Anthropology/Global Studies 447
THE GLOBAL POLITICS OF HUMAN RIGHTS
Fall 2014: Tuesdays/Thursdays 2:00-3:15pm

Course description: This course addresses the theoretical and historical background of human rights discourse as well as efforts to protect human rights in particular social settings. The class begins with an exploration of religious and philosophical foundations of rights theory, and then examines the engagement of anthropology with particular human rights issues such as: the limitations of cultural relativism, the problem of defining “the individual” and “universal humanity,” ethnographies of rights activism, and critiques of rights practices. The course uses case studies to analyze efforts to achieve social justice regarding particular rights claims: rights to health and economic security, women’s rights in international law, indigenous people’s rights. We will focus on the politics of making rights claims, institutional contexts for demanding reparations and arguments for rights against cruelty. We will investigate the work of global advocates for rights, rights institutions, and contexts of transitional justice. One goal of the class is to help students learn the difference between human rights in theory and practice and to understand the complexities of contemporary human rights activism. To facilitate this goal, in addition to lectures, examinations, and class participation, students will pick a particular historical case and/or institution to research in greater depth. Student research projects will be presented in class at the end of the semester, further demonstrating the politics of human rights as it turns from theory to practice.

Prerequisites: Prereq: jr st; Anthro 102(R). Students enrolling in this course should have familiarity with basic concepts in the social sciences and should have taken at least some anthropology. Some prior knowledge of global studies and/or international relations, though not required, will be extremely helpful.

Course requirements undergraduates: This course is a lecture/discussion course. It is reading-intensive, with considerable attention devoted to in-depth discussion of assigned readings. Students are expected to attend class regularly, keep up with the readings and to be prepared to participate in discussion. Participation (20% of course grade) is an important part of this class and will include oral presentations and classroom engagement. Each week students will be asked to present outlines of the assigned readings (a sign up sheet will be passed around early in the course to schedule presentations of the outlines). The remainder of the course will be evaluated via two take-home essay exam questions (30% x 2 = 60% of total grade), and a short research essay on a relevant topic with reference to assigned course readings (5-page double spaced plus 5 minute presentation: 20%).
**Course requirements graduate students:** For class participation (20% of final grade) graduate students will be expected to make oral presentations on specific topics weekly, and will be assigned particular days to lead discussion. They will be expected to engage deeply with the assigned readings and to contextualize the topics more broadly in anthropological scholarship. Graduate students will write two essay exams (25% x 2 = 50% of total grade) alongside the undergraduates, however, they will be given more challenging questions and will be expected to provide more sophisticated critical analysis.

In addition, graduate students will write a 10-12 page double spaced final research paper that will count as 30% of final the grade and will include a presentation to the class. In the first few weeks of class, I will schedule meetings with graduate students to discuss possible paper topics. An excellent paper will have a clearly stated research question; it will be well written, well researched, and will include references to both external sources and assigned course materials. Students are encouraged to begin research on their paper early in the semester and to select their topic no later than week 8.

**Class presentations:** There is no required format for the brief final presentations of the short essay (undergraduates)/ research paper (graduate students). An ideal presentation will include an engaged and thoughtful discussion of the topic with direct links to assigned course readings. Your goal is to demonstrate to me and to your classmates that you have thought carefully and critically about the topic you have written about in your essay. Students are encouraged to make an outline of the presentation and to stick to the time limit.

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<th>Undergraduates</th>
<th>Graduates</th>
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<tr>
<td>Class participation</td>
<td>20%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Essay Exam 1</td>
<td>30%</td>
<td>25%</td>
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<td>Essay Exam 2</td>
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<tr>
<td>Short essay &amp; class presentation</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>NA</td>
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<tr>
<td>Research paper &amp; class presentation</td>
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**Required reading:**

Course reserves: Books are available on reserve in the UWM library. Readings marked with an (*) on the syllabus are available on D2L.

**Books:**
Plagiarism warning
All writing for this course must be your own. Cutting and pasting from the internet without citing the website and putting the passage in quotation marks is plagiarism. If I find evidence of plagiarism, you will receive an F for the assignment and possibly fail the course. If you have questions about this please ask.

