Human Rights and International Studies

http://www.sociologyofhumanrights.org

SEMINAR: INTL 407

Instructor: Tugrul Keskin
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Office Hours: Tuesday 1:00 PM – 4 PM or by appointment
(PLEASE include “Human Rights” in the subject line)

Course Description and Objective:

Over the last few decades, some concepts have become very popularized as a consequence of increased technological advancement and global market conditions, and their implications on human society. These include democracy, human rights, freedom, free elections, minority and immigrant rights, freedom of expression, religious freedom, academic freedom, and other related concepts. However, each of these terms holds vague meaning to those who seek freedom, human rights, democracy, and so on. Most importantly, these terms have been commodified in the marketplace. State actors, organizations, academicians and activists have also politicized these terms, resulting in careers based on the political usage and interests of those wielding power to decide what constitutes human rights. Human Rights ideology represents a political opportunity structure for many political and social groups and plays a major role in world politics today, especially after the collapse of the Soviet Union. In this class, we will critically review and analyze the history of human rights in the larger context of globalization and power politics that determine how these concepts are understood and applied. This course provides an alternative overview of the definitions, history and development of Human Rights in the Western and Non-Western contexts.
In this class, we will explore the meanings, definitions, history, and development of Human Rights and its place in world politics from a sociological perspective. The sociological approach is different than political science and law because while they each see these as ascribed rights that come with birth, the field of Sociology takes into account the power relationships that are built into the understandings and the differential usage of the concept of Human Rights. Sociology also accounts for the cultural, societal and historical context in which the discussion of Human Rights arises.

Hence, this class will be taught from the perspective of society and culture, not through the lense of a particular set of laws and regulations. In this context, when we read the Human Rights violations reports published by HRW, AI or the US State Department Human Rights reports, we need to critically approach each subject when we examine highly politicized human rights issues in East Timor, Kashmir, Tibet, Xinjiang (Eastern Turkistan), Rwanda, Israel/Palestine and Europe. Because of the politicization and commodification of Human Rights, it is very difficult to create an objective and contextual approach to issues such as the Kurds, Palestinians, Uighurs, Mexican immigrants in the US, Turkish Immigrants in Germany, Arabs in the US, among other examples. How can we improve women’s rights in Afghanistan? Who defines these rights? Why are there different approaches and definitions of Human Rights and where do those differences arise from?

The concept of Human Rights is embedded in the European and American framework of neo-colonialism and in this context, it has been commodified by the market conditions of capitalism. The colonial legacy of Europe created unintended consequences such as the dictatorial regimes, cheap labor, and reactionary conservative and religious social and political movements in the former colonies. These conditions led to the human right problems and abuses in those countries we see today. Europe and the US now exploit these weaknesses to benefit of American and European economic interests. This dynamic
became obvious after the Reagan Administration came to power in the US. In this process, we have witnessed the emergence of the human rights industry in the West.

**Learning Outcomes (Tugrul Keskin):**

By the end of the course, you will have enhanced your:
- Critical thinking in relation to international studies and sociology
- Ability to question dogmas and taboos in today’s societies
- Consciousness of differing perspectives and diversity
- Understanding of world issues and trends
- Understanding of the impact of colonialism and imperialism in developing nations

You also will have increased your knowledge concerning:
- Resources in your potential discipline
- Resources specific to your region
- Traditional information sources
- Alternative information sources
- Knowledge of relevant methodologies

**Learning**

Core Learning Outcome: Students will demonstrate an understanding of world cultures, politics, and economics, within the context of globalization, as well as developing the skills and attitudes to function as “global citizens.”

