

Political Science 4565/5565  
**INTERNATIONAL HUMAN RIGHTS**  
Fall 2016

Instructor: Dr. Andrew Ross <[rossa@ohio.edu](mailto:rossa@ohio.edu)>  
Office: Bentley Annex 255  
Office Hours: Tu 1:30-3:30; W 8:30-9:30

Location: Bentley 023  
Meeting times: W 3:05-5:50

### **Course Description**

This course studies human rights as an inescapable but imperfect vehicle for moral and legal change in international politics. We begin discussing the use of torture by the United States during the War on Terror in order to reflect on the often-cited "trade-off" between liberty and security. The second section turns to the mechanics of human rights protection in the present and recent past, addressing question such as: How can human rights be enforced in the absence of a centralized authority? Why do states care so much about being regarded as champions of human rights? And what role do non-governmental organizations play in advancing human rights and shaping which issues attract international attention and which do not? The course then examines various critical perspectives on the past and present value of human rights, including the problem of translating global standards across cultural differences.

### **Learning Outcomes**

Students should complete the course with an ability to:

1. discuss historical and current problems in international human rights;
2. think critically about human rights institutions and organizations;
3. evaluate competing perspectives on how and to what degree human rights law is enforced;
4. design and deliver short essays that are organized coherently and logically, and that employ relevant evidence and examples;
5. design, plan, and deliver a written project that is organized coherently and logically, and that employs relevant evidence and examples (research paper only);
6. cite and document a broad range of sources to support an argument using a consistent and formal method of citation and format (research paper only); and
7. summarize and evaluate complex ideas in an accurate and compelling way.

### **Course Requirements for POLS 4565**

Assignments are described in greater detail in the "assignments" section of Blackboard (hereafter "Bb"). All assignments except the mid-term will be submitted via Bb under "submissions."

**Attendance and participation:** Regular attendance and participation are essential requirements for this course. Students are expected to arrive at class having completed and thought about the assigned readings. The participation grade will be based on your attendance (see below) and the quality and quantity of your contributions in class. Visits to office hours count as part of your participation: please don't be a stranger!

**First short paper:** A five-page paper based on the readings assigned for Aug. 31. The paper will be due on **Friday, September 9 at noon.**

**Mid-term exam:** There will be one mid-term exam on material covered from Sep. 7 to Sep. 21. It will be held **in-class on October 5.** The exam will consist of short, paragraph-length questions asking you to explain key concepts in international human rights using examples from readings and class discussions.

**One additional short paper:** A five-page paper on one of two topics, each with a different deadline (i.e. choose the one that best fits your schedule). The first topic is based on readings assigned for Oct. 12 and 19; it is due **Friday, October 28 at noon.** The second topic is based on readings assigned for Oct. 26; it is due **Friday, Nov. 4 at noon.**

**Final exam:** There will be a take-home final exam covering all readings and topics; it will presuppose that you have understood topics and can employ concepts covered by the mid-term, but questions will focus on materials and topics discussed since that exam. The exam will consist of two essays of approximately five pages each. I will post it on Bb the day of our last class, and it will be due one week later, on **Wednesday, December 7 at midnight.** We will have time to do review for the final exam during our last class. I am also happy to discuss during office hours strategies for writing the final exam, but not during the one week period before it is due (i.e. while you have the questions).

### **Research option for POLS 4565**

Undergraduates who receive 88/100 or higher on the first short paper may opt to write a research paper in lieu of the second short paper and the final exam. The paper will be 10-12 pages long (excluding bibliography/references) but will otherwise follow all the same requirements and due dates as the research paper for 5565.

### **Course Requirements for POLS 5565**

**Attendance and participation** and the **first short paper**, as described above, are also required for the graduate section.

**Research paper:** You will write a research paper of 15-17 pages (excluding bibliography/references) on a topic relating to international human rights: you might begin with a human rights problem in a specific country or region, but your analysis of it should in some way address *international and/or global* norms, rules, institutions, and/or actors. You will choose your topic, but also obtain my approval (via email or in person) by **Thursday, Sep. 29.** There are then three graded components to this assignment:

- (1) **Abstract and annotated bibliography:** one document consisting of (a) a 1.5-page (double-spaced) abstract of the paper and (b) a bibliography of the materials you have gathered to date. For the

bibliography, you should have a special sub-section listing scholarly secondary sources, and five of these should be annotated. This part of the assignment is worth 10% of your overall grade. This document is due via Bb by **Friday, October 21 at noon**;

- (2) **Paper draft**: submit and circulate a full draft of your paper two days before our last class, i.e. **by Monday, November 28 at 3pm**. You will submit a copy to me via email, and I will then forward it to the classmates in your working group for the workshop. Be prepared to read drafts from one, two, or three other students.
- (3) **The paper**: Revise your draft and submit the final paper via Bb by **Wednesday, December 7 at midnight**.

