

SYLLABUS

Human Rights Activism: History, Theory, and Practice
WAGS 32 / Political Science 24
Spring 2008

Amrita Basu
301 Cooper House
542-2306
Office hours: Wed. 3.30-5 in Converse 100

Martha Saxton
111 Chapin Hall
542-2241
Wed. 10am -12 pm

Description:

This course is intended to illuminate the challenges and satisfactions involved in the practice of human rights work as well as a critical sense of how the discourses calling it forth developed and continue to evolve. It will explore the charge, among others, that for all its claims to universalism, human rights discourses reflect the values of European Enlightenment traditions which are inimical to conceptions of rights and justice that are grounded in culture and religion. The semester will begin by exploring the historical growth of human rights doctrines in Europe and the United States, culminating in the emergence of the post-World War II Universal Declaration. We will then turn to the proliferation of these discourses through non-governmental organizations, many of them internationally based, and to expanding meanings of human rights, including new conceptions of women's human rights. We will analyze specific regional and cultural contexts in which human rights abuses of women and men have occurred, and will explore different traditions of activism in them. Throughout the course, we will present the views of rights' activists on the relationship between their work and formal human rights principles.

Course Requirements

The writing requirements for this course are two five to seven page papers, black board entries and a final take-home exam. We will distribute paper topics for the papers about a week in advance of the due dates. The first paper is due on Friday February 29th and the second paper is due on Tuesday March 25th. The final take home exam is due on May 12th.

We will only grant extensions for papers if requests are well founded and are submitted in writing at least four days in advance of the due date.

We expect you to attend class regularly and inform us by email if you miss a class.

Keeping up with and critically analyzing the readings are essential. To this end we would like you to contribute comments on the readings to the course blackboard. Each student will be responsible for contributing blackboard comments. You should make blackboard entries for the classes you've chosen by 8 pm on the day before the class (either Sunday or Wednesday). Your comments should provide a critical analysis of one of the themes that the readings for that session raise.

Several films will be discussed in class. Please be sure to view them via streaming before the class. The films are marked on the syllabus with an * on the day we will discuss them.

Evaluation

The final grade for this course will be based on the following criteria:

First paper: 25%
 Second paper: 25%
 Final Exam: 50%
 Blackboard entries, class participation: 25%

Course Materials

Required Books

Sally Merry, *Human Rights and Gender Violence*
 Available from Food For Thought Bookshop (106 North Pleasant St., Amherst)

Jean Quataeret, *The Gendering of Human Rights*
 Available from WAGS office (14 Grosvenor House)

Course Packet: Vols. I and II
 Available from WAGS office (14 Grosvenor House)

Course Schedule

Monday, Jan. 28 Introduction

I. The Debates

Wednesday, Jan. 30

Readings:

Michael Ignatieff, "The Attack on Human Rights" *Foreign Affairs*, 2001, Issue 6, November/December, pp. 102-116.

Martha C. Nussbaum, "Human Capabilities, Female Human Beings" in *Women, Culture, and Development*, pp. 61-104.

Monday, Feb. 4

Readings:

David Kennedy, "The International Human Rights Movement: Part of the Problem?" *Harvard Human Rights J.*, 2002, pp. 101-125.

Talal Asad, "What Do Human Rights Do? An Anthropological Enquiry" *Theory and Event*, 2000 4:4, pp. 1-28.

Richard Falk, "Interpreting the Interaction of Global Markets and Human Rights", *Globalization and Human Rights*, pp. 61-76.

Wednesday, Feb. 6

Readings:

David M. Smolin, "Will International Human Rights Be Used as a Tool of Cultural Genocide?"
Journal of Law and Religion, Vol. 12, No. 1. (1995-1996) pp. 143-171.

Will Kymlicka and Ruth Rubio Marín "Liberalism and Minority Rights: An interview"
Ratio Juris. Vol. 12 No. 2 June 1999, pp. 133-152.

Abdullahi Ahmed An-Na'im, "Toward a Cross-Cultural Approach to Defining International Standards of Human Rights",
Human Rights in Cross-Cultural Perspectives, 1995, pp. 19-43.

II. The History

Monday, Feb. 11

Readings:

Woodrow Wilson, "President Woodrow Wilson's Fourteen Points", *The Avalon Project at Yale Law School*, pp. 1-5.

Johannes Moresink, *The Universal Declaration of Human Rights, Origins, Drafting and Intent*, pp. Appendix, the Declaration.

Paul Kennedy, *The Parliament of Man: the Past, Present, and Future of the United Nations, 2006*, Chapter 1, pp. 3-47.

Paul Gordon Lauren, *The Evolution of International Human Rights*, Chapter 1, pp.4-36.