Specific Outcomes:
- Demonstrates knowledge of global issues, processes, trends and systems (i.e. economic and political interdependency among nations; environmental-cultural interaction; global governance bodies).
- Can articulate an understanding of her/his culture in global and comparative context; that is, recognizes that her/his culture is one of many diverse cultures and that alternate perceptions and behaviors may be based in cultural differences.
- Demonstrates an understanding of the meaning and practice of political, military, economic, and cultural hegemony within states and within the global system.
- Demonstrates an understanding of how her/his field is viewed and practiced in different international contexts.
- Uses diverse cultural perspectives and frames of reference, including those of the media, to think critically and solve problems.
- Uses information from other languages and other countries to extend their access to information and experiences.
- Interprets issues and situations from more than one cultural perspective.
- Can articulate differences among cultures; demonstrates tolerance for the diverse viewpoints that emerge from these differences.
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Spring 2014  
Monday and Wednesday 18:00 – 19:50

- Demonstrates a critical understanding of the historical origins of the nation-state, and its current role in the global system.
- Can apply the key theoretical concepts in the field to interpret global issues.
- Exhibits an ongoing willingness to seek out international or intercultural opportunities.

**Required Books:**  
This course will use sections from the following books and articles:

   [http://www.sagepub.com/books/Book235439](http://www.sagepub.com/books/Book235439)

Other Readings will be posted on the D2L and you will find them under the course documents.

**Recommended Additional Readings:**


33. Sen, Amartya "More than 100 Million Women are Missing. [http://www.nybooks.com/articles/archives/1990/dec/20/more-than-100-million-women-are-missing/?pagination=false](http://www.nybooks.com/articles/archives/1990/dec/20/more-than-100-million-women-are-missing/?pagination=false)


Resources:

- **US Department of State - Human Rights Country Reports:**
  [http://www.state.gov/g/drl/rls/hrrpt/2008/index.htm](http://www.state.gov/g/drl/rls/hrrpt/2008/index.htm)
  [http://www.mid.ru/bdomp/ns-dgpch.nsf/8f29680344080938432569ea00361529/2ab49ff642baf0c244257aa000254663!OpenDocument](http://www.mid.ru/bdomp/ns-dgpch.nsf/8f29680344080938432569ea00361529/2ab49ff642baf0c244257aa000254663!OpenDocument)
- **Amnesty International Country Reports:**
- **Human Rights Watch: Daily Reports**
- **United Nations Human Rights Regime:**
  - UNHR:
    - [http://www.un.org/Overview/rights.html](http://www.un.org/Overview/rights.html)
  - UN Human Rights Section:
  - UN HR High Commissioner:
    - [http://www.ohchr.org/EN/Pages/WelcomePage.aspx](http://www.ohchr.org/EN/Pages/WelcomePage.aspx)
  - UN HR Council:
    - [http://www2.ohchr.org/english/bodies/hrcouncil/](http://www2.ohchr.org/english/bodies/hrcouncil/)
  - UN HR Committee:
  - UN Convention Rights of Children:
- **Mailing list:** [http://www.hrea.org/lists/index.html](http://www.hrea.org/lists/index.html)
- **White Papers of PRC**
- **Human Rights Library – University of Minnesota**
  [http://www1.umn.edu/humanrts/](http://www1.umn.edu/humanrts/)
- **Philosophy of Human Rights**
- **H-Human Rights**

Documentaries and Movies:

1. **Taxi to the Dark Side** (2007) [http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WX0MPcN08Zc](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WX0MPcN08Zc)
2. **Life is Beautiful** (1997) [http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=64ZoO7oiN0s](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=64ZoO7oiN0s)
5. **Ali G on Human Rights** [http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zydq4S9c8Ys&feature=related](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zydq4S9c8Ys&feature=related)
6. **The 30 Articles of Human Rights**
http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=36CUlaqmFi4&feature=related
   https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=k0lsAYnBNaM
8. Forgotten Bird of Paradise (full version) - undercover West Papua documentary
   http://www.youtube.com/watch?feature=player_embedded&v=CaGou3vB3A0
   http://www.youtube.com/watch?feature=player_embedded&v=FXTnVsy32bE
10. These Birds Walk (2013)
    https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UaLSrOvHo_Q

Course Philosophy:
The goal of this course is to enable students to write a theoretically guided and empirically rooted research paper. I expect you to become familiar with the social, political and economic underpinnings of Human Rights.

