

**Georgia Institute of Technology**  
**Sam Nunn School of International Affairs**  
**Fall 2010**

**INTA 3031/8803 MF: Human Rights and International Relations**  
**Class Time: T, R 1:35-2:55 PM**  
**Classroom: Instructional Center 211**

**Instructor:**

Dr. Mikulas Fabry  
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Office hours: Thursday 3:15-4:15 PM, or by appointment

**Course Description:**

The central idea behind human rights in world politics is that human beings have rights 1) simply by virtue of being human, and that 2) their realization is not merely a concern of the countries in which they reside, but in some sense an international responsibility. The purpose of this course is to understand the premises and implications of this idea. It will address questions such as: Where do human rights come from and what particular entitlements do they consist of? Who has duties and responsibilities to guarantee the realization of human rights? What role do, and should, human rights play in the formulation of a country's foreign policy? To what extent are international human rights treaties and organizations effective? What conditions or activities generally help prevent human rights violations? Does increased awareness of foreign human rights violations, made possible by great technological strides, also mean increased concern about them? How do we reconcile conflicts among rights, as well as conflicts between the realization of rights and other goals?

The course has three core learning objectives:

1. To familiarize students with different ways of thinking about human rights
2. To explore various institutions that deal with human rights in international relations
3. To survey and examine some of the most important human rights issues in world politics

**Required Texts:**

David P. Forsythe, *Human Rights in International Relations*, 2nd ed. (Cambridge University Press, 2006).

Tim Dunne and Nicholas J. Wheeler (eds.), *Human Rights in Global Politics* (Cambridge University Press, 1999).

These books are available for purchase in the GT Barnes & Noble Bookstore and the Engineering Bookstore. They are also on reserve in the Main Library. Other readings will be available directly, or linked to particular online resources, on T-Square's course website (<https://t-square.gatech.edu/portal>) under "Resources". Resources using Microsoft Office software will use the 2007 version. It is the responsibility of students to ensure access to resources posted on T-Square. Should you experience technical difficulties, contact the Office of Information Technology (<http://www.oit.gatech.edu>) for help.

### **Course Evaluation for Undergraduate Students:**

Undergraduate students will be evaluated according to the following format:

- Two closed-book in-class exams, on September 28 and November 4 (worth 25% each)
- Final open-book take-home exam, handed out via e-mail on Monday, December 6 and due on Monday, December 13 at 2 PM in my mailbox in Habersham 129 (40%)
- Class participation (10%) + extra credit up to 5%

You must take both in-class exams, and hand in the final take-home exam, on their assigned dates and times, unless you can provide official documentation of illness or family emergency. In all your coursework, you must adhere to Georgia Tech's Honor Code ([www.honor.gatech.edu](http://www.honor.gatech.edu)). In-class exams can be appealed to the instructor within one week of their return. Students must attach to the exam a sheet containing their name, e-mail address, and a detailed explanation of why their grade should increase. The instructor reserves the right to re-grade the entire assignment (i.e. not just the appealed part) and to increase, affirm or decrease the originally assigned grade.

You are **required** to attend lectures and have the assigned readings completed **before** the lecture. Doing the assigned reading prior to each class is essential since class time will regularly feature discussion. You should also follow events in international relations by reading respectable news publications such as *The New York Times*, *The Washington Post*, *The Wall Street Journal* and *The Economist*.

Absence is excused only for **legitimate** reasons. In addition to being present every class, you are expected to participate actively. Although this is a relatively large class, we will have discussions in a variety of formats. Bring with you 3"x5" index cards to every class – I will regularly ask you to write brief discussion summaries or other written exercises and hand them to me at the end of the class. On some occasions, I will only take class attendance and will count it in the same way as written index-card exercises. Your participation grade will be determined by the ratio of the index card exercises you participated in (assuming that they show familiarity with the course material) to the total number of these exercises. If you participated in 90%-100% of the total number of exercises, your participation grade will be 10/10, if in 80%-90% you participation grade will be 9/10, etc. Students can earn **up to 5 % extra credit** by making both **regular and informed** verbal contributions in class.

