

Human Rights

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The Human Rights Program at the University of Chicago integrates the exploration of the core questions of human dignity with a critical examination of the institutions designed to promote and protect human rights in the contemporary world. It is an initiative unique among its peers for the interdisciplinary focus its faculty and students bring to bear on these essential matters. The Human Rights curriculum includes a core sequence and an array of elective courses that examine human rights from a variety of disciplinary, thematic, and regional perspectives. The Human Rights Internship Program provides fellowships to students for practical experiences at host organizations in the United States and around the world. Through conferences, workshops, lectures, and film series, the program brings the world to the campus, incorporating the broader community into its educational mission.

Students wishing to pursue a systematic introduction to the study of human rights are encouraged to take the core sequence in Human Rights (Human Rights I: Philosophical Foundations of Human Rights; Human Rights II: History and Theory; and Human Rights III: Contemporary Issues in Human Rights). Additional courses provide an in-depth study of various human rights issues from a number of different theoretical perspectives.

Students interested in human rights are also encouraged to attend the Human Rights Workshop. The workshop provides a forum for the ongoing human rights research of faculty and graduate students in a variety of disciplines. Prominent human rights activists, theorists, artists, and faculty from other universities are among the guest speakers at workshops. Offered every quarter, workshop sessions are open to faculty, students, and the public.

The Human Rights Internship Program offers University of Chicago students the opportunity to learn the skills and understand the challenges inherent in putting human rights into practice. The internship program is unique in its flexibility, awarding grants that afford all interns the freedom to explore their interests, whether thematic or regional in focus. The program places more than thirty students each summer with nongovernmental organizations, governmental agencies, and international human rights bodies around the world. The application deadline is in Autumn Quarter. More information is available on the program Web site at humanrights.uchicago.edu.

Faculty

B. Akinrinade, A. Boden, J. Cattellino, E. Chandler, J. Chandler, M. Carneiro da Cunha, B. Cormack, N. Field, M. E. Geyer, S. Gzesh, J. Hoffman, J. Kelly, E. Kouri, M. Makinen, W. Novak, M. Nussbaum, M. Postone, J. Saville, S. Sassen, R. Shweder, E. Slauter, J. Sparrow, A. Stanley, T. Steck, G. Stone

NOTE: Lists of qualifying courses, which are prepared both annually and quarterly by the Human Rights Program, are available in P 124 and on the following Web site: humanrights.uchicago.edu.

Core Sequence: Human Rights (HMRT)

20100/30100. Human Rights I: Philosophical Foundations of Human Rights. (=HIST 29300/39300, INRE 31600, ISHU 28700/38700, LAWS 41200, MAPH 40000, PHIL 21700/31600) The aim of this course is to help students think philosophically (carefully, precisely, and somewhat abstractly) about human rights. We ask whether human rights has or needs philosophical foundations, what we need such foundations for, and where they might be found. We also ask some questions that tend to generate the search for philosophical foundations: Are human rights universal or merely the product of particular cultures? What kinds of rights (political, cultural, economic, negative, positive) are human rights? Can there be human rights without human duties? Without universal enforcement? Do the rights we enshrine as human mark only some of us (e.g., men) as human? *A. Laden. Spring.*

20200/30200. Human Rights II: History and Theory. (=HIST 29302/39302, INRE 39400, ISHU 28800/38800, LLSO 27100) This course is concerned with the theory and the historical evolution of the modern human rights regime. It discusses the emergence of a modern “human rights” culture as a product of the formation and expansion of the system of nation-states and the concurrent rise of value-driven social mobilizations. It juxtaposes these Western origins with competing non-Western systems of thought and practices on rights. The course proceeds to discuss human rights in two prevailing modalities. First, it explores rights as protection of the body and personhood and the modern, Western notion of individualism. Second, it inquires into rights as they affect groups (e.g., ethnicities and, potentially, transnational corporations) or states. *W. Novak. Winter.*

20300/30300. Human Rights III: Contemporary Issues in Human Rights. (=INRE 57900, ISHU 28900/38900, LAWS 57900, LLSO 27200, PATH 46500) For the U.S. public, the system of international human rights conventions and covenants is an unfamiliar language, despite acceptance around the globe. This course introduces the history and development of the international human rights regime. We present several specific contemporary human rights problems as a means to explore the interrelationship between international, regional, and national human rights conventions and laws, as well as the uses and limitations of various rights protection schemes. Topics may include U.S. civil rights versus

international human rights, the rights of migrants and refugees, torture and the death penalty, and security versus rights in the post-9/11 period. *S. Gzesh. Autumn.*

Courses: Human Rights (HMRT)

