

# **POL 450: GLOBAL ISSUES OF HUMAN RIGHTS**

Spring 2014, Quad I  
TTh 12:30-2:10 am  
Dr. Rosco Williamson

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## **Course Reading – Required Texts**

- Jack Donnelly (2013), *Universal Human Rights in Theory and Practice*, 3<sup>rd</sup> ed. (Cornell University Press).
- Paul Farmer (2005), *Pathologies of Power: Health, Human Rights, and the New War on the Poor* (University of California Press).

## **Course Outcomes**

Although the idea that every government must respect “human rights” is relatively new, it is now an established feature of world society. To speak the language of international relations and diplomacy means using the vocabulary of human rights. However, this vocabulary is constantly changing and there is a constant struggle over the meaning and practice of these ideas. This makes this topic an extremely complex one of which we will merely scratch the surface in this course. Each student will:

(1) Gain a familiarity with the idea and practice of global human rights. The idea of “human rights” is often thrown out in public speeches and international diplomacy, but what exactly is meant by the term? This class will attempt to understand where human rights came from, how they are implemented, and the relevant ideas that surround them.

(2) Learn how to do research in the field of human rights. The issue of human rights is not one that can be avoided whether one is a diplomat, businessperson, or even a consumer. Thus, one of the objectives of this course is to give students the tools to be able to do independent research in the field when the course is completed.

(3) Do in-depth research in an aspect of human rights that interests you. This course will allow the student to look more closely at some aspect of human rights that will be relevant to the things he or she would like to be more involved in.

(4) Begin to think critically about the issues surrounding human rights. Each lecture is designed to search for an answer to some perplexing issue with respect to global human rights. One of the goals of each lecture is for each student to think critically about that issue and begin to formulate his or her own answer that is satisfying both intellectually and morally.

(5) Examine her or his place in the world. Questions about justice and morality should be central to a Christian education. In the field of international relations, that usually means beginning with the same questions generated by the human rights discourse. Thus, it is not enough to come up with some intellectual answers – we must also strive to come up with answers that we can then act on and live with. What exactly that means will be an important part of this course.

## **Course Grading**

The following is the breakdown of how the final grade will be determined:

35%	Final Exam
20%	Assignments
30%	Final Assignment
15%	Attendance and Participation

## **Final Exam**

The exam will be a take-home exam (we have no class time to spare). The terms and dates of the final exam will be determined by the class as a whole during the semester.

## **Make-ups**

NO MAKE-UP EXAMS WILL BE ALLOWED WITHOUT A UNIVERSITY-APPROVED EXCUSED ABSENCE OR DOCTOR'S WRITTEN PERMISSION. Any student receiving a university-approved excused absence should contact the professor BEFORE the absence to arrange a time to make-up the missed exam.

## **Attendance and Participation**

Participation will be 7% of your total grade. There aren't a lot of people in class, so no one can hide in the crowd. Participation is not measured in quantity but in quality. The student who talks all the time, but doesn't add very much to the discussion, will fare no better than the student who says nothing. Good participation means being prepared for class, demonstrating it, *and* joining in on class discussions.

Attendance will be 8% of your total grade. Of the 14 total class sessions:

<i>If you miss</i>	<i>0-1 class(es)</i>	<i>= you get the full 8%</i>
	2	= 6%
	3	= 4%
	4	= 2%
	5 or more	= 0% ( <i>and I have the choice to drop you</i> )

In terms of tardiness: the second time you are tardy my passive aggressiveness wears off and every tardy after it will count as an absence.

Finally, setting aside the punishments and threats associated with attendance and tardiness, the course is for your benefit. Absences not only can hurt your final grade, but they obstruct your education. One of the amazing things about education is you never know when some new idea is going to strike you and change the way you think about the world. So, take advantage of every opportunity that you have and immerse yourself in learning – even when you'd rather be asleep in your bed.

## **Assignments**

Every Tuesday (except the first Tuesday of the course), each student will review a journal article or a book chapter covering some aspect of human rights (the article should be at least 15 pages in length – if it's less, do additional articles that week). The review should include a brief summary of the main argument of the article, new information that you think may help you with the final assignment, and your opinion of the article and its arguments. It should be typed and between 2 and 3 pages, double-spaced.

