

Course Syllabus

COURSE INFORMATION

GOVT 4357 Human Rights and the Rule of Law

Fall 2013

Online format with optional discussion and film sessions

Professor Contact Information

Linda Camp Keith

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Green 3.818

Office Hours: Skype and email or by appointment. On campus, see calendar posted on elearning.

TA info: Maureen Stobb, J.D.

Office: Green 3.314

Office hours/help session: Mon. 7-8 pm, Friday 11am-12pm

Optional film, discussion, and review sessions: FO 2.604.

Course Description

The study of international human rights typically spans a broad range of academic disciplines. This course will focus primarily upon the development of international rights norms and law as well as the major competing political theories that sometimes weigh against the development universal human rights. The course will also examine the effectiveness of the law and courts, especially international courts and truth commissions, in regard to human rights. We will also examine illustrative case studies such as Rwanda, Darfur and Bosnia.

NOTE on ONLINE CLASSES in General and Specific to This Course

This course will be an exciting and engaging way to student international human rights. I have strong expectations of success for my students, but there are some things to consider first. For this course, you will be assigned the typical reading for the upper level undergraduate class which on average is two chapters a week or sometimes one chapter and one outside article (approximately 50 per week). What is different is that in lieu of in-class time, which is typically three academic hours, you will be viewing presentations and documentaries and engaging in discourse with professor and other students in discussion boards. The presentations are not talking head videos of me lecturing you (not an effective method of learning). Instead I have created a series of presentations (PowerPoint and Prezi) that have some voice-over component as well lecture type notes and additional material such as video clips, graphics and so forth that illustrate and expand upon each week's material. In addition to presentation and read

materials, you will be viewing documentaries that further illustrate and expand upon some of the week's materials. I have carefully balanced the level of material assigned so that is equivalent to the general expected time students spend in and on an upper level course. Remember on average, students should expect to spend 2 hours of study time per week per academic hour for each course, *beyond the three hours in class*. Thus you should expect to spend on average 6 hours per week on this course in addition the 3-hours you would normally be spending in the classroom. Again, be sure you consider these factors before taking any course, but especially an online course.

Online courses require much self-discipline and structure. Consider this carefully. I have designed the course to have a significant amount of structure and you have the freedom to engage the material on your own schedule, within the confines of due dates. You will have weekly assignments and many will contain graded components but not all. If you get behind in the course, playing catch-up can be counter-productive to successfully completing the course. UTD students typically have high standards for themselves and this course is set up in way that you should be able to achieve those, but self-discipline is a critical component. Again, consider your learning style carefully.

I have set up optional on-campus components that I strongly recommend. Hybrid courses require this component. This course is online so it is not required. The optional on campus components will include reviews with the professor or the TA, typically one before the midterm and one before the final, one each conducted by the professor and the TA, so there will a total of two time options for each exams. You will have study guides for each exam. The other on campus components will be documentary viewing and discussion session. In lieu of the on campus viewing students may watch the documentary on their own in the library or when available through an internet source such as Netflix, Amazon, Hulu or Youtube. If you do not participate in the on campus viewing and discussion, you will participate in one of discussion boards online. Ultimately, you will make the choice based on what best serves your learning style and schedule for each documentary. I hope you will make some of the on campus sessions so that we meet in person. For office hours, I will Skype students and I will blocks of time for on campus meetings either other week that I will post on elearning at the beginning of the semester. The TA will do so as well.

Student Learning Objectives/Outcomes

1. To gain an understanding of the development of international human rights standards and the competing models and theories related to human rights and the rule of law.

2. To develop an understanding of the empirical studies of political terror and human rights abuse in the context of theory and policy.
 3. To develop an understanding of genocide and crimes against humanity and to be able to analyze actual events of this nature.
 4. To develop an understanding of the role of truth commissions and international criminal tribunals and to be able to analyze these institutions in practice.
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Required Textbooks

International Human Rights, 4th Edition by Jack Donnelly. July 2012. Westview. ISBN 9780813345017 (**You must use the 4th edition, not the earlier editions**).

The Global Struggle for Human Rights by Debra DeLaet. 2005. Thomson-Wadsworth. ISBN-10: 0534635725

All other readings will be placed in the UTD e-reserves system or placed on elearning. More instructions and appropriate passwords will be place on elearning.

