

Dalhousie University
Department of Political Science
Human Rights: Foundations (POLI 3505)
Fall 2015
Tuesday and Thursday, 11:35am-12:55

Instructor: Dr. Steven Seligman
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Office: Henry Hicks Building, Room 360
Office Hours: Wednesday, 1:00pm-3:00 (or by appointment)

COURSE OVERVIEW

This course provides an introduction to the study of international human rights. The first section of the course examines key philosophical issues and debates. We introduce the concept of human rights and explore debates about universality; cultural relativism; feminist perspectives; economic, social and cultural rights; contemporary criticisms of rights discourse; and human rights in International Relations Theory. The second section of the course provides a brief historical overview of human rights, focusing primarily on events since the late 18th century. We explore ancient conceptions of duties and human dignity as well as key historical events in the development of modern human rights.

The third section of the course addresses the international human rights institutions that have been created since 1945. We discuss the major international human rights treaties and the key United Nations institutions in the field of human rights. The last section of the course discusses various contemporary issues related to the politics of human rights. We address the role of global civil society and NGOs, the impact of globalization, the rights of children, migrants and refugees, Indigenous Peoples, sexual minorities, the practice of torture, the politics of humanitarian intervention, and the politics of transitional justice.

REQUIRED BOOKS AND READINGS

There are two required book for purchase, which are available at the Dalhousie University Bookstore. Other readings will be made available online by the instructor. The required books are:

Michael Goodhart, ed., *Human Rights: Politics and Practice*, 2nd ed. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013.

Jack Donnelly, *Universal Human Rights in Theory and Practice*, 3rd ed. Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2013.

GRADE DISTRIBUTION

- 1) Mid-Term Exam (Held in class October 22): 25%
- 2) Research Paper (Due in class November 19): 50%
- 3) Final Exam (Take-home exam due in class December 8): 25%

ASSIGNMENTS

1) **Mid-Term Exam:** The mid-term exam will be held in class on October 22. It is worth 25% of the course grade. The first portion of the mid-term exam will ask students to define and explain the significance of key terms. The second portion will ask students to write a short essay in response to a question. Both portions will give students some choice about which terms and essay questions they wish to answer.

2) **Research Paper:** Students will write a research paper of approximately 3,000 words (10-12 pages, double spaced, Times New Roman, 12 point font) in response to a question provided by the instructor. Students will have some choice among a few questions. The paper is due in class on November 19. It is worth 50% of the course grade. Students must submit a hard copy of the paper to the instructor. Papers cannot be submitted via email. Late papers will be assessed a penalty of 5 percentage points per day. Papers submitted more than 7 days late will not be accepted.

3) **Final Exam:** The final exam will be a take-home exam that is due in class on December 8. It is worth 25% of the course grade. Students will write two short essays in response to questions provided by the instructor.

OTHER IMPORTANT INFORMATION

1) **Academic Integrity.** Students are strongly advised to familiarize themselves with Dalhousie University's policies on academic integrity, particularly the section concerning plagiarism and cheating, but also the section concerning student resources:

http://www.dal.ca/dept/university_secretariat/academic-integrity.html

Additional information about academic integrity and University policies can be found here:

<http://www.dal.ca/faculty/healthprofessions/faculty-and-staff/academic-integrity/information-for-faculty.html>

All assignments submitted may be subjected to evaluation by Turnitin.com, a computer service that checks assignments for plagiarism. Students are required to retain an electronic copy of all papers in addition to the hard copy submitted to the professor.

2) **Academic Accommodation.** Students may request accommodation as a result of barriers experienced related to disability, religious obligation, or any characteristic protected under Canadian human rights legislation.

Students who require academic accommodation for either classroom participation or the writing of tests and exams should make their request to the Advising and Access Services Center (AASC) prior to or at the outset of the regular academic year. Please visit www.dal.ca/access for more information and to obtain the Request for Accommodation form.

A note taker may be required as part of a student's accommodation. There is an honorarium of \$75/course/term (with some exceptions). If you are interested, please contact AASC at 494-2836 for more information or send an email to notetaking@dal.ca

3) **Grade Appeals.** Students who wish to appeal their grade must produce a brief written statement (approximately 250 words) explaining why they feel that the assignment/exam was not graded correctly. Appeals must be made within one week from the date on which the assignment/exam was returned. The appeal process will produce a revised grade that may be raised, unchanged, or lowered. The revised final grade cannot be appealed.

4) **Use of electronic devices.** Students are not permitted to use any electronic devices during the mid-term exam. Students are asked to turn off their cell phones during lectures. Laptops, tablets and other electronic devices may be used during lectures for note taking, but not for any purpose that, in the judgement of the instructor, is distracting to class (i.e. listening to music, streaming videos, etc).

5) **Email Communication with the Instructor.** Emails to the instructor must be sent from the student's official Dalhousie University Email Account. The instructor will not respond to emails sent from any other account. Grades will not be discussed over Email.

