

History of Human Rights

Fall 2019: HIST 33805 ~ MWF 9:30-10:20 ~ UNIV 217

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Eleanor Roosevelt holding the Spanish-language version of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, Palais de Chaillot, Paris, December 1948.

The concept of – and struggle for – human rights is powerful, pervasive. Its origins, development, and strategies of implementation contested. Have human beings always had the "right to have rights"? How did the concept of "rights" arise? What does it mean, and how has it been used? This course explores human rights' genealogy and uneven historical evolution from the European Enlightenment through the late twentieth century human rights revolution and experience of globalization. We will examine Atlantic Revolutionary era articulations of “rights of man” and “human rights,” the interwar institutionalization of rights, the post-WWII shift from minority to individual human rights, the human rights revolution of the late 1970s, and the relationship between globalization and human rights using a variety of primary and secondary sources. Students will come away with a deeper understanding of a human rights narrative that belongs to the world, its politics and ideas, and our own humanity. This course fulfills a core requirement for the Human Rights minor.

Required Texts:

- Micheline R. Ishay, *The History of Human Rights: from Ancient Times to the Globalization Era* (University of California Press, 2008)
- Lynn Hunt, *Inventing Human Rights* (Norton, 2007)
- Michael R. Marrus, *The Nuremberg War Crimes Trial, 1945-46, A Brief History with Documents, 2nd edition* (Bedford St. Martin's, 2018)

• **Additional required readings posted on Blackboard, marked with an asterik (*).**

Course Objectives:

By the end of the course, you will have:

- 1) Gained a deeper understanding of the patterns and processes, ruptures and continuities in the human rights history narrative which have shaped today's world, its politics, ideas, and ambitions;
- 2) Explored how human rights connects us to other people, places, and times;
- 3) Used primary source evidence to analyze fundamental problems in human rights history in individual writing and in group work;
- 4) Engaged in an environment of open inquiry to exchange ideas and interpretations of human rights concepts;
- 5) Become better prepared to negotiate the variable applications of human rights concepts in today's globalized world;
- 6) Become proficient in the use of **Zotero** citation software. <https://www.zotero.org/>

Attendance Policy:

Attendance at all class sessions is mandatory. Arrive on time. An attendance sheet will be passed around to sign at the beginning of class. More than four (4) absences will result in a grade penalty (1/2 of a letter grade) for each subsequent unexcused absence. Unexcused means undocumented by a doctor's note, or other valid form of documentation. If there is an occasion where you must leave early, notify me before class starts and sit near an exit. **Be courteous. Do not disrupt the professor or your fellow students. Put away all electronic devices that we are not using together. Be prepared to participate. Bring the day's readings to class.**

Course Requirements and Grading: 400 possible points

- I) **Five Reaction Logs (RL) (100 points total, 20 pts. each):** These are concise (300 word min – 500 word max, about 1 ½ pages) and reflective responses to the RL question based on the week's readings, which you will find listed on the syllabus under the Friday entry. Reaction Logs are due at the beginning of class on Fridays, typed, and in hard copy.
- II) **Take-home Midterm (100 points):** For the take-home midterm exam, you will answer the two given questions as completely and thoughtfully as you can, drawing on your readings and our class discussions. Take a position, back up your statements, and clearly state what you want to say in minimum 800 to maximum 1000 words (about 4 pages). Due at the beginning of class on the date noted on the syllabus, typed, and in hard copy.
- III) **Take-home Final (100 points):** For the take-home final exam, you will reflect upon two questions regarding the development of human rights over time, drawing from your readings and class discussions from the second half of the semester in minimum 800 to maximum 1000 words (about 4 pages).
- IV) **Precedent Nuremberg Project (100 points):** Week 11 is set aside for addressing the profound precedents arising from the postwar Nuremberg Trials, including debates about 1) crimes against humanity, 2) crimes against peace, and 3) war crimes. We will consider constructions of justice and the shaping of the postwar world order. The class will divide into 6 groups to represent the pro and con argument for each theme. We will hear debates on Monday, Wednesday, and Friday of that week. More details to follow in class. We will use the Marrus book.

Grade determined by calculating points, participation, & attendance.

Grade scale: A+ = 98-100; A = 93-97; A- = 90-92; B+ = 88-89; B = 83-87; B- = 80-82; C+ = 78-79; C = 73-77; C- = 70-72; D+ = 68-69; D = 63-67; D- = 60-62; F = 0-59

Written work for this course must adhere to the following format: double-spaced, one-inch margins, in 12 point Times New Roman font, paginated, **proofread**, and including **Chicago Style footnotes. We will be using Zotero citation software (free)**. Assignments are due at the beginning of class. No email attachments. Late papers will be penalized by 5 points for each day late. Keep all graded assignments until you have received your final grade. In this way, if there are grade discrepancies, you will have the original document in your possession for consideration of final grade adjustment.

