

POLITICS 332, Human Rights
November, 2008
David Yamanishi

Contact Information

Office hours: I am generally on campus from about 8:30am to 4:30pm Monday to Friday (and often longer), and tend to be in my office most of the time between 9-11 and 1-3 when I'm not with you. Let me know if you'd like to talk and we can set up an appointment if you don't want to just take a stab at catching me in my office.

Office phone: 895-4300. A great way to figure out whether I'm there! I should warn you that I have an unfortunate tendency to forget to check my office voicemail. Email's better than leaving a voice message.

Email: dyamanishi@cornellcollege.edu. The best way to reach me.

Consulting Librarian: Mikki Smith, 308 Cole Library, x4256, msmith@cornellcollege.edu.

Writing Studio: 125 Cole Library, hours: Monday-Thursday, 9am-5pm and 6-11pm; Friday, 9am-5pm; Sunday, 1-5pm and 6-11pm. I have discussed each assignment with Laura Farmer in particular, but Laura, Shawn, and the student workers can all be helpful.

I'm here to help, as are Mikki and the Writing Studio folks. Please take advantage of us.

There is a Moodle site for this class. I will post copies of all handouts there, and I will pay attention to the questions forum if you use it.

Overview

The seminar will introduce the experience, philosophy, politics, and empirics of human rights abuse and protection. We will discuss (in part):

- The abuses that actually occur, from "ordinary" torture to ethnic cleansing. In particular, we will look at genocide in Rwanda, political abuses under military rule in Argentina, and the bureaucratic management of the Holocaust, along with numerous other examples of abuse and protection addressed by our texts.
- The meaning and scope of human rights.
- Why we should or shouldn't protect human rights, or certain types of human rights.
- How to detect and measure human rights abuse.
- What leads to the abuse and protection of human rights (democracy? dictatorship? wealth? poverty? religion?).
- Whether increasing globalization has led to a rise or fall in human rights abuse.
- The history of the international movement to protect human rights.
- The growing issue of non-state or para-state abuse (by paramilitaries in Colombia, for example).

- Whether there are different classes of human rights or human rights are a cohesive, mutually reinforcing whole.
- Whether human rights are universal (or whether there are, for example, “Asian values” that are different from Western rights).
- Whether group rights, such as the right of an immigrant group to receive education in its own language, are justified.
- How to resolve conflicts between rights, for example whether our government should torture those suspected of terrorist activities in order to protect others.
- When, if ever, human rights abuses justify international intervention.
- What motivates the individuals who perpetrate human rights abuses, who do things that they must know to be “evil.”

Disabilities

If you have a disability registered with the college that will require special accommodations for the quizzes or other assignments, please let me know by Wednesday, October 29.

If you have a disability that is *not* registered with the college that will require special accommodations for any assignments, please register it (!) and then let me know by Wednesday, October 29.

Feedback

I am very interested in your suggestions for improvement of this class and my teaching generally. Please email comments to me as you think of them or share them with me at my office, if you would like to see your thoughts have immediate effect. I also pay very close attention to course-end evaluations.

Assessment

Participation	15%	every day
Journals	10%	every day for which there’s reading
First in-class essay	5%	October 31
Second in-class essay	10%	November 7
Third in-class essay	10%	November 14
Project proposal	5%	November 3
Project outline	5%	November 10
Annotated bibliography	5%	November 10
Final project	25%	November 17
Presentation	10%	November 17-19

While the particular things I’m looking for vary to some degree by assignment, in general an A on an assignment means that your work is outstanding in terms of:

- addressing the assigned question and avoiding digression,
- having a well-structured argument,
- expressing your argument clearly and effectively,
- making appropriate and properly cited use of material on the syllabus and other well-selected sources,
- and demonstrating thoughtful integration and interpretation of the course material and discussions.

Lower grades mean that you have not done all of these things or have done one or more of them less well than you could have. The order of items on the above list should not be taken to indicate their order of importance in determining your grade on an assignment, nor should you suppose that the items will carry equal weight on an assignment or invariant weight across assignments. Moreover, I expect your work to improve during the course and across courses.