22100/32100. Accountability for Human Rights Violations. This course examines approaches taken by countries and the international community in dealing with past violations of human rights, as well as the process by which formerly repressive states transform themselves into societies based on democracy and the rule of law. We discuss the various means of establishing accountability and the obstacles to this process. While all these mechanisms pertain to violations of civil and political rights, we also explore the possibility of accountability processes for violations of economic, social, and cultural rights. *B. Akinrinade. Autumn.*

22200/32200. Human Rights in Africa. This course examines the state and practice of human rights in Africa. It reviews efforts aimed at the promotion and protection of human rights on the continent, in the context of colonialism, apartheid, and the authoritarianism of the post-colonial African State. It aims to develop awareness of the varying context of human rights violations in Africa, as well as efforts to promote human rights. Topics include human rights and armed conflict in Africa; the role of the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights; human rights and democracy; the new NEPAD initiative and prospects for greater human rights protection; economic, social, and cultural rights and cultural challenges to human rights in Africa; and human rights of women, children, and other vulnerable groups. This course situates Africa in the international human rights movement and enhances understanding of human rights laws, policies, and practices. *B. Akinrinade. Winter.*

22230/32230. State Collapse and State Reconstruction. This course examines the phenomenon of state failure and state collapse, looking at causes and consequences and related issues. We also study the prospects for state reconstruction in cases that have witnessed the total implosion of internal governance processes through the various state-building models that predominate in the literature. We also examine the possibility of predicting/anticipating collapse in particular countries and what could be done to prevent state failure by focusing on contemporary cases (e.g., Afghanistan, Somalia, Sierra Leone, Colombia). *B. Akinrinade. Spring.*

24501/34501. Human Rights in Mexico. *PQ: Reading knowledge of Spanish and at least one prior course on Latin American history or culture.* This course examines human rights in Mexico from the early twentieth century to the present. We begin with the notion of rights created in the post-revolutionary Constitution of 1917, through the consolidation of the relationship between the individual, sectors of society, and the state in the Cardenas period. The second half of the course focuses on two contemporary case studies. In the area of civil and political

rights, we examine the 1968 massacre of students in Mexico City. In the area of economic, social, and cultural rights, we examine either agrarian reform and right to land in west-central Mexico or the situation of indigenous peoples in southern Mexico. *S. Gzesh. Winter.*

24701/34701. Human Rights: Alien and Citizen. (=LACS 25303/35303, LAWS 62401) This course addresses how international human rights doctrines, conventions, and mechanisms can be used to understand the situation of the “alien” (or foreigner) who has left his or her country of origin to work, seek safe haven, or simply reside in another country. How native or resident populations and governments respond to new arrivals has varied tremendously in the past and present. In some situations, humanitarian impulses or political interests have dictated a warm welcome and full acceptance into the national community. In other cases, alien populations have become targets of suspicion and repression. In some extreme cases, states have “denationalized” resident populations who previously enjoyed national citizenship. *S. Gzesh. Spring.*

24911. Global Environmental Politics. (=ENST 24901, PBPL 24301) We examine the ways in which international society responds to global environmental problems. The aim is to develop a broad understanding of global environmental politics over the past three decades and provide tools for the analysis of complex environmental issues. The course reviews the history of international environmental cooperation and key theoretical frameworks as well as identifies the roles, interests, and behaviors of political actors. We apply these ideas to a variety of contemporary environmental debates related to trade, conservation, pollution, security, biotechnology, and climate change under the rubric of “global sustainable development.” *S. Pieck. Spring.*

25400. Hiroshima, Nagasaki, and Beyond (=EALC 27605, JAPN 27305) *Knowledge of Japanese not required.* This course considers the history of Hiroshima and Nagasaki through literature, film, photo essays, and nonfiction writing. We grapple with the shifting understanding of the bomb and continued nuclear testing both within and without Japan during the cold war and beyond. We also study what many consider the current and ongoing form of nuclear war in the deployment of depleted uranium. *N. Field. Spring.*

28801. Terror, Religion, and Aesthetics. (=BPRO 28000, ISHU 28201, RLST 23401) *PQ: Third- or fourth-year standing.* Through our contemporary experiences of terrorist acts, we apprehend the no-citizens’ land of life without a social contract, of the violent “state of nature” among people. In varied genres (e.g., poems, plays, novels, memoirs, essays), we engage with the transformative powers of diverse aesthetics (e.g., catharsis, the sublime, theatre of cruelty, realism, fable, satire) and of religious faiths (e.g., deism, Hinduism, Judaism, Islam, Sufism, Buddhism) to counteract terror and redeploy our civil status in society. *A. Boden, M. Browning. Autumn.*