Important Notes:

- **Cheating / Plagiarism:** Plagiarism refers to the reproduction of another's words or ideas without proper attribution. Cheating, plagiarism, and other forms of academic dishonesty are serious offenses, and will result in a failing grade and notification of the Dean of Students Office. You are expected to produce your own work and to accurately cite all necessary materials. Cheating, plagiarism, and other dishonest practices will be punished as harshly as Purdue University policies allow. Don't do it!! **Learn and use the Zotero citation software.**
 - **Course evaluations:** During the 15th week of classes, you will receive an official email from evaluation administrators with a link to the evaluation site. You will have two weeks to complete the evaluation. I do not see your evaluation until after grades are submitted.
 - **Disclaimer:** In the event of a major campus emergency, the above requirements, deadlines and grading policies are subject to changes that may be required by a revised semester calendar. Any such changes in this course will be posted on Blackboard once the course resumes or can be obtained by contacting the professor via email.
- ***Email etiquette:** Outside of class or office hours, communicate with your professor by email. State the reason for your email in the subject line (ex: "question about essay"). Include a full salutation (ex: "Dear Professor"), and closing with your full name (ex: "Sincerely, Eleanor Roosevelt"). Use full sentences, correct grammar, and punctuation. If you fail to follow this etiquette, I will not respond to your email. I will *usually* respond to your emails within 24 hours, with the exception of weekends.

Schedule of Classes (You will learn of any changes to the schedule in advance):

Week 1: Introduction to the History of Human Rights

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| M, 8/19 | Snapshot of human rights debates in our globalized world:
Ishay, "Preface," pp. ix-xxi. |
| W, 8/21 | Human Rights as History
Iriye, "Introduction: Human Rights as History," pp.3-24.* |
| F, 8/23 | Zotero Session: <u>come to class with Zotero downloaded on your laptop. We will add course readings to Zotero in class, and practice how to use it. Complete adding all course readings into Zotero on your own.</u>
https://www.zotero.org/ |

Week 2: Genealogies: Where does the history of human rights begin?

- M, 8/26 Cmiel, "The Recent History of Human Rights," pp. 117-135.*
- W, 8/28 **Building a chronology:** In class timeline exercise
Ishay, appendix, "Chronology of Events and Writings Related to Human Rights," pp. 357-367
- F, 8/30. Stefan Ludwig Hoffmann, "Genealogies of Human Rights," pp.1-26.*
(RL#1) Hoffmann discusses 4 points in the section of the article "Rights, Nations, and Empires since 1800," and 4 more in the section "Competing Universalisms since 1945." Briefly explain the main idea of each of the 8 total points. We will build on this foundational narrative all semester.

Week 3: Early Ethical Contributions: A Pre-history

- M, 9/2 *No Class – Labor Day*
- W, 9/4 Ishay, ch.1, "Early Ethical Contributions to Human Rights," pp. 15-40.
- F, 9/6 Ishay, ch.1, "Early Ethical Contributions to Human Rights," pp. 40-61.
Class discussion: How did the ancients understand notions of liberty, equality, justice, fraternity? • Discussion with Professor Daniel Frank (Philosophy)

Week 4: The Rights of Man

- M, 9/9 Ishay, ch.2, "Human Rights and the Enlightenment," pp.63-91.
- W, 9/11 Ishay, ch.2, "Human Rights and the Enlightenment," pp. 91-116.
- F, 9/13 Jacob Katz, "Legal Steppingstones," ch.10 in *Out of the Ghetto: The Social Background of Jewish Emancipation, 1770-1870*, pp. 161-175.; and see map of Jewish Emancipation in Europe.*
(RL#2) How can we trace the transition from religious ethics to a secularized version of these ethics? Drawing on the Jewish case study presented in Katz, what sort of legal transformations are necessary for civic emancipation?

Week 5: "We hold these truths to be self-evident"

- M, 9/16 Hunt, "Introduction," pp. 16-34: consider terms and phrasing, their meaning and usage: "universal", "self-evident", "natural", "equal", "rights", "torture", "the Creator."
- W, 9/18 Hunt, ch.1, "Torrents of Emotion," pp. 35-69.
- F, 9/20 John Locke and Early Modern Thought
• Guest lecture by Alžbeta Hajková (PhD candidate, PHIL)

Week 6: Trajectories

- M, 9/23 Hunt, ch.2, "Bone of Their Bone," pp. 70-112.
Class discussion: How did Eighteenth-century readers learn to empathize "across more broadly defined boundaries"? To what extent do you find Hunt's argument convincing?
- W, 9/25 Hunt, ch.3, "They Have Set a Great Example," pp. 113-145.
Class discussion: Why do declarations serve as milestones, and evidence of attitude transformation, according to Hunt? In what ways?

