

HUMAN RIGHTS, POLS 332

Professor Fred Shepherd, Fall 2008

Office Hours: MW, 12-1:00, Th. 12-1:00, DBH 111, 726-2119, fmshephe@samford.edu

This course will explore the historical, political, cultural and religious evolution of human rights. Human rights will be defined, in this course, as the rights which each human being, upon birth, automatically enjoys, regardless of the race, religion, political system, or gender into which he or she is born. The course will begin with the historical, theoretical, and theological underpinnings of human rights, and how the concept was formalized by the United Nations in the late 1940s. It will then move to a broad assessment of the global political movement for human rights, followed by a focus on the rights of vulnerable individuals and the emergence of global civil society. It will conclude with a general assessment of current human rights conditions around the globe.

COURSE ASSIGNMENTS:

Each student will take an individual quiz for each assigned reading. I will provide a topic for one analytical paper, with due date noted in the course outline. There will be a comprehensive exam at the end of the semester. Every student will be required to complete the various stages of a research paper, including a brief initial presentation on a prospectus, an annotated bibliography, a second more lengthy presentation, and a final draft. All the due dates are noted in the course outline. Students will be expected, out of respect for their professor and fellow students, to attend class on a regular basis. I will not flunk any student solely for attendance reasons. But after two unexcused absences, students will begin to lose significant portions of their class participation grades, with forfeiture of the entire 10% coming at six unexcused absences.

The class will be divided into groups, which will become the basis for several types of work. Each group will work together to provide material for News Days. Each group will gather to take reading quizzes after individual quizzes have been completed. And each group will be called on to take part in structured class activities at various points in the semester. One quarter of the course grade will be a group grade, modified by formal, numerical peer evaluations, administered three times during the semester.

Samford University complies with Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act and the Americans with Disabilities Act. Students with disabilities who seek accommodations must make their requests by contacting Disability Support Services located in Counseling Services on the lower level of Pittman Hall, or call 726-4078 or 726-2105. I will grant accommodations only upon written notification from Disability Support Services.

Please consult your student handbook for University policy on plagiarism and cheating.

REQUIRED BOOKS:

Paul Gordon Lauren, The Evolution of International Human Rights, 2003

Mark Danner, The Massacre at El Mozote, 1993

Margaret Keck and Kathryn Sikkink, Activists Beyond Borders, 1998

Alison Brysk, Human Rights and Wrongs: Constructing Global Civil Society, 2005

Human Rights Watch, Human Rights Watch World Report, 2008

GRADE BREAKDOWN:

Individual Grade:		Group Grade (modified by peer evaluations)
One analytical paper	12%	Participation in Classroom Activities 15%
Reading Quizzes, 20 at 0.5% each	10%	Group Quizzes, 20 at 0.5% each 10%
Final exam	15%	
Class Participation	10%	
Research Paper Prospectus	3%	
Initial Research Presentation	3%	
Annotated Bibliography	5%	
Research Paper Presentation	5%	
Research Paper	12%	

COURSE OUTLINE:

Weeks 1-5

25 August: Introduction, Formation of Groups

27 August: Origins of Human Rights

Lauren, Introduction, Chapter 1

1 September: Labor Day

3 September: Early Human Rights Movements

Lauren, Chapter 2

8 September: Human Rights and the Early 20th Century

Lauren, Chapters 3 and 4

10 September: News Day, discussion of Research Projects

15 September: World War II and Its Aftermath

Lauren, Chapters 5 and 6

17 September: The Universal Declaration of Human Rights

Lauren, Chapter 7

First Half of Initial Student Presentations on Research Projects

Research Paper Prospectus Due 17 September

22 September: Bringing Meaning to the Universal Declaration

Lauren, Chapter 8

Second Half of Initial Student Presentations

24 September: Current and Future Prospects

Lauren, Chapters 9 and 10

Week 6: Understanding Human Rights Violations: A Case from Central America

29 September: The Massacre at El Mozote I

Danner, pp 3-61

Paper Due 29 September

1 October: The Massacre at El Mozote II

Danner, pp 62-162

Weeks 7 and 8: The Transnational Human Rights Network

6 October: Introduction

Keck and Sikkink, Preface, Chapter 1

8 October: Human Rights Networks in Latin America

Keck and Sikkink, Chapter 2

13 October: Networks for Women and the Environment

Keck and Sikkink, Chapters 4 and 5

15 October: Conclusions on Transnational Networks, News Day

Keck and Sikkink, Chapter 6

Weeks 9 and 10: Expanding the Human Rights Agenda: "Private Wrongs"

20 October: Fall Break

22 October: Introduction

Brysk, Chapters 1 and 2

27 October: Children, Money and Human Rights

Brysk, Chapters 3 and 4

29 October: Health and Medicine, Conclusions; News Day

Brysk, Chapters 5 and 6

Weeks 11 and 12: Student Research Presentations

3 November: Student Presentations, Day I

Annotated Bibliography due 3 November

5 November: Student Presentations, Day II

10 November: Student Presentations, Day III

Weeks 12-14: Current Human Rights Practice

12 November: Human Rights in Asia

Readings on appropriate sections in Human Rights Watch

17 November: Human Rights in Latin America

Readings on appropriate sections in Human Rights Watch

19 November: Human Rights in Europe

Readings on appropriate sections in Human Rights Watch

24 November: Human Rights Africa

Readings on appropriate sections in Human Rights Watch

Concluding Week on Human Rights in the United States

1 December: General Human Rights in the United States

Readings, Activities TBA

3 December: Challenges since 9/11/2001

Readings, Activities TBA

Research Paper Due 3 December

Final Examination, 1:00 Monday 8 September