Protecting Human Rights

BA Course
Winter semester 2014/2015
16 October 2014 – 12 February 2015
Thursday, 4-6pm
Seminar pavillon Westend – SP 0.01

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This course examines the protection of human rights, with a focus on international/transnational efforts to protect human rights. We study a diversity of actors including states and international organizations, as well as non-state actors such as non-governmental organizations, transnational activist coalitions, local human rights groups, corporations and rebel groups. While the focus is on political and civil rights, especially rights relating to physical integrity such as the ban on torture, we also look at economic, social, and cultural rights. In analyzing efforts to diffuse human rights and promote compliance, we draw on insights from International Relations, international law, political theory, and sociology.
Requirements

1. The course language is English.
2. Attendance: You can miss no more than two classes, and only with a valid reason.
3. Read the texts before class.
4. Contribute to debates during classes.
5. Bring a hard copy of the texts to class (a reader is available for purchase), or have the texts (which can be downloaded from OLAT) on your computer.
6. Participate in the role-play on 12 February 2015.
7. Those who only wish to receive confirmation of participation have to give a presentation on one of the course topics (and make available the handout of the presentation, see below). Fill in the relevant form (make sure you have the right form; forms have been changed in 2014), hand it in on 12 February 2015, and collect the signed and stamped forms at the office of Frau Beate Stein (Office 1.12, Clusterbuilding Campus Westend). You may also take the filled-in forms to Frau Stein’s office later. In this case the forms will be signed during the semester break (if all of the above-mentioned requirements have been fulfilled).
8. To receive more credit points (“Leistungsschein”), give a presentation on one of the topics of the course and write an essay (see the information below). Fill in the relevant form, hand it in together with your essay, and collect the signed and stamped form (which will also include the grade) at the office of Frau Beate Stein.

The presentation

- Choice of topic: select one of the questions suggested for each session (the questions will be distributed before the beginning of the course). You may also formulate your own research question; in this case first discuss it with SD/CF. The choice of topic is to be made in Weeks 1-3. Presentations can be made individually or as part of a small group.
- Length: no more than 20 minutes, to leave time for discussion. Presenters are invited to moderate the discussion.
- Prepare a handout of around two pages and upload the presentation on OLAT no later than a week before your presentation.
- Produce copies of your handout and distribute them in class.
- The handout/presentation should include three parts:
  - Analysis/criticism of the texts to be read for class (brief summary, gaps, contradictions, divergent opinions). You must also search and refer to additional material relevant to your chosen topic (most of which you find in the library, including through electronic data bases – searching the Internet is not sufficient). Avoid lengthy summaries of the texts and aim at problem-oriented analysis instead of description;
  - Statements/hypotheses related to the question under discussion, to introduce the debate in class;
  - A reference list (that includes not only the core readings).
The Essay

❖ Select a topic (it can be the topic of your course presentation) and formulate a research question.

❖ Write an outline of 2-3 pages (formatted as explained below) that includes: topic, literature/theory, research question, hypothesis, methodology, sources, a tentative structure, key references, and an abstract of around 250 words. It is helpful to consult reference books on research methodology, for instance:
  • Alexander L. George and Andrew Bennett, Case Studies and Theory Development in the Social Sciences (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2005).

❖ Once you have prepared a first draft, think it over, get feedback from peers, and revise it. It takes many drafts to organize your ideas and to produce a high-quality outline!

❖ Submit two hard copies of your outline to SD/CF by 29 January 2015.

❖ Set up an appointment with SD/CF to discuss your outline, and take into account the comments you receive when writing your essay.

❖ Have the essay language-edited by another person; flawed language will lead to a lower grade.

❖ Deadline: 13 April 2015. After this date, essays are no longer accepted.

❖ Hand in two hard copies of your essay (email attachments will not be accepted) at Frau Stein’s office, put them in the letterbox of SD/CF, or send them by post.

❖ Format
  o Length: 15 pages (no less than 12, no more than 17), including abstract, footnotes, title page, and bibliography. Essays shorter or longer than this will not be accepted.
  o Font: Times New Roman; font size 12; 1.5 space; leave sufficient margins.
  o Page numbering.
  o Title page with name, number of words, email address and abstract.
  o Use footnotes or references in the main text, but no endnotes.