The success of this course depends on your continued and sustained reading and participation. The course will be based on a four-dimensional method of learning, and this includes inquiry and critical thinking; communication; the diversity of human experience; and ethics and social responsibility. First, I would like you to critically analyze what you learn in this class or have learned so far through the media and education, because in today’s world, truth is a relative concept. Throughout human history, critical thinking is the one of the most important factors that has contributed to human development. In order to become active, self-motivated, empowered learners and future leaders, you will need to have the ability to think critically, and therefore your criticism, feedback and suggestions are necessary. Second, I would like you to enhance your writing and oral communication skills in this course. Therefore, it is important to clearly elaborate your arguments in the class discussion as well as in the written assignments.

Third, we are each part of the human mosaic, and all have different experiences based on our social, political and economic differences. We can all learn from and respect each other and benefit from our diversity. Please try to learn from and understand those with different perspectives than you. Lastly, we need to learn that we are all part of this intellectual community and larger society, and all have social and ethical responsibilities to our family, community, classmates, and humanity. We live in a globalized world and therefore, we need to be aware of events in our community, and the world today. In order to enhance our knowledge, we must critically examine our social, political and economic environment in order to apply this knowledge to our experience.

Course Requirements
To prevent confusion later, please read the following information:

Weekly Reflection Papers: Weekly reflection paper will include an open book essay that
will determine what you have learned in class each week. I will ask you two to four questions regarding the same week’s class subject and discussion. The weekly reflection paper should be at least 1600 words. Font size should be Times New Roman, 12 point. The due date for each paper is Sunday by 11:59 PM. Criteria: If your paper is less than 1600 words, or late, you will lose 2 points.

Newspaper Articles: During the semester, you can bring 6 newspaper articles related with our class subjects. You cannot bring more than one article in the same week. You will have to summarize these articles in class. You will find the recommended newspapers on blackboard under the external links section.

Weekly Presentations: Each week, three or four students will be assigned a weekly topic from the readings. These students will summarize the readings and will prepare questions for the class and lead the class discussion. Each student must read the course material before they attend class and I expect them to participate in class discussion.

Final Paper: You will choose a topic related with Human Rights, which you will analyze within a theoretical framework described in the class and course materials. I must approve your topic and plan ahead of time; therefore, the final paper proposals are due as MS Word attachments emailed to me by Monday, April 28th. The final paper is a short empirical or theoretical paper of at least 4000 words (Font should be Times New Roman, 12 point), doubled spaced, and on a focused topic that relates directly to this course. The last day to submit your final paper is Sunday June 8th.

CRITERIA:
• If you submit your final paper proposal after April 28th you will lose 3 points!
• If your final paper is late, you will lose another 4 points!
• If your final paper is less than 4000 words, you will lose 5 points!

Format: ASA citation and bibliography format will be followed for all course assignments. All work should adhere to the guidelines published by the American Sociological Association (ASA) at: http://www.asanet.org/cs/root/topnav/sociology_depts/quick_style_guide. This is not a definitive source, but is a Quick Guide provided by ASA.

Participation/Attendance: Each student must read the course materials before they attend class, and I expect them to participate in class discussion. Regular class attendance is one of the most important parameters to successful completion of the course requirements. If you find interesting articles, books, videos, or other sources that pertain to the class topics and discussion, please share them with me and with your classmates. This can count towards your class participation score.

PLEASE READ CAREFULLY! - Electronic Devices & Other Classroom Policies
Coming late to class and leaving early: Latecomers will not be accepted in the class, so be on time. If you are late for a class, please do not disturb your classmates and me and do not come at all. Please also do not send an email or call me regarding your class attendance. If there is a medical need, bring a letter from a doctor. Whatever the reason is, if you cannot come to class, this is your responsibility. If you miss more than 3 classes, you will not receive an attendance/participation grade. PLEASE DO NOT LEAVE EARLY EITHER! This is a class, not a coffee shop!

