INTRODUCTION TO HUMAN RIGHTS
CulAnth 104D/ICS113D/PubPol162D-01

Tuesdays: 1:25-2:40, Friedl 107
Thursdays: 1:25-2:40
  Section One: Friedl 107
  Section Two: Friedl 126

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OVERVIEW

“Where, after all, do universal human rights begin? In small places, close to home - so close
and so small that they cannot be seen on any maps of the world. Yet they are the world of the
individual person; the neighborhood he lives in; the school or college he attends; the
factory, farm, or office where he works. Such are the places where every man, woman, and
child seeks equal justice, equal opportunity, equal dignity without discrimination. Unless
these rights have meaning there, they have little meaning anywhere. Without concerted
citizen action to uphold them close to home, we shall look in vain for progress in the larger
world.”

Eleanor Roosevelt

This course introduces students to human rights and is the required Gateway for the Human
Rights Certificate. The course has three purposes: to define and explore the terms, histories and
theories of human rights; examine alternative or competing definitions of rights; and apply
human rights thinking to local and international issues using a case-based approach. The class
includes lectures, discussion, special events and guest lectures.

The first class of the week is taught on a specific concept of rights. The week’s second class
either invites deeper discussion in sections or features a guest speaker or event. The course uses
our own community of Durham and North Carolina as a case example where appropriate.
Students are evaluated through attendance and participation, reading notes, quizzes, a midterm
paper, participation in special events and a final 800-word opinion piece a central rights concept
or dilemma.

Far from a settled or self-evident body of norms, human rights presents a changing, complex, and
often contentious field of human beliefs and practices. It’s likely – in fact, inevitable – that we as
a class will disagree. The instructors expect all students to engage respectfully in debate and with
a commitment to listen carefully to other points of view.
Due to the subject matter, some of the materials we will read, view and discuss are of a violent or graphic nature. Students very sensitive to graphic descriptions and images need to consider this before enrolling. Please speak to the instructor if you have specific concerns.

REQUIREMENTS

Required books (also on reserve at Perkins Library)


I strongly suggest that you follow one or more human rights social media outlets. As we inaugurate a new administration, human rights are likely to be in the news on a daily – indeed hourly – basis. These feeds may greatly enrich your understanding of the historical moments and figures we’ll be discussing in class as well as current human rights debates. I created an easy Twitter list – by no means exhaustive – to subscribe to here: https://twitter.com/RobinKirk/lists/human-rights.

READINGS

Individual readings are available through Internet links or as .pdf files under Resources on Sakai. The required books and films are on reserve at Lilly Library. Students are expected to view the films outside of class and include comments on them in your reading notes.

GRADING

Attendance and outside events (20 percent)

Attendance is a crucial part of this class and is mandatory. We will be using readings as a basis for knowledge and fodder for discussion. There is no way to replicate that experience without being present in class. Students are required to attend a minimum of 3 (three) outside events during the semester. These events are featured on the Duke Human Rights Center@FHI events site here: http://humanrights.fhi.duke.edu/events/. I will take attendance at events. After the event, students should post a brief (150 word) reaction to the event under the corresponding Forum title for full credit. If you attend more than 3 events, you will receive extra credit for the class equivalent to a point on a quiz.
Reading notes (20 percent)

Reading notes should be completed prior to the corresponding week of assignments and are due the Sunday before class by midnight. Please make sure to mention all of the assignments for the week in your notes. It is best to discuss the assignments in the order that they appear in the syllabus, making sure to mention each one. The notes should be no more than 400 words long. Reading deeply in advance of class is necessary for a good grade. If you do not understand a word or reference, it’s your responsibility to look it up.

Notes should demonstrate that you have read and engaged with the assignments and have an opinion about them. Refer to the key points of the assignments and put them into relationship with the rights theme of the class. Please also read the notes of your fellow students and comments by instructors; and refer to them if relevant, of course in your own words.

Each student may miss one week’s worth of reading notes without penalty, but no late notes will be accepted. If you must miss a class, please make sure your notes are posted before the Sunday deadline. For grading, we've divided the semester into two parts, each worth half of this grade.

Make sure to follow up in class on the points you've made in your notes and engage in the discussion. Speaking up in class is essential to a good grade. If you need tips on how best to speak up in class, please talk to Jake or Robin during office hours about strategies to accomplish this effectively.

Quizzes (20 percent)

There will be 2 quizzes during the semester. These are designed to ensure that you develop knowledge of the key terms, debates, figures and documents related to human rights.

Mid term (20 percent)

Students are required to prepare a 1,000-word paper addressing one of three questions. The assignment is posted under “Assignment” on Sakai. Midterm papers are due by 5 pm on Dropbox on March 9.