Each student should choose some theme of human rights to devote to these assignments in order to gain a more thorough understanding of some area that most interests her or him. The final assignment will tie together the five reviews the student completed (and any other relevant required course readings) in order to make an argument about the theme itself. The final assignment should be between 6 and 8 pages long, typed and double-spaced.

Assignments are due at the start of Tuesday class. Late assignments will be accepted ***only*** on the following Thursday for a reduced grade. After that, no late assignments will be accepted. You may not receive these reviews back by the time of the final assignment, so be sure to hold on to a copy of the reviews you turn in.

1/21	Nothing	2/18	Review #4
1/28	Review #1	2/25	Review #5
2/4	Review #2	3/4	Final assignment due
2/11	Review #3		

# **GLOBAL HUMAN RIGHTS LECTURE SCHEDULE**

Copies for some readings will also be available on e-class. Most readings not found in the course texts can also be found at Ebsco or Lexis-Nexis, depending on the source. Go to the PLNU library's website under "Reference Databases." A few other readings are found on the Internet.

Readings should be completed *before* the class session for which they are listed.

## **PART I: A FRAMEWORK FOR GLOBAL HUMAN RIGHTS**

### **January 16: WHAT ARE "HUMAN" RIGHTS AND WHERE DO THEY COME FROM?**

- Donnelly, chs. 1-4 (pp. 1-45, 54-71) [skip the section on "Group Rights" in ch. 3]

### **January 21: ARE ECONOMIC, SOCIAL, AND CULTURAL RIGHTS HUMAN RIGHTS?**

- *Universal Declaration of Human Rights*
- Donnelly, ch. 14 (pp. 235-53)
- Paul Farmer (2005), *Pathologies of Power*, ch. 1 (pp. 29-50)
- "Righting Wrongs," *The Economist*, August 18-24, (2001): 18-20
- Jeb Bush (Dec. 19, 2011), "Capitalism and the Right to Rise," *Wall Street Journal op-ed*

### **January 23: DO HUMAN RIGHTS TRUMP SOVEREIGNTY?**

- Donnelly, ch. 11 (pp. 161-96)
- Zehra F Kabasakal Arat (2006), "Forging a Global Culture of Human Rights: Origins and Prospects of the International Bill of Rights," *Human Rights Quarterly* 28(2)
- JL Holzgrefe (2003), "The Humanitarian Intervention Debate," in JL Holzgrefe and Robert O Keohane, eds., *Humanitarian Intervention*: 36-49
- Michael Ignatieff (Feb. 5, 2002), "Is the Human Rights Era Ending," *New York Times op-ed*

### **January 28: ARE HUMAN RIGHTS UNIVERSAL (AND WHAT DOES THAT MEAN)?**

- Donnelly, chs. 5-7 (pp. 75-118)

### **January 30: DOES THE MOST POWERFUL STATE DEFINE "UNIVERSAL HUMAN RIGHTS?"**

- Donnelly, ch. 12 (pp. 197-213)
- Noam Chomsky (2008), "Humanitarian Imperialism: The New Doctrine of Imperial Right," *Monthly Review*

## **PART II: ROOT CAUSES OF HUMAN RIGHTS VIOLATIONS**

### **February 4: ARE MOST HUMAN RIGHTS VIOLATIONS SYSTEMIC OR INTENTIONAL?**

- Donnelly, ch. 13 (pp. 217-34)
- Thomas Pogge (2005), "World Poverty and Human Rights," *Ethics and International Affairs* 19(1): 1-7

### **February 6: WHEN AND WHY DOES ETHNIC VIOLENCE LEAD TO HUMAN RIGHTS VIOLATIONS?**

- Donnelly, ch. 3 (pp. 45-54)
- Samantha Power (2001), "Bystanders to Genocide," *Atlantic Monthly*
- Rene Lemarchand (2005), "Bearing Witness to Mass Murder," *African Studies Review* 48(3)

### **February 11: DO POWER ASYMMETRIES PLAY A ROLE IN HUMAN RIGHTS VIOLATIONS?**

- Donnelly, ch. 16 (pp. 274-92)
- Selmin Caliskan and Karen Griese (2006), "Women Fighting Violence in War-Torn Societies," *Development* 49(1)
- Aryeh Neier (1996-1997), "The New Double Standard," *Foreign Policy*

