

Human Rights

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Web: humanrights.uchicago.edu

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.

Faculty

B. Akinrinade, J. Cattelino, J. Chandler, M. Carneiro da Cunha, B. Cormack, N. Field, M. E. Geyer, 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, T. Steck, G. Stone

NOTE: Lists of qualifying courses, which are prepared both annually and quarterly by the Human Rights Program, are available in P 118 and on the following website: 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 (carefully, precisely, and somewhat abstractly) 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 (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? *Spring*.

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, J. Sparrow. 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. Autumn*.

Courses: Human Rights (HMRT)

22100/32100. Accountability for Human Rights Violations. This course examines different approaches taken by countries and the international community in dealing with past serious violations of human rights, as well as the process by which formerly repressive States transform themselves into societies based on democracy and the rule of law. We examine the various means of establishing accountability including truth, reconciliation, and historical commissions; national, international and hybrid prosecutions of perpetrators of human rights abuse; reparation for victims of human rights violations; and “lustration” laws and institutional reforms. We consider the obstacles to this process, including political instability, amnesty laws, and the lack of engagement by the international community in particular country situations. Other topics include accountability for terrorism and terrorist acts and the war on terror; and accountability for historical injustices. *B. Akinrinade. Autumn.*

22200/32200. Human Rights in Africa. (=CRPC 20301) This course reviews efforts aimed at human rights promotion and protection, in the context of colonialism and neo-colonialism, apartheid, the authoritarianism of the post-colonial African State, and recent health challenges that threaten the welfare and dignity of individual Africans. Topics include the role of the *African Charter on Human and Peoples’ Rights*; human rights and democracy; the NEPAD initiative and prospects for greater human rights protection; economic, social, and cultural rights; the public health challenge; human rights of vulnerable groups; human rights and armed conflict in Africa; and challenges to and future prospects for human rights in Africa. *B. Akinrinade. Winter.*

22230/32230. State Collapse and State Reconstruction. This course examines the phenomenon of State failure and State collapse and the role of human rights violations in State implosion, and prospects for State reconstruction in cases total implosion of internal governance processes. We consider the causes and consequences of State collapse and related issues of anarchy, civil war, and the emergence of strong non-State actors that challenge the State monopoly of violence. We look at prospects for rebuilding a collapsed State, including the possibility of integrating respect for human rights and rule of law into the state-rebuilding process, and the various state-building models that predominate in the literature. We focus on contemporary cases of state failure and collapse, including Afghanistan, Somalia, Sierra Leone, and Colombia. *B. Akinrinade. Spring.*

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, including Fray Bartolome de las Casas, the influence of the Enlightenment on the Constitution of 1857, and the influence of anarchist, socialist, and peasant movements on the post-revolutionary Constitution of 1917. 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 and 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. Spring.*

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, women, men, and children do not lose their human rights merely by crossing a border. The course uses an interdisciplinary approach to study concepts of citizenship and statelessness, as well as the human rights of refugees and migratory workers. *S. Gzesh. Winter.*

25400. Hiroshima, Nagasaki, and Beyond. (=EALC 27605) For course description, see East Asian Languages and Civilizations. *N. Field. Spring, 2010.*

28502. Beginning after the End: Reconstruction in Post-Catastrophic Societies. (=HIST 28502) For course description, see History. *C. Stansell. Winter, 2009.*

28600. U.S. Labor History. (=ECON 18600, HIST 18600, LLSO 28000) For course description, see History. *A. Stanley. Spring, 2009.*