Wednesday, Feb. 13

Guest Lecturer:

Professor Yasmine Ergas, Law School, Columbia University

Reading:

Paul Gordon Lauren, "To Preserve and Build on its Achievements and to Redress its Shortcomings", *Human Rights Quarterly* 29 (2007), pp. 307-345.

Monday, Feb. 18th The Rise of NGOs and International Human Rights Organizing

Readings:

William Korey, "Human Rights NGOs: The Power of Persuasion," *Ethics and International Affairs*, pp. 151-174.

Patrick James Flood, *The Effectiveness of UN Human Rights Institutions*, pp. 1-29.

Kiyoteru Tsutsui and Christine Min Wotipka, "Global Civil Society and the International Human Rights Movement...", *Social Forces*, December 2004, pp. 587-620.

Naomi Klein, *The Shock Doctrine*, pp. 118-128

Wednesday, Feb. 20th The Historiography of Human Rights

Readings:

Reza Afshari, "On Historiography of Human Rights, Reflections on Paul Gordon Lauren's *The Evolution of International Human Rights: Visions Seen*" *Human Rights Quarterly* Vol. 29 No. 1, February 2007, pp. 1-67.

Jean Quataeret, *The Gendering of Human Rights*

Monday, Feb 25th Translating Norms into Practice

Readings:

Thomas Risse and Kathryn Sikkink, "The Socialization of International Human Rights Norms into Domestic Practices:" *The Power of Human Rights*, pp. 1-38.

Kenneth Roth, "Defending Economic, Social and Cultural Rights", *Human Rights Quarterly* 26 (2004), pp. 63-73.

Wednesday, Feb. 27th Human Rights and Armed Conflict

Readings:

Radhika Coomaraswamy, "The Protection of Women and Children During Armed Conflict: Whose Responsibility?" *The 2007 Chancellor's Human Rights Lecture, December 13, 2007, The University of Melbourne*

Miranda Alison, "Wartime Sexual Violence: Women's Human Rights and Questions of Masculinity", *Review of International Studies* (2007), pp. 75-90.

David M. Rosen, "Child Soldiers, International Humanitarian Law, and the Globalization of Childhood", *American Anthropologist*, Vol. 109, Issue 2, pp. 296-306.

III. The Different Contexts

Monday, March 3rd Latin America

Readings:

Carozza, "From Conquest to Constitutions", *Human Rights Quarterly* 25 (2003), pp. 281-313.

Margaret Popkin and Nehal Bhuta, "Latin American Amnesties in Comparative Perspective: Can the Past Be Buried?" *Ethics & International Affairs*, pp. 99-122.

Margaret E. Keck and Kathryn Sikkink, *Activists Beyond Borders*, chapter 3, pp. 79-120.

Wednesday, March 5th Africa

Readings:

Abdullahi A. An-Na'im and Jeffrey Hammond, "Cultural Transformations and Human Rights in African Societies", *Cultural Transformation and Human Rights in Africa*, Chapter One, pp.13-37.

Martin Chanock, "'Culture' and Human Rights: Orientalising, Occidentalising and Authenticity", *Beyond Rights Talk and Culture Talk*, pp.15-36.

Florence Bernault, "What Absence Is Made Of: Human Rights in Africa", *Human Rights and Revolutions*, pp.127-139.
"African [Banjul] Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights," adopted June 27, 1981, pp. 1-18.

Monday, March 10th The Middle East

Readings:

An-Na'im, "Human Rights in the Arab World: A Regional Perspective", *Human Rights Quarterly* 23 (2001), pp.701-732.

Louay Safi, "Towards an Islamic Tradition of Human Rights", *The American Journal of Islamic Social Sciences*, pp. 16-41.

Leila Ahmed, *Women and Gender in Islam*, Chapter 8, pp. 144-168

Wednesday, March 12

Visit by Professor Abdullahi An-Na'im, "Why Muslims Need a Secular State"

An-Na'im, *Islam and the Secular State: Negotiating the Future of Shari'a*, Chapter 1, pp. 1-42

Monday, March 24th Asia

Readings:

The Bangkok Declaration on Human Rights, Appendix B, pp.390-394.

Amartya Sen, "Human Rights and Asian Values", *The New Republic*, July 14-21 (1997), pp. 1-11

Kishori Madhubani, "Can Asians Think?"

Wednesday, March 26th Local Translations

Readings:

Sally Merry, *Human Rights and Gender Violence*, Chapter 1 and Conclusion

IV. The Issues

Monday, March 31st Gender, Health and Reproductive Rights

Readings:

Adetoun Ilumoka, "Advocacy for Women's Reproductive and Sexual Rights in Africa: Between the Devil and the Deep Blue Sea"

Paul Farmer and Nicole Gastineau Campos, "New Malaise: Bioethics and Human Rights in the Global Era",
Journal of Law, Medicine & Ethics, 32 (2004), pp. 243-251.

