

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 website at humanrights.uchicago.edu.

Minor Program in Human Rights

Students in other fields of study may also complete a minor in human rights.

The minor program in Human Rights is an interdisciplinary plan of study that provides students the opportunity to become familiar with theoretical, historical, and comparative perspectives on human rights. The flexibility of this course of study complements majors in any of the disciplines. A minor in Human Rights will provide a background for graduate study in an appropriate discipline where scholarship can focus on human rights or for careers that incorporate human rights advocacy (e.g., journalism, filmmaking, the practice of law or medicine, teaching, policy analysis, service in government or intergovernmental entities).

The minor requires five courses. At least two of the courses must be selected from the three Human Rights core courses (HMRT 20100, 20200, 20300). The remaining courses can be selected from among the Human Rights core and approved upper-level Human Rights courses.

Students must receive the program adviser's approval of the minor program on a form obtained from their College adviser. This form must then be returned to their College adviser by the end of Spring Quarter of their third year. (The deadline for students graduating in June or August of 2009 is Friday of first week of Spring Quarter of 2009.)

Courses in the minor program may not be (1) double counted with the student's major(s) or with other minors or (2) counted toward general education requirements. Courses in the minor must be taken for quality grades, and more than half of the requirements for the minor must be met by registering for courses bearing University of Chicago course numbers.

Faculty

M. Bradley, D. Brudney, M. Carneiro da Cuna, J. Chandler, J. L. Comaroff, B. Cormack, J. Dailey, R. Dixon, N. Fields, M. Fred, M. E. Geyer, T. Ginsburg, R. Gutierrez, S. Gzesh, J. Hoffman, J. Kelly, E. Kouri, M. Makinen, W. Novak, M. Nussbaum, M. Postone, J. Saville, J. Schumann, E. Slauter, J. Sparrow, A. Stanley, C. Stansell, G. Stone, N. Vaisman

NOTE: Lists of qualifying courses are prepared both annually and quarterly by the Human Rights Program. For up-to-date information, visit Room 207 at 5720 South Woodlawn Avenue or *humanrights.uchicago.edu*.

Core Sequence: Human Rights (HMRT)

20100/30100. Human Rights I: Philosophical Foundations of Human Rights. (=HIST 29301/39301, INRE 31600, ISHU 28700/38700, LAWS 41200, LLSO 25100, MAPH 40000, PHIL 21700/31600) The aim of this course is to help students think philosophically 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 (e.g., 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? *Autumn.*

20200/30200. Human Rights II: History and Theory. (=HIST 29302/39302, INRE 31700, ISHU 28800/38800, LAWS 41301, 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. *M. Geyer. Winter.*

20300/30300. Human Rights III: Contemporary Issues in Human Rights. (=HIST 29303/39303, INRE 31800, ISHU 28900/38900, LAWS 78201, LLSO 27200) For U.S. students, the study of international human rights is becoming increasingly important, as interest grows regarding questions of justice around the globe. This interdisciplinary course presents a practitioner’s overview of several major contemporary human rights problems as a means to explore the utility of human rights norms and mechanisms, as well as the advocacy roles of civil society organizations, legal and medical professionals, traditional and new media, and social movements. Topics may include the prohibition against torture, problems of universalism versus cultural relativism, and the human right to health. *S. Gzesh. Spring.*

Courses: Human Rights (HMRT)

24501/34501. Human Rights in Mexico. (=LACS 24501/34501, LAWS 62411, HIST 29408/39408) *PQ: Reading knowledge of Spanish and at least one prior course on Latin American history or culture.* This course examines human rights in Mexico in the contemporary period. We begin with an exploration of the religious and secular sources of Mexican concepts of human rights. We also explore the contemporary human rights movement through civil society responses to the 1968 massacre of students at Tlatelolco and the 1985 Mexico City earthquake. The second half of the course focuses on contemporary case studies, which may include labor rights, the rights of women and indigenous people, and issues of accountability and impunity. Readings are largely drawn from Mexican sources. *S. Gzesh. Not offered 2009–10; will be offered 2010–11.*

