George Mason University
Graduate Course Approval/Inventory Form

Please complete this form and attach a copy of the syllabus for new courses. Forward it as an email attachment to the Secretary of the Graduate Council. A printed copy of the form with signatures should be brought to the Graduate Council Meeting. Complete the Coordinator Form on page 2, if changes in this course will affect other units.

Please indicate: ___XX___ NEW  ___ MODIFY  ___ DELETE

Local Unit: ICAR  Graduate Council Approval Date:

Course Abbreviation: CONF  Course Number: 728

Full Course Title: Human Rights Theory and Practice in Comparative Perspective

Abbreviated Course Title (24 characters max.): Human Rights in Comparative Perspective

Credit hours: 3  Program of Record: ICAR

Repeatable for Credit? ___ D=Yes, not within same term  ___ T=Yes, within the same term  ___ x_ N=Cannot be repeated for credit

Activity Code (please indicate): ___ Lecture (LEC)  ___ Lab (LAB)  ___ Recitation (RCT)  ___ Studio (STU)  ___ Internship (INT)  ___ Independent Study (IND)  ___ X_ Seminar (SEM)

Catalog Credit Format  3 : 0: 0 Course Level: GF(500-600) ___ GA(700+) ___ XX_

Maximum Enrollment: 25  For NEW courses, first term to be offered: Fall 2004

Prerequisites or corequisites:

Catalog Description (35 words or less) Please use catalog format and attach a copy of the syllabus for new courses.: Introduces students to major controversies and debates surrounding the use of human rights theory and practice cross-culturally. After a basic study of human rights philosophy, uses cases studies from around the world to examine the problems and potential of human rights in today's globalized world.

For MODIFIED or DELETED courses as appropriate:

Last term offered: Previous Course Abbreviation: Previous number:

Description of modification:

APPROVAL SIGNATURES:

Submitted by: ________________________________ email: __________________

Department/Program: ________________________________ Date: _________________

College Committee: ________________________________ Date: _________________

Graduate Council Representative: ________________________________ Date: _________________
GEORGE MASON UNIVERSITY
Course Coordination Form

Approval from other units:

Please list those units outside of your own who may be affected by this new, modified, or deleted course. Each of these units must approve this change prior to its being submitted to the Graduate Council for approval.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Unit:</th>
<th>Head of Unit’s Signature:</th>
<th>Date:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Unit:</td>
<td>Head of Unit’s Signature:</td>
<td>Date:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unit:</td>
<td>Head of Unit’s Signature:</td>
<td>Date:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unit:</td>
<td>Head of Unit’s Signature:</td>
<td>Date:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unit:</td>
<td>Head of Units Signature:</td>
<td>Date:</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Graduate Council approval: ___________________________ Date: __________

Graduate Council representative: ___________________________ Date: __________

Provost Office representative: ___________________________ Date: __________
Course 728: Human Rights Theory and Practice in Comparative Perspective

Course description:

Introduces students to major controversies and debates surrounding the use of human rights theory and practice cross-culturally. After a basic study of human rights philosophy, uses cases studies from around the world to examine the problems and potential of human rights in today's globalized world.

INTRODUCTION:

Human rights theory and institutions are used as major vehicles for addressing conflict at various social and geographical levels. Intense and protracted conflict around the world inevitably leads to a call by individuals and institutions to protect the human rights of victims and to use a human rights framework to seek redress from violators. In addition, globalization has created a dynamic in which human rights theory and practice have come to form the foundation for a variety of initiatives including international development and foreign aid, civil society projects, bilingual education, community conflict resolution, truth and reconciliation commissions, gender equality, and the protection of children, among many others.

In this course we will explore human rights from as many different angles as possible, including the theoretical or philosophical aspects of human rights, the practical problems of implementation and protection, the institutional dimensions, and, in particular, the dilemmas associated with the use of human rights in cross-cultural or comparative perspective. The course schedule and reading lists assume no prior knowledge or training in human rights among students; to this extent, the course will be an introductory survey for graduate students and advanced undergraduates for whom a solid basis in human rights theory and practice would be useful.

