

International Human Rights

Spring 1999 - IHD 519b - W 10:00-11:50

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The course will address the evolution of international human rights and of the legal instruments designed for their protection. It will study the theoretical foundations of the idea of human rights in various civilizations and cultures, evaluate its legacy within the western and non-western traditions, and examine its meaning and relevance in dealing with major issues in the contemporary world.

The following books have been ordered for the course and are available at Yale Co-op:

1. George Andreopoulos, Richard Pierre Claude (eds.), *Human Rights Education for the Twenty-First Century*. (University of Pennsylvania Press, 1997).
2. Philip Gourevitch, *We Wish to Inform You That Tomorrow We Will Be Killed With Our Families. Stories From Rwanda*. (Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 1998).
3. Peter Juviler, *Freedom's Ordeal. The Struggle for Human Rights and Democracy in Post-Soviet States*. (University of Pennsylvania Press, 1998).
4. Henry Steiner and Philip Alston, *International Human Rights in Context. Law, Politics, Morals*. (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1996).

In addition, the following books have been placed on reserve:

1. George Andreopoulos (ed.), *Genocide: The Conceptual and Historical Dimensions*. (University of Pennsylvania Press, 1994).
2. Jack Donnelly, *Universal Human Rights in Theory and Practice*. (Cornell University Press, 1989).
3. Abdullahi Ahmed An-Naim, *Human Rights in Cross-Cultural Perspectives: A Quest for Consensus*. (University of Pennsylvania Press, 1992).
4. Carlos S. Nino, *Radical Evil on Trial*. (Yale University Press, 1996).

There will be a series of assigned readings, which will be placed on reserve at the library. Moreover, certain documents listed below can be accessed via internet. You must become familiar (if you are not already) with the United Nations' web site (<http://www.un.org>). The following documents are available at <http://www.un.org/Docs/SG/>.

1. Secretary-General's Report to the UN Security Council on the causes of conflict and the promotion of durable peace and sustainable development in Africa.
2. Agenda for Development.
3. An Agenda for Peace (A/47/277-S/24111) 17 June 1992.
4. An Agenda for Peace, Supplement (A/50/60-S/1995/1) 3 January 1995.

Finally, you should visit: (1) the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights web site (<http://www.unhchr.ch/>); it includes a wealth of information and reports on human rights issues, and (2) the Consortium for Health and Human Rights web site (<http://www.healthandhumanrights.org/>)

Course requirements. A 20-25- page research paper on a topic to be chosen after consultation with the instructor (90% of the grade). The paper is due on Wednesday, May 12. Class participation will count for 10% of the grade.

Week 1

What are human rights? The evolution and normative framework of international human rights.

- Henry Steiner and Philip Alston, *International Human Rights in Context*, pp. 3-116.

Week 2

Philosophical underpinnings of human rights. The institutionalization of human rights in western political thought. The issue of economic and social rights.

- Jack Donnelly, *Universal Human Rights in Theory and Practice*, pp. 9-45; Steiner and Alston, pp. 256-328.

Week 3

Human rights in non-western traditions. Universalist vs. cultural relativist perspectives on human rights. The individual and society in non-western thought.

- Abdullahi An-Naim (ed.), *Human Rights in Cross-Cultural Perspectives*, pp. 1-102.

Week 4

Cultural perspectives on human rights (continued).

- Steiner and Alston, pp. 166-255. Michael J. Perry, "Are Human Rights Universal? The Relativist Challenge and Related Matters," *Human Rights Quarterly*, vol. 19, 3 (August 1997). (on reserve).

Week 5

The United Nations and the internationalization of human rights standards.

- Steiner and Alston, pp. 347-455;
- Jonathan Mann, Lawrence Gostin, Sofia Gruskin (and others) "Health and Human Rights," *Health and Human Rights*, vol. 1(1), 1994;
- Virginia Leary, "The Right to Health in International Human Rights Law," *Health and Human Rights*, vol. 1(1), 1994 (both articles can be accessed at <http://www.hri.ca/partners/fixcenter/journal/>)

Week 6

Regional instruments and institutions for the protection of human rights.

- Steiner and Alston, pp. 563-639;
- Tom Farer, "The Rise of the Inter-American Human Rights Regime: No Longer a Unicorn, Not Yet an Ox," vol. 19, 3(August 1997), (on reserve).

Week 7

Regional instruments and institutions (continued).

- Steiner and Alston, pp. 640-705.

Week 8

Past and contemporary challenges to the promotion and protection of international human rights.

- George Andreopoulos, *Genocide: The Conceptual and Historical Dimensions*, pp. 1-63;
- Carlos Nino, *Radical Evil on Trial*, pp. 3-104.

Week 9

Past and contemporary challenges (continued).

- Helen Fein, "Genocide by Attrition 1939-1993: The Warsaw Ghetto, Cambodia and Sudan," *Health and Human Rights*, vol. 2(2), 1997 (on reserve);
- Nino, pp. 107-89.

Week 10

Human Rights in the post-cold war period.

- An Agenda for Peace; An Agenda for Peace, Supplement; Agenda for Development; Secretary-General's Report to the UN Security Council on the causes of conflict and the promotion of durable peace and sustainable development in Africa (all these documents can be accessed at the web sites indicated above).

Week 11

Human rights in the post-cold war period (continued). The challenges of fractured societies.

- United Nations Department of Peacekeeping Operations, *Multidisciplinary Peacekeeping: Lessons From Recent Experience* (it can be accessed at <http://www.un.org/Depts/dpko/lessons/>);
- Philip Gourevitch, *We Wish to Inform You that Tomorrow We Will Be Killed With Our Families*.

Week 12

The Human Rights Situation in Post-Soviet States.

- Peter Juviler, *Freedom's Ordeal*, pp. 1-103.

Week 13

Human Rights in Post-Soviet States (continued). Strategies of human rights promotion: the role of human rights education.

- Juviler, pp.104-88;
- George Andreopoulos and Richard Pierre Claude, *Human Rights Education for the Twenty-First Century*, pp. 3-50, and pp. 278-333.

Week 14

The role of human rights education (continued). Assessing the record: the fiftieth anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

- Andreopoulos and Claude, pp. 334-373; Read the special issue of *Health and Human Rights* dedicated to the fiftieth anniversary (vol. 3, no.2, 1998) and in particular the commentary by Gro Harlem Brundtland, *The UDHR: Fifty Years of Synergy Between Health and Human Rights*, and the piece by Richard Claude and Bernardo Issel, *Health, Medicine and Science in the UDHR*.
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