Laptop and cell phone policy: No electronic devices (including but not limited to laptops, cell phones, blackberries, etc) are to be used in the classroom. This includes talking on the phone, networking, playing games, surfing the web, or any other inappropriate usage. Those caught using restricted devices will be asked to leave class. Lectures may not be recorded with audio or multi-media devices. Please turn your cell phone off before you come to class.

Responsibility: You and/or your parents pay tuition for this class; therefore, you have responsibility to yourself and/or your parents. Passing or failing the class is not the main objective, rather that you learn and improve your knowledge. Please read and try to understand the main concepts of this class. If you are having difficulty, please do not hesitate to see me and discuss your concerns!

Each year, almost half a million people graduate from American public universities (see http://collegecompletion.chronicle.com/). As you will see from the statistics, the job market is very competitive; therefore, students need to improve their knowledge, skill, and experience in order to find a job they want. Learning is a lifelong process. An academic institution like Portland State University will provide you with an educational discipline and methodology; everything else is up to you. You should study and improve your skills, in order to compete with the rest of the graduates. While you are in the program, you should apply for internships to obtain relevant experiences before you graduate. Therefore, if you need a letter of recommendation for an internship or job, please do not hesitate to ask me, if you receive at least an A, A- or B+ grade from my class. Please also remember that an undergraduate degree might not be enough to find the job you want; therefore, you might need to apply to graduate school. In order to apply to graduate school, you will also need to have a letter of recommendation. I am also happy to advise you on graduate school or provide a letter of recommendation if you receive an A, A- or B+ grade.

Grades: Your grade for this course will be based on performance on the following components, shown with their dates and respective weights:

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<tr>
<th>Item</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Weight (%)</th>
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<tr>
<td>5 Weekly Reflection Paper</td>
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<td>60.0</td>
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<tr>
<td>Final Paper</td>
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<td>20.0</td>
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Weekly Presentation and Participation  10.0
Newspaper Articles  6.0
Attendance  4.0

The grading system in this class is as follows:

A  95-100
A-  90-94
B+  86-89
B   85
B-  80-84
C+  76-79
C   75
C-  70-74
D+  66-69
D   65
D-  60-64
F   (Failure)

Disabilities: Please let me know if you have any disabilities relevant to your involvement in this class, so that I can make appropriate adjustments. Contact Disability Resource Center at Portland State University 435 Smith Memorial Student Union, 1825 SW Broadway Portland, OR 97201 - Phone: (503) 725-4150 - Fax: (503) 725-4103 - TTY or Relay: (503) 725-6504. Email: drc@pdx.edu, if you think you may have a class related disability for which you need counseling and certification. Following is the link to the Disability Resource Center, and all related matters will be kept in strict confidence: http://www.pdx.edu/uasc/disability-resource-center.

PSU Student Code of Conduct: I will enforce the Student Code of Conduct strictly in this course. Be familiar with it. Unless specifically stated otherwise, you should complete any work for this course without assistance from others. Cheating, plagiarism, falsifications and attempts at any of these acts in connection with any work for this course are violation of the Student Code of Conduct.

(2) All forms of academic dishonesty, cheating, and fraud, including but not limited to: (a) plagiarism, which includes, but is not limited to, word for word copying, using borrowed words or phrases from original text into new patterns without attribution, or paraphrasing another writer's ideas; (b) The buying and selling of all or any portion of course assignments and research papers; (c) Performing academic assignments (including tests and examinations) for other persons; (d) Unauthorized disclosure and receipt of academic information; and (e) Falsification of research data. http://www.pdx.edu/dos/conductcode

Additional Remarks: If you have difficulty with the course, please schedule a time to discuss your concerns with me, to help you get back on track.
## Course Timeline