Final (20 percent)

The final is a 800-word opinion piece addressing a contemporary human rights issue. Students are required to meet with either Robin or Jake during office hours to discuss your draft after you've chosen your topic. The final is due April 30 by 5 pm.

NOTE: Please make sure papers are double-spaced in Times New Roman with 12-point font. All opeds should be spell and grammar-checked, with proper punctuation. Cite your sources, including class readings, using Chicago style. The Purdue Online Writing Lab has an excellent summary of what this means.
Content is important, but so is creativity, attention to detail, spelling and grammar, a cogent, well-designed argument and command of the subject. Oped should demonstrate a knowledge that deepens the discussions we’ve had in class as well as a reasonable course of action.

Late submissions are reduced by half a grade for each 6 hour period beyond the due date and time. We encourage all students to use the Writing Studio to improve your written work.

SCHEDULE

**WEEK 1 (January 12): Welcome**

Introduction to class, schedule and events

**WEEK 2**

**January 17: History of Human Rights**


Please review the following human rights instruments prior to class. Pay special attention to differences in language between these documents and the US Bill of Rights, the French Declaration on the Rights of Man and the English Bill of Rights mentioned in Ishay.

- Universal Declaration of Human Rights
- International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights
- Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW)
- Glossary of Human Rights terms

**January 19: discussion groups**

QUESTIONS: The Universal Declaration makes the case that all people have equal rights and all people should enjoy rights equally. But are we all equal in our need for rights? Do certain groups like women (or children, indigenous people, the disabled) have special rights? Does this take away from the concept of universal rights?

**WEEK 3**

**January 24: Who is Human?**

Hochschild, Adam, *Bury the Chains*, Introduction, Chaps 8, 9, 13


**January 26: The Laws of War and Refugees**


**Refugee Convention**

**WEEK 4**

**January 31: Catherine Flowers visit**


Flowers is the founder of the Alabama Center for Rural Enterprise Community Development Corporation (ACRE), which seeks to address the root causes of poverty by seeking sustainable solutions. She also serves as the Rural Development Manager for the Equal Justice Initiative serving the citizens of Lowndes County, one of the 10 poorest counties in Alabama’s Black Belt. Flowers has been able to bring significant resources to address its many environmental and social injustices. Specifically, her work at ACRE addresses the lack of sewage disposal infrastructure in Alabama’s rural Black Belt, the legacy of racism and neglect stretching back to the time of slavery. Ms. Flowers is also an internationally recognized advocate for the human right to water and sanitation and works to make the UN Sustainable Development Agenda accountable to front-line communities.

**February 2: Ellen Andrews, Church World Service**

Andrews has been the Director of the CWS Durham Office since December 2014. Ellen began working with refugees at CWS in 2009; first as an Employment Specialist, and
then as the Employment Services Coordinator, managing our refugee employment programs. In her current role as office Director, Ellen manages the overall and daily operations of the Reception & Placement, Matching Grant, Preferred Communities, RAP, TAGD and Immigration Services programs at the Durham office and provides leadership and supervision to direct services staff. Ellen holds a BA in Psychology with a minor in Biology from UNC-Chapel Hill.

WEEK 5

February 7: The Cold War: Human Rights in Latin America


Grandin, Greg, ”The most important place in the World: Toward a new Imperialism,” from Empire’s Workshop, pp. 52-86.

The Case Against Pinochet, ” National Security Archives. Please browse this extensive archive and pick one document you find interesting to talk about in class.

FILM: DEATH SQUADRONS: THE FRENCH SCHOOL (Lilly 4174) reveals that French veterans of the wars in Indochina and Algeria provided the inspiration, the training, and some of the intelligence that allowed Latin America's dictators to torture and kill thousands of their own citizens. Filmmaker Marie-Monique Robin traces the development of the theory of counter-revolutionary warfare, first tested Indochina and in Algiers (where 20,000 civilians died).

February 9: discussion groups

QUESTIONS: International institutions like the United Nations, European Union, the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) and the World Bank were created in part to uphold norms like the ones contained in human rights treaties. What is the responsibility countries have to stand up for human rights in other countries? Should countries that fund or impose violations be held accountable? How do we weigh advances in economic, social and cultural rights with violations of civil and political rights and vice versa?

WEEK 6

February 14: Holocaust and Genocide


BBC interview with Bernhard Schlink on World Book Club


Convention on the prevention and punishment of the crime of Genocide
THE READER (Lilly 14596): Nearly a decade after his affair with an older woman came to a mysterious end, law student Michael Berg re-encounters his former lover as she defends herself in a war-crime trial. The film raises questions about what responsibility following generations have to learn about and rectify the past.

