



SYLLABUS

Human Rights and Humanitarian Intervention

Instructors: Emina Buzinkic, MA; Will Johnson, MA, JD

Language of Instruction: English

UO Credits: 5

Contact Hours*: 45

Total Hours of Student Engagement (THSE) in all course activities*: 135

Zagreb, Croatia

COURSE DESCRIPTION

Human Rights Law and Humanitarian Intervention in the Former Yugoslavia: The conflict in the former Yugoslavia represents an excellent case study for the disconnect between aspirational human rights law and actual attempts at humanitarian intervention during civil or regional war. This course will introduce students to the basic framework for the understanding of international human rights law in both its domestic and geopolitical perspectives. Similarly, this course will include an overview of the history, law, and policy of international “humanitarian” interventions. The purpose of the course is for students to understand the roles different domestic, regional, and international actors played towards the escalation of violence, during the war, and after the “peace” was established. The course will conclude with a role-playing exercise whereby students are encouraged to explore alternate outcomes to the Yugoslav conflict.

COURSE OBJECTIVES

Instructional Goals. The course will:

- Establish a foundation for understanding the normative structure of the international human rights system, both historically and contemporarily.
- Establish a foundation for the understanding of the legal and political debates that inform the practice of international “humanitarian” interventions.
- Provide a culturally-specific context through which to study the application of international human rights laws at the domestic and regional level.
- Prepare students to pursue advanced study of human rights and related fields at the graduate level.

Student Outcomes. Students who successfully complete this course will:

- Draw connections between the relevant historical and theoretical perspectives that inform the international human rights movement.
- Analyze the moral, political, economic, and cultural tensions inherent in international human rights practices in Europe and the Balkans.

- Evaluate, compare, and contrast the various political, legal and development organizations that work to promote and protect human rights and peace between previously warring states and non-state actors in the Balkans.
- Begin assessing the relative success or failure of specific human rights mechanisms, e.g. the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights and the International Criminal Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia (ICTY).

INSTRUCTIONAL METHODOLOGY

This course is divided between classroom instruction (2/3) and excursions or experiential learning (1/3). During class, regular lectures will be supplemented with small group discussion, videos, and guest speakers. At least half of each class period will consist of lectures covering core course material, though the structure will be informal enough to allow for group and class discussions at any point. The remaining in-class time will be divided between guided class discussions, small-group discussions, simulated debates and videos. Excursions (e.g. to museums, courthouses, NGOs, and victim’s advocacy groups) will provide an opportunity for students to begin understanding the practical application of theoretical, philosophical, and legal material covered in class. Excursions will also provide students an opportunity to engage directly with local perspectives on the topics studied in class.

METHOD OF EVALUATION (GRADING)

Attendance and participation:	30%
Midterm Exam:	30%
Final Essay or Group Project:	30%*
Excursion Reflection:	10%

*Due one week after end of course. Electronic submission required.

Note: Graduate students will have additional requirements.

COURSE OUTLINE

Week 1: History and Theory of Human Rights

Students will be introduced to the historical and theoretical foundations of the modern human rights system. This will provide the foundation for all future coursework.

Day 1: Introduction to course; Introduction to human rights: How do rights “function”?

Day 2: Early ethical foundations: Are human rights “modern”?

Day 3: WWII and the creation of the United Nations and UN bodies; Rights and enforcement (Is Human Rights Law really ‘law’?)

Week 2: History and Theory of Humanitarian Intervention

Students will be introduced to the historical events and philosophical debates that shape international interventions in domestic, regional, and international conflicts

Day 1: Historical perspectives on “humanitarian” intervention

Day 2: Interventions in the 21st century: Failures and successes

Days 3-4: The Cold War and the geopolitics of intervention

Week 3: International Perspectives on the Break-up of the Former Yugoslavia

Students will explore key foreign actors involved in the war.

Day 1: Intervention from the “East”: Russia and Russian actors

Day 2: Intervention from the “West”: Europe and the U.S., the ECHR

Day 3-4: Victims, Bystanders, and Perpetrators – Where (and how) do we draw the line?

Week 4: Regional and International Human Rights Bodies

Students will be introduced to relevant international and regional human rights bodies

Day 1: Legal and Philosophical Foundations

Day 2: Key UN Bodies

Day 3: The European Court of Human Rights

Day 4: “Foreign” courts: Re-evaluating the ICTY

Week 5: “Peace” from abroad: the limitations of Intervention and Int’l Human Rights Law

Day 1: Early Peace Efforts; Re-evaluating the ICTY

Day 2-3: The Dayton Accords

Day 4: A Shaky Peace: Kosovo and Beyond

COURSE READINGS

Each week students may be provided with additional required news articles (online or as handouts) or related current-event pieces to supplement the required readings, below.

- A Packet of Supplemental Readings will be made available to students during orientation.

Required Readings will come from some or all of the following books:

- *Human Rights in Theory and Practice* by Jack Donnelly (2013)
- *International Human Rights Law* by Mark Gibney (2016)
- *Human Rights and International Relations* by David P Forsyth (2012)
- *War and Change in the Balkans: Nationalism, Conflict, and Cooperation* by Brad K Blitz (2006).

Additional readings may be assigned or recommended, TBA. This is a draft syllabus and is subject to change.