**Grades and Late Papers**

There will be no make-up assignments, extra credit assignments, or opportunities to revise and resubmit assignments for a higher grade (i.e. other than the research paper draft). If you have concerns about your grade or questions about my expectations, please schedule a meeting with me as early as possible in the semester.

Late papers will be penalized 6 points per day (e.g. a paper awarded an 88/B+ submitted one day late will receive an 82/B-), including weekend days, to a maximum of three days (after which the assignment will not be graded). No exceptions in cases of computer malfunction or loss of data. Cases of serious illness should be brought to my attention, with official documentation, prior to or immediately following the missed assignment.

I use a standard grading scale for determining letter grades: A = 93-100; A- = 90-92; B+ = 87-89; B = 83-86; B- = 80-82; C+ = 77-79; C = 73-76; C- = 70-72; D+ = 67-69; D = 63-66; D- = 60-62; F = <60. Overall grades will be calculated as follows:

<b>4565</b>		<b>4565 research option</b>		<b>5565</b>	
Participation/attendance	15 %	Participation/attendance	15 %	Participation/attendance	20 %
Paper 1	15 %	Paper 1	15 %	Paper 1	20 %
Mid-term exam	20 %	Mid-term exam	20 %	Abstract & bibliography	10 %
Paper 2	20 %	Abstract & bibliography	10 %	Draft & workshop	5 %
Take-home exam	30 %	Draft & workshop	5 %	Research paper	45 %
		Research paper	35 %		

**Attendance**

I strongly encourage students to attend every class. To accommodate minor illness or other occasional events, I allow all students to miss up to two classes (excluding the mid-term and paper workshop, if applicable) without documentation or explanation. I recommend reserving these absences in case you get sick or overcommitted later in the semester. If you miss class due to minor illness, traffic delays, student conferences, athletics events, family obligations, or the like, that missed class will count toward these allowed absences. This policy means that your participation grade will be reduced starting with the third missed class. The penalty will increase for each class missed, up to five absences. *If you miss six or more classes, you will get zero for your entire participation grade (i.e. 15% of the course grade for 4565, 20% for 5565).* Do not expect full attendance credit if you arrive late or leave early; arriving late on a regular basis may count as part of your

allowed absences. Students are responsible for all course materials covered and announcements made during missed classes. If you are missing class due to major, on-going health problems (physical or mental), please discuss the situation with me as early as possible.

## **Technology**

**Email:** I expect you to check your OU email regularly for announcements or other communications. You may contact me by email at any time, just be aware that I will not reply instantly. I try to reply within 24 hours M-F, and by Monday noon for messages sent Friday. And, if you have a complex or sensitive question, let's discuss it during office hours. **Devices in class:** Please turn off the ringer on your phone *and* put it away during class time. You may use a laptop or tablet in class only for taking notes and accessing electronic readings. I reserve the right to ask you to put electronic devices away when/if they become distracting to you, to others, or to me. **Blackboard:** I expect you to use the Bb system to access readings, announcements, and handouts, and to submit assignments. If you encounter a broken link, a missing content item, or something else I need to fix, please let me know via email as soon as possible. If you are having general problems with Bb, contact the Help Desk. All assignments due via Bb should have links posted under "submissions"; please email me if you do not see a link one week before your assignment is due. It is your responsibility to ensure that your documents are properly uploaded and open-able by me: "oops, I accidentally uploaded a draft of my paper instead of the final version" or "golly, it looks like I mistakenly uploaded my music history paper" will not work ☺. Uploading formats other than .pdf and MS Word-created .docx may cause problems; again, it is your responsibility to ensure that your document is intact and accessible to me.

## **Academic Misconduct**

Students in this course are expected to follow the University's standards of academic integrity and honesty and are responsible for understanding what constitutes plagiarism. One useful reference is here: <http://www.ohio.edu/communitystandards/academic/students.cfm>. If you are caught cheating or plagiarizing, you may receive a grade deduction on the assignment, a failing grade for the assignment, or a failing grade for the class. You may also be reported to the Office of Community Standards and Student Responsibility for additional sanctions. Students may appeal academic sanctions through the grade appeal process.

## **Disability Accommodations**

Any student who suspects s/he may need an accommodation based on the impact of a disability should contact the class instructor privately to discuss the student's specific needs and provide written documentation from the Office of Student Accessibility Services. If the student is not yet registered as a student with a disability, s/he should contact the Office of Student Accessibility Services.