To simplify communication about grades, I grade all assignments using the same marks that appear on your academic transcripts: letter grades. When I combine assignment grades to produce your course grade, I will do so using the same numbers that the college uses to determine your GPA (A = 4.0, A- = 3.7, B+ = 3.3, etc.). I will always round-up from the midpoint between grades (for example, a 3.85 rounds to an A, while a 3.84 does not). I may raise grades from what the raw numbers indicate in deserving cases, but I will never change the rank order of students' grades in the class in doing so.

Instructions for Assignments

Participation: If you punctually attend every class, appear to me to be paying attention, and never make a contribution to our common discussion, you will receive a C for participation. To get a grade higher than a C for participation, you must participate orally. I assess participation more by thoughtfulness and attentiveness to the flow of the conversation than by quantity of oral communication. I do, however, expect you to contribute regularly. Office visits help your participation grade, but are not a substitute for class attendance and participation.

Journals: Each day of the course that we have readings (that is to say, days 2-4, 6-9, and 11-15), you should submit a journal entry by 7am via email. You might consider one or more of the reading note questions that I've distributed, or reflect upon how the readings for the day relate to earlier material and/or current events in the news. Feel free to offer your personal reactions to each piece, but I do want you to offer some interpretation or analysis of some kind in each journal entry. You might also pose a question for discussion in class. Your entries should not exceed 500 words per day nor fall short of 300 words per day. Journals will be graded according to (thoughtful) completion. That is to say: if you finish all of them and take them reasonably seriously, you will receive an A for the journal component of the course grade. You may skip two of the twelve journal entries of your choice with no penalty, or complete all of them for a bit of extra credit.

Quizzes: I will hand out two or more quiz questions the day before each quiz and select one at random for you to address the following morning. You might use the reading notes that I hand out as a study guide, although you should keep in mind that many of the reading notes are factual or organizational in nature but the quiz questions will always have an interpretive or

analytic component. The quizzes will each address a week's worth of material (except that the last will not include Allende's novel) and will be non-cumulative, although you're welcome to make reference to earlier material to strengthen your answers.

Note on project assignment: I have written the following instructions as if you have chosen to do something like write a research paper. If you would prefer to work on an alternative assignment that requires a comparable amount of work and interpretation, please let me know.

Project proposal: Your project proposal will indicate what puzzle you will address in your larger project and give some indication of your problem's context: why it matters, and what we need to know about it to understand what you're asking about when you ask your question. You should address a human rights incident, policy decision, theme, pattern of abuse or protection, or other problem that has been or could be addressed by scholars representing at least two competing perspectives. The proposal should make the nature and facts of your puzzle clear, avoiding interpretive inferences for now. I will grade this assignment according to three principal criteria: the quality of your statement of your central puzzle, the quality of the selection and presentation of facts that you offer to make the context of your puzzle clear, and the coherence with which you establish a clear thesis and make each part of your paper make sense in terms of that thesis. We will select problems in class so as to avoid duplication. You should write your proposal as a coherent paper, not a set of bullet points. You should submit your proposal by email in a Word or RTF attachment. Your problem statement should not exceed 500, nor fall short of 400, well-chosen words.

Project outline: Your project outline should spell out the structure of your project more fully. In addition to your work on the proposal, you should add an explanation of the competing perspectives that you will address, and indicate how you will structure your interpretive analysis of the competing perspectives that you address. You should also describe, in a preliminary way, any discussion of specific evidence that you will bring to bear on your problem, as well as how you will bring it into your argument structurally speaking. Your outline need not be structured as a coherent paper. It should be detailed enough to make it clear what you will say in each section of your paper and why the sections of your paper will appear in the order that they do.

Annotated bibliography: You should describe each source that you have identified for your project, explain what it argues and what sorts of evidence it offers to support its argument, and explain what role it will play in your project.

Project: The project should present your puzzle, explain how competing scholars understand the phenomenon in question, and analyze the competing explanations to identify the roots of their disagreement and to assess why one or more perspectives are right and the other(s) wrong. I will grade the research paper according to three principal criteria: the quality of your discussion of how your problem has been and/or might be explained by scholars from different perspectives, the quality of your analysis of what fundamentally unites and distinguishes the competing perspectives that you address, and the coherence with which you establish a clear thesis about your problem and make each part of your paper make sense in terms of that thesis (including improvement upon material drawn from your proposal). Your research paper should not exceed 3000, nor fall short of 2400, well-chosen words.

