

POL412H1F/2212H1F – Human Rights and International Relations

Time: Thursday 6-8pm

Location: LA 340

Instructor:

David Zarnett

(david.zarnett@mail.utoronto.ca)

Office hours: Wednesdays 4-6pm in SS3007

Course Description:

This course is about human rights in international politics. Over twelve weeks, we will probe a number of important and pressing questions. What are human rights? What is the International Human Rights Movement and where did it come from? Why do human rights violations occur and what can be done to stop them? Why do some victims of abuse get more international attention than others? How do “new rights” emerge on the international agenda? Can torture ever be justified from a human rights perspective? And is the world a safer and more secure place today than in the past? To address these and other related questions, we will draw on an extensive literature in political science. We will ground our discussions in real world cases, including the use of starvation blockades against civilian populations during World War I, the use of child soldiers by rebel groups in civil wars in Africa, and the international sanctions against apartheid South Africa, among others. We will also look at the actions and strategies employed by Dalit, disability, and women’s rights activists to propel their causes onto the international stage.

This course is reading, writing and discussion intensive. Each week we will read approximately 100 pages of text. We will also complete a number of writing assignments, and will work towards developing a strong and focused research paper to be submitted by the end of the term. On weeks #6 and #9, we will hold in-class writing workshops to help you develop your research projects. These workshops will give you an opportunity to receive feedback and to give feedback to your colleagues.

By the end of the course, students will have developed a stronger and more nuanced understanding of human rights in the international system. They will also have improved their ability to describe, critically assess, and engage with scholarly texts. Students will also improve their ability to formulate a research question, devise a strategy to answer that question, and present their findings in a clear and compelling manner.

Course Format:

The course is composed of one two-hour seminar each week. Each class will begin with a short lecture by the instructor, to be followed by a class discussion. Each week’s discussion will be focused on the readings, so make sure to prepare to discuss them in some detail and depth (see ‘How to Prepare For Class’ below). To facilitate active learning, class will be a *laptop and cell-phone free zone*. You will not be permitted to use either unless you have sought prior permission to do so. If this is a concern for you, please come speak to me directly.

How To Prepare For Class?

The seminar discussion each week will look closely at each of the assigned readings. To prepare for class and to be able to meaningfully participate in it, come ready to answer the following seven questions about each of the readings:

1. What are the central questions being asked?
2. What are the central arguments being offered?
3. How does the author develop their arguments? What kinds of evidence do they use to persuade you of their validity?
4. What are the strengths of the reading?
5. What are the weaknesses of the reading?
6. How does this reading link to the other readings for this week and for previous weeks?
7. What did you not understand about the reading? What was confusing or unclear?

Marking Scheme & Course Requirements

The marking scheme for this course consists of six components:

Seminar Participation – 20%

Geography Quiz – 5% (in-class week #2 - September 14th)

Film Review Paper – 15% (due week #5 - October 5th)

Essay Outline & Annotated Bibliography – 15% (due week #6 - October 12th)

First Essay Draft – 15% (due week #10 - November 16th)

Final Research Paper – 30% (due December 6th)

Participation (20%)

Throughout the term students will be expected to draw upon the required readings to discuss and analyze the major topics of the week. Active participation in class is expected, and students should come to class prepared to speak and answer questions on the week's topics. Students are expected to attend all classes and participate in all class discussions. If you are not comfortable speaking in class, other forms of class participation, such as regular visits to my office hours or questions via email, will be considered. Please come speak with me by week #3 if this is a concern for you.

Geography Quiz (5%)

As this is a course on international relations, knowing where places are located is important. At the beginning of class #2 (Sept 14th) students will write a short quiz testing their knowledge of significant geographic locations relevant to the study of human rights and international relations. In week #1, a list of 100 locations will be posted online, 50 of which the students will be asked to identify on a quiz in the following week. This quiz is worth 5% of your grade.

Film Review Paper (15%)

In Week #4 (Sept 28th), in class we will watch the film *Beasts of No Nation*. In week #5 (Oct 5th), you will submit a 4-page paper (double-spaced) that connects ONE theme in the film to at least two of the course readings we have read so far (weeks #1-4 inclusive). You may choose any theme that you feel is relevant and interesting. The essay must be well organized and develop a clear argument about how the theme you select relates to the readings you discuss. The theme

you choose may challenge the arguments and perspectives offered in the readings. The theme may also touch on an issue that the readings do not adequately address. Properly formatted footnotes and a bibliography are required.