Nkiru Uwechia Nzegwu, *Family Matters*, pp.28-37 and 199-227

Wednesday, April 2nd Women's Human Rights

Readings:

Sally Merry, *Human Rights and Gender Violence*, Chapter 3

"Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination Against Women", pp.1-12.

Rajeshwari Sunder Rajan, "Women Between Community and State", *Social Text* 65, Vol.18, No.4

Monday, April 7th Women and Migration

* *Film, Senorita Extraviada: Missing Young Woman (ITVS 2001, 76 min.) viewing format TBD*

Readings:

"Mexico: Intolerable Killings..." *Amnesty International*

Sylvanna M. Falcon, "Rape as a Weapon of War: Militarized Rape at the U.S. -Mexico Border", *Women and Migration in the U.S.-Mexico Borderlands*

Kay Warren, "The 2000 UN Human Trafficking Protocol: Rights, Enforcement, Vulnerabilities",
The Practice of Human Rights, Ch. 6, pp. 242-269

Melissa W. Wright, "The Dialectics of Still Life: Murder, Women and Maquiladoras", *Women and Migration in the U.S.-Mexican Borderlands*

Corporate Rights and Human Rights in Africa

Wednesday, April 9

Guest Lecturer:

Professor Elliott Fratkin, "Oil in Africa"

Readings:

Michael Watts, "Human Rights, Violence and the Oil Complex"

"Nigeria: Are Human Rights in the Pipeline", Nov. 9, 2004 pp. 1-27, Amnesty International

Monday, April 14

Readings:

Human Rights Watch, "The Price of Oil," January 1999, Section V: The Environment, pp. 1-33, Section VIII: Protest and Repression in the Niger Delta, pp.1-25.

Brian Wright, "Non-governmental Organizations and Indifference as a Human Rights Issue: the case of the Nigerian Oil Embargo" *Journal of Human Rights*, Vol. I, No.2, 1 June 2002, pp.231-245.

Clifford Bob, "Globalization and the Social Construction of Human Rights Campaigns"
Globalization and Human Rights, pp. 133-147

Oga Steve Abah and Jenks Zakari Okwori, "A Nation in Search of Citizens: Problems of Citizenship in the Nigerian Context"

Wednesday, April 16 Transnational Struggles over Economic Rights

* *Film, Life and Debt (New Yorker Video 2001, 86 minutes) streaming: 4/01/08-end of finals*

Readings:

John G. Dale, "Transnational Legal Conflict Between Peasants and Corporations in Burma: Human Rights and Discursive Ambivalence Under the US Alien Tort Claims Act" in Mark Goodale and Sally Merry, *The Practice of Human Rights: Tracking Law Between the Global and the Local*

Deborah Spar, "The Spotlight and the Bottom Line", *Foreign Affairs*, March/April 1998

Monday April 21st Minority Rights in India

* *Film, Final Solution (ACT 2004, 149 minutes) streaming: 4/01/08-end of finals*

Rajeev Bhargava, Liberal, Secular Democracy and Explanations of Hindu Nationalism, "We Have No Orders to Save You" *Human Rights Watch*

Martha Nussbaum, "The Clash Within", Chapter 1, pp. 17-51.

Rwandan Genocide

Wednesday, April 23rd

* *Film, Sometimes in April (HBO Films 2005, 140 minutes) streaming: 4/08/08-end of finals*

Guest Lecturer:

Alison des Forges on Rwanda Genocide

Readings:

Alison des Forges, *Leave None Alive to Tell the Story*, pp. 1-27, 45-47, and 65-69

April 28th

Readings:

Filip Reyntjens, "Rwanda Ten Years On"

Monday, April 30th US Double Speak on Human Rights

Readings:

Juan Cole. "Double Standards, Human Rights and Democracy"

Mark Danner, *The Secret Road to Abu Ghraib*, pp. 26-49

Mark Benjamin, "Inside the CIA's Notorious 'Black Sites'"

Naomi Klein, *The Shock Doctrine*, pp. 25-46

Human Rights Activism At Home and Abroad

Monday, May 5th

* *Film, The Water Front (Red Lizard Media 2007, 53 minutes) streaming: 4/28/08-end of finals*

Readings:

Oscar Olivera, *Cochabamba*, pp. 7-23

Mehta, "Citizenship and the Right to Water"

Wednesday, May 7th

Readings:

Close To Home: Case Studies of Human Rights Work in the United States, pp.44-70

"Blood, Sweat, and Fear: Workers' Rights in US Meat and Poultry Plants" *Human Rights Watch*, January 2005, pp. 1-6

(Executive Summary), <http://hrw.org/reports/2005/usa0105>

Johannes Moresink, *The Universal Declaration of Human Rights*, pp. 168-190

Pratab Chatterjee, *Iraq, Inc.*, pp. 69-72