**Introduction**

This graduate seminar, open to students from the Law School, Graduate School and School of Public Health, examines the theory and practice of global human rights from an interdisciplinary perspective. In addition to issues of the history, origins and legitimacy of universal human rights, the seminar will discuss standards, institutions and processes of implementation. The seminar will also examine human rights across a variety of substantive issues areas, including; conflict, development, globalization, social welfare, religion, race and ethnicity, public health and rights of women and other vulnerable groups. Evaluation will be based on seminar participation, an analytical essay, a survey paper and major research paper. Students will also make brief presentations of their final papers.

**Goals**

To understand the interdisciplinary nature of human rights  
To appreciate how conceptions of human rights vary across disciplines  
To develop the ability to evaluate human rights policies and practices across a variety of disciplines  
To appreciate some of the ambiguities and contradictions inherent in human rights  
To understand human rights methods and approaches

**Course Materials**

We have set up a course webpage at http://humanrights.emory.edu/iphr.html which contains links to many of the readings for the class along with other helpful materials.

**Grading.**

Grades will be determined in the following manner.

- **Class Participation and Weekly Questions**: 20%
- **Analytical Essay**: 20%
- **Survey Paper**: 20%
- **Major Paper/project**: 40%
Class Participation and Weekly Question
The class participation grade will be based on attendance, participation in discussion, and your weekly question. Students are expected to attend each and every session. Observance of religious holidays will be considered an excused absence.

Your weekly question is due every Sunday by 5 p.m. and should address the readings assigned for the following Tuesday. Please email a copy to each instructor. The questions will allow us (your instructors) to grasp your understanding and reaction to the materials, and they are an opportunity raising issues that you would like us to explore in greater depth.

Analytical Essay
Students are required to write a short (5-8 pages, double spaced) analytical essay (due Monday October 18) on a topic assigned by the instructors. More details on the topic will follow.

Survey Paper
Students will also write a short interdisciplinary survey paper on a particular facet of human rights or a specific human rights problem of the students choosing. The paper will allow students to appreciate how different disciplines approach the same human rights issues. The paper should include: a general overview of the particular human rights area or issue, a discussion of how the particular topic is approached in different disciplines, a specification of the major human rights challenges or problems, a discussion of some of the ways in which these challenges are addressed in different disciplines, and some conjecture regarding possible remedies and recommendations. The paper should be 5-8 pages long. The survey paper will be due November 8.

Major Project
Forty percent of your grade will be determined by your major project. We envision that your project will take one of four primary forms, although we are flexible and willing to consider alternative projects. You will need to get your project approved by the instructors by the third week of class (Sept. 20), to allow you maximum time for preparation and consultation with instructors, etc

First, you can design and (time and data permitting) conduct original research on some facet of human rights. Original research generally involves conducting interviews, administering and analyzing surveys, archival/textual analysis, analysis of secondary data, and/or other types of statistical studies. You will need to develop a research question and a set of testable hypotheses that will be set within the context of the existing scholarly debate. You will then propose a research strategy for collecting and examining empirical evidence to assess the validity of the hypotheses. You will need to complete the research design portion of the project and hopefully it will be possible for you to complete the analysis portion of the project. The final version of the project will look quite similar to an academic article.
Second, you can design an advocacy/investigation project. A project in this area might include some or all of the following steps: articulate a human rights problem and identify the nature and extent of violations, (e.g., a lack of awareness of individuals of their rights, or a set of biased or discriminatory policies), identify goals, develop alternative strategies for addressing the problem, choose the best strategy, and lay out a plan of action for achieving your goals. This project can be undertaken in conjunction with an actual HR organization (for instance in the Atlanta area you could work with an organization like The Carter Center, Amnesty International, or the Southern Center for Human Rights) or you can design the program for a hypothetical NGO or government agency.

Third, you can conduct a descriptive research project in which you examine some aspect of human rights in greater detail. Projects in this area might include: surveying in detail debates about the nature of specific rights across disciplines or within a discipline over time, examining the philosophical origins and emergence of sets of rights in different disciplines, a detailed comparison of the strategies of several different HR organizations in their advocacy campaigns or investigations, or any of a number of other projects.

Fourth, Students may opt for legal analysis of international human rights law and institutions. Students from the Law School, Graduate School and School of Public Health may also adopt any of the above approaches. If you have any concerns about this, or need further clarification, please contact either instructor.

Discussion Topics and Readings

August 30 – Introduction

This first session will focus on three topics – defining human rights, competing conceptualizations of human rights, and the current human rights challenges across the globe.

Readings


The Universal Declaration of HR

Human Rights Watch Annual Report 2003 (only read up to page 26)

September 6 – Labor Day

In this session we will identify and discuss some of the important questions that are the topic of human rights research and advocacy in a variety of disciplines. We will also discuss examples of advocacy, investigation and research projects on human rights with a special emphasis on developing tools to complete your major projects. This will include discussion of the major project for the class. We will also discuss the historical evolution of human rights.

