

**WOH 3205**  
**The History of Human Rights**  
**Fall 2015**

[Syllabus Draft of 8/17/15]

Instructor: Prof. Stuart Finkel  
Class location: 119 Keene-Flint Hall  
Class meetings: T 5/6 and R 6  
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The belief that human beings of both genders and all races and creeds possess the same “inalienable rights” is a very modern concept. Just how recently it has developed is, in fact, a matter of considerable debate among historians: while many trace its origins back to the Enlightenment and French Revolution, others insist that the notion of international human rights as we currently understand them is no more than half a century old. At stake in this debate is the very essence of what we mean by “Human Rights,” how this concept has been applied, and its pertinence in the contemporary global arena.

In this course, students will study both the intellectual and practical history of human rights in the modern era. The debate over its chronology will form a backdrop informing our discussions of the topic. Did it originate, as Lynn Hunt suggests, with the development of “shared empathy” and the Declaration of the Rights of Man in the late 18<sup>th</sup> century? Or, on the other hand, does the international human rights movement of the late 20<sup>th</sup> century represent something qualitatively altogether different, as Samuel Moyn would argue?

In the process of tracing this debate, students will study the “prehistory” of human rights; the genealogy of the idea of the “Rights of Man” from the Enlightenment era; the uneasy coexistence of democracy and slavery; the genesis of 19<sup>th</sup> century humanitarian movements, including abolitionism; the origins of the Red Cross and the internationalization of humanitarian ideals; the socialist and anti-imperialist challenges to the “liberal” conception of rights; the “great breakthrough” of the international human rights movement *per se* in the post World War II era; and, finally, the achievements and challenges of human rights in the contemporary world.

**Required Texts:**

Lynn Hunt, *Inventing Human Rights: A History*.  
Samuel Moyn, *The Last Utopia: Human Rights in History*.  
Peter N. Stearns, *Human Rights in World History*.  
Paul Gorden Lauren, *The Evolution of International Human Rights: Visions Seen*, 3<sup>rd</sup> ed.  
Walter Laqueur & Barry Rubin, eds., *The Human Rights Reader*, rev. ed.  
Electronic Reserves (ER), on the course *Canvas* website.

The required texts are available for purchase at area or online bookstores. Supplementary readings will be posted on the *Canvas* website as electronic reserves (ER). You should always have all of each week’s readings with you for ready reference during our class discussions.

## Course Assignments

The assignments for this course will include:

A **Short Analytic Paper**, due Fri., Sept. 18<sup>th</sup> (**15%** of the final grade)

A **Midterm Exam**, to be taken in class on Tue., Oct. 27<sup>th</sup> (**30%**)

A **Group Presentation**, to be given Dec. 1<sup>st</sup>-3<sup>rd</sup> (**15%**), along with an associated, individually written **Final Summary Research Paper** (8-10pp.) due Mon., Dec. 14<sup>th</sup> (**25%**)

Class Discussion **Participation and Attendance** (**15%**)

Attendance for this class is mandatory; you must be on time, prepared to discuss the readings, and courteous to everyone in the room. The participation portion of your grade will be adversely affected after two unexcused absences. Lectures will alternate with class discussion, which will usually take place during part of the Tuesday double period. There may be a few occasions during the term, to be announced in advance, when a brief video lecture available via the course *Canvas* website will take the place of our usual Thursday class meeting.

## Grading Scale and Assignment Summary

Grade Proportion	Grade Scale	Grade Value
Short Paper = 15% of Grade	93-100 = <b>A</b>	A = 4.0
Midterm = 30% of Grade	90-92 = <b>A-</b>	A- = 3.67
Group Presentation = 15% of Grade	87-89 = <b>B+</b>	B+ = 3.33
Final Paper = 25% of Grade	83-86 = <b>B</b>	B = 3.00
Participation = 15% of Grade	80-82 = <b>B-</b>	B- = 2.67
	77-79 = <b>C+</b>	C+ = 2.33
	73-76 = <b>C</b>	C = 2.00
	70-72 = <b>C-</b>	C- = 1.67
	67-69 = <b>D+</b>	D+ = 1.33
	63-66 = <b>D</b>	D = 1.00
	60-62 = <b>D-</b>	D- = 0.67
	0-59 = <b>E</b>	E = 0.00

For more information on UF's grading system and policies, please consult the Undergraduate Catalog <https://catalog.ufl.edu/ugrad/current/regulations/info/grades.aspx>

## University and Class Policies

### Assignments and Attendance

Students will be expected to have done all of the reading and to participate fully in the class discussions. History classes are most rewarding when students interact with the texts, each other, and the instructor on a sustained basis. Readings provide the raw material for class discussion, where much of the learning takes place. Effective class participation is therefore essential. Students can expect a respectful atmosphere in which to express their opinions.

Attendance is mandatory, and you must be on time, prepared, and courteous to everyone in the room. The participation portion of the grade will be adversely affected after two unexcused absences, except in extraordinary circumstances. Consistent tardiness will also be penalized.

