

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](mailto: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](mailto: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](mailto: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 an 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)

Center for the Study of Human Rights, Columbia University, *25+ Human Rights Documents* (NY: CSHR, 2001)—read the *Universal Declaration of Human Rights*, the *International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights*, and the *International Covenant on Economic, Social and Culture Rights*.

### ***January 24***

#### **PHILOSOPHICAL FOUNDATIONS** (Serena Parekh)

In Hayden, *The Philosophy of Human Rights*, read the sections on Plato, Thomas Aquinas, John Locke.

### ***January 26***

#### **19<sup>th</sup> CENTURY SOCIAL MOVEMENTS** (Kathryn Libal)

Michelene Ishay, “Human Rights and the Industrial Age,” in *The History of Human Rights: From Ancient Times to the Globalization Era* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 2004), pp. 135-145; 155-172. (VISTA)

**January 31**

**DISCUSSION CLASS: THE UNIVERSAL BILL OF RIGHTS** (Shareen Hertel, Serena Parekh, and Kathryn Libal)

Louis Henkin, “Human Rights: Ideology and Aspiration, Reality and Prospect,” Samantha Power and Graham Allison, eds., *Realizing Human Rights: Moving from Inspiration to Impact* (NY: St Martin’s Press, 2000), pp. 3-38. (VISTA)

**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**

Paul Gordon Lauren, *The Evolution of International Human Rights: Visions Seen* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1998), Chapter 7, pp. 205-240. (VISTA)

**February 14**

**Exam #1 (in class)**

**February 16 & 21**

**ARE HUMAN RIGHTS TRULY UNIVERSAL? THE RELATIVISM DEBATE**

(Serena Parekh & Kathryn Libal)

Class 1:

James Rachels, “The Challenge of Cultural Relativism,” in *The Elements of Moral Philosophy* (Boston: McGraw Hill, 2003), pp. 16-31. (VISTA)

Fernando Teson, “International Human Rights and Cultural Relativism,” in Hayden, *The Philosophy of Human Rights*, pp. 379-396. (VISTA)

Class 2:

Abdullahi Ahmed An-Naim, “Human Rights in the Muslim World,” in Hayden, *The Philosophy of Human Rights*, pp. 315-334.

Center for the Study of Human Rights, Columbia University, *25+ Human Rights Documents* (NY: CSHR, 2001)—read the *Cairo Declaration on Human Rights in Islam*.

**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.

Keck and Sikkink, *Activists Beyond Borders* (Ithaca: Cornell Univ. Press, 1998), Chapter 1, pp. 1-38. (VISTA)

**February 28**

**GENOCIDE AND HUMAN RIGHTS** (Serena Parekh)

Center for the Study of Human Rights, Columbia University, *25+ Human Rights Documents* (NY: CSHR, 2001)—read *Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide*

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.

Priscilla Hayner, *Unspeakable Truths: Confronting State Terror and Atrocity* (New York: Routledge, 2001), Chaps. 1, 2, 3, pp. 1-31. (VISTA – under “Other Readings.”)

**March 7 and 9 – SPRING BREAK**

**March 14 and 16**

**REFUGEES AND DISPLACED PEOPLE** (Serena Parekh)

Class 1:

Hannah Arendt, *The Origins of Totalitarianism*, (New York: Harcourt Inc., 1976), Chapter 9, pp. 267-302. (VISTA)

Class 2:

Seyla Benhabib, *The Rights of Others*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), Introduction, pp. 1-12. (VISTA)

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:

Charlotte Bunch, "Women's Rights as Human Rights: Toward a Re-vision of Human Rights," *Human Rights Quarterly* 12, No. 4 (1990), pp. 486-498. (VISTA)

Center for the Study of Human Rights, Columbia University, 25+ Human Rights Documents (NY: CSHR, 2001) - read the *Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women*.

Class 2:

Read Declaration on the Elimination of Violence against Women – available electronically via: <http://www.ohchr.org/english/law/eliminationvaw.htm>

Leyla Pervizat, "In the Name of Honor," *Human Rights Dialogue* 2, vol. 10 (Fall 2003) and response by Zehra Arat, "A Struggle on Two Fronts," *Human Rights Dialogue* 2, vol. 10 (Fall 2003) – both available electronically:

<http://www.carnegiecouncil.org/viewMedia.php/prmID/1058?PHPSESSID=35fd16a4ba53ad7988aa88f77ddc240c>

**March 28**

**Exam #2 (in class)**

**March 30 and April 4**

**ECONOMIC & LABOR RIGHTS** (Shareen Hertel)

**Required:**

Class 1:

Virginia Leary, "The Paradox of Workers' Rights as Human Rights," in *Human Rights, Labor Rights, and International Trade*, Lance Compa and Stephen Diamond, eds. (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1996), pp. 22-47. (VISTA)

Class 2:

William E. Myers, "The Right Rights? Child Labor in a Globalizing World," *Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science* 575 (May 2001), pp. 38-55. (VISTA)

**April 6**

**CHILDREN'S RIGHTS** (Kathryn Libal)

**Required:**

Center for the Study of Human Rights, Columbia University, 25+ *Human Rights Documents* (NY: CSHR, 2001) – read the *Convention on the Rights of the Child*.

Nancy Scheper-Hughes and Daniel Hoffman, "Brazilian Apartheid: Street Kids and the Struggle for Urban Space," in *Small Wars: The Cultural Politics of Childhood*, Nancy Scheper-Hughes and Carolyn Sargent, eds. (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1998), pp. 352-388. (VISTA)

***April 11 & 13***

**MINORITY, INDIGENOUS AND GROUP RIGHTS – CHALLENGES FROM LIBERALISM AND COSMOPOLITANISM (Serena Parekh)**

Class 1:

Will Kymlicka, “The Good, the Bad and the Intolerable: Minority Group Rights” in Hayden, *The Philosophy of Human Rights*, pp. 445-461.

Kwasi Wiredu, “An Akan Perspective on Human Rights” in Hayden, *The Philosophy of Human Rights*, pp. 298-314.

Class 2:

J Waldron, “Minority Cultures and the Cosmopolitan Alternative” in Kymlicka, *The Rights of Minority Cultures* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004), pp. 93-119. (VISTA)

Susan Moller-Okin, “Is Multiculturalism Bad for Women?” at: <http://www.bostonreview.net/BR22.5/okin.html> .

***April 18 and 20***

**HUMAN RIGHTS & NGOs: POWER, REPRESENTATION AND PROFESSIONALIZATION (Shareen Hertel & Kathryn Libal)**

Class 1:

“Human Rights for All? The Problem of the Human Rights Box,” *Human Rights Dialogue* (Winter 2000), Series 2, No. 1, at:

<http://www.cceia.org/viewMedia.php/prmTemplateID/8/prmID/599> .

Arthur and Joan Kleinman, “The Appeal of Experience, the Dismay of Images: The Cultural Appropriation of Suffering in our Times,” *Daedalus* 125:1 (1997), pp. 1-23.

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***

Center for the Study of Human Rights, Columbia University, *25+ Human Rights Documents* (NY: CSHR, 2001).

David P. Forsythe, *Human Rights in International Relations* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000).

Patrick Hayden, *The Philosophy of Human Rights* (St. Paul, MN: Paragon House, 2001).