## **Writing Resources**

Writing effectively is key to your success in this class. I will give you feedback on your first paper, with the expectation that you apply my suggestions to subsequent assignments. I am also happy to meet during office hours, either before or after your papers are due, to discuss your writing. I cannot read a full draft for each student but am happy to skim one or two pages' worth while we meet. Additional writing resources are available at the library. One is *A Writer's Reference*, by Diana Hacker (available online). Another is *They Say / I Say: The Moves That Matter in Academic Writing*, by Gerald Graff and Cathy Birkenstein.

Please note that "human rights" is not capitalized unless it is part of a book title, the name of a treaty, the name of an organization, or some other proper noun. The same applies to "international law," "international organizations," and "international relations."

### **Required Texts**

The following books are available for purchase at the Little Professor Bookstore on Court St. They are also available at the library reserves.

Ford, Richard Thompson. *Universal Rights Down to Earth*. New York: W.W. Norton, 2011.

Hopgood, Stephen. *The Endtimes of Human Rights*. Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2013.

Merry, Sally Engle. *Human Rights and Gender Violence: Translating International Law into Local Justice*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2006.

Merry, Sally Engle. *The Seductions of Quantification: Measuring Human Rights, Gender Violence, and Sex Trafficking*. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2016.

All remaining readings are available on Bb under "Readings." Minor modifications to weekly readings may become necessary; I will notify you of any changes in class and confirm via email.

## **COURSE TOPICS AND READINGS**

### **PART I. INTRODUCTION**

#### **Aug. 24: What are "Human Rights"?: Introduction to The Politics of Human Rights**

Ford, Introduction, *Universal Rights Down to Earth*

Begin film (in-class): *Taxi to the Dark Side*, by Alex Gibney

#### **Aug. 31: The "Trade-off" between Rights and Security**

Continue film: *Taxi to the Dark Side*

Mayer, Jane. "Whatever It Takes." *The New Yorker* 83, no. 1 (19 February 2007).

Ignatieff, Michael. "Lesser Evils." *New York Times Magazine* (2 May 2004).

Luban, David. "Eight Fallacies about Liberty and Security." In: Richard Ashby Wilson, ed. *Human Rights in the "War on Terror,"* 242-57. New York: Cambridge University Press, 2005.

Dershowitz, Alan. "Should the Ticking Bomb Terrorist Be Tortured?" In: *Why Terrorism Works: Understanding the Threat, Responding to the Challenge*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 2002. [pp. 131-63]

Scarry, Elaine. "Five Errors in the Reasoning of Alan Dershowitz." In: Sanford Levinson, ed. *Torture: A Collection*, 281-90. New York: Oxford University Press, 2004.

### **PART II. THE MECHANICS OF HUMAN RIGHTS PROTECTION**

## **Sep. 7: The Codification and Institutionalization of Human Rights**

(Note: First short paper due Friday, September 9 at noon)

*International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights* (Pre., AA.1-4, skim 6-27, 40); and *International Covenant on Economic, Social, and Cultural Rights* (Pre., AA.1-2, skim 6-17). These treaties are widely available online; it doesn't matter where/how you access them.

Donnelly, Jack. "Human Rights as an Issue in World Politics" and "Global Multilateral Mechanisms." Ch. 1 and 5 in: *International Human Rights*, 3-18 and 77-94. Fourth edition. Boulder: Westview Press, 2013.

Henkin, Louis. "U.S. Ratification of Human Rights Conventions: The Ghost of Senator Bricker." *American Journal of International Law* 89 (1995): 341-50.

Merry, Ch. 3, *Human Rights and Gender Violence*.

## **Sep. 14: Problems and Prospects of Treaty Enforcement**

Hathaway, Oona A. "The Promise and Limits of the International Law of Torture." In: Sanford Levinson, ed. *Torture: A Collection*, 199-212. New York: Oxford University Press, 2004.

Hafner-Burton, Emilie M. Ch. 11, *Making Human Rights a Reality*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2013.

Brysk, Alison. "Global Good Samaritans? Human Rights Foreign Policy in Costa Rica." *Global Governance* 11(2005): 445-66.

Koh, Harold Hongju. "How is International Human Rights Law Enforced?" *Indiana Law Journal* 74 (1999): 1397-1417.

## **Sep. 21: Global Civil Society and The Politics of Gatekeeping**

Hafner-Burton, Emilie. "Sticks and Stones: Naming and Shaming the Human Rights Enforcement Problem." *International Organization* 62, no. 4 (2008): 689-716.

Ron, James et al. "Transnational Information Politics: NGO Human Rights Reporting, 1986-2000." *International Studies Quarterly* 49, no. 3 (2005): 557-87.