Essay Outline & Annotated Bibliography (15%)

In week #6 (Oct 12th), students will submit a two-page (double-spaced) outline of their essay in which they provide a preliminary sketch of their research project. Students must come up with their own questions. For help in doing so, please come speak to me directly, either after class or during my office hours. In the outline, students must address the following questions in order and using appropriate sub-headings:

1. What is your central research question?
2. Why does this research question matter for the study of human rights? Why should we care about it?
3. What is your strategy for answering your research question?
4. What are some possible answers (hypotheses) to your research question that you will investigate?

In addition to the two-page outline, you must also provide a short annotated bibliography specifying 10 scholarly sources that you have consulted. For each bibliographic entry, provide a short description (2-3 sentences maximum) of how you plan to use the source.

In the week #6 writing workshop, in small groups you will read your colleagues' outlines and provide feedback based on a set of questions that I will provide at the beginning of class. To ensure that others can read your outline, you must bring a hard copy of it to class. All together, we will then discuss common problems and challenges faced, and how to overcome them. Your grade for this assignment will be determined based on how well you answer the four questions stated above.

First Essay Draft (15%)

In week #10 (Nov 16th), students will submit a five-page (double-spaced) first draft of their papers. In week #10's writing workshop, in small groups you will read your colleagues' drafts and offer your thoughts on how they can be improved, based on a list of questions I will provide. I will also review each of the draft's separately and offer additional feedback for you to consider when working on your final research paper. Your grade for this assignment will be based on how well you incorporate the feedback you received on your outline.

Final Research Paper (30%)

On December 6th, you will submit a 10-page (double-spaced) paper on your research question. Papers MUST use 12-point Times New Roman font. Footnotes must be included as well as a full bibliography. The papers will be graded using the following six criteria:

1. Clarity of the central question asked
2. Strength and persuasiveness of the central argument
3. Depth of knowledge demonstrated
4. Use of relevant examples to support arguments made
5. Engagement with counter-arguments
6. Proper citation formatting, including footnotes and bibliography.

For some good examples of student research papers, see: <http://www.e-ir.info/>. For a useful resource on footnoting and bibliographies see: <http://www.aresearchguide.com/7footnot.html>

Course Materials

There are no readings or textbooks that need to be purchased. Many of the readings are available online through the library catalogue. Others will be scanned and posted on Blackboard under the section entitled “Weekly Readings.”

BlackBoard:

All course announcements and a number of readings will be posted online through Blackboard (portal.utoronto.ca). Please check this site regularly for any updates to the course and for further information on the course assignments.

Late Penalties & Extensions:

All assignments that will be graded must be submitted on time via Blackboard. The penalty for late assignments is 2% percent per day (including weekends). If the assignment is not submitted in one week (7 days including the weekend) after the due date, a mark of zero will be assigned. Extensions will only be granted for valid and documented medical/family reasons. If you require an extension for a valid reason, please let me know ASAP via email. Late work must also be submitted to me directly via Blackboard AND email. Students are strongly advised to keep draft work and hard copies of their assignments until the marked assignments have been returned and grades posted on ACORN.

Re-Grading Policy

If students would like to challenge a grade, they will have to submit a one-page document explaining in detail why a re-grade is necessary. This document MUST be submitted to me no sooner than 48 hours after the assignment has been returned to you and no later than one week after it has been returned. As the instructor, I reserve the right to reject this request. If I agree to re-grade the assignment, there is a chance your grade may be lower than the first grade you received.

Office Hours

Each week during the term, I will hold regular office hours. No RSVP is required so please feel free to come by with any issues, concerns, or questions you might have. I’m also always happy to chat about the course material if you would like to learn more about any particular issue discussed in class. If you are unable to come to my office hours, please get in touch so we can make alternative arrangements. I also encourage students to come in pairs or in groups, should you feel more comfortable in doing so.

Email Policy:

You can contact me anytime via email and I will get back to you within 24 hours from Monday to Friday. I will not be checking email on the weekend. While I am happy to correspond via email, please note that in-person discussions during office hours are often a more productive and efficient use of our time.

