

THE INTERNATIONAL HUMAN RIGHTS REGIME: PROMISE AND PERIL

**GO 340
SPRING 2011
MW 2:30 – 3:50 Ladd 207**

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Department of Government**

COURSE DESCRIPTION: This course examines the philosophical, religious, and legal foundations of our modern concept of human right, and the political processes by which human rights are either provided for and protected or violated and ignored worldwide. In the first unit, we examine the sources of our modern human rights regime. What do we mean when we talk about human rights? Where did we get the idea of “human rights” from? We then proceed to examine the creation of the “modern” human rights regime, which is centered upon the UN Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the UN system. We then examine some of the “social scientific” approaches to human rights, asking how we know when human rights are or are not being fulfilled and how we might understand better the processes by which human rights either flourish or fail to flourish. We then look at specific “sectors” of human rights – the rights of women and children, indigenous peoples, and other specific cases and categories of human rights violation. Finally, we examine our own potential individual moral responsibility regarding human rights as citizens of the international system.

COURSE GOALS:

It is my aim that by the end of this course you will have:

- gained a deep understanding of and appreciation for the philosophical, religious and legal principles that underlay the modern international human rights regime
- gained a sophisticated knowledge of the political processes by which human rights are either provided for and protected or violated and ignored world-wide
- gained an appreciation for the fact that there are alternative and critical perspectives on the modern international human rights regime
 - examined your own views about human rights, and weighed the question of your potential moral obligations regarding the provision, protection or violation of human rights
- significantly improved your critical reading, note-taking, comprehension, analytical and writing skills

Required Readings:

Human Rights: Politics and Practice, Michael Goodhart, ed. Oxford, 2009.

The World Made New: Eleanor Roosevelt and the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, Mary Ann Glendon, Random House, 2001

Moral Clarity: A Grown-Up Guide for Idealists, Susan Neiman, Princeton, 2009.

Inventing Human Rights: A History, Lynn Hunt, Norton, 2007.

The Life You Can Save: Acting Now to End World Poverty, Peter Singer, Random House, 2009.

Women and World Development: A Capabilities Approach. Martha Nussbaum, Cambridge, 2001.

Projects / Assignments

1. **Participation and Classroom Comportment:** See the Government Department Comportment Code—I take this code of conduct seriously and expect you to as well. Excessive absences and violations of the comportment code will adversely affect your grade for this portion of the course **(10%)**
2. **Three Short (about 4 pages each) Papers (30%):** the topics for the first two will be handed out in class at least a week before the deadline; the third will be based on Martha Nussbaum’s book during Week

DUE DATES: MON 2/1; WED 2/16 ; WED 4/13

3. **Four In-Class Quizzes (40%):** these quizzes will be based on the class reading, and students will be permitted to use their reading notes for them (though not the books themselves). The quizzes will consist of both short answer and (very) short essay and will take approximately 20 minutes each.

QUIZ DATES: WED 3/2; WED 3/9; WED 3/23; WED 3/30

4. **Final Take-Home Essay:** (8-10 pp) **(20%)**
DUE WEDNESDAY MAY 11 @ 5 pm

Week 1:	Monday 1/24	Discussion of syllabus and class policies
	Wednesday 1/26	Goodhart, ed., <i>Human Rights: Politics and Practice</i> , Introduction (p.1-8). AND Langlois, “Normative and Theoretical Foundations of Human Rights, in Goodhart, ed., <i>Human Rights: Politics and Practice</i> , (p. 11-25). AND “The Universal Declaration of Human Rights,” Appendix One in in Goodhart, ed., <i>Human Rights: Politics and Practice</i> , (p. 379-383).

Week 2: WHERE DID THE IDEA OF HR COME FROM ?

Monday 2/1	Paper #1 Due Hunt, <i>Inventing Human Rights</i> , Intro and Ch.1 (p. 15-69).
Wednesday 2/3	Hunt, <i>Inventing Human Rights</i> , Ch. 2,3,4 (p. 70-175).

