INTL 370: International Human Rights  
Spring 2015  
CRN: 13111

INTL 370: International Human Rights  
Fall 2015  
Instructor: William Johnson  
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Class Meeting Times:  
Mondays & Wednesdays 4-5:20pm  
240A McKenzie Hall

Discussion Sections Held Fridays from 10:00-10:50; 12:00-12:50; and 1:00-1:50

Instructor Office Hours: TBD

GTF Information: TBD

COURSE DESCRIPTION:

This course covers the history, theory, and practice of human rights from a global perspective. We will emphasize the normative context within which human rights discourses develop, followed by an explanation of how and why international institutions support (or inhibit) the protection of human rights in local contexts. Drawing on the instructor's legal background, students will also be introduced to the practice of human rights law in domestic, regional, and international courts. The overriding goal of the course is for the students to begin to address three foundational questions:

1 - What are human rights, or, rather, what should they be?;
2 - How do human rights function in today’s world? (i.e. How do political and legal institutions, including NGOs, actually "do" human rights work?), and;
3 - Do human rights matter? (i.e. What are the practical possibilities and limitations informing the ability of the international human rights regime to achieve its stated goals?).

We will aim to get a sense of relevant, contemporary human rights issues through academic analysis, empirical evidence, and cultural inquiry. Students will develop a sense of the diverse perspectives on these issues internationally, while critically exploring the possibilities and contestations involved in human rights as a concept and as practice. This course will prepare students to study these issues in greater depth in their 400-level courses and graduate school.

Learning Outcomes: After completing this course, students will be able to:

- Draw connections between the relevant historical and theoretical perspectives that inform the international human rights movement.
- Analyze the moral, political, economic, and cultural tensions inherent in international human rights practices in the 21st century.
- Evaluate, compare and contrast the various political, legal and development organizations that work to promote and protect human rights around the world.
- Begin assessing the relative success or failure of specific human rights mechanisms.
COURSE CONTENT & READING SCHEDULE:

The content and reading schedule is listed at the end of this syllabus. All readings, unless otherwise marked, are required. Recommended readings will be marked with a “Rec’d” before the reading. All required readings are either pages in the Ishay book or documents available on Blackboard (note: anything with [BB] in front of it is a Blackboard document).

As you can see, this course is divided into 5 parts: Part I (wk 1) is an introduction to the course and an overview of the key controversies in human rights; Part II (wks 2-3) discusses the historical, philosophical, and legal origins of what we now call Human Rights; Part III (wks 4-6) discusses the “internationalization” of human rights law, which describes how and why policy makers in the early to mid-20th century tried to create a system of international legal and political order; Part IV (WKS 7-9) provides an overview of the theory and practice of human rights in our lifetimes, which includes an introductory overview of Human Rights law at the domestic, regional, and international level; and Part V (wk 10) is a conclusion to the course, where we will return to the critiques and controversies that began the course and attempt to answer the question “what is to be done?”

COURSE TEXT & REQUIRED MATERIALS:

Students are required to have an iClicker (version 1 or 2) registered through the INTL 370 Blackboard page.

The following required books will serve as the foundational texts for the course. Other required materials (e.g. journal articles, excerpts from other books, treaty texts, etc.) will be available to students on Blackboard and will supplement the required text.


COURSE EXPECTATIONS:

The most important expectation of this course is RESPECT. In this course we will confront and discuss many controversial and at times upsetting topics, and it is imperative that students act in a way that is respectful of others who may hold differing beliefs and value systems. No disrespectful behavior, speech, or other conduct will be tolerated.

Attendance is mandatory. Each student may miss 2 classes* no questions asked without being penalized (i.e. you have 2 “freebies”). If you expect to be excused for class for any reason, you must email the instructor and GTF prior to the beginning of the class session to get excused. Additional absences will negatively affect your final grade.
*unless excused in advance by the instructor, you cannot use one of your “freebies” on the day of
the midterm, the day an assignment is due, or any day there is a guest speaker. If you are unsure
about any aspect of the attendance policy, please see the instructor or GTF early in the course.

**Participation:** Students are expected to come to class prepared and ready to participate. There are
many ways to receive participation points (including asking questions, answering questions,
contributing to group discussions, etc.) but emphasis will be placed on participation that shows that
students are reading, thinking about, and interacting with course material. Students are free to
raise their hand and participate with the entire class at any time, but we will also regularly break
into groups or have other interactive exercises. Students are expected to read the material listed on
the reading schedule BEFORE coming to class.