Presentation: Your presentation should address your project. You should present your puzzle, the competing perspectives that you have identified about it, and your analysis of their advantages and shortcomings in about 15 minutes. After each presentation, I will select another student (or students) in the class to serve as a discussant who will briefly summarize the presentation and ask one or more critical questions about it. I may ask you to serve as a discussant more than once. After the discussant(s) speaks, other students may ask questions and make comments (which will count as ordinary class participation, not part of the presentation grade). Your presentation grade will depend on your effectiveness in presenting your argument in a clear way to the class and your facility and thoughtfulness in answering questions about your work, as well as quality of your formal discussion of another student's presentation.

Attendance and Lateness Policy

To avoid a penalty on your participation grade for missing class, you must ask the campus clinic (in a health emergency) or the dean of students or other relevant campus official (in other types of emergencies) to send me an excuse on your behalf. You may miss no more than one class without providing a documented excuse.

I will lower the grade on work submitted late by one grade per twelve hours late (thus, a paper that would have earned an A will receive an A- if three hours late, a B+ if eighteen hours late). Work submitted late *that meets the minimum expectations of the assignment* will receive at least a D regardless of lateness, so you should submit all assignments even if you are extremely late. I will not accept any work after 5pm on the last day of the block.

Except in cases of documented disability or emergency, I will not, on grounds of fairness, offer an extension to one student without offering it to everybody, and given the tightness of the block plan schedule, I simply can't afford to do that. Please do not experiment with my generosity.

To drop on the 15th day, you *must* complete every assignment due by the end of the 14th day of class and meet the attendance condition noted above (that is to say, you must miss no more than one class without a documented excuse). In other words, if you are likely to sleep through class on more than one occasion, you should drop now, because you will not be able to do so later. Because this is a linked class, I will be very hesitant to permit you to drop, as it will create vacancies in the sequel.

Books to Buy

All seven books are required and available at the Commons bookstore.

Philip Gourevitch, *We wish to inform you that tomorrow we will be killed with our families: Stories from Rwanda*, Picador USA, isbn 0312243359.

Jacobo Timerman, *Prisoner without a Name, Cell without a Number*, Wisconsin, isbn 0299182444.

Todd Landman, *Studying Human Rights*, Routledge, isbn 0415326052.

Jack Donnelly, *Universal Human Rights* (2nd ed.), Cornell, isbn 0801487765.

Hannah Arendt, *Eichmann in Jerusalem*, Penguin, isbn 0143039881.

James Waller, *Becoming Evil* (2nd ed.), Oxford, isbn 0195314565.

Isabel Allende, *Of Love and Shadows*, Dell, isbn 0553383833.

Reading and Assignment Schedule

We will meet in the mornings from 9-11am except where noted.

Monday, October 27	Judgment at Nuremberg (morning and afternoon) Recommended: Joshua Casteel, author of <i>Letters from Abu Ghraib</i> and a former military interrogator at Abu Ghraib, will speak in Hedges at 3:30pm.
Tuesday, October 28	Gourevitch, pp. 1-144
Wednesday, October 29	Gourevitch, pp. 145-353
Thursday, October 30	Timerman, complete Excerpt from Nunca Mas
Friday, October 31	<i>In-class essay</i>
Monday, November 3	<i>Project proposal due (9am)</i> Donnelly, chs. 1-3, 12-13 Landman, pp. 8-12
Tuesday, November 4 (VOTE!)	Landman, pp. 13-35 Donnelly, chs. 8-10, 14
Wednesday, November 5	Landman, chs. 3-8 Donnelly, ch. 11 Recommended: I will show <i>Hotel Rwanda</i> at 1pm in our classroom. This is optional.
Thursday, November 6	Donnelly, chs. 4-7
Friday, November 7	<i>In-class essay</i>
Monday, November 10	<i>Project outline and annotated bibliography due (9am)</i> Arendt, pp. 1-150

Tuesday, November 11	Arendt, pp. 151-298
Wednesday, November 12	Waller, pp. 1-134
Thursday, November 13	Waller, pp. 135-278 (plus skim to p. 303)
Friday, November 14	<i>In-class essay</i> Allende, complete (afternoon)
Monday, November 17	<i>Project due (9am)</i> Presentations (morning and afternoon)
Tuesday, November 18	Presentations (morning and afternoon)
Wednesday, November 19	Presentations

Honesty in Academic Work (from the Compass)

The College considers Cornell students to be responsible persons whose maturity will develop in a community that encourages free inquiry. The College expects the highest degree of personal integrity in all relationships. Any form of dishonesty is a violation of this spirit and of College rules.