Week 3: THE FIRST HR CAMPAIGN : ABOLITION

Monday 2/8	Adam Hochschild, <i>Bury the Chains</i> , p. 1-8, and p. 152-180 (Handout)
Wednesday 2/10	Adam Hochschild, <i>Bury the Chains</i> , p. 256-279 and p. 344-366 (Handout).

Week 4: CREATING THE MODERN HR REGIME: THE UN DECLARATION AND SYSTEM

Monday 2/14

Hunt, *Inventing Human Rights*, Ch.5

AND

Glendon, *A World Made New*, Preface and Ch. 1 and 2 (p. xv-34).

Wednesday 2/16

SHORT PAPER #2 DUE

Glendon, *A World Made New*, Ch. 3 and 4 (p. 35-72).

Week 5:

Monday 2/21

Glendon, *A World Made New*, Ch. 5, 6, and 7 (p. 73-123).

Wednesday 2/23:

Glendon, *A World Made New*, Ch. 8-10 (p.74 - XXX) and Epilogue

Week 6:

HUMAN RIGHTS AND POLITICAL SCIENCE

Monday 2/28:

Smith, "Human Rights in International Law", in Goodhart, ed., *Human Rights: Politics and Practice*, (p. 26-44).

AND

Landman, "Measuring Human Rights", in Goodhart, ed., *Human Rights: Politics and Practice*, (p. 45-58).

Wednesday 3/2:

Dunne and Hanson, "Human Rights in International Relations", in Goodhart, ed., *Human Rights: Politics and Practice*, (p. 59-74).

AND

Cardenas, "Human Rights in Comparative Perspective", in Goodhart, ed., *Human Rights: Politics and Practice*, (p. 75-91).

****IN-CLASS QUIZ #1****

Week 7:

HUMAN RIGHTS IN PRACTICE

Monday 3/7: Glasius, "Global Civil Society and Human Rights", in Goodhart, ed., *Human Rights: Politics and Practice*, (p. 147-163).

Wednesday 3/9: Fukuda-Parr, "Human Rights and Politics in Development", in Goodhart, ed., *Human Rights: Politics and Practice*, (p. 164-181).

AND

Richards and Gelleny, "Economic Globalization and Human Rights", in Goodhart, ed., *Human Rights: Politics and Practice*, (p. 182-200).

****QUIZ #2 IN CLASS****

Week 8:

SPRING BREAK 3/14-3/18

Week 9:

SPECIFIC HUMAN RIGHTS VIOLATIONS

Monday 3/21: Pupavac, "Children's Human Rights Advocacy," in Goodhart, ed., *Human Rights: Politics and Practice*, (p.219-238).

AND

Loescher, "Human Rights and Forced Migration," in Goodhart, ed, *Human Rights: Politics and Practice*, (p.239-259).

Wednesday 3/23: Havemann, “Indigenous Peoples and Human Rights,” in Goodhart, ed, *Human Rights: Politics and Practice*, (p.260-278).

AND

Barry and Woods, “The Environment,” in Goodhart, ed. *Human Rights: Politics and Practice*, (p.317-333).

****QUIZ #3 in CLASS****

Week 10:

Monday 3/28

Straus, “Genocide and Human Rights,” in Goodhart, ed, *Human Rights: Politics and Practice*, (p.279-296).

AND

Schulz, “Torture,” in Goodhart, ed, *Human Rights: Politics and Practice*, (p.297-315).

Wednesday 3/30

Kuperman, “Humanitarian Intervention,” in Goodhart, ed. *Human Rights: Politics and Practice*, (p.334-353).

AND

Quinn, “Transitional Justice,” in Goodhart, ed. *Human Rights: Politics and Practice*, (p.354-369).

****IN-CLASS QUIZ #4****

Week 11:

NEW WAYS OF THINKING ABOUT HR / WOMEN

Monday 4/4:

Martha Nussbaum, *Women and Human Development: The Capabilities Approach*, “Introduction: Feminism and International Development,” (p.1-33) and Ch. 1 “In Defense of Universal Values,” sections I-III (p.34-70)

- Wednesday 4/6:** Nussbaum, Ch. 1 “In Defense of Universal Values,” sections IV-VII, (p.70-110).
- Week 12:**
- Monday 4/11:** Nussbaum, Ch. 4 “Love, Care and Dignity,” (p.241-297) and “Conclusion,” (p.298-303).
- Wednesday 4/13:** ****PAPER #3 DUE****
Neiman, *Moral Clarity*, Introduction, (p.1-26), Ch. 4 “Myths or Monsters” and Ch. 5 “Heaven and Earth) (p.121-162)

WHAT IS EACH INDIVIDUAL’S RESPONSIBILITY FOR HR ?