6) **Grade Scale and Definitions.** All course assignments will be graded according to the following grade scale, which was approved by the Dalhousie University Senate in 2014:

Grade	Grade Point Value		Definition	
A+	4.30	90-100	Excellent	Considerable evidence of original thinking; demonstrated outstanding capacity to analyze and synthesize; outstanding grasp of subject matter; evidence of extensive knowledge base.
A	4.00	85-89		
A-	3.70	80-84		
B+	3.30	77-79	Good	Evidence of grasp of subject matter, some evidence of critical capacity and analytical ability; reasonable understanding of relevant issues; evidence of familiarity with the literature.
B	3.00	73-76		
B-	2.70	70-72		
C+	2.30	65-69	Satisfactory	Evidence of some understanding of the subject matter; ability to develop
C	2.00	60-64		

C-	1.70	55-59		solutions to simple problems; benefitting from his/her university experience.
D	1.00	50-54	Marginal Pass	Evidence of minimally acceptable familiarity with subject matter, critical and analytical skills (except in programs where a minimum grade of "C" or "C+" is required).
FM	0.00		Marginal Failure	Available only for Engineering, Health Professions and Commerce.
F	0.00	0-49	Inadequate	Insufficient evidence of understanding of the subject matter; weakness in critical and analytical skills; limited or irrelevant use of the literature.
INC	0.00		Incomplete	
W	Neutral and no credit obtained		Withdrew after deadline	
ILL	Neutral and no credit obtained		Compassionate reasons, illness	
P	Neutral		Pass	
TR	Neutral		Transfer credit on admission	
Pending	Neutral		Grade not reported	

WEEKLY READINGS AND TOPICS

Thursday, September 10 – Introduction to the Class

The United Nations, *The Universal Declaration of Human Rights*, 1948.

OPTIONAL: Michael Goodhart, “Introduction: Human Rights in Politics and Practice,” in *Human Rights: Politics and Practice*, 2nd ed., edited by Michael Goodhart, 1-8. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013.

OPTIONAL: Jack Donnelly, *Universal Human Rights in Theory and Practice*, 3rd ed. Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2013, 1-3.

SECTION 1 – THEORETICAL APPROACHES AND DEBATES

Tuesday, September 15 – Normative and Theoretical Foundations

Anthony J. Langlois, “Normative and Theoretical Foundations of Human Rights,” in *Human Rights: Politics and Practice*, 2nd ed., edited by Michael Goodhart, 11-26. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013.

Jack Donnelly, *Universal Human Rights in Theory and Practice*, 3rd ed. Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2013, 7-39.

Thursday, September 17 – Feminist Approaches

Brooke Ackerly, “Feminist and Activist Approaches to Human Rights,” in *Human Rights: Politics and Practice*, 2nd ed., edited by Michael Goodhart, 27-41. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013.

Zehra F. Kabasakal Arat, “Women’s Rights as Human Rights: The Promotion of Human Rights as a Counter-Culture,” *UN Chronicle* 45, 2/3 (2008): 9-13.

Tuesday, September 22 – Cultural Relativism

Jack Donnelly, *Universal Human Rights in Theory and Practice*, 3rd ed. Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2013, 106-118.

Jack Donnelly, “Cultural Relativism and Universal Human Rights,” *Human Rights Quarterly* 6, 4 (1984): 400-419.

Thursday, September 24 – Economic, Social and Cultural Rights

Jack Donnelly, *Universal Human Rights in Theory and Practice*, 3rd ed. Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2013, 40-54.

Kenneth Roth, “Defending Economic, Social and Cultural Rights: Practical Issues Faced by an International Human Rights Organization,” *Human Rights Quarterly* 26, 1 (2004): 63-73.

Tuesday, September 29 – The Use and Abuse of Human Rights: Universality and Hegemony

Jack Donnelly, *Universal Human Rights in Theory and Practice*, 3rd ed. Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2013, 55-71 and 93-105.

David Chandler, “Contemporary Critiques of Human Rights,” in *Human Rights: Politics and Practice*, 2nd ed., edited by Michael Goodhart, 107-122. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013.

Thursday, October 1 – International Relations Theory and Human Rights

Tim Dunne and Marianne Hanson, “Human Rights in International Relations,” in *Human Rights: Politics and Practice*, 2nd ed., edited by Michael Goodhart, 42-57. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013.

Hans Morgenthau, *Human Rights and Foreign Policy*, New York: Council on Religion and International Affairs, 1979, 1-8.

Hans Peter Schmitz and Kathryn Sikkink, “International Human Rights,” in *Handbook of International Relations*, edited by Walter Carlsnaes, Thomas Risse and Beth A. Simmons, 517-537. London: Sage Publications, 2002.

SECTION 2 – A BRIEF HISTORY OF HUMAN RIGHTS

Tuesday, October 6 – Human Rights before the Nineteenth Century

Jack Donnelly, *Universal Human Rights in Theory and Practice*, 3rd ed. Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2013, 75-92.

OPTIONAL: Jack Donnelly, *Universal Human Rights in Theory and Practice*, 3rd ed. Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2013, 121-158.

Thursday, October 8 – Human Rights in the Nineteenth Century

Paul Gordon Lauren, *The Evolution of International Human Rights: Visions Seen*, 2nd ed. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2003, 37-70.