- F, 9/27 Hunt, ch.4, "There Will Be No End of It," pp. 146-175.
(RL#3) What does Hunt mean when she cites the quotation "there will be no end of it?" How does this sentiment relate to the cascading rights demands argument?
 • **Discussion of Precedent Nuremberg Project**

Week 7: Advances and Retreats

- M, 9/30 *Rosh Hashanah*
Albert Chapman, Professor in the Purdue libraries Humanities, Social Sciences, Education, and Business Division, presentation on [library information resources on human rights.](#)
- W, 10/2 Ishay, ch.3, "Human Rights and the Industrial Age," pp.117-144.
 F, 10/4 Ishay, ch.3, "Human Rights and the Industrial Age," pp.145-172.
Class discussion: How can we explain the nature of human rights advances in the Industrial Age?
 • **Discuss and distribute take-home midterm exam, due 10/11**

Week 8: Midterm

- M, 10/7 *No Class – Fall Break*
 W, 10/9 *Yom Kippur – No Class – work on midterms*
 F, 10/11 **Take-home Midterms due. Discussion.**

Week 9: Interwar Institutionalization of Rights

- M, 10/14 Ishay, ch.4, "The World Wars," pp.173-178, 181-191.
"[Maps, Central Europe, and History](#)"
- W, 10/16 Mark Mazower, "Empires, Nations, Minorities," ch.2 of *Dark Continent: Europe's Twentieth Century**
- F, 10/18 Ishay, ch.4, "The World Wars," pp.199-211.
 Class Discussion: What is meant when scholars frame post-WWI rights trajectories as the "Wilson" or "Lenin" option? Explain.

Week 10: Perplexities

- M, 10/21 Hannah Arendt, "The Perplexities of the Rights of Man," in ch. 9, *The Origins of Totalitarianism**
- W, 10/23 View & discuss Jan Karski's testimony from *Shoah*, and *Attentat 1942* trailer <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hpg-wFjRxRQ>
<http://attentat1942.com/press/#trailers>
- F, 10/25 **Precedent Nuremberg Project prep: in class group meetings**

Week 11: Precedent Nuremberg Project

MWF, 10/28-11/1 Group Debates

Week 12: Postwar Regime of Rights

- M, 11/4 G. Daniel Cohen, "The 'Human Rights Revolution' at Work: Displaced Persons in Postwar Europe," ch.2 in Hoffman, ed., *Human Rights in the Twentieth Century**

- W, 11/6 Ishay, ch.4, "The World Wars," pp. 211-229: "After World War II: The Universal Declaration of Human Rights"
- F, 11/8 Mark Mazower, "The Strange Triumph of Human Rights, 1933-1950"*
(RL#4): Where and how do we see the shift in the international system from protection of minority rights to the UN's commitment to human rights? What is the relationship between displacement and the understanding of "rights"?

Week 13: Cold War Parameters

- M, 11/11 Ishay, ch.4, "The World Wars," pp. 179-181, 191-198: Decolonization
- W, 11/13 Brad Simpson, "The Biafran Secession and the Limits of Self-Determination"*
- F, 11/15 Gale Stokes, ed., *From Stalinism to Pluralism*, pp. 160-174 – Human Rights: "The Helsinki Accords," "Charter 77," and "The Power of the Powerless"*
Class discussion: What does it mean to "live in truth"? What is the power of the powerless? How is it related to the Helsinki Accords?

Week 14: Globalization and Human Rights

- M, 11/18 Samuel Moyn, "Preface," to *The Last Utopia**
- W, 11/20 Peter Gatrell, "The World Wide Web of Humanitarianism: NGOs and Population Displacement in the third quarter of the twentieth century"*
- F, 11/22 Zolberg, et al, "Toward a Better International Refugee Regime," ch.10 in *Escape from Violence**
(RL#5): What do Zolberg and his fellow authors suggest would constitute a better international refugee regime? Why is this issue so important?

Week 15: Thanksgiving Break

M, 11/25 - F, 11/29

Week 16: Wrap-Up – Thinking about Justice and Virtue

- M, 12/2 Kathryn Sikkink, "Introduction," ch.1 of *The Justice Cascade: How Human Rights Prosecutions are Changing World Politics**
- Discuss and distribute take-home final exams, due 12/9**
- W, 12/4 Michael Ignatieff, "Human Rights, Global Ethics, and the Ordinary Virtues"*
- F, 12/6 *No Class – work on finals*

Take home final due Monday, 12/9 (first day of finals week) on Blackboard!

Have a great winter break!