

DRAFT

*In the whole world no poor devil is lynched, no wretch is tortured,
in whom I am not degraded and murdered ... Aimé Césaire*

*For to be free is not to cast off one's chains, but to live in a way that respects
and enhances the freedom of others ... Nelson Mandela*



The Politics of Human Rights (PS 399), Summer 2017, M,T,W,R
Instructor: Farhad Malekafzali, Ph.D., malekafz@uoregon.edu

Description:

This course will use case studies ranging from the Armenian genocide to the War on Terror to explore the meaning, basis, roots, and practical significance of human rights. Special attention will be paid to questions of the universality of human rights and the importance of political and economic context for understanding the reasons for persistence of human rights violations.

Readings:

Richard Goldstone and Adam Smith, International Justice Pursuit, 2015
Roy Gutman, et.al. Crimes of War, 2008

Grading Criteria:

Examinations: Two essay examinations are noncumulative. Each will have six questions. You will answer four. Three questions will be based on class material and three based on the readings. (1/3rd of course grade each)

Thresholds: Below 60%= F, 60% and up= D- to D+, 70% and up= C- to C+, 80% and up= B- to B+, and 90% and up= A.

Improvements during the course of the semester will be taken into account if you are on the borderline.

Makeup:

Make-up exams will be granted only under extreme circumstances, resulting from:
1) Documented family emergencies, 2) Documented travel associated with university obligations. 3) **Severe** illness or injury documented by the attending physician.

Rules:

- Punctuality is required.
- Use of laptops, cell phones, and other electronics are not allowed in class.
- Texting, or working on another project during lecture will not be tolerated.
- Students are responsible for completion of the assigned readings.
- There will be no extra-credit assignments, no extension of deadlines, and no “study guides.”
- Students are responsible for saving their mid-term.
- Grades are not subject to negotiation. In absence of a clerical error your grade is final.

Deadlines:

Mid-term:

Final:

I. Introduction (Week 1):

- Ideas and sources of human rights
- Evolution of international human and humanitarian law
- Significance of WWII

Readings:

Goldstone and Smith, Chapters 1 – 3

Gutman, et.al, pp. 23 – 26, 196 – 197, 245 – 251, 270 – 282, 284 – 293, 297 – 302, 349 – 351, 354 – 359, 392 – 394, 396 – 416

Film and Class Discussion: *Memory of the Camps*

II. International law, Violations of Human Rights, and the Importance of Economic Context (Weeks 1-2):

- Right to Self Determination and Imperial Interests:
 - Uprooting democracy: US intervention in Iran and Chile
 - US in Afghanistan and Nicaragua
 - Overturning the Palestinian Elections
 - Overthrowing democratic socialism: USSR in Eastern Europe
 - Supporting rightwing tyrants: USSR in Middle East
 - Arab Spring and the Syrian Civil War

Readings:

Goldstone and Smith, Chapter 4

Gutman, et.al pp. 165 -166

Mid-term: Thursday of Week 2

Weeks 3-4

- Corporate profits:
War profiteering: From World War II to War on Terror
Mass murder: Bhopal
Curse of the black gold: Niger Delta

Home viewing on line: BBC: A night in Bhopal; First part of Yes Men Change the World

- War crimes and crimes against humanity:
Rights and responsibilities of combatants
Rights of civilians
Aggressive war
The body count: US in Indochina
“Never again”: Genocide in Bosnia, and Rwanda
“This time we went too far”: Israel’s invasion of Gaza
Geneva Conventions do not apply: US in Afghanistan and Iraq

Readings:

Gutman, et.al pp. 28 – 38, 40 – 48, 103 –107, 115 –125, 135 – 156, 175 – 182, 208 –214, 216 – 230, 234 –244, 341 – 344, 352 –353, 360 – 364, 366 – 377, 378 – 391, 418 – 29

Neier, Chapters 8-10

Film and Class Discussion: *Triumph of Evil*

Home Viewing on line: *Vietnam: The American Holocaust*

- Military occupation
Responsibilities of the occupying state and rights of people under occupation
Occupied Palestinian Territories
US occupation of Iraq
US occupation of Afghanistan
- The War on Terror
Limiting Freedom of Speech
Scuttling Habeas Corpus
Torture and Cruel, Inhumane, and Degrading Treatment (CIDT)

Readings:

Gutman, et.al, pp. 49 – 54, 66 – 74, 107 – 109, 159 – 164, 167 – 170, 183 - 184, 186 – 195, 198 – 204, 260 – 268, 307 – 332, 338 – 340

Film and Class Discussion: *Iraq’s Secret Files* (Related questions are on Blackboard)

III. Investigating and Prosecuting Violations of Human Rights (Week4):

- Significance of Ad hoc Tribunals

International Criminal Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia
International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda

- International Criminal Court (ICC)
Need for a permanent criminal court
Creating ICC
Jurisdiction of ICC
Opposition to the Court
- UN Fact Finding Mission on Gaza Conflict
Findings
Recommendations
Implementation

Readings:

Goldstone and Smith, Chapters 5-7

Gutman, pp. 132 – 134

Neier, Chapters 10-11

Final: Thursday of Week 4