

Princeton University

Human Rights & Science in the World Community: Issues & Actions

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Thursday, 1:30-4:20

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This course, CST 399, is offered under the auspices of the Council on Science and Technology at Princeton. It is an advanced undergraduate seminar, organized roundtable-style, which depends upon full participation in the discussion of complex and controversial topics. It is designed to enhance understanding of the international politics and law related to global human rights issues, and to explore some the ways in which the fields of science and human rights impinge upon one another. The connections are diverse and multiple.

In part, we will take an historical perspective in view of the fact that the post-World War II period is marked by enlarged notions of scientific responsibility, newly informed by the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. For example, scientists contributed to debate over the need for such a Declaration in 1948, and have ever increasingly come to rely on its protection, as seen by contemporary examples of scientists and science associations in one country invoking human rights norms to protest political repression of scientists in other countries. Moreover, recent technological and cultural changes are linked not only to scientists defending abused colleagues overseas, as called for by the late André Sakharov, but more positively, examples are given of science in the service of human rights. To explore these developments we will have outside speakers making presentations on:

- field research by "Physicians for Human Rights" in Cambodia, Gabriel Otterman, M.D. (Harvard)
- health professionals and human rights, Allen Keller, M.D.(Bellevue Hospital)
- data management issues and internet research opportunities in human rights, Stephen Hansen (American Association for the Advancement of Science)
- forensic anthropology and human rights applications in Guatemala, Robert Kirchner, M.D. (Cook County Medical Examiners Office)

The size of the class is strictly limited, and attendance is critically important. Our weekly meetings will be organized around a mix of student written reports subjected to critical peer review, lectures, outside speakers, and the final production of a major research paper with an oral and written report thereon at the end of the semester.

Our topic requires discussion and analysis because it is both complex and charged with ethical and normative issues and dilemmas. Global human rights issues seem to arise in public affairs on a daily basis: Chinese denials of deliberate starving of children in orphanages; Kurdish testimony about

poisoned gas attacks from Iraqi bombing of civilians; Bosnian allegations of Serbian genocidal objectives in the Balkans; Burmese (Myanmar) evidence of military use of civilians to clear dangerous mine fields; Guatemalan governmental persecution of rural Indian populations. These and myriad other such issues require analysis in the context of the newly emerging field of the international law of human rights and fundamental freedoms and of international action in support of United Nations objectives of preserving global security and promoting human rights. The underlying importance of these concerns was articulated by President John Kennedy in 1963, asking a group of Washington, D.C. college students: "Is not peace, in the last analysis, a matter of human rights?" Given the importance of human rights in terms of international peace, and in view of the interest heightened in the subject by the Nobel Peace Prize awarded to Amnesty International, and the liveliness of debate over the role of human rights in U.S. foreign policy, college level courses on the subject have become commonplace. This growing field, characterized by documentary and historical richness, is very broad --involving domestic, comparative and international issues and institutions.

Assignments Leading up to the Mid-term Exam

Required and recommended readings for the class will be drawn from library reserve materials and four paperback books. (1) *Human Rights in the World Community; Issues and Action*, 2d edition, Claude & Weston, editors, (University of Pennsylvania Press, 1992); (2) Chalk, *Science, Technology and Society; Emerging Relationships* (Washington, DC: American Association for the Advancement of Science, 1988); (3) Annas, eds., *Nazi Doctors 7 The Nuremberg Code* (Oxford University Press paperback, 1992); (4) Christopher Joyce and Eric Stover, *Witness From the Grave* (Ballentine, 1992) In the assignments below, Claude and Weston is referred to as C&W and Chalk as CH.

During the first part of the semester, emphasizing discussion and leading up to an examination, we will review the six roman numerated sections below (I-VI) by means of requiring each student to take responsibility for one discussion question, as shown below, and writing a 6-10 page paper for presentation and critical peer review before the class. This exercise may take the form of the development of an argument, thesis, or well-organized response to the question. Most of these questions, by design, are open to diverse answers and approaches, and accordingly the student is encouraged to take a stand on a question from the C&W text, defending her or his response. The editors of the text devised questions open to answers about which reasonable people might defensibly disagree. Thus papers will not be judged as "right or wrong" but as coherent, well organized, and internally consistent based on identified premises, irrespective of whether the instructor or other students agree with the views expressed. A minimum of four such papers per student of which two should be orally presented and subject to seminar review and criticism.

Assignments After the Mid-term

The semester's work should culminate in a research paper of very high quality. Students should select a research paper topic within four weeks and arrange an appointment as early as possible with the instructor to plan the project. A list of possible term paper topics will be presented in the first class meeting. A one-page description of the research paper, listing at least three secondary sources and two primary sources, will be due after the mid-term examination and Spring break. It should include a clear indication of the scope of the topic, research methods and sources to be used, including reference to primary sources such as interview respondents and government documents. An appropriate way to organize your research paper is around a question which you pose at the beginning of your paper. Thus, your prospectus should pose such a question.