❖ Introduction
  o Present the topic and engage the interest of the reader.
  o Formulate a question that is of scientific and/or political salience (ideally a puzzle).
  o The aim is to explain, not to describe.
  o Why is it important to reflect on this question?
  o Formulate a hypothesis (a preliminary answer to your question).
  o Method: How are you going to answer the question (cases, case selection criteria, indicators, sources)?
  o Define important terms.
  o Clarify your assumptions.
  o Explain how you have structured your paper.
Overview of the literature (may be part of the introduction)

- What empirical and theoretical literature is pertinent to your topic?
- Is there a scientific and/or political debate on the topic?
- How does your essay speak to this debate?
- Which theories are most suitable for answering your initial question?
- From the theory, derive a hypothesis.

Main part

- Present your line of argument in different sections.
- The titles of the sections should encapsulate the content.
- Integrate empirics, theoretical debates, and your hypothesis.

Conclusion

- Summarize the results of your inquiry.
- Do the results confirm or contradict your initial hypothesis?
- Here you may also outline ideas for further research.

Footnotes

- Use explanatory footnotes sparingly. Important information should be included in the main text, and information that is not important can be omitted. Footnotes generally should only reference sources (if you have opted for footnotes).
- In the footnote, list the author’s name, the date of publication, and the relevant page number.
- The complete reference should be listed in the bibliography.
- The bibliographic details must be complete, i.e. include
  - Name and first name of the author, title of the text, place of publication, and date of publication.
  - For book chapters: Name of the editor, chapter pages.
  - For journal articles: Name of the journal, volume and issue number, page numbers.

Reference list/bibliography

Further important points

- Beware of plagiarism! All sources must be cited.
- The Internet merely complements research in the library – it is not a substitute. ‘Google bibliographies’ will significantly lower the grade.
- Correct grammar, spelling, and punctuation are crucial to enable the reader to follow your line of thought.
- Always keep in mind that you are writing for the reader, not for yourself. Use simple prose. You may want to try and entertain the reader, but avoid polemics. Tell the reader how you proceed. Make the reader happy.

Readings

The syllabus and the texts are available online at: https://olat.server.uni-frankfurt.de. In addition, you can purchase a reader that contains all the essential readings, at Fürstenbergstr. 168. In case of technical or administrative issues, do not hesitate to email Miranda Loli (mirandaloli@stud.uni-frankfurt.de) or Sara Dezalay/Cornelius Friesendorf.
Schedule

**Week 1: 16 October**
Introduction, course overview, requirements

**Week 2: 23 October**
The History of Human Rights

**Week 3: 30 October**
Human Rights and International Relations

**Week 4: 6 November**
Debating the Universality of Human Rights

**Week 5: 13 November**
The Global System of Human Rights Protection: The United Nations
- **Read the following online:** Universal Declaration of Human Rights, International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (including its Optional Protocols), International Covenant on Social, Economic and Cultural Rights.

**Week 6: 20 November**
Regional Systems of Human Rights Protection: Europe, Latin America, and Africa Compared
Read **at least one of the following online**: European Convention for the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms, American Convention on Human Rights, African Charter on Human and Peoples’ Rights.

**Week 7: 27 November**

**Implementing Human Rights: From Commitment to Compliance**


**Week 8: 4 December**

**Torture**


**Week 9: 11 December**

**Economic, Social, and Cultural Rights**

- **Guest speaker**

**Week 10: 18 December**

**Human Rights and Humanitarian Intervention**


**Week 11: 15 January**

**Human Rights, Crimes and Justice after War**

Week 12: 22 January

Human Rights and Corporations


- **Documentary:** Bananas! Fredrik Gertten, 2009

Week 13: 29 January

Human Rights and Rebel Groups


- **Search for specific cases in this database:**
  
  [http://theirwords.org/pages/geneva-call](http://theirwords.org/pages/geneva-call)

Week 14: 5 February

Migration and Human Rights


- **Guest speaker**

Week 15: 12 February

Role Play and Course Critique