BOOKS (required):


Recommended:

1. Gourevitch, Philip, We Wish to Inform You That Tomorrow We Will Be Killed With Our Families: Stories From Rwanda, Picador, 1998.
OTHER COURSE MATERIALS:

George Mason has recently instituted an electronic reserve system and they are encouraging professors to use this system in lieu of a formal (and sometimes expensive) course packet. I will be using this system throughout the semester, which gives me the ability to add readings as they either become available and/or relevant. I will give the class an brief tutorial on the use of the e-reserve system during the first meeting. E-reserve readings are listed below as “ER.”

COURSE FORMAT:

The course is a graduate seminar and will, therefore, involve the following features and expectations: (1) students will be expected to come to each Wednesday seminar with the readings fully digested and prepared to engage in a sustained interactive discussion of both critical concepts found in the readings, and ongoing themes that the seminar will inevitably develop; (2) seminar participants will be expected to engage in discussion and, at times, debate, with respect for the differences in background, belief, and ideology found at ICAR; and (3) students will be expected to devote themselves to their written work with the kind of energy associated with graduate study and to turn in assignments on time. Seminars will feature a combination of context-setting exposition by the professor, student presentation of critical concepts in the readings, discussion structured by student-prepared questions, free discussion, and, hopefully, guest lectures or presentations.

GRADING:

Since this is a graduate seminar, the evaluative focus will be on in-class participation and your critical writing. The grading distribution will be as follows:

Participation: 20%
Short essays: 30%
Final paper: 50%

** We will discuss the in-class and writing assignments in detail during our first class meeting and in follow-up handouts.

Introduction to course and course participants

Wednesday August 27

- Detailed introduction to course, assignments, expectations, participants.

I. Philosophical Foundations

September 17

A. An overview of the issues/Classical perspectives

- Sarat and Kearns, “The Unsettled Status of Human Rights,” pp. 1 – 18. [Electronic Reserve; hereinafter “ER”]
- Rosenbaum, Alan, “The Editor’s Perspectives on the Philosophy of Human Rights,” pp. 3-41. [ER]
• Donnelly, Jack, “Being Right and Having a Right,” pp. 1-10. [ER]
• Aristotle, from Politics, pp. 24-33 in Hayden.
• Cicero, from On the Laws, pp. 34-42 in Hayden.
• St. Thomas Aquinas, from Summa Theologica, pp. 43-47 in Hayden.
• Grotius, Hugo, from The Rights of War and Peace, pp. 48-53 in Hayden.

B. Modern perspectives

September 24

• Locke, John, from The Second Treatise on Government, pp. 71-79 in Hayden.
• Burke, Edmund, from Reflections on the Revolution in France, pp. 88-94 in Hayden.
• Paine, Thomas, from The Rights of Man, pp. 95-100 in Hayden.
• Wollstonecraft, Mary, from A Vindication of the Rights of Women, pp. 101-108 in Hayden.
• Kant, Immanuel, from The Principles of Political Right, pp. 109-117 in Hayden.
• Bentham, Jeremy, from Anarchical Fallacies, pp. 118-125 in Hayden.
• Marx, Karl, from On the Jewish Question, pp. 126-135 in Hayden.
• Mill, John Stuart, from Utilitarianism and On Liberty, pp. 136-146 in Hayden.

C. Current perspectives

September October 1

• Sen, Amartya, “Rights and Capabilities.” [ER]
• Perry, Michael, “Is the Idea of Human Rights Ineliminably Religious.” [ER]

II. Human Rights and Culture

October 8

III. The Institution of Human Rights and Human Rights Institutions

October 15


October 22


November 5

- Dowdle, Michael, “How a Liberal Jurist Defends the Bangkok Declaration.” In *Negotiating Culture*.
- Selected readings from *International Human Rights in Context*. [ER]
IV. Human Rights Practice and Practical Problems (Implementation, Activism, “Special Cases”)

November 12


Date To be Announced (between 11/12 and 11/19)

- Nickel, James, “What’s Wrong with Ethnic Cleansing?” In Hayden.
- Section on “Truth Commissions” from *International Human Rights in Context*. [ER]

November 19

LAST CLASS: Final paper due; party at my house; course evaluations; informal discussion of *We Wish to Inform You;* leave taking