Hist 510:394  
Human Rights: Theory and Practice in Historical Perspective

Dr. Melissa Feinberg  
Office: 108 Van Dyck  
Email: mfeinberg@history.rutgers.edu

This class examines the history of human rights, both as a set of ideas and as a motivation for social action. We will consider how ideas about rights have shaped the politics of the past two centuries and think about how they influence politics today. The course concentrates on the role of human rights in European history, but we will try and look at this material from an international perspective, thinking about the relationship between the events or ideas we are studying and rights-based activism in other parts of the world. The first half of the course deals with the early history of human rights in Europe, considering how this concept developed during the period from the French Revolution in 1789 through the end of the Second World War. We will examine how different groups (the bourgeoisie, workers, women, abolitionists, etc) defined and fought for rights, either for themselves or others. In the second half of the course, we will look at contemporary institutions and organizations dedicated to furthering human rights, internationally and locally.

Course requirements. All students are expected to complete the reading assignment before class, be present and contribute actively to the discussion. Grades will be calculated as follows: Class participation, 15%; 2 midterm essays (6-7 pages), 25% each; research paper (8 pages), 35%. Unexcused late assignments will be marked down one full letter grade for each calendar day that they are late.

Students are expected to abide by the Rutgers Academic Integrity Policy (available at http://academicintegrity.rutgers.edu/integrity.shtml). Any and all violations will be prosecuted, with the typical penalty being an F in the course. Any students with the slightest bit of doubt about how to use or properly cite sources in their written work are strongly encouraged to meet with me to clarify this.

Texts. The following books have been ordered at the Rutgers Bookstore.

AT LEAST ONE ADDITIONAL BOOK AS YET TO BE DETERMINED

Additional required readings will be available on Sakai.

Daily Topics and Assignments (PRELIMINARY):

Wk 1  
Introduction
  The International Origins of Human Rights?
  Lauren, p. 1–21

Wk 2  
The French Revolution and the Rights of Man
  Lauren, 21–36
  Hunt, 1–32, 35–37, 77–79 (introduction and documents # 1, 14)
Revolutionary Dilemmas: Who is Human?

Wk 3
To Free the Enslaved: Nobility and Hypocrisy
Lauren, 37–58
Hochschild, 1–100

A New Slavery? Leopold’s Congo
Hochschild, 100–139, 150–224

Wk 4
The CRA: Success or Failure?
Hochschild, 224–306

To Assist the Exploited: Social Rights

Wk 5
Socialism and Human Rights
Micheline Ishay, The Human Rights Reader, 199–207 (Marx) and 226-232 (Bebel) (on Sakai)

Women’s Rights, Human Rights?
Jane Lewis, ed Before the Vote Was Won, 118–140, 409–413 (on Sakai)

Wk 6
Women’s Suffrage Activism
Jane Lewis, ed Before the Vote Was Won, 453–464 (on Sakai)
Emmeline Pankhurst, “When Civil War is Waged by Women” (on Sakai)

To Care for the Wounded: the Red Cross
Lauren, p. 58–70
Henry Dunant, A Memory of Solferino, 34–48
Midterm essay #1 due

Wk 7
Back to 1848: National Rights
Frank Eyck, ed. The Revolutions of 1848, 74–79, 83–93, 96–97, 156–161 (on Sakai)

Nationalism and “Human” Rights
Lauren, 71–134

Wk 8
Genocide
Lauren, 135–165

After Auschwitz
Lauren, 166–198

Wk 9
UN Declaration of Human Rights
Lauren, 199–232
A new international rights regime?
Lauren, 233–270

Wk 10
Postwar international activism #1: Charter 77

Postwar international activism #2: Amnesty International

**Midterm essay #2 due**

Wk 11
Local Activism: TBD

Local Activism: TBD

Wk 12
Local Activism: TBD

The ICC and war crimes tribunals
Lauren, 271–281
Geoffrey Bindman, “Bringing International Criminals to Justice” (on Sakai)

Wk 13
Human rights military interventions
Tzevan Todorov, “Right to Intervene or Duty to Assist?” (on Sakai)
Peter Singer, “How Can We Prevent Crimes Against Humanity?” (on Sakai)

Torture/terror

Wk 14
Human Rights in the 21st century

**Final research papers due**