Plagiarism:

Plagiarism, accidental or otherwise, is a serious offense. Students are required to familiarize themselves with the university's plagiarism policy, and to ensure that they follow it. Please consult the following link for more specific advice:

<http://www.writing.utoronto.ca/advice/using-sources/how-not-to-plagiarize>. As you prepare your essay, please review the document "How Not to Plagiarize" that is available on Blackboard.

Accessibility:

The University of Toronto is committed to accessibility. If you require accommodation for a disability, or have any accessibility concerns about the course, the classroom or course materials, please contact Accessibility Services as soon as possible: disability.services@utoronto.ca or <http://studentlife.utoronto.ca/accessibility>

Course Schedule & Readings

*****For those interested in further readings on any of the topics below, please do not hesitate to ask me!**

Week #1 (September 7th) – Human Rights as a Contested Concept: Where Does it Come From and Is It Universal?

- Louis Henkin, *The Age of Rights* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1990), pp. 1-10.
- Samuel Moyn, "Human Rights in History," *The Nation* (August 11, 2010). Available here: <https://www.thenation.com/article/human-rights-history/>
- Thomas Franck, "Are Human Rights Universal?" *Foreign Affairs* Vol. 80 No. 1 (2001), pp. 191-204.
- Stephen Kinzer, "End Human Rights Imperialism Now," *The Guardian* (December 31, 2010). Available here: <https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/cifamerica/2010/dec/31/human-rights-imperialism-james-hoge>

Please also familiarize yourself with the following documents:

- Charter of the United Nations: <http://www.un.org/en/sections/un-charter/un-charter-full-text/>
- Universal Declaration of Human Rights: <http://www.un.org/en/universal-declaration-human-rights/>
- International Covenant on Civil & Political Rights: <http://www.ohchr.org/EN/ProfessionalInterest/Pages/CCPR.aspx>
- International Covenant on Economic, Social & Cultural Rights: <http://www.ohchr.org/EN/ProfessionalInterest/Pages/CESCR.aspx>

Week #2 (September 14th) – The International Human Rights Movement: Why the Proliferation of International NGOs?

*****In-Class Geography Quiz**

- Kjell Skjelsbaek, “The Growth of International Nongovernmental Organization in the Twentieth Century,” in Robert Keohane & Joseph Nye Jr. (eds.), *Transnational Relations and World Politics* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1972), pp. 420-442.
- Ronnie Lipschutz, “Reconstructing World Politics: The Emergence of Global Civil Society,” *Millennium – Journal of International Studies* Vol. 21, No. 3 (1992), pp. 389-420.
- Kim Reiman, “A View from the Top: International Politics, Norms and the Worldwide Growth of NGOs,” *International Studies Quarterly* Vol. 50 (2006), pp. 45-67.

Week #3 (September 21st) –States as Rights Abusers: What are the Causes of Mass Killings?

- Brandon Valentino, “Final Solutions: The Causes of Mass Killings and Genocide,” *Security Studies* Vol. 9 No. 3 (2000), pp. 1-59.
- Alexander Downes, *Targeting Civilians in War* (Ithaca, New York: Cornell University Press, 2008), Introduction and Chapter 3 (pp. 1-12 & 83-114).

Week #4 (September 28th) –Non-State Actors as Rights Abusers: The Case of Child Soldiers

***In-class film: *Beasts of No Nation* (2015). Trailer here:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2xb9Ty-1frw>

- Jo Becker, “Children as Weapons of War,” *Human Rights Watch* (2004). Available here: <https://www.hrw.org/legacy/wr2k4/download/11.pdf>
- Vera Achvarina & Simon Reich, “No Place to Hide: Refugees, Displaced Persons and the Recruitment of Child Soldiers,” *International Security* Vol. 31 No. 1 (Summer 2006), pp. 127-164.

Week #5 (October 5th) – Preventing Abuse (Part I): Can Military Intervention & Economic Sanctions Curb Rights Abuses?

*****Film Review Due**

- Thomas Cushman, “Introduction: The Liberal Humanitarian Case for War in Iraq,” in Thomas Cushman (ed.), *A Matter of Principle: Humanitarian Arguments for War in Iraq* (Berkeley, California: University of California Press, 2005), pp. 1-28.
- Amanda Murdie & David Davis, “Problematic Potential: The Human Rights Consequences of Peacekeeping Interventions in Civil Wars,” *Human Rights Quarterly* Vol. 32 No. 1 (February 2010), pp. 49-72.
- Aryeh Neir, “Sanctions and Human Rights,” *Social Research* Vol. 82 No. 4 (Winter 2015), pp. 875-886.
- Lee Jones, *Societies Under Siege: Exploring How International Economic Sanctions (Do Not) Work* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015), chapter 2, pp. 52-92.