Grading Policy and Components

Participation (15%)

Independent Explorations (15%)

EXAMS (Midterm and Final) (70%)

A+ = 98-100%

A- = 90-93%

B = 84-87%

C+ = 78-79%

C- = 70-73%

D = 64-67%

F = Below 60

A = 94-97%

B+ = 88-89%

B- = 80-83%

C = 74-77%

D+ = 68-69%

D- = 60-63%

Course & Instructor Policies

PARTICIPATION (15%): As with any class active participation in the course, particularly in which you are engaging with your colleagues and the professor makes up a significant component of the teaching pedagogy of any class. This is especially true for an online class. Students will

fulfill this component through a variety of methods including participation in guided discussion board discourse over reading materials and a selection of required films (see the participation documents posted online). Students will have the option of participating online or in the on-campus events. This component may also include occasional online reading quizzes or questions. It includes an online foreign aid simulation which counts as 5% of the participation grade. Late work/postings will not be accepted, as students will have either have 1) options from which to choose or 2) a timeframe of multiple days to complete the work. Use your misses wisely, and anticipate some possible disruptions throughout the semester. More details are provided in the online “Getting Started” documents. See the “Getting Started” folder.

INDEPENDENT EXPLORATIONS (15%): In a one-semester course it is difficult to cover all of the possible human rights topics that may be of interest to each student. In this you will be able to individually pursue further knowledge on topic that interests you, and you may do so through three options, each of which will lead to a critical essay of one sort or another. Each option will require additional research beyond the general class material. Students will be required to have their topics and materials approved (more details will follow as the course progresses). I will set a due date after the midterm so that students will have time to acquire some of the theoretical foundations of the course, and will set due about three-quarters into the semester so that it will coincide with the due dates of research papers or final exams in your other courses. UNGRADED PAPERS and projects will be posted on elearning so that all students may benefit from your research. Students will have an opportunity to respond to other students’ work in an online discussion room. The critical essays will be formal essays should be approximately 4 pages single-spaced.

Option One--Film Paper and Critical Review of Two Journal Articles: For this option you will select two refereed journal articles on research related to your human rights topic of interest. You will write a critical essay in which you identify the key questions that the two articles seeks to address, the theory and the empirical literature that informs the explorations, the resulting hypotheses, the means the articles employ to test the hypothesis (methodology, measurement), the key findings in regard this question or set of questions, the contributions and limitations of the study, the implications, and ultimately what these studies suggest for future research. Your critical essay should be integrative and synthesize across the two works. The critical essay will be a formal essay should be approximately 4 pages single-spaced.

Option Two--Critical and Integrative Essay of Two Documentaries: For this option you will select two documentaries that deal issue or human rights topic of interest or two related topics. You will write a critical essay in which you identify the key issues that documentaries address. For each documentary you will identify and describe fully the

human rights issues that addressed in the film. Discuss the ways in which the film portrays these issues. For example, does it give an in-depth personal account of one individual? Does it use a series of vignettes? Who are the individuals it focuses upon and what are their stories? How do their stories illustrate the broader human rights issues in the film? For each documentary you will discuss the contribution of the film to our understanding of the particular human rights issues and assess how accurately the film portrays reality assess the perspective of the film makers as well. What are the film's weaknesses and strengths? You discuss how films fit within the scholarly work you have read on this issue in the course. What is missing? Is the film an over-simplification? What could have been done better? Then you will compare the film's substantive contribution and discuss the ways in which the documentaries inform each other and our broader understanding of the subject. The critical essay will be a formal essay should be approximately 4 pages single-spaced.

Option Three—Partnered Creative Option: In this option a pair of students will conduct a joint project that examines a specific topic within the human rights literature, such as trafficking, child soldiers, or refugees and displaced persons, or that examines specific human rights events such as the genocide in Darfur or political repression during the Arab spring. The project must be informed by at least 4 scholarly sources. Students will present their research in multi-media presentations of the students' choice. The projects represent an opportunity for a pair of students to pool resources in exploring a human rights issue and will allow students to creatively devise a delivery mechanism to present the information online for the viewing of the rest of the class. No formal paper is required but students will be required to imbed appropriate citation within the creative project.

Due Dates: Options One and Two due Monday, Nov. 18th at 8 am. Option Three due Monday, November 25th at 8 am.