Bob, Clifford. "Power, Exchange, and Marketing." Chapter 2 in *The Marketing of Rebellion: Insurgents, Media, and International Activism*. New York: Cambridge University Press, 2005. [pp. 14-53]

Carpenter, R. Charli. "Governing the Global Agenda: 'Gatekeepers' and 'Issue Adoption' in Transnational Advocacy Networks." In: Deborah D. Avant et al., eds. *Who Governs The Globe?* 202-37. New York: Cambridge University Press, 2010.

## **Sep. 28: Case Study on Human Trafficking**

In-class film: excerpts from *Half the Sky*

Power, Samantha. "The Enforcer: A Christian Lawyer's Global Crusade." *The New Yorker* 84, no. 45 (19 January 2009): 52-63. [B]

Pollitt, Katha. "Sex Trafficking, Lies & Money: What Can We Learn from The Somaly Mam Scandal?" *The Nation* (23 June 2014): 6-7.

Ford, "Rights in Practice," *Universal Rights Down to Earth* [pp. 59-86 only]

Bernstein, Elizabeth. "The Sexual Politics of the 'New Abolitionism.'" *Differences: A Journal of Feminist Cultural Studies* 18, no. 3 (2007): 128-51.

### **Oct. 5: Mid-term Exam and Research Paper Workshop**

POLS 4565 students will arrive at the usual time for a 75-minute mid-term exam; POLS 5565 students will arrive at 4:30 for a paper workshop. (Undergrads opting for the research paper get to stay for the whole class 😊)

## **PART III. CULTURAL AND PSYCHOLOGICAL CONTEXTS**

### **Oct. 12: Universal Rights and Local Practices**

Merry, Sally Engle. Chs. 1 and 4, *Human Rights and Gender Violence*.

Donnelly, Jack. "The Relative Universality of Human Rights." *Human Rights Quarterly* 29, no.2 (2007): 281-306.

### **Oct. 19: Human Rights and Women's Rights in Islamic Societies**

(Note: abstract and bibliography due Friday October 21 at noon)

Kendhammer, Brandon. "Islam and the Language of Human Rights in Nigeria: 'Rights Talk' and Religion in Domestic Politics." *Journal of Human Rights* 12, no. 4 (2013): 469-90.

An-Na'im, Abdullahi Ahmed. "Toward a Cross-Cultural Approach to Defining International Standards of Human Rights: The Meaning of Cruel, Inhuman, or Degrading Treatment or Punishment." In: Abdullahi Ahmed An-Na'im, ed. *Human Rights in Cross-Cultural Perspective: A Quest for Consensus*, 19-43. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1992.

Abu-Lughod. "Do Muslim Women Really Need Saving? Anthropological Reflections on Cultural Relativism and Its Others." *American Anthropologist* 104, no. 3 (2002): 783-790.

Abu-Lughod. "The Social Life of Muslim Women's Rights." Ch. 4 in *Do Muslim Women Need Saving?* Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2015. pp. 143-72.

### **Oct. 26: The Emotional Underpinnings of Human Rights**

(Note: Additional short paper (first opportunity) due Friday, Oct. 28 at noon)

Hunt, Introduction and Chapter 1, *Inventing Human Rights*

Rorty, Richard. "Human Rights, Rationality, and Sentimentality." In: *Truth and Progress*: Rorty, Richard. "Human Rights, Rationality, and Sentimentality." In: *Truth and Progress: Philosophical Papers*, 167-85. New York: Cambridge University Press, 1999.

Fassin, Didier. Introduction. *Humanitarian Reason: A Moral History of the Present Times*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 2012. pp. 1-17.

## **PART IV: CRITICAL APPROACHES**

### **Nov. 2: The Limits of Indicators and Quantification**

(Note: Additional short paper (second opportunity) due Friday, Nov. 4 at noon)

Merry, Sally Engle. *The Seductions of Quantification: Measuring Human Rights, Gender Violence, and Sex Trafficking*. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2016.

### **Nov. 9: Philosophical Critiques**

Ford, "Rights in Theory," *Universal Rights Down to Earth*

Burke, Edmund. "Reflections on the Revolution in France." In: Isaac Kramnick, ed. *The Portable Edmund Burke*. New York: Penguin, 1999. [read only pp. 417-18, 428-43]

Marx, Karl. "On The Jewish Question." In: Lawrence H. Simon, ed. *Karl Marx: Selected Writings*. Indianapolis: Hackett, 1994. [read only pp. 1-21]

### **Nov. 16: The Endtimes of Human Rights?**

Hopgood, Stephen. Selections TBA, *The Endtimes of Human Rights*. Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2013.

## **PART V: WRAPPING UP**

### **Nov. 30: Paper Workshop and Review session**

(Note: Research paper drafts due Monday, Nov. 28 at 3pm)

Students completing the research paper should arrive at 3:05; all others arrive at 3:45pm.