Late work will not be accepted without penalty. Please make every effort to apprise the instructor of adverse circumstances that affect your ability to attend class or complete assignments on time. Official documentation is required to excuse absences and to schedule make-up assignments. Requirements for class attendance and make-up exams, assignments, and other work in this course are consistent with university policies detailed online at <https://catalog.ufl.edu/ugrad/current/regulations/info/attendance.aspx>

### Academic Honesty

Students must conform to UF's academic honesty policy regarding plagiarism and other forms of cheating. This means that on all work submitted for credit by students at the University of Florida, the following pledge is either required or implied: "On my honor, I have neither given nor received unauthorized aid in doing this assignment." The university specifically prohibits cheating, plagiarism, misrepresentation, bribery, conspiracy, and fabrication. For more information about the definition of these terms and other aspects of the Honesty Guidelines, see the University's student code of conduct at <https://www.dso.ufl.edu/sccr/process/student-conduct-honor-code>, and conflict resolution procedures at <https://www.dso.ufl.edu/sccr/conflict-resolution>

All students found to have cheated, plagiarized, or otherwise having violated the Honor Code in *any assignment* for this course will be prosecuted to the full extent of the university honor policy, including judicial action and the sanctions listed in paragraph XI of the Student Conduct Code. For serious violations, you will fail this course.

### Students with Disabilities

Please do not hesitate to ask for accommodation for a documented disability. Students requesting classroom accommodation must first register with the Dean of Students Office, see online at <http://www.dso.ufl.edu/drp>. The Dean of Students Office will provide documentation to the student, who must then provide this documentation to the Instructor when requesting accommodation. Please ask if you would like any assistance in this process.

### Evaluations

Students are expected to provide feedback on the quality of instruction in this course based on ten criteria. These evaluations are conducted online at <https://evaluations.ufl.edu>. Evaluations are typically open during the last two or three weeks of the semester, but students will be given specific times when they are open. Summary results of these assessments are available to students at <https://evaluations.ufl.edu>.

## Readings and Assignment Schedule

[There may be minor changes in the readings and assignments, which will be announced in advance.]

### **Week One (Aug 25, 27): What are Human Rights? and How New Are They?**

Readings: Stearns, pp.1-23; Kenneth Minogue, “The History of the Idea of Human Rights,” in Laqueur & Rubin, pp.3-17; Hunt pp.15-34; Moyn, pp.1-10.

### **Week Two (Sep 1, 3): Human Rights: A Prehistory.**

Readings: Stearns, pp.24-53; Lauren, pp.1-18; Moyn, pp.11-20.

Primary sources: The Code of Hammurabi, excerpts (ER); Confucius, brief excerpt from *The Analects* (ER); Cicero, brief excerpt from *The Laws* (ER); Hebrew Bible, brief excerpts from Exodus (ER); The Sermon on the Mount, from Matthew 5:1-48 (ER); “The Magna Carta,” excerpts, in Laqueur & Rubin, pp.102-4.

### **Week Three (Sep 8, 10): The Enlightenment: Changing Sensibilities.**

Readings: Stearns, pp.54-76; Hunt, pp.35-112.

Primary sources: John Locke, excerpt from *Second Treatise of Government*, in Laqueur & Rubin, 62-68; The English Bill of Rights (1689), excerpts, in *ibid.*, pp.104-6; Cesare Beccaria, excerpt from *Essay on Crimes and Punishments*, in *ibid.*, pp.75-78; Voltaire, excerpt from *Philosophical Dictionary*, in *ibid.*, pp.79-82.

### **Week Four (Sep 15, 17): The Age of Revolutions ... and of Declarations.**

Readings: Lauren, pp.19-24; Hunt, pp.113-45; Moyn, pp.20-31.

Primary sources: The United States Declaration of Independence, in Laqueur & Rubin, pp.106-9; The Bill of Rights to the U.S. Constitution, in *ibid.*, pp.115-16; The French Declaration of the Rights of Man and Citizen, in *ibid.*, pp.118-20; Thomas Paine, brief excerpts from *The Rights of Man* (ER); Edmund Burke, brief excerpts from *Reflections on the Revolution in France* (ER).

### **1<sup>st</sup> Paper due Sept. 18<sup>th</sup>**

### **Week Five (Sep 22, 24): Whose Rights?**

Readings: Stearns, pp.76-87; Lauren, pp.24-42; Hunt, pp.146-96.

Primary sources: Amendments to the U.S. Constitution, in Laqueur & Rubin, pp.117-18; Bartolomé de Las Casas, excerpts from *In Defense of the Indians* (ER); Olympe de Gouges, excerpts from “The Declaration of the Rights of Woman” (ER); Mary Wollstonecraft, excerpts from *A Vindication of the Rights of Women* (ER); French National Assembly “Admission of Jews to Rights of Citizenship” (1791) (ER); Jeremy Bentham, brief excerpts from *Anarchical Fallacies* (ER).

**Week Six** (Sep 29, Oct 1): Humanitarianism in the 19<sup>th</sup> Century: Antislavery, the International Red Cross, & the Case for “Humanitarian” Intervention.