By Friday, October 25th you must have Option Three project approved. Beyond this date you must do Option One or Two.

EXAMS (70%): Exams are typically a combination definitions, short answer and essay format. Exams will be tailored to fit the content of the course appropriately. Typically, essay questions will test your understanding of the core theories and assumptions we have studied and applied. They will test your ability both to evaluate and to apply theory to the various countries. They will test your ability to synthesize the material and findings and to be able to derive and discuss relevant implications. I will likely give the essay portion of each exam as a "takehome" essay. I will grade the essays. The short answer and definitions sections of the exams will be taken in

the testing center on campus. Students will have a range of dates through which they may take the exam portion that is on campus. This portion will be graded by the TA.

I will post a study guide and discussion sessions with the TA and/or the professor will be scheduled on campus.

MISSED EXAM: As each exam will be open typically for at least four days, a make-up option will not be available except under an extreme circumstance.

Additional UT DALLAS Policies may be found at: <http://go.utdallas.edu/syllabus-policies>

Assignments & Academic Calendar

Readings will typically cover two chapters a week or sometimes one chapter and one outside article (approximately 50 to 60 pages per week which is appropriate for a senior level class). Be sure to follow class and elearning announcements to stay update on any subsequent adjustments.

TOPICS and DATES

Week One (Aug 26 through Aug 31) *Development of International Human Rights*

- Chapter One Donnelly: Human Rights as an Issue in World Politics
- Be sure you read the short "Introduction" in DeLaet
- Chapter Two DeLaet: "International Human Rights Law"

Week Two (Sept. 1st through Sept. 7th) *Competing Theories of Human Rights*

- Chapter Two Donnelly: "Theories of Human Rights"
- Norms v. Interest in Asylum Decisions: Keith, Holmes and Miller paper
- REQUIRED FILM: WELL FOUNDED FEAR
 - On reserve in library (and online discussion)
 - Optional on-campus viewing and discussion Thursday, Sept. 5th (generally 7-9:45 pm) Room SLC 1.202

Week Three (Sept. 8th through 13th) *The Universality of Human Rights*

- Chapter Three Donnelly: "The Relative Universality of Human Rights"
- Shashi Tharoor. 1999. Are Human Rights Universal? World Policy Journal: <http://www.mtholyoke.edu/acad/intrel/tharoor2.htm>
- Chapter Three DeLaet: "Are Rights Universal?"

Week Four (Sept 15th through the 21st) *Realism, National Security Doctrine and the Southern Cone*

- Chapter Four Donnelly: “Domestic Politics of Human Rights—The Case of the Southern Cone”
- Pion-Berlin and Lopez (1991) “Of Victims and Executioners: Argentine State Terror, 1975-1979.” *International Studies Quarterly* 35(1): READ EXCERPT only--pages 69-75.
- FILM: The Judge and the General (Chile)
 - On reserve in library (and online discussion)
 - Optional on-campus viewing and discussion Thursday, Sept. 19th (generally 7-9:45 pm) Room SLC 1.202

Week Five (Sept 22nd through 28th) *Theoretical Debates: Norms versus Interest in US Policy (Foreign Aid)*

- Clair Apodaca and Michael Stohl. 1999. “United States Human Rights Policy and Foreign Assistance.” *International Studies Quarterly* 43: 185–198.
- ONLINE FOREIGN AID SIMULATION

Week Six (September 29th through October 5th) *Economic and Social Rights*

- Chapter 6 DeLaet, “Economic and Social Rights in a World of Sovereign States”
- Case Study: *Education Under Fire* (30 minute documentary) Posted on elearning.

REVIEW SESSION Thursday October 3rd Room SLC 1.202 7-9 pm with professor and XX with TA (tba)

**Week Seven (October 6th through 12th) *MIDTERM ONE*
*To be taken in testing center***

Week Eight (October 13th through October 19th) *The Psychology of Terror*

- Alette Smuelers. 2004. “What Transforms Ordinary People into Gross Human Rights Abusers?” In Carey and Poe, eds. *The Systematic Study of Human Rights*, eds. Sabine Carey and Steven C. Poe (New York: Ashgate Publishing)
- EXCERPT from The Making of a Suicide Bomber: What Drives Someone to Kill Themselves While Killing Others? By Post et al.
- EXCERPT from Understanding the Terrorist Mind-Set by Randy Borum
- FILM: *Death in Gaza* (no on-campus viewing—on reserve in library)

