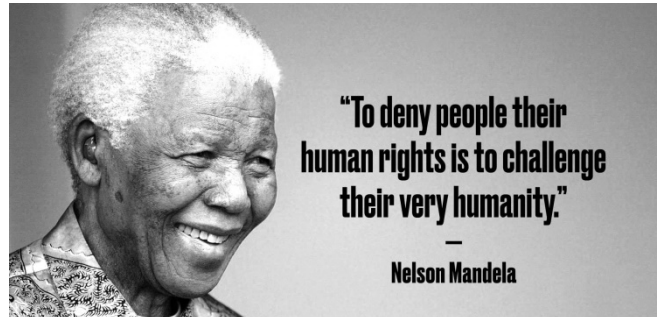


Syllabus

Instructor: Samuel Aslaner

Seminar Title: Human Rights and Peacebuilding

Dates: August 10-17, 2017



Overview: The main focus of the seminar is to analyze a variety of global issues in the 20th and 21st centuries and to introduce students to the core ideas, issues, practices and controversies regarding human rights and peacebuilding. The approach of the seminar is to consider how human rights and peacebuilding are perceived: as a philosophy, a legal construct, or a concept rooted in history. The seminar will consist of five class days and the students will be encouraged to discuss, debate, write and think both analytically and creatively throughout the seminar. The essential goal of the seminar is to ensure the students come away with an understanding that the issues our world faces today cannot be addressed by any one nation, religion, academic discipline or social movement, but by collaboration across boundaries of all kinds.

Day 1: We will begin the seminar by exploring the sources of intellectual traditions that have led to our modern understanding of democracy, peace, and human rights. This section of the seminar will be based in textual analysis of philosophical thought and expanded through discourse and debate.

- **Lecture:**
 - Establishment of basic social contract theory
 - Analysis and overview of both Kant and Cicero's different interpretation on governance
- **Homework:**
 - Immanuel Kant's *Perpetual Peace* (pages 93-115) (copies will be provided), and Cicero's *On Duties* (pages 1-23) (copies will be provided)
 - After reading the two texts, the students formulate an opinion for the next class. The students will come to class prepared with an established argument and counterargument for both sides.

Day 2: History of Human Rights

- **Student Activity:** During the first half of the next day the students will be split up into small teams of 4 to argue for or against Kant's and Cicero's opposing views. Essentially debating the question "Is the authority of governance rooted in the ruler or the citizens?"

- **Lecture:**
 - During the second half of class, we will discuss the historical narratives of human rights abuse, discrimination, religious and ethnic conflicts, and even climate change. The students will come to understand the history of injustice and how it manifests itself today.
- **Homework for the Week/Final Project:**
 - I will assign every two students a different global issue to read about and research in order to create a small presentation for the final day. All historical reading material will be provided to the groups of two at the end of class.
 - The students must prepare a 3-5 minute presentation for the final day to present to the class as their final project. Creative ideas such as skits, artistic poster boards and different props that can be provided in order to facilitate more insightful presentations are encouraged. Some of these possible topics include Israel-Palestine, Cambodia, Armenia, deforestation of the Amazon, South African Apartheid, Yugoslavia, Sri Lanka, Native Americans, etc.¹

Day 3: Peace

- **Student Activity:** The first part of the class will be devoted to an in class activity where we observe the importance of cultural differences. We will play a short game where groups of students will be organized based on “different cultural behaviors” which will be assigned. The name of the game or simulation is called “Brief Encounters” and the purpose of this cross-cultural simulation game is to explore how people perceive cultural differences. This activity will lead us into the lecture for the day.
- **Lecture:** The importance of using cultural understanding in conflict resolution:
 - We will ask the questions, “How can these conflicts be resolved?” and “What do we mean when we say peace?”
 - We will discuss the following: 1) strategies of conflict resolution 2) reparation of oppressed individuals 3) solidarity through social movements 4) atrocity prevention 5) political reconciliation 6) intergenerational justice and transitional justice
- **Day 3 Homework: Mock Trial Preparation**
 - One of the main activities of the seminar is the creation of a mock trial which will resolve the issues of a specific contemporary global conflict. We will be modeling our mock trial off of the cases in the ICTY (International Criminal Tribunal of Yugoslavia). Homework for day three and day four will be to prepare for the mock trial which will take place on day five. Each student will be given a role (defense attorneys, prosecutors, jury members, judges and witnesses) within the context of the ICTY and receive a case packet which they will need to read in order to prepare for the trial. The case packet will be filled with background on the various cases within the ICTY, the format of the mock trial, information on international law, the charges, and general instructions for the various roles. The activity will allow the students to create their own arguments and provide them

¹ There are countless global conflicts and issues to discuss, so it is best that every group of two has their own individual topic to learn about and present on in order to maximize the intellectual exposure.

with experience in law. Ultimately, the students will develop a more legal understanding on human rights and peacebuilding.

Day 4: Refugees

- **Student Activity:** The first part of the class period will be devoted to the mock trial. Once the trial decision is, we will all discuss what we learned through this activity. Some concluding discussion topics include:
 - What are the students' opinions on peacebuilding and the establishments of justice through legal means?
 - What are the benefits and limitations of using the international legal system in conflict resolution? Are there any other methods they would use to achieve a just and lasting peace in Yugoslavia?
- **Lecture:**
 - The lecture during the second half of class will be centered on refugees
 - Explore the following questions: "What does it mean to be a refugee and, what is statelessness?"
 - Give background on the contemporary refugee crisis in Syria
 - Watch clips from the documentary *Fire at Sea* and discuss the impact of film as a tool for human rights advocacy
- **Homework:**
 - The students will continue preparing for their final projects which will be presented the next day.

Day 5: Student Final Presentations

- The student presentations will take up most of class and I hope that the various topics discussed in the previous classes will influence each group's presentation. In addition to understanding the historical facts, I want the students to take into account the philosophical roots of the conflict, the legal perspective and possible ideas for future conflict resolution. *Each group should conclude their presentation with concrete solutions to resolve the issue in the future.*

Conclusion/ Closing Remarks: Explain to the students that peacebuilding and human rights advocacy is not a definitive discipline, and that hopefully, after this seminar they understand the level of complexity involved in conflict resolution. Because of this nuance, peaceful conflict resolution and human rights advocacy requires a broad range of perspectives, and I want the students to feel empowered that with their unique perspectives they can have a lasting impact on the world around them.