

Syllabus for Global Politics: Human Rights and Justice
Site: Princeton

Course Description

This course is designed to provide students with an understanding of the topic of human rights and justice, as well as the global political context that shapes these issues. We will discuss various issues surrounding human rights in global politics, including but certainly not limited to: universalism vs. relativism; humanitarian intervention; genocide; the role of international organizations; globalization and human rights; sustainable development; and the tension between national security and human rights. We will look at case studies in several regions of the world, which involve issues of international human rights. We will engage in many lively classroom discussions and debates, as well as a policymaking simulation. We will also read about the life of Sergio de Mello, a prominent Brazilian diplomat who gave his life in Iraq, in order to see what the issues we will discuss look like on the ground—to an individual who was actively involved in advancing humanitarian causes. After taking this course, students should:

- understand the nature of human rights in theory and in practice.
- be able to explain key reasons why theory and practice are different.
- be able to defend their viewpoints (esp. regarding when and how the international community should work to protect human rights).
- know how to write a well-structured comparative essay.
- be better able to engage in college-level reasoning, speaking, reading, and writing.

Required Books

- Core text:
 - Jack Donnelly, *International Human Rights, 3rd Edition* (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 2007).
- Supplementary texts:
 - Michael Barnett, *Eyewitness to a Genocide: The United Nations and Rwanda* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2002).
 - Samantha Power, *Chasing the Flame: One Man's Fight to Save the World* (New York: Penguin Books, 2008).

Assessments

The following assignments will be required, in order to gauge student understanding of the course material and to assess students' abilities to apply the skills that will be learned in the course:

- Position Paper
 - What role should the promotion and protection of international human rights play in a state's foreign policy? Why?
 - ~2 pages
- Close-reading Exercise
 - What is of Michael Barnett's central argument in *Eyewitness to a Genocide* about why the United Nations did not intervene in the 1994

genocide in Rwanda? Please trace the entire argument—including all major points that are necessary for allowing Barnett to reach his central argument.

- ~2 pages
- Research Paper/Comparative Essay
 - Instructions: Your task is to write an essay in which you make an argument about what works (and/or what *does not* work) in the attempt to promote/protect human rights. You must support your argument with evidence from a carefully structured comparison of at least two different attempts to promote or protect human rights (*broadly defined*), or of one attempt at multiple points in time.
 - ~8 pages

Daily Schedule

Sunday

Evening	Introductions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Students placed in groups of three. ● Each member of the group will introduce another person in the group—the person who is not introducing him/her. ● Instructor and TA introduce each other and answer any remaining questions.
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Monday, Day 1

Morning	Groundwork	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Pre-assessment ● Review honor code and computer policy ● Overview of the course ● Class discussion: What is justice? ● Class discussion: What are human rights? ● Group work: In small groups, arrive at a consensus on how to define human rights. ● Each group shares its definition with the class; then all groups critically evaluate each other’s definitions. Finally, the class tries to arrive at a consensus on how to define the term throughout the session.
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Afternoon	Groundwork and Reading	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Negotiations continue regarding how to define human rights. • Read Donnelly, chapter 1
Evening	Skill Tutorial and Group Study	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tutorial: What plagiarism is and how to avoid it • Groups of students figure out what happened in world history (that might relate in some way to human rights). Each group is given a particular time period and asked to prepare a short presentation regarding the major events during that period that had the greatest effect on human rights as an international issue.

Tuesday, Day 2

Morning	Historical Overview	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Group presentations on the history of human rights
Afternoon	Reading and Group Study	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Place students in three groups. Each is assigned one of three schools of thought regarding international relations. • Readings on IR schools of thought: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Group 1: Waltz, <i>Man, the State, and War</i>, chapter 8 ○ Group 2: Sterling-Folker, <i>Making Sense of International Relations Theory</i>, chapter 3.1 ○ Group 3: Wendt, “Anarchy is What States Make of It” ○ All: Walt, “One World, Many Theories”
Evening	Skill Tutorial and Group Study	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tutorial: How to give a good presentation • Vocabulary lesson: students circle words in the readings that they were not familiar with, then we discuss the meanings. • Each group reviews its assigned school of thought and prepares to persuade a hypothetical president that it is the best way to view the world.