Week Nine (October 20th through October 26th) *Genocide and International Responses (RWANDA and DARFUR)*

- Powers, Samantha. 2001. “Bystanders to Genocide.” *Atlantic Monthly*
<http://www.theatlantic.com/doc/200109/power-genocide>

- Interview with [Philip Gourevitch](http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/pages/frontline/shows/evil/interviews/gourevitch.html) author of *We Wish To Inform You That Tomorrow We Will Be Killed With Our Families* (Note: Be sure you follow the links to read the full interview)
- <http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/pages/frontline/shows/evil/interviews/gourevitch.html>
- <http://worldwithoutgenocide.org/genocides-and-conflicts/darfur-genocide>
- REQUIRED FILM: GHOSTS OF RWANDA —————
 - On reserve in library (and online discussion)
 - Optional on-campus viewing and discussion Thursday, Oct. 24th (generally 7-9:45 pm) Room SLC 1.202

Week Ten (Oct 27th through November 2nd) *Genocide and International Responses (DARFUR and BOSNIA)*

- <http://worldwithoutgenocide.org/genocides-and-conflicts/darfur-genocide>
- John Stoessinger, "From Sarajevo to Kosovo" (Chapter Five) in *Why Nations Go To War* (pages tba)
- Chapter Thirteen Donnelly: Humanitarian Intervention Against Genocide 191-203
- ONLINE FILM REQUIRED: Srebrenica (no on campus viewing)
<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Fliw801iX84>

Week Eleven (November 3rd through November 9th) *Justice Issues: International Courts, Truth Commissions, and Indigenous Justice*

- NOTE: Readings will be spread out over two weeks. I will give further instructions on how to split it between the two weeks.
- Priscilla B. Hayner. 2011. *Unspeakable Truths, Second Edition*. Routledge Press. Chapters One, Two, Three and Four (pages 1-44)
- Debra DeLaet. 2006. *The Global Struggle for Human Rights*. Thomson-Wadsworth. Chapter Nine (Punitive Justice and Human Rights) and Chapter Ten (Restorative Justice and Human Rights)

Week Twelve (Nov 10th through 16th)

Justice Issues: International Courts, Truth Commissions, and Indigenous Justice

CONTINUED FROM ABOVE:

- Priscilla B. Hayner. 2011. *Unspeakable Truths, Second Edition*. Routledge Press. Chapters One, Two, Three and Four (pages 1-44)
- Debra DeLaet. 2006. *The Global Struggle for Human Rights*. Thomson-Wadsworth. Chapter Nine (Punitive Justice and Human Rights) and Chapter Ten (Restorative Justice and Human Rights)
- REQUIRED FILM: Fambul Tok (Sierra Leone) or As We Forgive
 - On reserve in library (and online discussion)
 - Optional on-campus viewing and discussion Thursday, Nov. 14th

(generally 7-9:45 pm) Room SLC 1.202

Week Thirteen (Nov 17th through 24th) Treaty Commitments (Return to Theoretical Debates)

- Kelley, Judith. 2007. "Who Keeps International Commitments and Why? The International Criminal Court and Bilateral Non-Surrender Agreements." *American Political Science Review* 101(3): 573-589.
- Linda Camp Keith. October, 2010. "Survey of Empirical ELS Research: Human Rights Instruments." In *Oxford Handbook of Empirical Legal Studies*, Peter Cane and Herbert M. Kritzer, eds. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 353-75.

Fall Break Nov 24th through Dec. 1st

Week Fourteen (Dec 2nd through Dec. 7th) and Fifteen (Dec 8th through Dec. 11th): *Women's Rights* (Return to Theoretical Debates)

- Chapter Seven DeLaet: "Sexual Equality and Human Rights"
- Wotipka, Christine Min, and Francisco O. Ramirez. 2007. "World Society and Human Rights: An Event History Analysis of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women." In *The Global Diffusion of Markets and Democracy*, ed., Beth A. Simmons , Geoffrey Garrett, and Frank Dobbin. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- REVIEW: Thursday Dec. 5th 7-9 pm) Room SLC 1.202

FINAL: In testing center—begins Friday Dec. 13th when testing center opens and ends Monday Dec. 16th when testing center closes.