Readings:


September 20 – Philosophical Foundations of Human Rights, and Human Rights and Morality

* Visit by Michael Perry, Woodruff Professor of Law

Jerome J. Shestack. The philosophical foundations of human rights,

Michael Perry. Human Rights and Morality

September 27 – International Law, Regional and Global Institutions

In this session we will discuss international law and the international institutions that create it. Much of our attention will focus on the international standard setting role of the United Nations and growing importance of regional human rights institutions – The Council of Europe, The Inter-American Human Rights System, and the African Union. We will explore similarities and differences across the regional organizations in terms of standards, legitimacy and effectiveness.

Readings
October 4 - Non-Governmental Organizations

The primary purpose of this week’s class is to examine the implementation of global human rights standards, with particular attention paid to the role of Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs). In general, we want to examine the roles that actors play in the implementation process, and the mechanisms available for implementation. We will focus on the relationship between the resources, power, moral authority, and expertise of different NGOs and the strategies they adopt in the pursuit of human rights goals. We will also discuss the exchange of knowledge and networking among NGOs and their interaction with other actors in the global human rights movement.

Readings

Ramcharan. Strategies for The International Protection of Human Rights in the 1990s HRQ


P.J. Simmons. Learning to Live with NGOs

Laurie Weisberg. Human Rights NGOs

October 11 – Fall Break

October 18 – Religion and Human Rights

* Guest Speakers
Abduh An-Na’im, Candler Professor of Law
Michael Broyde, Professor of Law School and Director, Law and Religion Program
Elizabeth Bounds, Associate Professor, School of Theology
Unni Wikan, University of Oslo

This week our attention will be focused on the relationship between religion and human rights including a focus on human rights in different religious traditions.

Readings


October 25 Health and Human Rights

* Guest Speaker:
Paul Talcott, Assistant Professor of Political Science

This week we will examine the emergence of human rights as an area of concern in public health. We will begin by addressing fundamental questions such as “what is the relationship between Health and HR?, and “What are the bases for human rights concerns for public health professionals.” This will include a discussion of biomedical ethics. We will also review the international human rights standards that exist with respect to health? And discuss how a human rights framework can improve the provision of healthcare? We will also discuss public health impacts of human rights violations? Finally, we will discuss the role of health care professionals in terms of documenting human rights violations, treating the victims, educating people about human rights, and advocating for change.

Readings

Sofia Gruskin and Daniel Tarantola "Health and Human Rights"

25 Questions and Answers on Health and Human Rights

November 1: Human Rights and Ethics

* Guest Speaker:
James Fowler, Professor of Theology and the Director of the Emory Center for Ethics

Readings

Varmus, Harold; and Satcher, David. "Ethical Complexities of Conducting Research in Developing Countries"
November 8 - The Human Rights of “Vulnerable” Persons and Groups

* Guest Speakers:
Rosemarie Garland-Thompson, Professor of Women Studies
Mark Jordan, Professor of Religion

This week, we focus on understanding the human rights challenges faced by vulnerable groups (women, children, refugees, disabled, minority and marginalized groups). An initial question to consider is why are these persons and groups particularly vulnerable and what does that mean for the definition and protection of their human rights? It is helpful or counter-productive to single these persons and groups for specialized treatment within the human rights paradigm? For instance, why does “cultural relativism” often focus its claims on the rights of women and re-productive, sexual rights? Are the human rights of women better served by “mainstreaming” them into broader rights discourse, or as a specialized field? A related set issues pertain to competing perspectives on the rights of these persons and groups, such as differences among Western and non-Western feminist, or disagreements over the “best interest of the child”.

Readings

Women’s Rights

The Rights of Children

Alexander H. E. Morawa Vulnerability as a Concept of International Human Rights Law

Internally displaced Peoples


November 15- Globalization

* Guest Speakers:
Robert Ahdieh, Assistant Professor of Law
Eric Reinhardt, Associate Professor of Political Science

Readings

Gabrielle Marceau “The WTO and Human Rights”


November 22

Laurie L. Patton, Winship Distinguished Research Professor

November 29 – Transitional Justice, Conflict Resolution and Accountability

* Guest Speakers:
Thee Smith, Associate Professor of Religion
Ashley Barr, Director, Human Rights Program, The Carter Center

Readings

Kieran McEvoy “Beyond the Metaphor: Political Violence, Human Rights and New Peacemaking Criminology”

King et. al. “Armed Conflict as a Public Health Problem”

John Fitzpatrick. “The War Against Terrorism and Human Rights”

Elin Skaar. Truth commissions, trials-or nothing? Policy options in democratic transitions

December 6 – Human Rights in the Professions

Development – doner plus? Training, education policy
Globalization Eric and Robert and Diana
8. Nov 1 – Conflict and Religion or ethic back-up (Fowler)
9. Nov 8 – Mark Jordan, Rosemarie (vulnerable groups)
10. Nov 15
11. Nov 22 – Fowler – Ethics
13. Dec 6 – Last Class – human rights in practice
hinman, mcgrath, basia

March 23 The Human Right to Development
This week, we focus on the human right to development and the challenges to realizing this right. Attention will be focused on the actions and responsibilities of MNCs.

Readings

Peter T. Muchlinski “Human rights and multinationals: is there a problem?”

Steven Marks. 2003 “Obstacles to the Right to Development”


April 20 – Democratization
In this session, we will focus on democracy, development, and human rights.

Readings

Freeman, Michael “The Perils of Democratization: Nationalism, Markets, and Human Rights.”

Evans Tony “If democracy, then human rights?”