

Harvard School of Public Health

Health and Human Rights

PIH 218c - January - March 1998

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Class Materials

1. Course reading packet.
2. Twenty-five Human Rights Documents, Center for the Study of Human Rights, Columbia University, 1994.
3. Case Materials: to be distributed in class.

Course Outline

Class 1: January 27

Part 1: Introduction to the Course, History of Modern Human Rights

The objectives, structure, readings and assignments of the course will be presented. The underlying propositions and conceptual framework for the course will be discussed. The basic trends and developments in human rights are reviewed briefly.

Part 2: Human Rights Instruments and Core Principles

The core principles of modern human rights thinking and practice will be discussed. Emphasis will be placed on the instruments comprising the International Bill of Human Rights.

Class 2: February 3

Part 1: Human Rights Institutions, Monitoring and Enforcement

An introduction to the institutions relevant to the promotion, monitoring, implementation and enforcement of human rights norms, including the United Nations and United Nations-related institutions and the vital role of non-governmental organizations (NGOs).

Part 2: Case Study (Prison)

Class 3: February 10

The Impact of Public Health Policies and Programs on Human Rights

Discussion of how public health policies, programs and practices can burden human rights, and how an optimal balance can be negotiated between public health goals and human rights norms.

Class 4: February 17

Human Rights Violations in Times of Extreme Political Repression and in Times of Conflict

Guest Lecturer: Susannah Sirkin, Deputy Director, Physicians for Human Rights

Discussion of the assessment of the health impacts of human rights violations in situations of extreme political repression and conflict settings. The pivotal role of health professionals in documenting and responding to violations, and in prevention efforts will be highlighted.

Class 5: February 24

Health Effects of Human Rights Violations in Peacetime: The Rights to Information and Reproductive Health

An exploration of the impact of human rights violations on health, using the example of reproductive health, with a focus on the right to information. Emphasis will be placed on the newly emerging concepts of reproductive rights and sexual rights.

Class 6: March 3

From Vulnerability to Human Rights: The Case of HIV/AIDS

Development of the concept of risk and vulnerability and its relationship to health issues and human rights. Using a human rights analysis, the determinants of vulnerability to HIV/AIDS will be explored, and interventions intended to reduce them will be examined.

With Daniel Tarantola, Director, International AIDS Program, François-Xavier Bagnoud Center for Health and Human Rights, Lecturer, Department of Population and International Health.

Class 7: March 10

Child Health and Child Rights

A discussion of child health issues in the context of human rights with emphasis on the application of the Convention on the Right of the Child.

Class 8: March 17

Next Steps: Incorporating Human Rights into Public Health Practice

Paper presentations and next steps.