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. If human rights are universal,

human rights are not lost merely by crossing a border. We use an interdisciplinary approach to study concepts of citizenship and statelessness, as well as the human rights of refugees and migratory workers. *S. Gzesh. Winter.*

26200/36200. Human Rights: An Anthropological Perspective. (=ANTH 25215/35215) The course explores what human rights are and how they have been defined, argued with, and fought for in different parts of the world and in different historical epochs. Using an anthropological perspective, we interrogate the world of human rights discourse and practice. Ethnographic accounts and case studies will serve to illustrate the complexities of the fight for human rights. The course is built on three modules: the first looks at how human rights have been defined over the years; the second looks at how these human rights have been fought for in different social and cultural contexts; and the third looks at the different mechanisms of reparation and redress that have developed in the aftermath of mass violation of human rights. *N. Vaisman. Autumn.*

26300/36300. Practices of Othering and the Logic of Human Rights Violations: Race, Eugenics, and Crowds. (=ANTH 25220/35220, CHDV 26301, CRPC 26200/36200, HIST 25006/35006) How are mass violations of human rights thought up? What scientific theories and political doctrines have been invented and implemented to justify genocide and mass incarceration? These questions serve as our starting point for the course where through an exploration of different political ideologies and scientific theories we learn how human rights violations were reasoned and justified. Readings of both primary and secondary sources in the first part of the course present theories and ideologies that have informed and set the ground for human rights violations. In the second part of the course we focus on the aftermath of genocide and killing and ask how individuals and groups explain their participation in these acts. *N. Vaisman. Winter.*

26400/36400. What Is a Human? The New Sciences, the Nature/Culture Divide, and Human Rights. (=ANTH 25225/35225) In what ways and to what extent have new technologies, such as assisted fertilization, surrogacy, and cloning, refashioned our basic social and biological categories? How has the internet changed the way we understand ourselves as humans? How does this new knowledge, and its elaborate technological apparatus, inform and complicate our understanding of human rights? These questions are at the core of our explorations in this course. By reading (mostly) ethnographic accounts of new scientific technologies and of knowledge production processes we challenge essentialist ideas about nature, culture, and the human. Using this critical lens, we then explore how these new ways of understanding the world and ourselves challenge current human rights discourse and practice. *N. Vaisman. Spring.*

29001/39001. The Practice of Human Rights. *PQ: Completion of Human Rights Program internship or equivalent experience in a rights-focused advocacy organization and consent of instructor.* The seminar uses an interdisciplinary approach to give students a variety of conceptual frameworks to integrate their field experience into their academic program. Course material focuses on two major aspects of the internship experience: analysis of the work of “social change” organizations

and an evaluation of the student's personal experience. The first half of the course is dedicated to readings and discussion. Students then give presentations that are subject to group critique and discussion. *S. Gzesb. Autumn.*

25210/35210. Anthropology of Disability. (=ANTH 20405/30405, CHDV 30405, MAPS 36900, SOSC 39000) *PQ: Third- or fourth-year standing.* This seminar undertakes to explore "disability" from an anthropological perspective that recognizes it as a socially constructed concept with implications for our understanding of fundamental issues about culture, society, and individual differences. We explore a wide range of theoretical, legal, ethical, and policy issues as they relate to the experiences of persons with disabilities, their families, and advocates. The final project is a presentation on the fieldwork. *M. Fred. Autumn.*

25400. Hiroshima, Nagasaki, and Beyond. (=EALC 27605) *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 to the present. We also study what many consider the current and ongoing form of nuclear war in the widespread deployment of depleted uranium in war zones and military bases. We compare nuclear bombing with other forms of bombing, on the one hand, and with its putative peaceful use as a source of energy. *N. Field. Spring.*

27300. Overcoming Torture: Past and Present. (=HIST 29507, LLSO 28012) The abolition of torture, as well as of cruel and inhuman punishment, is one of the key standards of achievement of the modern era. This discussion course begins with the fact that torture is a remarkably persistent reality in order to explore how, in different times and places, it was contained and how it was overcome (if only temporarily). Classic European cases feature in the first part of discussion. Human rights and humanitarian campaigns against torture in the second half of the twentieth century are discussed in the second part. The United States, past and present, is the focus of the third part. *M. Geyer. Autumn.*