### First Week
**March 31 – April 4**
- Introduction to Human Rights and Syllabus
- The Universal Declaration of Human Rights
- (Donnelly-International Human Rights)  
  Part One: Introduction and Theory  
  1. Human Rights as an Issue in World Politics
- (Blau and Frezzo-Sociology and Human Rights)  
  Chapter 1. Introduction - Mark Frezzo  
  Chapter 2. Deepening Civil and Political Rights - Mark Frezzo
- Video: The Story of Human Rights
  [http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=oh3BbLk5UIQ&feature=related](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=oh3BbLk5UIQ&feature=related)
- Video: Ali G on Human Rights
  [http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zydq4S9c8Ys&feature=related](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zydq4S9c8Ys&feature=related)

### Second Week
**April 7-11**
- (Donnelly-International Human Rights)  
  2. Theories of Human Rights  
  3. The Relative Universality of Human Rights  
  4. The Domestic Politics of Human Rights: Dirty Wars in the Southern Cone
- (Blau and Frezzo-Sociology and Human Rights)  
  Chapter 3. Ensuring Economic and Social Rights - Louis Edgar Esparza  
  Chapter 4. Promoting Cultural Rights - Laura Toussaint
- Non-Western Human Rights Approach  
- China issues report on human rights in the U.S.  
- Movie: Life is Beautiful (1997)  
  [http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=64ZoO7oiN0s](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=64ZoO7oiN0s)

### Sunday April 13
- Reflection Paper – 1

### Third Week
**April 14-18**
- (Donnelly-International Human Rights)  
  Part Two: Multilateral, Bilateral, and Transnational Action  
  5. Global Multilateral Mechanisms  
  6. Regional Human Rights Regimes
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<td>Fifth Week</td>
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<td>(Blau and Frezzo-Sociology and Human Rights) Chapter 9. Beyond Two Identities: Turkish Immigrants in Germany - Tugrul Keskin Chapter 10: The Rights of Age: On Human Vulnerability - Bryan S. Turner</td>
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<td>Sunday May 4th</td>
<td>Reflection Paper – 3</td>
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<td>Sixth Week</td>
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- (Blau and Frezzo-Sociology and Human Rights) Chapter 5. Globalizing the Human Rights Perspective - Bruce K. Friesen Chapter 6. Cooperating Around Environmental Rights - Rebecca Clausen
- Documentary: Taxi to the Dark Side (2007) http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WX0MPcN08Zc
### Seventh Week
**May 12-16**
- **(Donnelly-International Human Rights)**
  - 14. Globalization, the State, and Human Rights
  - 15. (Anti-)Terrorism and Human Rights
- (Blau and Frezzo-Sociology and Human Rights)
  - Chapter 13. Going Forward - Judith Blau
- World Report 2012: United States
  - [http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=v65R9WIUq4](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=v65R9WIUq4)

### Sunday
**May 22nd**
**Reflection Paper – 4**

### Eighth Week
**May 19-23**
- Documentary: Forgotten Bird of Paradise (full version) - undercover West Papua documentary
  - [http://www.youtube.com/watch?feature=player_embedded&v=CaGou3vB3A0](http://www.youtube.com/watch?feature=player_embedded&v=CaGou3vB3A0)

### Ninth Week
**May 26-30**
- Documentary: These Birds Walk (2013)
  - [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UaLSrOvHo_Q](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UaLSrOvHo_Q)
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<th>Sunday June 1st</th>
<th>Reflection Paper – 5</th>
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| | Case Studies - Countries and Human Rights: China (PRC), US, Iran, Israel, Turkey, Zimbabwe, Mexico, Saudi Arabia and Uzbekistan.  
| | Newspaper Articles:  
| | [http://www.china-embassy.org/eng/zt/zgrq/t302225.htm](http://www.china-embassy.org/eng/zt/zgrq/t302225.htm)  
| | • FINAL PAPER PRESENTATIONS (DRAFT VERSION) WEDNESDAY  
| | **FINAL PAPER**  
| | Sunday – June 8th  
| | Midnight  
| | By Email – tugrulkeskin@pdx.edu |