- Week 13:**
- Monday 4/18** Neiman, *Moral Clarity*, Ch. 6, “Happiness”, Ch. 7 “Reason”, Ch. 8 “Reverence”, and Ch. 9, “Hope”,(p.163-296).
- Wednesday 4/20** Neiman, *Moral Clarity*, Ch. 10 “The Odyssey”, Ch. 11 “ What About Evil” and Ch. 12 “Enlightenment Heros” (p.299-421)
- Week 14:**
- Monday 4/25** Singer, *The Life You Save*, p.3-41
- Wednesday 4/27** Singer, *The Life You Save*, p.129-173.
- Week 15:**
- Monday 5/2** Excerpts from *Approaches to Peace* and *A Peace Reader*, **Handouts**.

Final Take-Home Exam : DUE WEDNESDAY MAY 11 at 5pm in MY OFFICE

**DEPARTMENT OF GOVERNMENT
SKIDMORE COLLEGE**

**POLICY ON CIVILITY AND COMPORTMENT IN THE
CLASSROOM**

FALL 2005

The classroom experience is the heart of liberal education, and as such is the most important aspect of your Skidmore College education. Presumably, if you did not agree you would not be attending Skidmore. The faculty of the Government Department takes this understanding as the basis of our educational efforts. It is in an attempt to honor the centrality of the classroom experience that we offer this department policy on civility and comportment.

As is stated in the *Student Handbook*, your presence at Skidmore College is contingent upon your acceptance of, and full adherence to, the Skidmore College Honor Code. This honor code is distinct from the oath you take when writing a paper or taking an exam – it is in fact much more all-encompassing, and much more demanding.

The Code includes the following statement: “*I hereby accept membership in the Skidmore College community and, with full realization of the responsibilities inherent in membership, do agree to adhere to honesty and integrity in all relationships, to be considerate of the rights of others, and to abide by the College regulations.*” Elsewhere, the Code also calls all Skidmore students to “*conform to high standards of fair play, integrity, and honor.*”

What does it mean to do act honestly, with integrity, and according to high standards of fair play, particularly in the classroom? In our view, it includes, minimally, the following.

1. No student shall lessen the learning experience of others in the classroom by arriving late to class.
2. No student shall lessen the learning experience of others in the classroom by leaving the classroom while class is in session, except for true medical emergencies.
3. Cell phones must be turned off during class.

4. No student shall disrupt the learning experience of others in the classroom by talking to a neighbor, writing notes to other students, reviewing one's mail, reading the newspaper, completing homework for other classes, or playing with the laptop computer, while class is in session.
5. No student shall disrespect other Skidmore students, professors or the housekeeping staff by putting feet on the desks or other furniture in the classroom, or by leaving trash, food, or recyclables in the room at the end of the class session.

While we will hold all students to these minimal expectations, we also have some suggestions for those who seek to go beyond the bare minimum of civil classroom comportment to become the type of mature, responsible, active learners who are an asset to any classroom and society at large. These include the following.

6. Every student should take copious and meaningful notes both on assigned readings and during classroom sessions. Note taking is an important skill—if you do not already possess it, you should acquire it.
7. Every student should take some time to review the notes that he or she has taken on the day's assigned reading before each class meeting. You will be amazed how much more invested and engaged in the class you will feel if you go into the classroom well-prepared.
8. Disruptions in class can be a significant impediment to learning, and no member of the Skidmore community—including faculty and students—should tolerate them. Thus every student should take responsibility for holding his or her peers and classmates to both high academic standards and high standards of civility. If people around you are chatting, passing notes or otherwise detracting from the overall quality of YOUR classroom experience, don't let them get away with it.
9. Individual faculty members in the Government Department will determine the level of sanctions for disruptive behavior.