**Electronic Devices:** Please be respectful of the students around you and your instructor.

**COMPUTERS & TABLETS:** Using a laptop computer for note-taking is allowed, but if you chose
to do so you must sit in the front row. You are not allowed to surf the web or use Facebook (etc.)
while in class – it is distracting to those around you.

**PHONES:** Turn off your phones (or put on silent) and **PUT THEM AWAY.** We all love our
electronics, but it is offensive and disrespectful to me when I see students using their phones,
ipods, Facebook, etc. in class. If we see you using a Cell Phone or other device for ANY reason
while class is in session will reflect negatively on your participation grade.

**Note:** If on any single day it is necessary for you to have your phone available, i.e. if there is an
emergency or if you are waiting for a call from a sick spouse, child, parent, etc., please tell the GTF
and the instructor **before** class so that we know why you may need to use your phone in class.

**GRADING:**

Your final grade will be decided based upon the following criteria:

**Attendance, Participation, and Quizzes (APQ):** 20%
See attendance policy above for details. Quizzes will be administered, using clickers,
without prior announcement.

**Response Papers (2 at 10% each):** 20%
In these short (2-3pg) response papers students will address a specific question or set of
questions in light of course readings, a specific film, or a guest speaker.

**In-Class Midterm Exam (use Greenbooks!):** 30%

**Final Essay (more details will be provided in class):** 30%

**Extra Credit:** Students are eligible for 1% of extra credit added to their final grade (up to 3% total)
for completing a news article assignment. This consists of choosing a news article that is relevant to
our discussion of human rights, briefly presenting the article to class on a day when that topic is
relevant, and handing in a ½ - 1 page explanation of how the subject of the article relates to the
themes and concepts we have discussed or read about up to that point. **NOTE:** No extra credit
news article assignments will be accepted in weeks 9 or 10.
Throughout the course there may be additional campus or community events that will involve an extra credit assignment, depending on availability. All such activities will be announced in class and posted to Blackboard. More details are available in the “assignments” folder on Blackboard.

**ACADEMIC POLICIES AND PROCEDURES:**

**Academic Integrity:** Your enrollment in this course constitutes your agreement to abide by the University of Oregon policy on Academic Misconduct, as defined in the University Student Conduct Code (available at conduct.uoregon.edu). Neither ignorance of these policies nor lack of intention to engage willfully in acts defined as academic misconduct will be considered a legitimate defense. In short, I expect that all work you produce for this course will be your own; if you engage in academic misconduct, such as plagiarism, it will result in a failure of the entire course, without exception. To learn more about your rights and responsibilities concerning academic conduct and the procedures related to academic misconduct, I strongly advise you to become familiar with the University Student Conduct Code (link given above). Additional information about a common form of academic misconduct, plagiarism, is available at www.libweb.uoregon.edu/guides/plagiarism/students. Please talk with me if you have any questions about academic integrity issues.

**Inclusive Access:** The University of Oregon is working to create inclusive learning environments. Please notify me within the first week of the term if aspects of the instruction or course design present obstacles to your active participation. Such obstacles may include, but are not limited to, issues concerning physical access and mobility, physical or mental health and well-being, and academic learning. For additional assistance and resources, I encourage you to contact the following campus services, as appropriate for your concerns:

- Disability Services, 164 Oregon Hall, 346-1155 or disabrv@uoregon.edu; website: http://ds.uoregon.edu/
- University Counseling and Testing Center, Health Center 2nd Floor, 346-3227; website: http://counseling.uoregon.edu/dmn/
- Teaching and Learning Center, 68 Prince Lucien Campbell, 346-3226; website: http://tlc.uoregon.edu/

**Diversity:** The University of Oregon is dedicated to the principles of equal opportunity in education and an acceptance of diversity as an affirmation of individual identity within a welcoming community. Open inquiry, freedom of expression, and respect for difference are therefore fundamental to a comprehensive and dynamic education. This course is committed to upholding these ideals by encouraging the exploration, engagement, and expression of divergent perspectives and diverse identities. Please notify me ASAP if you feel aspects of the instruction or course design, or classroom activities, undermine these principles in any way. For additional assistance and resources, I encourage you to contact the following campus services, as appropriate for your concerns:

- Office of Institutional Equity and Diversity, 1 Johnson Hall, 346-3175; website: http://oied.uoregon.edu/
- Bias Response Team, 164 Oregon Hall, 346-1134 or brt@uoregon.edu; website: