This course analyzes international human rights—their philosophical basis, their emergence and legal recognition in the post-World War II world, and their enforcement by unilateral, multilateral, domestic and non-governmental means. We read works by political scientists, policy analysts and legal academics—including a leading international human rights law casebook. The course is designed to assist students in writing a major research paper on the world politics of human rights. The specific questions we shall examine include: What valid basis is there for the assertion of universal rights? Which rights can be so justified and which cannot? Why have governments accepted formal obligations and established international mechanisms to monitor and enforce those obligations, even at considerable sacrifice of domestic sovereignty? In what way have rights been translated into major international legal obligations under the United Nations, regional human rights conventions, and various treaties? Which governments resist this trend and why? What is the relative importance of interstate coercion (intervention, sanctions, financial inducement), institutional design (the nature of international judges and officials, the form of international tribunals and standards), domestic political commitment (the interests of national governments and their constituencies, the role of domestic courts) and idealistic persuasion (the power of NGOs, public opinion, transnational diffusion, and analogical reasoning)? Under what circumstances are international tribunals, military intervention, sanctions, truth commissions, domestic litigation, idealistic persuasion, or public shaming effective means to enforce human rights? What has been the role of groups in civil society—NGOs, political parties, lawyers and judges—in promoting observance of human rights?

The reading load totals approximately 150-225 pp. per week. Assigned work will include five individual or group research assignments, and one individual final research paper on an appropriate topic to be determined in consultation with the professor. The five individual/group assignments will be due at 5 p.m. the Monday before class on Weeks 2, 6, 9, 10, and 11. Each will also involve an oral class presentation. The purpose of the final research paper is to employ detailed primary research to illuminate an enduring issue in international human rights. A two-page prospectus for this paper will be due to the professor on 26 November. A copy must be circulated electronically to all class members by 5 p.m. on the Monday preceding the penultimate discussion session in Week 12, where they will be discussed. The paper itself will be due at 5 p.m. on the last day of reading period. 50% of the final grade will be based on reading, class participation, and group assignments—each is required to receive a passing grade in the course. The remaining 50% of the final grade will be based on the final research paper. Late papers and any papers (or other communications) that arrive with a virus will trigger an automatic penalty to the final grade.

NB: Some class sessions may be rescheduled.
**Course Materials**

Nearly all the materials for this course will be on reserve at Hilles and Lamont Reserve Desks. Some materials for this course (including a journal articles for which hard copies will also be at Hilles and Lamont) are available only from either on-line bibliographical sites or electronic distribution in Word or pdf files. I have not asked Lamont and Hilles to stock materials available on-line. Before the class begins students should therefore make sure that they are familiar with ProQuest, Project Muse, J-STOR, LEXIS-NEXIS, and other basic on-line sources available through Harvard, and that they have the computer capability to download and read (and/or print out) Word and PDF files. Also they should be able to send attachments, since all assignments, including the final paper, should be submitted by e-mail. Finally, since students will be sharing a lot of files, please make sure you have anti-virus software and keep it updated during the course.

**Texts**

The nine books below are required for the course. They have been submitted to UC Books for internet purchase. Students can access UC Books at [http://www.fas.harvard.edu/~ucbooks/](http://www.fas.harvard.edu/~ucbooks/).

Philip Gourevitch, *We Wish to Inform You that Tomorrow We Will Be Killed with our Families: Stories from Rwanda* (New York: Picador, 1998).


WEEK 1 (SEPT 19) – THE EYE OF THE BEHOLDER

+ Philip Gourevitch, *We Wish to Inform You that Tomorrow We Will Be Killed with our Families: Stories from Rwanda* (New York: Picador, 1998), entire.

WEEK 2 (SEPT 26) – PHILOSOPHICAL FOUNDATIONS: WHAT ARE HUMAN RIGHTS AND HOW DO WE JUSTIFY THEM?


WEEK 3 (OCT 3) – HISTORICAL ORIGINS: RELIGIOUS LIBERTY, SLAVERY, NON-COMBATANT IMMUNITY, AND MINORITY RIGHTS


WEEK 4 (OCT 10) – CONSTRUCTING UNIVERSAL HUMAN RIGHTS: THE UNIVERSAL DECLARATION AND THE COVENANTS


+ “Universalism and Cultural Relativism” (pp. 366-398), “Gender” (pp. 404-425), the African system (pp. 920-937) in Steiner and Alston, *International Human Rights in Context*, 2nd ed.


**WEEK 5 (OCT 17) – GENOCIDE AND HUMANITARIAN INTERVENTION**


**WEEK 6 (OCT 24) – INTERNATIONAL TRIBUNALS: FROM NUREMBERG TO THE ICC**


+ On the European regional regime, pp. 786-788, 797-804, 808-818, 822-840.
Not required: If you are interested in the UN system, what it does, why it is so constrained, and whether these constraints are legitimate, see also Steiner and Alston, *International Human Rights in Context*, 2nd ed., pp. 597-605, 611-612, 620-641.

**WEEK 7 (OCTOBER 31) – UNIVERSAL JURISDICTION AND TRUTH COMMISSIONS**


§ Michael Byers, “In Pursuit of Pinochet”, *London Review of Books* [Available at: http://www.lrb.co.uk/v21/n02/byer2102.htm]


Henry Kissinger, forthcoming article, *Foreign Affairs.*


**WEEK 8 (NOVEMBER 7) – GLOBAL CIVIL SOCIETY**


WEEK 9 (NOVEMBER 14) – EXPLAINING AMERICAN EXCEPTIONALISM


WEEK 10 (NOVEMBER 21) AND WEEK 11 (NOVEMBER 28) – GENERATION(S) OF RIGHTS: HOW FAR SHOULD THE HUMAN RIGHTS DISCOURSE BE EXPANDED?


Individual topics to be assigned.

WEEK 12 (DECEMBER 5) AND WEEK 13 (DECEMBER 12) – INDIVIDUAL RESEARCH PRESENTATIONS