

Course Title	: HISTORY OF HUMAN RIGHTS
Course Code	: HST3009
Recommended Study Year	: Term 4-8
No. of Credits/Term	: 3
Mode of Tuition	: Sectional
Class Contact Hours	: 3 hours per week
Category in Major Prog.	: Category 4: Comparative and Transnational
Prerequisite(s)	: None
Co-requisite(s)	: None
Exemption Requirement(s)	: None

Brief Course Description

This course introduces students to the history of human rights, considered not as natural or unchanging principles but as a set of ideas whose meaning has changed across time and space. We will first explore the emergence of rights concepts and their role in the American, French, and Haitian revolutions; and will interrogate whether and how these concepts related to subsequent humanitarian efforts in the colonial world. Turning to the twentieth century, we will examine how total war and authoritarianism shaped the institutionalization of human rights and the explosion of transnational rights activism.

Aims

This course enables students to analyze human rights as a historically contingent concept. It prompts them to interpret a variety of primary sources related to human rights, and to evaluate diverse approaches used in secondary sources in the field of human-rights history.

Learning Outcomes

1. Comprehend how ideas about human rights have been articulated in a variety of historical contexts.
2. Evaluate diverse secondary sources related to the history of human rights.
3. Synthesize relevant primary and secondary sources into an original argument.
4. Communicate effectively on key issues in human rights history, in both written and spoken English.

Indicative Content

- I. Rights in the Enlightenment and the Age of Revolutions
- II. Imperial rule and humanitarian mobilizations

- III. The institutionalization of human rights in the 1940s
- IV. Witnessing atrocity: human rights in visual cultures since 1945
- V. Was decolonization a human-rights issue?
- VI. Antiracism, the United States, and South Africa during the Cold War
- VII. Nongovernmental activism in the 1970s and beyond
- VIII. The cultural relativism versus universalism debate
- IX. Women's rights and gay rights as human rights? Debates since the 1970s

Teaching Method

The course will be taught in seminars emphasizing the close analysis of texts and regular student participation.

Measurement of Learning Outcomes

- Source reviews (LOs 1, 2, 4)
Short reviews of assigned secondary sources will be used to evaluate students' comprehension of course themes and methods.
- Presentations (LOs 1, 3, 4)
Students will present on their research during the semester, explaining their approach and argument.
- Research paper (LOs 1, 2, 3, 4)
A research paper will prompt students to integrate primary and secondary sources to support an original argument.
- Discussion participation (LOs 1, 4)
Students will be expected to participate actively and constructively in all class discussions.

Assessment

- Source reviews **30%**
- Presentations **20%**
- Research paper **30%**
- Discussion participation **20%**

Required Readings

Readings will include selections from the following (the precise readings may vary from term to term):

Anderson, Carol, *Eyes off the Prize: The United Nations and the African American Struggle for Human Rights, 1944-1955*, New York, Cambridge University Press, 2003.

Angle, Stephen C., and Marina Svensson, eds., *The Chinese Human Rights Reader: Documents and Commentary, 1900-2000*, New York, M.E. Sharpe, 2001.