Tuesday, October 13 – Human Rights in the Early/Mid Twentieth Century

Jan Herman Burgers, “The Road to San Francisco: The Revival of the Human Rights Idea in the Twentieth Century,” *Human Rights Quarterly*, 14, 4 (1992): 447-477.

Thursday, October 15 – The Drafting of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights

Johannes Morsink, *The Universal Declaration of Human Rights: Origins, Drafting and Intent*. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1999, 1-35.

Susan Waltz, “Reclaiming and Rebuilding the History of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights,” *Third World Quarterly* 23, 3 (2002): 437-448.

Tuesday, October 20 – Review Class before Mid-Term

No Readings

Thursday, October 22 – Mid-Term Exam

No Readings

SECTION 3 – INTERNATIONAL HUMAN RIGHTS INSTITUTIONS

Tuesday, October 27 – International Human Rights Law and Regimes

Rhona K. M. Smith, “Human Rights in International Law,” in *Human Rights: Politics and Practice*, 2nd ed., edited by Michael Goodhart, 58-74. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013.

Jack Donnelly, *Universal Human Rights in Theory and Practice*, 3rd ed. Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2013, 161-196.

Thursday, October 29 – The United Nations Human Rights Council and the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights

Kevin Boyle, “The United Nations Human Rights Council: Politics, Power and Human Rights,” *Northern Ireland Legal Quarterly* 60, 2 (2009): 121-133.

Harold Hongju Koh, “The UN High Commissioner for Human Rights: From the Personal to the Institutional,” in *The United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights: Conscience for the World*, edited by Felice D. Gaer and Christen L. Broecker, 45-61. Leiden: Martinus Nijhoff Publishers, 2014.

SECTION 4 – CONTEMPORARY HUMAN RIGHTS ISSUES

Tuesday, November 3 – Global Civil Society and NGO advocacy

Marlies Glasius, “Global Civil Society and Human Rights,” in *Human Rights: Politics and Practice*, 2nd ed., edited by Michael Goodhart, 144-160. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013.

Margaret E. Keck and Kathryn Sikkink, *Activists Beyond Borders: Advocacy Networks in International Politics*. Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1998, 1-38.

Thursday, November 5 – Development and Globalization

Sakiko Fukuda-Parr, “Human Rights and Politics in Development,” in *Human Rights: Politics and Practice*, 2nd ed., edited by Michael Goodhart, 161-178. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013.

David L. Richards and Ronald D. Gelleny, “Economic Globalization and Human Rights,” in *Human Rights: Politics and Practice*, 2nd ed., edited by Michael Goodhart, 179-196. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013.

Tuesday, November 10 – Children’s Rights

Vanessa Pupavac, “Children’s Human Rights Advocacy,” in *Human Rights: Politics and Practice*, 2nd ed., edited by Michael Goodhart, 197-216. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013.

Thursday, November 12 – No Class (Study Day)

Tuesday, November 17 – Migration and Refugees

Gil Loescher, “Human Rights and Forced Migration,” in *Human Rights: Politics and Practice*, 2nd ed., edited by Michael Goodhart, 217-236. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013.

Deniz Şenol Sert, “United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees,” in *The Encyclopedia of Global Human Migration*, edited by Immanuel Ness and Peter Bellwood. Hoboken, NJ: Wiley-Blackwell, 2013.

Thursday, November 19 – Indigenous Peoples

Paul Havemann, “Indigenous Peoples Human Rights,” in *Human Rights: Politics and Practice*, 2nd ed., edited by Michael Goodhart, 237-254. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013.

Erica-Irene Daes, “The UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples: Background and Appraisal,” in *Reflections on the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples*, edited by Stephen Allen, Alexander Xanthaki, 11-40. Oxford: Hart Publishing, 2011.

Tuesday, November 24 – Human Trafficking, the Sex Trade and Sexual Minorities

Andrea M. Bertone, “Trafficking for Sexual Exploitation,” in *Human Rights: Politics and Practice*, 2nd ed., edited by Michael Goodhart, 255-272. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013.

Jack Donnelly, *Universal Human Rights in Theory and Practice*, 3rd ed. Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2013, 274-291.

Thursday, November 26 – Torture

William F. Schulz, “Torture,” in *Human Rights: Politics and Practice*, 2nd ed., edited by Michael Goodhart, 310-327. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013.

Tuesday, December 1 – Genocide and Humanitarian Intervention

Scott Straus, “Genocide and Human Rights,” in *Human Rights: Politics and Practice*, 2nd ed., edited by Michael Goodhart, 273-289. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013.

Alan J. Kuperman, “Humanitarian Intervention,” in *Human Rights: Politics and Practice*, 2nd ed., edited by Michael Goodhart, 290-309. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013.

Jack Donnelly, *Universal Human Rights in Theory and Practice*, 3rd ed. Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2013, 254-273.

Thursday, December 3 – Transitional Justice

Joanna R. Quinn, “Transitional Justice,” in *Human Rights: Politics and Practice*, 2nd ed., edited by Michael Goodhart, 328-343. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013.

Tuesday, December 8 – Take Home Exam Due in Class Today

No readings