Wednesday, Day 3

Morning	Theories of International Relations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continue preparation for group presentations. • Lecture/class discussion: Introduction to IR schools of thought • CAT: Defining Features Matrix (Complete as a class, in order to facilitate the presentation of the different theories.) • Group presentations: Advising the president about which IR theory is best
Afternoon	Skill Tutorial and Group Study	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Group presentations: Advising the president about which IR theory is best (cont.) • Lecture/class discussion: The status of human rights in the different IR theories • Class discussion: anarchy vs. chaos
Evening	Individual Study	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Students work on position papers.

Thursday, Day 4

Morning	Universality of Human Rights	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Explanation of how the in-class debate will be structured • Read Donnelly, chapter 3 • Groups of two or three students prepare to debate three resolutions regarding universalism vs. relativism.
Afternoon	Class Debate	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Finish debate prep • Debate: Universalism vs. relativism
Evening	Skill Tutorial and Individual Study	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Debate: Universalism vs. relativism (cont.) • Students work on position papers.

Friday, Day 5

Morning	International Law	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Final revision/polishing of position papers • Position papers due at end of morning. • Read Donnelly, chapter 5 • Vocabulary lesson • Lecture/class discussion: Intro to international law
Afternoon	Skill Tutorial and Individual Study	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lecture/class discussion: Intro to international law (cont.) • Read Barnes, “Confronting Sensory Crisis in the Great Stinks of London and Paris” • Tutorial: How to structure a comparative essay

Sunday

Evening	Individual Study and Review of Skill Tutorial	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Vocabulary lesson (from Barnes reading) • CAT: Muddiest Point <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ What was the muddiest point in the explanation of how to structure a comparative essay? • Brainstorming about possible comparative essay topics • Paper topic worksheet #1 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ What is the general topic or issue area that you will explore in your paper? ○ What is the basic conclusion you hope to be able to draw? • Students consult with instructor about possible paper topics.
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Monday, Day 6

Morning	International Regimes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Students work on final paper ideas in computer lab. • Guest lecture: JC talks about his experience volunteering to rid a Cambodian village of landmines. • Different types of international efforts to address human rights (Geneva Conventions, UNHCHR, ICRC, ICC, etc.)
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Afternoon	International Regimes (cont.) and Reading	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Different types of international efforts to address human rights (cont.) • Read Barnett, chapter 2 • Read Donnelly, section 8.3
Evening	Skill Tutorial and Individual Study	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tutorial: How to write a better paper • Students work on comparative essays. • Students consult with instructor about comparative essays. • Paper topic worksheet #2 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ What will be the basis for comparison in your paper? In other words, which cases will you compare/contrast and why?

Tuesday, Day 7

Morning	Rwanda	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Students are placed in four groups. Two of the groups discuss how the U.S. should have responded to the outbreak of genocide in Rwanda and the other two discuss how the UN should have responded. • Groups present their ideas about how the U.S. and UN should have responded to Rwanda. • Read Barnett, chapters 1 and 5
Afternoon	Rwanda	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Finish reading Barnett, chapters 1 and 5 • Students should take notes on what Barnett is arguing. What is his central argument and what points does he make to lead up to this argument? • Class discussion: Careful review of the Barnett chapters. What does Barnett argue regarding why the UN did not intervene to halt the genocide in Rwanda? What are the most important passages in the reading?
Evening	Individual Study	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Students work on comparative essays. • Students discuss final ideas for how to approach their comparative essays.