University academic policies can be found at: http://www4.uwm.edu/secu/SyllabusLinks.pdf

Weekly Schedule of Lectures, Readings, and Discussion Topics

RIGHTS THEORY

Week 1 (9/2 & 4) Course Introduction: a Brief History of Human Rights
Read:
(*) Universal Declaration of Human Rights
(*) African Charter on Human and People’s Rights
(*) Vienna Declaration
(*) Beijing Declaration
(*) UN Convention on the Rights of the Child
(*) UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples

Week 2 (9/9 & 11) Religious & Philosophical Concepts
Read:
(*) Excerpts from the Koran (Ishay pp. 42-57)
(*) Mahatma Gandhi, excerpts from “Passive Resistance” (Ishay pp. 349-352)
(*) Bartholome de las Casas, In Defense of the Indians (Ishay pp. 67-72)
(*) Thomas Paine, excerpts from The Rights of Man (Ishay pp. 134-138)

Week 3 (9/16 & 18)
Read:
• Arendt: The Decline of the Nation-State and End of the Rights of Man (ch.2)
• Kymlicka: the Good, the Bad, and the Intolerable: Minority Group Rights (ch.3)
• An-Nai’im: Toward a Cross-Cultural Approach to Defining International Standards in Human Rights: The Meaning of Cruel, Inhuman, or Degrading Treatment or Punishment (ch.4)
• Sen: Human Rights and Capabilities (ch.5)
ADVOCATING FOR RIGHTS

Week 4 (9/23 & 25)  
**Anthropology & Rights Activism**

**Read:**
- AAA Statement Human Rights (1947) & Commentaries (Goodale, ch.1)
- Declaration on Anthropology and Human Rights (1999) (ch.6)
- Messer: Anthropology, Human Rights and Social Transformation (ch.7)
- Sanford: Excavations of the Heart: Healing Fragmented Communities (ch.8)
- Farmer & Gastineau: Rethinking Health and Human Rights: Time for a Paradigm Shift (ch.9)
- Schepers-Hughes: Rotten Trade: Millennial Capitalism, Human Values and Global Justice in Organs Trafficking (ch.10)

Week 5 (9/30 & 10/2)

**Read:**
- Turner et al: Anthropology and Human Rights… (ch.11)
- Wilson: Representing Human Rights Violations: Social Contexts and Subjectivities (ch.12)
- Speed: Gendered Intersections: Collective and Individual Rights in Indigenous Women’s Experience (ch.13)
- Englund: Human Rights and Moral Panics: Listening to Popular Grievances (ch.14)

**Essay exam #1 distributed 10/2 – due 10/9**

Week 6 (10/7 & 9)  
**Critiques**

**Read:**
- Cowan: Culture and Rights after Culture and Rights (ch.15)
- Preis: Human Rights as Cultural Practice: an Anthropological Critique (ch.17)
- Eriksen: Between Universalism and Relativism: A Critique of the UNESCO Concept of Culture (ch.18)
- Goodale: Toward a Critical Anthropology of Human Rights (ch.18)

INSTITUTIONAL CONTEXTS

Week 7 (10/14 & 16)  
**Women’s Rights + International Law**

**Read:**
- Merry, Human Rights and Gender Violence (chapters 1-3)

Week 8 (10/21 & 23)
- Merry, Human Rights and Gender Violence (chapters 4-7)
Week 9 (10/28 & 30)    **Transitional Justice**  
*Read:*  
  • Wilson, *The Politics of Truth and Reconciliation in South Africa* (chapters 1-4)

Week 10 (11/4 & 6)  
  • Wilson, *The Politics of Truth and Reconciliation in South Africa* (chapters 5-8)

Week 11 (11/11 & 13)    **Amnesty International**  
*Read:*  
  • Hopgood, *Keepers of the Flame* (chapters 1-4)

Week 12 (11/19 & 20)  
  • Hopgood, *Keepers of the Flame* (chapters 5-8)

* * * Essay exam #2 distributed 11/18 – due 11/25

**PRESENTATIONS**

Week 13 (11/25)    Research project/paper consultations with professor  
  • In class meetings with Professor about research projects

* * * November 27: NO CLASS THANKSGIVING BREAK * * *

Week 14 (12/2 & 4)    Present project papers (workshop format)  
  -- 12/4 virtual class TBA: professor will be attending the American Anthropological Association annual meetings

Week 15 (12/9 & 11)    Present project papers (workshop format)

*RESEARCH PAPERS DUE: 12/13 in D2L dropbox by midnight (11:59pm)*