## **PART III: GLOBAL RESPONSES TO HUMAN RIGHTS VIOLATIONS**

### **February 13: HOW EFFECTIVE IS THE USE OF FORCE IN STOPPING HUMAN RIGHTS VIOLATIONS?**

- Donnelly, ch. 15 (pp. 254-73)
- Deborah M Weissman (2004), "The Human Rights Dilemma: The Humanitarian Project," *Columbia Human Rights Law Review* 35
- International Commission on Intervention and State Sovereignty (2001), *The Responsibility to Protect*: XI-XIII, 11-18

### **February 18: HOW EFFECTIVE IS LAW IN STOPPING HUMAN RIGHTS VIOLATIONS?**

- Anne-Marie Slaughter (2004), *A New World Order*, ch. 2
- "Notes on *Hamdi v Rumsfeld* and *Rasul v Bush*," *American Journal of International Law* 98
- Richard J Wilson (2006), "The Pinochet Effect: Transnational Justice in the Age of Human Rights," *Human Rights Quarterly* 28(2)
- "Prosecutor v Erdemovic," *American Journal of International Law* 92(2)
- "Prosecutor v Akayesu," *American Journal of International Law* 93(1)

### **February 20: WHAT OTHER RESPONSES CAN HELP PREVENT HUMAN RIGHTS VIOLATIONS?**

- Mary Kaldor (1999), "Bringing Peace and Human Rights Together"
- Thomas Risse and Kathryn Sikkink (1999), "The Socialization of International Human Rights Norms into Domestic Practices," in *The Power of Human Rights: International Norms and Domestic Change*: 1-3.

## **PART IV: A FEW CURRENT HUMAN RIGHTS ISSUES**

### **February 25: WHAT CAN/SHOULD BE DONE INSTITUTIONALLY IN POST-CONFLICT CONTEXTS?**

- George W Bush (2006), "Peace," *Vital Speeches of the Day* 72(25)
- Rachelle Marshall (2005), "US Effort to 'Spread Democracy' Leaves a Trail of Conflict and Suffering," *The Washington Report on Middle East Affairs* 24(4)
- Sapna Desai and Melissa J Perry (2004), "Tracking Gender-Based Human Rights Violations in Postwar Kosovo," *American Journal of Public Health* 94(8)
- Amy Pont (2006), "A Crisis in the Dark: The Forgotten Refugees," *UN Chronicle* 43(3)
- Christine Knudsen (2004), "Demobilization and Reintegration [of Child Soldiers] During an Ongoing Conflict," *Cornell International Law Journal* 37
- (2004), "Questions and Answers: Panel on the Problem of Re-Acclimating Child Soldiers into Society," *Cornell International Law Journal* 37
- Kathy Vandergrift (2004), "Challenges in Implementing and Enforcing Children's Rights," *Cornell International Law Journal* 37

### **February 27: IS THERE A "RESPONSIBILITY TO PROTECT?"**

- Readings TBA

### **March 4: IS THERE A UNIVERSAL HUMAN RIGHT TO HEALTH?**

- Paul Farmer (2005), *Pathologies of Power*, chs. 5 and 9 (pp. 139-59, 213-46 [plus skim/review pp. 1-50])

# Schedule of Topics – POL450 Human Rights

## **Part I: A Framework of Global Human Rights**

- What Are “Human” Rights and Where Do They Come From?
- Are Economic, Social, and Cultural Rights *Human Rights*?
- Do Human Rights Trump Sovereignty?
- Are Human Rights Universal?
- Does the Most Powerful State Define “Universal Human Rights?”

## **Part II: Root Causes of Human Rights Violations**

- Are Most Human Rights Violations Systemic or Intentional?
- When Does Ethnic Violence Lead to Human Rights Violations?
- What Role Do Power Asymmetries Play in Human Rights Violations?

## **Part III: Global Responses to Human Rights Violations**

- How Effective Is the Use of Force in Stopping Human Rights Violations?
- How Effective Is Law in Stopping Human Rights Violations?
- How Effective Are Other Responses in Stopping Human Rights Violations?

## **Part IV: Some Current Human Rights Issues**

- What Can/Should Be Done Institutionally in Post-Conflict Contexts?
- Is There a “Responsibility to Protect?”
- Is There a Universal Human Right to Health?