- Barnett, Michael, *Empire of Humanity: A History of Humanitarianism*, Ithaca, NY, Cornell University Press, 2011.
- Burke, Roland, *Decolonization and the Evolution of International Human Rights*, Philadelphia, University of Pennsylvania Press, 2010.
- Cmiel, Kenneth, "The Emergence of Human Rights Politics in the United States," *Journal of American History*, 86/3 (Dec., 1999), 1231-50.
- Du Bois, W. E. B., "An Appeal to the World" (1946), in *The Oxford W. E. B. Du Bois Reader*, ed. Eric J. Sundquist, Oxford, Oxford University Press, 1996, 454-61.
- Eckel, Jan and Samuel Moyn, eds., *The Breakthrough: Human Rights in the 1970s*, Philadelphia, University of Pennsylvania Press, 2014.
- Grossmann, Atina "Grams, Calories, and Food: Languages of Victimization, Entitlement, and Human Rights in Occupied Germany, 1945-1949," *Central European History*, Vol. 44 (2001): 118-48.
- Hunt, Lynn, *Inventing Human Rights: A History*, New York, W. W. Norton, 2008.
- Klose, Fabian, "'Source of Embarrassment': Human Rights, States of Emergency, and the Wars of Decolonization," in *Human Rights in the Twentieth Century*, ed. Stefan-Ludwig Hoffmann, New York, Cambridge University Press, 2011, 237-57.
- Lauren, Paul Gordon, *The Evolution of International Human Rights: Visions Seen*, 3rd edn., Philadelphia, University of Pennsylvania Press, 2011.
- Lynda S. Bell, Andrew J. Nathan, and Ilan Peleg, eds., *Negotiating Culture and Human Rights*, New York, Columbia University Press, 2001.
- Moyn, Samuel, *The Last Utopia: Human Rights in History*, Cambridge, MA, Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2010.
- Skrentny, John D., *Minority Rights Revolution*, Cambridge, MA, Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2002.
- Slate, Nico, *Colored Cosmopolitanism: The Shared Struggle for Freedom in the United States and India*, Cambridge, MA, Harvard University Press, 2012.
- Sliwinski, Sharon, *Human Rights in Camera*, Chicago, University of Chicago Press, 2011.
- Sontag, Susan, "Photography," *New York Review of Books*, 18 Oct. 1973.
- Wasserstrom, Jeffrey N., et al, eds., *Human Rights and Revolutions*, 2nd edn, Lanham, MD, Rowman & Littlefield, 2007.

Supplementary Readings

Borstelmann, Thomas, *The Cold War and the Color Line: American Race Relations in the Global Arena*, Cambridge, MA, Harvard University Press, 2001.

Dudziak, Mary, *Cold War Civil Rights: Race and the Image of American Democracy*, Princeton, Princeton University Press, 2000.

Duranti, Marco, *The Conservative Human Rights Revolution: European Identity, Transnational Politics, and the Origins of the European Convention*, New York, Oxford University Press, 2017.

Frazier, Robeson Taj, *The East Is Black: Cold War China in the Black Radical Imagination*, Durham, NC, Duke University Press, 2014.

Glendon, Mary Ann, *A World Made New: Eleanor Roosevelt and the Universal Declaration of Human Rights*, New York, Random House, 2001.

Hochschild, Adam, *King Leopold's Ghost: A Story of Greed, Terror and Heroism in Colonial Africa*, New York, Mariner Books, 1999.

Iriye, Akira, et al, eds., *The Human Rights Revolution: An International History*, New York, Oxford University Press, 2012.

Mazower, Mark, "The Strange Triumph of Human Rights, 1933-1950," *Historical Journal*, 47/2 (Jun., 2004), 379-98.

Mitoma, Glenn, *Human Rights and the Negotiation of American Power*, Philadelphia, University of Pennsylvania Press, 2013.

Moyn, Samuel, *Christian Human Rights*, Philadelphia, University of Pennsylvania Press, 2015.

Scott, Joan Wallach, *Only Paradoxes to Offer: French Feminists and the Rights of Man*, Cambridge, MA, Harvard University Press, 1996.

Sontag, Susan, *Regarding the Pain of Others*, New York, Picador, 2003.

Watenpugh, Keith David, "The League of Nations' Rescue of Armenian Genocide Survivors and the Making of Modern Humanitarianism, 1920-1927," *American Historical Review*, 115/5 (2010), 1315-39.

Important Notes:

- (1) Students are expected to spend a total of 9 hours (i.e. 3 hours of class contact and 6 hours of personal study) per week to achieve the course learning outcomes.
- (2) Students shall be aware of the University regulations about dishonest practice in course work, tests and examinations, and the possible consequences as stipulated in the

Regulations Governing University Examinations. In particular, plagiarism, being a kind of dishonest practice, is “the presentation of another person’s work without proper acknowledgement of the source, including exact phrases, or summarised ideas, or even footnotes/citations, whether protected by copyright or not, as the student’s own work”. Students are required to strictly follow university regulations governing academic integrity and honesty.

- (3) Students are required to submit writing assignment(s) using Turnitin.
- (4) To enhance students’ understanding of plagiarism, a mini-course “Online Tutorial on Plagiarism Awareness” is available on <https://pla.ln.edu.hk/>.