Readings: Lauren, pp.43-78; Stearns, pp.86-113; Michael Barnett, *Empire of Humanity: A History of Humanitarianism*, pp.49-60 (ER).

Primary sources: Olaudah Equiano, excerpts from *The Interesting Narrative* (ER); Henri Dunant, brief excerpts from *Memory of Solferino* (ER); Documents on international intervention, 1839-1913, in Laqueur & Rubin, pp.128-48.

**Week Seven** (Oct 6, 8): Challenging “Liberal” Rights: Socialism and Anti-Imperialism.

Readings: Hunt, pp.196-200; Micheline Ishay, “Challenging the Liberal Vision of Rights,” in *History of Human Rights*, pp.127-35 (ER); Moyn, pp.31-43; Barnett, *Empire of Humanity*, pp.60-75 (ER); Bonny Ibhawoh, *Imperialism and Human Rights*, pp.29-49, 55-58, 63-70 (ER).

Primary sources: Excerpts from Marx, *Critique of the Gotha Programme* (ER); Paul LaFargue, “The Rights of the Horse and the Rights of Man” (ER); Excerpts from Lenin, *The State and Revolution* and “Report to the First Congress of the Third International,” in Laqueur & Rubin, 179-88; Gandhi, “An Appeal to the Nation” (ER).

**Week Eight** (Oct 13, 15): World Wars and Genocide: Humanity in the Age of Global Catastrophe.

Readings: Stearns, pp.113-23; Lauren, pp.79-147.

Primary sources: “German Government Memorandum on the Armenians” (1915), in Laqueur & Rubin, p.150; brief excerpt from The League of Nations Covenant in *ibid.*, p.151; “Polish Minority Treaty” (1919) in *ibid.*, 151-56; André Mandelstam, on the 1929 “New York” Declaration of the International Rights of Man (ER); brief excerpt from The Atlantic Charter (1941), in Laqueur in Rubin, p.156.

**Week Nine** (Oct 20, 22): Human Rights as Modern Construct: The United Nations Declaration of Human Rights.

Readings: Lauren, pp.147-94; Hunt, pp.200-8; Moyn, pp.44-83. [Optional: Stearns, pp.124-35.]

Primary sources: U.N. Universal Declaration on Human Rights and related Covenants in Laqueur & Rubin, pp.197-204, 215-33.

**Week Ten** (Oct 27, 29): Mid-Term. Introduction to the “Great Breakthrough.”

**Mid-Term on Tue, Oct 27<sup>th</sup>**

Readings (for Thurs.): Lauren, pp.195-242; Moyn, pp.84-119. [Optional: Stearns, pp.135-46.]

**Week Eleven** (Nov 3, 5): The “Great Breakthrough”: The International Human Rights Movement in the Late Twentieth Century.

Readings: Lauren, pp.242-66; Moyn, pp.120-211.

Primary sources: The Helsinki Agreement (1975), in Laqueur & Rubin, pp.253-63; Nelson Mandela, “Statement during the Rivonia Trial (1964),” in *ibid.*, pp.320-24; Andrei Sakharov, “Open Letter to the United States Congress (1973) in *ibid.*, pp.334-36; “Czechoslovakian Charter 77 Declaration (1976),” 336-40; and Jimmy Carter, Speech on Humane Purposes in Foreign Policy (1977), in *ibid.*, pp.349-52.

Group presentation initial selections.

**Week Twelve** (Nov 10, 12): Human Rights After the “End of History.”  
Group presentation work.

Readings: Stearns, pp.146-60; Barnett, *Empire of Humanity*, pp.161-94 (ER).

Primary sources: Amnesty International, “Human Rights and U.S. Foreign Policy” (1988), in Laqueur & Rubin, pp.434-40; Mikhail Gorbachev, Speech to the U.N. General Assembly (1988), in *ibid.*, 452-54; Corazon Aquino, Speech on the Fortieth Anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, in *ibid.*, 442-45; Samantha Power, “Raising the Cost of Genocide” (ER); and Chandra Muzaffar, “From Human Rights to Human Dignity” (ER).

**Week Thirteen** (Nov 17, 19): Review. Group presentation consultations.

**Week Fourteen** (Nov 24): Contemporary Human Rights, cont.

Readings: Stearns, pp.161-86; Lauren, pp.267-88; Micheline R. Ishay, “Debating Globalization and Intervention: Spartacists versus Caesarists” (ER).

Primary sources: Excerpt from Amartya Sen, *Development as Freedom* (ER); Vanessa Baird, “Trafficked” (ER); Hillary Rodham Clinton, “Remarks in Recognition of International Human Rights Day, 2011” (ER); David Cole, “Let’s Fight Terrorism, not the Constitution” (ER).

**Week Fifteen** (Dec 1, 3): Group Presentations

**Week Sixteen** (Dec 8): Conclusions.

Readings: Stearns, pp.187-91; Lauren, pp.289-315; Hunt, pp.209-14; Moyn, pp.212-227.

**Final Summary Research Paper due Mon., December 14<sup>th</sup> at 11:59pm.**