### **Course Evaluation for Graduate Students:**

Graduate students will be evaluated according to the following format:

- Three analytical response papers on the assigned readings (30%; 10% each)
- Research paper, due on Monday, December 13 at 2 PM in my mailbox in Habersham 129 (50%)
- Class participation and research paper presentation (20%)

#### Three analytical response papers:

Graduate students are required to write three response papers on the assigned readings. The dates of the following ten lectures correspond to the possible topics: September 30, October 12, 14, 26, and 28, November 9, 11, 16, 18, and 23. You can turn in four papers – in that case I will count the three highest grades you receive. The papers, which are due at the beginning of the class when the topic they deal with is discussed, should be no less than one-page and no more than two pages single-spaced (with 1” margin from each side and 12-size font). In the papers you should:

- (1) Identify and concisely summarize the main arguments in the readings as they relate to the assigned topic.
- (2) Compare and contrast the readings. Are there any points of convergence between them? In what ways do they differ?
- (3) Critically engage with the readings. Do you find one more convincing than the others? If you do, why? If you do not find any of the readings convincing, why not? What questions are left in your mind?

#### Research paper:

There is no set list of questions for the research paper assignment. Graduate students should formulate their own question based on their interests and consultation with the instructor prior to proceeding with their research. In general, students should seek to examine a significant human rights issue/debate and include empirical evidence in their analysis. By mid-October, you should have enough research to draw up a seven-page (double-spaced) outline that sketches the paper’s topic, preliminary argument and annotated bibliography of at least 12 academically reputable sources beyond the course material. The outline is due on October 21 and is worth 10% of your final course grade. Toward the end of the semester, your work should have progressed further, to the point where you can make an oral presentation of your findings and field questions from your classmates. Presentations of research paper findings will be done in the class of December 7. That presentation will count towards your class participation grade. The final research paper (15 to 20 pages, double-spaced, with 1” margin from each side and 12-size font) is worth 40% of the final course grade. It is due on Monday, December 13 at 2 PM in my office. Papers will be graded on the basis of their originality and logic of argument, quantity and quality of supporting research, and readability and elegance of writing style.

#### Class participation and presentation:

Graduate students are required to attend every lecture and to participate actively during class discussions. On occasion, they may be asked to meet with the instructor for discussion of class material as a separate group.

**Outline of Classes and Readings:**

[N.B. The schedule is subject to revision; I will provide ample notice.]

**August 24: Course Introduction**

Begin readings for next class

***I. The Foundations of Human Rights Standards***

**August 26: Human Rights in International Relations**

Dunne and Wheeler, ch. 5.

Forsythe, preface to the first edition + ch. 1.

**August 31: What are Human Rights?**

Forsythe, ch. 2.

Dunne and Wheeler, ch. 2.

**September 2: Universalism vs. Cultural Relativism**

Dunne and Wheeler, chs. 3 and 4.

***II. Implementing Human Rights Standards in a World of States***

**September 7: Global Institutions**

Forsythe, ch. 3.

Read also the following online: Universal Declaration of Human Rights, International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (including its Optional Protocols), International Covenant on Social, Economic and Cultural Rights.

**September 9: Instructor Away (NO CLASS OR OFFICE HOURS)**

**September 14: Regional Institutions**

Forsythe, ch. 5.

Read also at least one of the following online: European Convention for the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms, American Convention on Human Rights, African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights

**September 16: Foreign Policy**

Hans J. Morgenthau, "Human Rights and Foreign Policy," *First Distinguished Council on Religion and International Affairs Lecture* (1979), pp. 1-8.

Forsythe, ch. 6.

**September 21: Non-Governmental Institutions: The Role of NGOs and Transnational Corporations**

Dunne and Wheeler, ch. 7.

Forsythe, chs. 7 and 8.

**September 23: Review Session**

**September 28: In-Class Exam 1**

***III. Contemporary Human Rights Issues***

**September 30: Humanitarian Intervention**

Michael Walzer, "The Argument about Humanitarian Intervention," *Dissent* (Winter 2002), pp. 29-37.

Miroslav Nincic and Donna Nincic, "Humanitarian Intervention and Paradoxes of Moral Authority: Lessons from the Balkans," *International Journal of Human Rights*, Vol. 8 (2004), pp. 45-64.

Read also Report of the International Commission on Intervention and State Sovereignty, *The Responsibility to Protect* (2001), pp. vii-18, available at [www.iciss.ca/report-en.asp](http://www.iciss.ca/report-en.asp)

**October 5: Case Study: Rwanda (1994)**

Documentary: The Ghosts of Rwanda (PBS, 2004)

Dunne and Wheeler, ch. 6 + Read the UN Convention on the Prevention of Genocide (1948)

**October 7: Case Study: Rwanda (1994)**

Documentary: The Ghosts of Rwanda (PBS, 2004), Part II + Discussion

**October 12: Case Study: Darfur/Sudan (2003-)**

Eric Reeves, "Refusing to Save Darfur," *Dissent* (Fall 2008), pp. 22-25.