A student is expected to explicitly acknowledge ideas, claims, observations, or data of others, unless generally known. When a piece of work is submitted for credit, a student is asserting that the submission is her or his work unless there is a citation of a specific source. If there is no appropriate acknowledgement of sources, whether intended or not, this may constitute a violation of the College's requirement for honesty in academic work and may be treated as a case of academic dishonesty.

Dishonesty in academic work includes both cheating and plagiarism.

Cheating refers to the use of unauthorized sources of information on examinations or any attempt by students to deceive the evaluator of an examination, paper, or project.

Plagiarism is the act of taking the work of another and presenting it as one's own, without acknowledgement of the original source.

There is not one set of rules for the acknowledgement of sources that is appropriate across all disciplines. For this reason, students are always encouraged to consult their professors and guidelines included in their syllabi. However, in general the appropriate acknowledgement of sources involves meeting the following requirements:

Quotations and Paraphrasing. All direct quotations, even if mingled with original words and ideas, must be placed within quotation marks and accompanied by a specific citation for the source of the quotation. Unless the information is generally known, all phrases that are not original to the author - even two or three words - must be placed in quotation marks and cited. If an existing idea is used but paraphrased or summarized, both the original author's words and

sentence structure must be changed and a specific citation for the source must still be made. It is always the responsibility of the student to provide precise sources for all ideas, information, or data he or she has borrowed or adapted. Simply listing sources in a bibliography is not sufficient. Students who use information from the World Wide Web are expected to follow these same guidelines for the citation of sources.

Failure to cite sources properly constitutes academic dishonesty, whether the omission is intentional or not.

Ideas and Data. All students are required to acknowledge the ideas of others. Every student is expected to do her or his own work in the completion of an assignment or an examination unless either (a) the sources for these ideas are explicitly cited, or (b) the instructor explicitly allows such collaboration. In addition, a person giving unauthorized assistance to another on an examination is just as guilty of cheating as the person who accepts or solicits such aid.

Submitting revisions of academic work previously submitted, either in the current course or in previous courses, qualifies as academic dishonesty unless the student obtains the explicit permission of all of the instructors involved.

All data sources must be cited accurately. It is dishonest to fabricate or alter research data included in laboratory reports, projects, or other assignments.

A safe guide is to provide a full citation for every source consulted. Sources may include, but are not limited to, published books, articles, reviews, Internet sites, archival material, visual images, oral presentations, or personal correspondence. In addition, students should always keep previous drafts of their work in order to provide documentation of their original work. Finally, due to disciplinary differences, students should consult their professor, a librarian, and/or the Teaching and Learning Center for specific instructions on properly providing citations for sources.

Procedures for Dealing with Dishonesty in Academic Work (from the Compass)

If an instructor judges that a student has violated the College's policies on academic honesty, the student may be charged with academic dishonesty and assigned an F either for the particular examination, paper, report, or project, or for the course. The instructor shall notify the student in writing of the charge and the penalty and shall include a statement of the circumstances which precipitated the action. A copy of the instructor's letter along with a copy of the paper shall be sent to the Registrar. The Registrar shall then advise the student in writing of the right to appeal. Within ten (10) days of notification, the student may appeal the charge and/or the penalty by submitting a letter to the Dean of the College requesting that he or she appoint an ad hoc committee consisting of three (3) faculty members, one of whom may be nominated by the student. The recommendation of this committee is advisory only and is not binding upon the instructor.

All material and information relative to the charge of academic dishonesty shall be kept by the Registrar in a special file during the period in which the student is enrolled at Cornell College,

serving only as a statement of record if the student is charged a second time with academic dishonesty. In the case of an appeal after the first offense, the file shall be destroyed if the committee finds the student not guilty and the instructor concurs; otherwise, the recommendation of the committee shall be inserted into the special file. If there are no further charges, the file will be destroyed at the time of the student's graduation from Cornell.

Should a subsequent charge of academic dishonesty be brought against a student, the Registrar shall notify the Dean of the College who shall convene a committee consisting of the Dean of the College, the Dean of Students, and the Chair of the Academic Standing Committee, who shall determine the status of the student. The normal penalty for a second offense is indefinite suspension from the College.