February 16: discussion groups

QUESTIONS: Discuss the way that The Reader novel and film explore the role of guilt and the second generation. Does this contain lessons for societies other than Germany? Pick out a scene that you think reflects some of the discussions we are having in class. How do the book and movie differ? How does this reflect artistic choices made by the writer or the director?

WEEK 7

February 21: A World Made New


February 23: visit to The Nasher Art Museum to view part of the collection related to human rights. Meet at the museum lobby at 1:20 pm.

WEEK 8

February 28: SYRIA and the challenge of soft vs hard power


March 2: QUIZ 1 and Rights Trivia: This game will use terms, historical figures and dates included in the readings. The winning team gets a special prize!

WEEK 9

March 7: The Death Penalty


THE TRIALS OF DARRYL HUNT (LILLY 1003): This award-winning documentary investigates a brutal rape/murder case and a wrongly convicted man, Darryl Hunt, imprisoned nearly 20 years for a crime he did not commit. At once a social justice story, a decades-long courtroom drama, and a personally driven narrative, the film follows this capital case from 1984 through 2004 through exclusive footage from two decades, the film frames the judicial and emotional response to a chilling crime - and the implications that reverberated from Hunt's conviction - against a backdrop of class and racial bias in the South and in the American criminal justice system.

March 9: Shelagh Kenney, lawyer, Center for Death Penalty Litigation (CDPL)

Kenney has been a staff attorney at CDPL since 2001. In 2005, she served as the legal director of the ACLU of NC. Prior to joining CDPL, Kenney clerked for the Hon. Aleta Trauger in the U.S. District Court for the Middle District of Tennessee. She also clerked for the Hon. Napoleon Jones, Jr., then a federal district court judge for the Southern District of California. Between college and law school, Kenney was a teacher in south central Los Angeles through Teach for America. She also worked for Public Counsel, a nonprofit legal organization in Los Angeles.

MID TERM DUE by 5 pm on MARCH 9

WEEK 10

March 21: Civil Rights and Human Rights

Rev. Martin Luther King, Jr., “Letter From Birmingham City Jail, April 16, 1963.”


March 23: CIVIL RIGHTS scavenger hunt: We will be meeting at 1 25 pm at the entrance of the Carolina Theater for a walking tour of Durham’s civil rights history. The tour will last 90 minutes. For directions, please consult the theater web site at Carolina Theater. Attendance is mandatory.

WEEK 11

March 28: Israel and the Occupied Territories

MERIP primer on the conflict


**March 30: Sa’ed Atshan**

Atshan is an anthropologist and professor of Middle Eastern Studies at Swarthmore. In addition to his work on humanitarian politics and aid intervention, Atshan has conducted research into nonviolent Israeli and Palestinian social movements, countering old characterizations of nonviolence as foreign to the region. Instead he discovers and reveals “co-resistance” or coalition and joint struggles for social justice between Israeli and Palestinian activists. Atshan has worked with a range of organizations that include Human Rights Watch, the American Civil Liberties Union, the UN High Commissioner for Refugees, Seeds of Peace International Camp, the Palestinian Negotiations Affairs Department, and Medical Aid for Palestinians, all indicating his commitment to the practical pursuit of peace and justice to which our field aspires.

**WEEK 12**

**April 4: Justice, Truth and Reconciliation**


[**Rome Statute of the ICC**](#)

[**Global Issues: The International Criminal Court and the Pinochet case**](#)

**DEATH AND THE MAIDEN (Lilly 3617):** Fifteen years ago, Paulina Escobar had her life shattered when she was taken prisoner and tortured by a sadistic doctor. Now, through a chance encounter, she may have found the man responsible for her nightmares and tonight he’s going to pay. But how far will she go to get even? And how can she be sure, after so many years, that she has found the right man?

**April 6: Oped workshop: Please bring a draft of your oped printed out to class. We will break into groups to work on them**
WEEK 13

April 11: The torture debate


Human Rights First, Primetime Torture Project


Convention against torture

April 13: Visit by Alison Jones, Duke News, on how to write an oped

How to write an oped

WEEK 14

April 18: Gendered rights

David Boies and Ted Olsen, San Francisco Commonwealth Club: the case for gay marriage

A biased ruling on gay marriage in California, Tim Wildmon, Los Angeles Times, August 13, 2010 (oped)


April 20

QUESTIONS: Human Rights Jeopardy Part Deux and Quiz 2

WEEK 15 (April 25): A debate over human rights
