignty, <i>The Responsibility to Protect</i>, Chapters 1-2, http://www.dfait-maeci.gc.ca/iciss-ciise/report-en.asp *Skim: Luttwak, "Give War a Chance," <i>Foreign Affairs</i>, July/August 1999, available online through ProQuest</p>	<p>*Kuperman, "Rwanda in Retrospect," <i>Foreign Affairs</i>, 79, no 1 (2000), available online through ProQuest *Response to Kuperman, <i>Foreign Affairs</i>, 79, no. 3, (2000): 141, available online through ProQuest *Straus, "Darfur and the Genocide Debate," <i>Foreign Affairs</i>, Jan/Feb '05, available online through ProQuest</p>
12. 4/7	<p><u>Domestic Responses to Severe Rights Violations: Prosecution vs. Amnesty</u> SAG 1243-44; 1344-84 *Goodman, "Why Killers Should Go Free: Lessons from South Africa," <i>Washington Quarterly</i>, Spring 1999 *Cose, The Limitations of the Truth, <i>Newsweek</i>, Nov 2, 1998 *Truth & Reconciliation Comm. Website, http://www.truth.org.za/</p>	<p>*Hayner, "Fifteen Truth Commissions-1974 to 1994: A Comparative Study," <i>Human Rights Quarterly</i>, 16, no. 4 (1994)</p>

13. 4/21	<p><u>Policy Briefs Due</u></p> <p><u>International Justice for Severe Human Rights Violations; Peace vs. Justice</u> SAG 1243-56; 1288-1310; 1331-1344</p>	<p><i>Policy Briefs Due</i></p> <p>SAG 1310-31</p>
14. 4/28	<p><u>“New” Rights and Wrongs</u> SAG 1379-1414 *Bob, Excerpts from <i>The International Struggle for New Human Rights</i> *Manby, “The Role and Responsibility of Oil Multinationals in Nigeria,” <i>J. of International Affairs</i>, Fall 1999 Take-Home Final Distributed</p>	<p>SAG, 1414-20</p> <p>Take-Home Final Distributed</p>
5/1	<p>Take-Home Final Exam Due 4:30 PM in the Political Science Office, College Hall 503.</p>	