Wednesday, Day 8

Morning	Individual Study	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Students work on close-reading exercise. • Close-reading exercise due at the end of the morning session. • When finished: Students work on comparative essays.
Afternoon	Genocide	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Class discussion: Why did practice differ from theory in the international community's response to genocide in Rwanda? • Read Power, <i>A Problem From Hell</i>, chapters 1 and 2.
Evening	Genocide (cont.) and Reading	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Class discussion: Was it <i>just</i> for the Armenian to shoot the Turkish Interior Minister? (See Power, <i>A Problem From Hell</i>, chapter 1.) • Read Power, <i>Chasing the Flame</i>, sections on Kosovo (pgs. 236-285).

Thursday, Day 9

Morning	Humanitarian Intervention	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Finish reading Power, <i>Chasing the Flame</i>, 236-285. • <i>Chasing the Flame</i> cartoons • Case study: Kosovo <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ Class activity: Different stakeholder perspectives in the case of Kosovo • Read Donnelly, chapter 8
Afternoon	Individual Study	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Students work on comparative essays.
Evening	Skill Tutorial and Activity Prep	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Group work: What are the pros and cons of intervening in humanitarian crises? • Groups share their pros and cons with the class. • Explanation of what will happen during tomorrow's simulation • Simulation preparation: students consider the requirements of the roles that they will play in the simulation.

Friday, Day 10

Morning	Simulation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Simulation exercise <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Situation: A hypothetical instance of genocide is unfolding. Each student plays a key actor (POTUS, Secretary General of UN, foreign minister of a major country, domestic leaders in the country “hosting” the genocide, etc.) and responds to the crisis in a manner befitting of the actor they are impersonating.
Afternoon	Simulation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Finish simulation exercise • Reflection exercise <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Option 1: What were the major obstacles to reaching decisions as a group? Are you satisfied with how the group responded to the crisis, or do you think that a different response would have occurred in a perfect world? Why? ○ Option 2: Please envision a conversation between you and a skeptic who thinks that the group made the wrong decision. What might this person say to challenge your decision? And how might you respond to these criticisms?

Sunday

Evening	Individual Study	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Students work on comparative essays.
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Monday, Day 11

Morning	Debate Prep	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Read Donnelly, chapter 10 • Explanation of debate format • Distribute debate topics and teams • Debate prep time
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Afternoon	National Security and Human Rights	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Debate with another GPOL class: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ National security vs. rights and liberties at home ○ National security vs. human rights abroad ○ National security vs. norms against torture
Evening	Reading and Individual Study	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Students work on comparative essays.

Tuesday, Day 12

Morning	Globalization and Human Rights	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lecture/class discussion: The tension between globalization and human rights • Case study: China <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Read Donnelly, chapter 7 ○ Class activity: Different stakeholder perspectives in the case of human rights in China
Afternoon	Individual Study	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Students work on comparative essays. • Students are encouraged to review drafts of each other's essays.
Evening	Individual Study	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Students work on comparative essays.

Wednesday, Day 13

Morning	Human Rights and Development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lecture/class discussion: Development and human rights <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Different conceptions of development and the status of human rights in each ○ Why development is difficult and what it means for human rights ○ In vogue: Sustainable human development <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ What sustainable development means for human rights
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Afternoon	Individual Study	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Final polishing of comparative essays • Comparative essays due at the end of the afternoon. • When finished, students prepare presentations consisting of a short paper summary and responses to two questions: what worked well and did not work well? What is another instance in your education or life in which you might utilize the logic of comparison that you learned?
Evening	Comparative Essay Debriefing and Post-assessment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Class discussion: Comparative essays <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ What lessons were learned about human rights and/or writing this type of essay? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Summaries of papers ▪ What are the take-away points about human rights? What went well and what did not? ▪ What are the lessons learned as a student writing an academic essay? • Students prepare for post-assessment—organize and review class materials. • Administer post-assessment

Thursday, Day 14

Morning	Film	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Watch <i>The Pianist</i>.
Afternoon	The Future of Human Rights	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Students complete evaluations. • Class discussion: What will human rights look like in the future? If one of our children ends up teaching or taking this course in the coming decades, what will be different?
Evening	Informal Discussion	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Class discussion: students' future plans

Friday, Day 15

Morning	Film	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Watch film with Politics and Film class.
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