University of Connecticut
The Human Rights Institute
INTRODUCTION TO HUMAN RIGHTS (POLS 125)

Spring 2006
Location: Family Studies, Room 220
Day/time: Tuesday/Thursday 3:30 – 4:45 p.m.

Prof. Shareen Hertel
Office Hours: Tuesday 1-3 p.m.
Office: 108 Monteith Hall
Email: shareen.hertel@uconn.edu
Phone: 860 486 4129

Prof. Serena Parekh
Office Hours: Wednesday 1:30-3:30 pm
Office: Manchester Hall 136
Email: serena.parekh@uconn.edu
Phone: 860 486 3463

Prof. Kathryn Libal
Office Hours: Monday, 9:30-10:30 am; Tuesday 12-1 pm
Office: 410 Beach Hall
Email: kathryn.libal@uconn.edu
Phone: 860 486 1129

Purposes. Human rights is a powerful idea in our time, but it is also the focus of numerous controversies: it is not only an ideal but also a political tool, which different forces try to bend to their own ends. This course looks at selected intellectual controversies and political puzzles involved in human rights theory and practice. It explores the central institutions of the human rights regime. And it analyzes the challenges of contemporary human rights advocacy.

Requirements. The course grade will be based upon: three in-class examinations, quizzes, and course participation. Overall course grade weighted as follows:

First exam: 25% of final grade
Second exam: 25% of final grade
Final exam: 35% of final grade
Quizzes: 10% of final grade
Course participation, including simulations: 5% of final grade

Academic (Mis)Conduct and Plagiarism
Academic Misconduct in any form is in violation of the University of Connecticut Student Code and will not be tolerated. This includes, but is not limited to: copying or sharing answers on tests or assignments, plagiarism, and having someone else do your academic work. Depending on the act, a student could receive and F grade on the
test/assignment, F grade for the course, and could be suspended or expelled from the University. Please see the Student Code at http://www.dosa.uconn.edu/code2.html for more details and a full explanation of the Academic Misconduct policies.

*Please turn down the volume on pagers and turn off cell phones before class begins.*

If there are any students in this class who have special needs because of learning disabilities, it is your responsibility to discuss this with one of the instructors during the first two weeks of class.

**Readings.** Books are in paperback and have been ordered at the UConn Co-Op; a list of books available for purchase is included at the end of this syllabus. Books are on reserve at the Homer Babbidge Library. *Many of the articles and other readings assigned can be obtained online (online addresses are indicated in the syllabus) and through VISTA.*

**CLASS SCHEDULE***

*Any changes to the schedule below will be announced in class and confirmed in writing.*

**Jan 17**
**INTRODUCTION** (Shareen Hertel, Serena Parekh, Kathryn Libal)
General comments and welcome; review of logistics.

**January 19**
**HUMAN RIGHTS AS LAW** (Shareen Hertel)

**January 24**
**PHILOSOPHICAL FOUNDATIONS** (Serena Parekh)
In Hayden, *The Philosophy of Human Rights*, read the sections on Plato, Thomas Aquinas, John Locke.

**January 26**
**19th CENTURY SOCIAL MOVEMENTS** (Kathryn Libal)
January 31
DISCUSSION CLASS: THE UNIVERSAL BILL OF RIGHTS (Shareen Hertel, Serena Parekh, and Kathryn Libal)

February 2 & 7
STRUCTURE OF THE UN HR SYSTEM (Shareen Hertel and Kathryn Libal)
   Class 1:
   David P. Forsythe, Human Rights in International Relations (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), Chapter 3, pp. 55-83. (VISTA)
   Class 2:
   Fully review the website of the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights, particularly the section “About OHCHR” and within it “Structure” at: http://www.ohchr.org/english/structure.htm Make sure to CLICK ON the colored boxes and read the text that you link to for each agency, etc.

February 9
SIMULATION ON UN HUMAN RIGHTS REFORM
   Plus: EXAM REVIEW

February 14
Exam #1 (in class)

February 16 & 21
ARE HUMAN RIGHTS TRULY UNIVERSAL? THE RELATIVISM DEBATE (Serena Parekh & Kathryn Libal)
   Class 1:
   Class 2:
   Recommended:
   Please read the Vienna Declaration and Programme of Action, available electronically via: http://www.ohchr.org/english/law/vienna.htm
February 23
HUMAN RIGHTS IN THE INTERNATIONAL SYSTEM: THE SHAME & BLAME GAME (Shareen Hertel)
   Forsythe, Chapter 6, pp. 139-162.

February 28
GENOCIDE AND HUMAN RIGHTS (Serena Parekh)
   Excerpt from Alain Destexhe, Rwanda and Genocide in the Twentieth Century. Available electronically via:
   http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/pages/frontline/shows/rwanda/reports/dsetexhe.html
   Samantha Power, “Never Again: The World’s Most Unfulfilled Promise.” Available electronically via:
   http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/pages/frontline/shows/karadzic/genocide/neveragain.html

March 2
CONFLICT & TRANSITIONAL JUSTICE (Shareen Hertel)
   Forsythe, Chapter 4, pp. 84-109.

March 7 and 9 – SPRING BREAK

March 14 and 16
REFUGEES AND DISPLACED PEOPLE (Serena Parekh)
Class 1:

Class 2:
   Gil Loescher, Beyond Charity, (Oxford: OUP, 1993), Chapter 8, pp. 180-190, 196-205. (VISTA)
March 21 and 23
WOMEN’S RIGHTS AS HUMAN RIGHTS (Kathryn Libal)
Class 1:
Class 2:

March 28
Exam #2 (in class)

March 30 and April 4
ECONOMIC & LABOR RIGHTS (Shareen Hertel)
Required:
Class 1:
Class 2:

April 6
CHILDREN’S RIGHTS (Kathryn Libal)
Required:
April 11 & 13
MINORITY, INDIGENOUS AND GROUP RIGHTS – CHALLENGES FROM LIBERALISM AND COSMOPOLITANISM (Serena Parekh)
Class 1:

Class 2:

April 18 and 20
HUMAN RIGHTS & NGOs: POWER, REPRESENTATION AND PROFESSIONALIZATION (Shareen Hertel & Kathryn Libal)
Class 1:

Class 2: GUEST SPEAKER

April 25 and April 27
COURSE REVIEW FOR FINAL EXAM & COURSE EVALUATION

FINAL EXAM – date to be announced.

BOOKS AVAILABLE FOR PURCHASE

University of Connecticut Co-Op