After our mid-term examination, we will concentrate on planning a final research paper using primary source-materials (we will have an orientation to such work in the Government Documents room of the library) and relying on at least one and preferably two interviews of an expert or experts involved in the field under inquiry. Such an expert should be a scientist, engineer or health professional involved in human rights work, a government policy-maker, a representative of a human rights organization, an activist, or an academic specialist. The instructor will be able to help arrange such connections for students conducting interviews. Our post-exam meetings will concentrate on research opportunities, sources, methods, and presentation format. Our last three meetings will exclusively involve student preliminary reports on research, eliciting comments and criticism. A one-page outline of the paper should be prepared for distribution to all members of the class for the preliminary report. The final revised paper (in light of criticisms) will be due in lieu of a final examination. The research paper should be typed and double-spaced, about 20 text pages. Endnotes may supply added pages, and should include citations to interviews and government documents (primary sources), as well as references to related readings, e.g., from the first part of the semester (secondary sources).

Research Resources

David Forsythe's *The Internationalization of Human Rights* (Lexington Books, 1991), on reserve, provides a useful primer on primary sources, "Researching Basic Sources on Human Rights," and the text by Claude and Weston ends each of six chapters with lengthy annotated bibliographies of secondary sources, or scholarly books of commentary. Especially useful is Jack Tobin and Jennifer, Green, eds., *Guide to Human Rights Research* (Human Rights Program, Harvard Law School, 1994). Secondary sources usually constitute analysis and commentary on public affairs by various experts, but not necessarily those responsible for finding and reporting the information relied upon. In conducting research, the student should understand that interviews constitute "primary sources," i.e., direct access to information from those responsible for gathering and publishing it. Because of the accessibility of human rights experts in the New York and mid-Atlantic area including Washington, DC, and because we will have a few such experts speaking in our class, the interviews required for the research paper should not be difficult to arrange. They should involve respondents, for example, from such places as the United Nations, The Science and Human Rights Program of the American Association for the Advancement of Science, The International Affairs Committee of the National Academy of Science, The Lawyers Committee for Human Rights, Amnesty International, USA, Asia Watch, The Helsinki Commission, and the Bureau of Human Rights and Humanitarian Affairs of the United States Department of State.

For research purposes, the student should be aware of various scholarly journals and other resources available in most libraries. These include *Human Rights Quarterly*, a comparative and international journal of the humanities, social sciences and law; *The Harvard Human Rights Journal*; *Health and Human Rights* (Harvard); *The Netherlands Quarterly on Human Rights*, *The Human Rights Law Journal* (mostly concentrating on European regional developments); *The Human Rights Tribune*, and the *Human Rights Internet Reporter* (published until 1991 in Canada to report on the activities of human rights organizations, especially non-governmental organizations or "NGOs"). Other related magazines and journals are: the *Index on Censorship*, *Freedom at Issue*, *The American Journal of International Law*, and the *International and Comparative Law Journal*. To look up periodical literature on human rights, the student should be aware of various research tools. They include: the *Index to Legal Periodicals*, *The Social Science Index*, *The Index to Foreign Legal Periodicals* etc. Human rights legal documents such as the U.S. Department of State *Country Reports on Human Rights Practices* are available in the Government Documents collections of most libraries, as are United Nations documents and reports. Human rights treaties and other sources of international law are available in a convenient single volume edited by Albert P. Blaustein, Roger S.

Clark and Jay A. Sigler, *Human Rights Sourcebook* often found in library reference collections. A more convenient paperback is Center for the Study of Human Rights, *Twenty-four Human Rights Documents* (Columbia University, 1992).

Of special interest for interdisciplinary work is the *Guide to Human Rights Research*, edited by Jack Tobin and Jennifer Green, for the Human Rights Program of the Harvard Law School. Persons interested in measurement issues associated with human rights policy should consult: A "*Guide to Human Rights Data Sources*" and quantitative indicators available in *Human Rights and Statistics; Getting the Record Straight*, Jabine and Claude, editors, (University of Pennsylvania Press, 1991), 392-342.

Class Procedures

Professor Claude will lecture for about an hour at the beginning of several sessions. Some transcribed lectures will be printed and distributed if necessary to make way for class discussion and outside speakers. One such lecture by Professor Claude is attached here, on "Science and Health Rights in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights." Lectures will assume knowledge from assigned readings. The assignment agenda below refers to our required and recommended readings; the Arabic numerals are consistent with the numbered readings from the Claude and Weston textbook, and the lettered readings are science-related and from Chalk, Annas, Joyce & Stover, and from recommended readings on reserve. Each student is expected to undertake all of the required readings for sections I-VI and to accept responsibility to write four papers over this period, selecting a writing topic from the "Questions for Reflection and Discussion" found after each C&W textbook reading. Because four questions are due over six weeks, the student may "opt out" twice. Our objective is not necessarily to cover every question or even every reading in class discussion, but to maximize discussion over six weeks, advancing through sections I-VI, one week at a time. Note that the assignments for parts I-VI give advance notice of discussion questions for roundtable consideration. Please take your writing commitments seriously. Late papers will result in lowered participation grades. While we will try to maximize participation, students will not be able orally to present all four papers over the course of six weeks. We will try to organize so as to ensure that everyone has at least two oral presentations based on papers. Whether time allows for this goal or not, four papers are due on the four days for which commitments are made. These papers will be letter-graded, and a paper is more eligible for a grade of "A" if it draws upon recommended readings in the course of answering the discussion question. In any event, grades for the discussion papers finally will factor into the participation grade which reflects the overall development of analytical, articulation, and argumentation skills. The primary idea is to develop the skills to produce a first-rate original research paper relying, in part, on primary sources.