David Rieff, "Moral Blindness: The Case against Troops for Darfur," *The New Republic*, June 12, 2006, pp. 13-16.

**October 14: The Role of the Media**

Dunne and Wheeler, ch. 8.

Clifford Orwin, "Distant Compassion: CNN and Borrioboola-Gha," *The National Interest* (Spring 1996), pp. 42-49.

**October 19: Fall Recess (NO CLASS)**

**October 21: Transitional Justice**

Forsythe, ch. 4.

Read also the Rome Statute online.

**October 26: Case Study: The US Rejection of The International Criminal Court**

Kenneth Roth, "The Court the US Doesn't Want," *The New York Review of Books* (November 19, 1998).

John R. Bolton, "The Risks and Weaknesses of the International Criminal Court from America's Perspective," *Law and Contemporary Problems*, Vol. 64 (Winter 2001), pp. 167-180.

### **October 28: Justice vs. Peace: International Criminal Justice vs. National Reconciliation**

Juan E. Méndez, "National Reconciliation, Transnational Justice, and the International Criminal Court," *Ethics and International Affairs*, Vol. 15, No. 1 (2001), pp. 25-44

Brad Roth, "Peaceful Transition and Retrospective Justice: Some Reservations - A Response to Juan E. Méndez," *Ethics and International Affairs* Vol. 15, No. 1 (2001), pp. 45-50

### **November 2: Review Session**

### **November 4: In-Class Exam 2**

### **November 9: Human Rights in Public Emergency: Torture**

Henry Shue, "Torture," *Philosophy and Public Affairs*, Vol. 7, No. 2 (Winter, 1978), pp. 124-143.

Alan Dershowitz, "Tortured Reasoning," in Sanford Levinson (ed.), *Torture: A Collection* (Oxford University Press, 2004).

### **November 11: Democracy as an International Right**

Morton H. Halperin, "Guaranteeing Democracy," *Foreign Policy*, No. 91 (Summer 1993), pp. 105-122.

David C. Hendrickson, "The Democratist Crusade: Intervention, Economic Sanctions, and Engagement," *World Policy Journal*, Vol. 2 (Winter 1994/95), pp. 18-30.

### **November 16: Case Study: The External Response to China's Human Rights Situation**

Jack Donnelly, "Responding to Tiananmen," in *International Human Rights*, 3<sup>rd</sup> ed. (Westview Press, 2007), pp. 149-169.

Zhou Qi, "Conflicts over Human Rights between China and the US," *Human Rights Quarterly*, Vol. 27, No. 1 (2005), pp. 105-124.

### **November 18: Economic, Social and Cultural Rights**

Kenneth Roth, "Defending Economic, Social and Cultural Rights: Practical Issues Faced by an International Human Rights Organization," *Human Rights Quarterly*, Vol. 26, No. 1 (2004), pp. 63-73.

Leonard S. Rubenstein, "How International Human Rights Organizations Can Advance Economic, Social and Cultural Rights: A Response to Kenneth Roth," *Human Rights Quarterly*, Vol. 26, No. 4 (2004), pp. 845-865.

### **November 23: Children's Rights**

Kristina A. Bentley, "Can There Be Any Universal Children's Rights?," *International Journal of Human Rights*, Vol. 9, No. 1 (2005), pp. 107–123.

Sonja Grover, "A Response to K.A. Bentley's 'Can There Be Any Universal Children's Rights?'," *International Journal of Human Rights*, Vol.11, No. 4 (2007), pp. 429-443.

**November 25: Thanksgiving Day (NO CLASS OR OFFICE HOURS)**

**November 30: Critical Perspectives on Human Rights Practice**

John Laughland, "Human Rights and the Rule of Law: Achieving Universal Justice?" in David Chandler (ed.), *Rethinking Human Rights: Critical Approaches to International Politics* (Palgrave, 2002).

Makau Mutua, "The Complexity of Universalism in Human Rights," in Andras Sajo (ed.), *Human Rights with Modesty: The Problem of Universalism* (Brill, 2004).

**December 2: The Politics of Human Rights in a World of States**

Forsythe, ch. 9.

Dunne and Wheeler, ch. 11.

**December 7: Graduate Students' Research Paper Presentations**

**December 9: Take-Home Exam/Graduate Research Paper Work Day - Extra Office Hours**