Week #6 (October 12th) – Writing Workshop #1

*****Essay Outline & Annotated Bibliography Due**

Week #7 (October 19th) – Preventing Abuse (Part II): Can International Law & NGO “Naming and Shaming” Curb Rights Abuses?

- Beth Simmons, *Mobilizing for Human Rights: International Law in Domestic Politics* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2009), pp. 3-21 & pp. 296-306.
- Jack Goldsmith & Stephen Krasner, “The Limits of Idealism,” *Daedalus* Vol. 32 No. 1 (Winter 2003), pp. 47-63.
- Alison Brysk, “From Above and Below: Social Movements, the International System and Human Rights in Argentina,” *Comparative Political Studies* Vol. 26 No. 3 (October 1993), pp. 259-285.
- Emilie Hafner-Burton, “Sticks and Stones: Naming and Shaming the Human Rights Enforcement Problem,” *International Organization* Vol. 62 (Fall 2008), pp. 689-716.

Week #8 (October 26nd) – Why Do Some Human Rights Issues Garner More International Attention Than Others?

- Clifford Bob, “Merchants of Morality,” *Foreign Policy* (March – April 2002), pp. 36-45.
- Jack Donnelly, “Human Rights at the United Nations 1955-1985: The Question of Bias,” *International Studies Quarterly* Vol. 32 No. 3 (1988), pp. 275-303.
- Charli Carpenter, Sirin Duygulu, Alexander Montgomery & Anna Rapp, “Explaining the Advocacy Agenda: Insights from the Human Security Network,” *International Organization* Vol. 68 (Spring 2014), pp. 449-470.

Week #9 (November 2nd) – How Do “New Rights” Emerge? Dalits, People with Disabilities, and Women.

- Clifford Bob, “Dalit Rights are Human Rights”: Caste Discrimination, International Activism and the Construction of a New Human Rights Issue,” *Human Rights Quarterly* Vol. 29 No. 1 (February 2007), pp. 167-193
- Janet Lord, “Disability Rights and the Human Rights Mainstream: Reluctant-Gate Crashers?” in Clifford Bob (ed.), *The International Struggle for New Human Rights* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2009).
- Jutta Joachim, “Framing Issues and Seizing Opportunities: The UN, NGOs, and Women’s Rights,” *International Studies Quarterly* Vol. 47 (2003), pp. 247-274.

READING WEEK – No class November 9th

Week #10 (November 16th) – Writing Workshop #2

*****Draft Paper Due**

Week #11 (November 23rd) – Terrorism and Human Rights: Can Torture Ever Be Justified?

- Christopher Hitchens, “Believe Me, It’s Torture,” *Vanity Fair* (August 2008). Available here: <https://www.vanityfair.com/news/2008/08/hitchens200808>
- Michael Ignatieff, “If Torture Works...” *Prospect Magazine* (April 23, 2006). Available here: <https://www.prospectmagazine.co.uk/magazine/iftortureworks>
- Jeffrey Addicott & Robert Brecher, “Is the Use of Coercive Interrogation or Torture Permissible and Effective as a Counter-Terrorism Method?” in Richard Jackson & Samuel Sinclair (eds.), *Contemporary Debates on Terrorism* (New York: Routledge, 2012), pp. 152-165.

Week #12 (November 30th) – Are We Safer Today Than In The Past?

- Steven Pinker & Andrew Mack, “The World Is Not Falling Apart,” *Slate* (December 22, 2014). Available here: http://www.slate.com/articles/news_and_politics/foreigners/2014/12/the_world_is_not_falling_apart_the_trend_lines_reveal_an_increasingly_peaceful.html
- Joshua Goldstein, *Winning the War on War: The Decline of Armed Conflict Worldwide* (New York: Penguin, 2011), chapter 2.
- John Arquilla, “The Big Kill,” *Foreign Policy* (December 3, 2012). Available here: <http://foreignpolicy.com/2012/12/03/the-big-kill/>

******Final Research Paper Due December 6th**