**HUMAN RIGHTS**

Program Office: Institute for the Study of Human Rights; 475 Riverside Drive (Interchurch Center), 3rd floor; 646-745-8577; uhrp@columbia.edu

Departmental Website: http://humanrightscolumbia.org/education/undergraduate

Director of Undergraduate Studies: Prof. Andrew Nathan, 931 International Affairs Building; 212-854-6909. Office hours: TBC.

Human rights are central to contemporary understandings of justice and equality and have crucial bearing on the ability to assess and respond to emerging technological, economic, social, cultural, and political issues.

The Undergraduate Human Rights Program at the Institute for the Study of Human Rights engages students in this dynamic and evolving field and enhances their knowledge, skills, and commitment to human rights. The program offers a major and a concentration in human rights, provides students the opportunity to deepen their knowledge and explore their interests in human rights outside the classroom, and works to strengthen and support the undergraduate human rights community on campus. More information on academic and extracurricular events, opportunities, and resources for undergraduate human rights students is available on the program's website. For an advising appointment, please e-mail humanrightsed@humanrightscolumbia.org or humanrightscolumbia.org.

**Departmental Honors**

To be eligible for departmental honors, a student must satisfy all the requirements for the major, maintain an overall GPA of 3.6, and complete a thesis of sufficiently high quality to merit honors. A thesis is required for all students who wish to be considered for honors, but does not guarantee honors. Students who graduate in October, February, or May of a given academic year are eligible for honors consideration in May. Normally no more than 10% of graduating majors receive departmental honors in a given academic year.

Students interested in writing a thesis for honors consideration complete a two semester course sequence during their final year of study. In the fall, students take HRTS UN3994 Human Rights Senior Seminar: Research Methods, which introduces students to various research methods and guides them through the proposal development process. In the spring, students take HRTS UN3995 Human Rights Senior Seminar. This course will consist of group sessions, where students will present their work and participate in discussions, as well as individual meetings with their thesis supervisor, who is also the course instructor.

Students are encouraged to write a thesis, but they should not do so solely to be eligible for honors consideration. Rather, students should consider enrolling in the thesis seminar in order to demonstrate their capacity to produce a work of original research and develop more specialized knowledge of a human rights issue.

**Guidelines for all Human Rights Majors, Concentrators, and Special Concentrators**

Student should also consult the general academic policies of their school.

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**Planning Forms**

Major and concentration planning forms are available on the ISHR undergraduate program website. Prior to each semester, students should submit an online course advising form. Students may also e-mail uhrp@columbia.edu to set up an advising appointment.

**Grades**

No course with a grade of D or lower is credited towards the major or concentration.

One course, with the exception of the three core courses required for the major, can be taken for Pass/D/Fail. The student must receive a grade of P for the course to count towards the requirements of the major. All other courses must be taken for a letter grade.

All seminar courses must be taken for a letter grade.

**Transfer Credit/Study Abroad Credit**

Human rights majors may transfer a maximum of three courses from other institutions. Human rights concentrators may transfer a maximum of two courses from other institutions. This includes study abroad credit. No more than one Advanced Placement course can be counted for the major or concentration. The application of transferred courses to the major or concentration must be approved by the Director of Undergraduate Studies or the undergraduate adviser.

Students wishing to count transfer courses toward the major or concentration should email uhrp@columbia.edu with their Transfer Credit Report, the syllabi of the courses they want to count toward departmental requirements, and a statement of how they want to apply the transfer credits to the requirements.

**Double-Counting**

Students may double count major or concentration courses toward the fulfillment of degree requirements in accordance with the academic policies of their school.

Normally, courses for one program of study (i.e. major, concentration, special concentration, etc.) may not be used to satisfy the course requirements for another program of study. Students should consult the academic policies of their school for specific information.

**Major in Human Rights**

The major in human rights requires 10 courses for a minimum of 31 points as follows. One of the distributional or specialization courses must be a seminar.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Core Courses</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>HRTS UN3001 Introduction to Human Rights</td>
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<tr>
<td>HRTS UN3190 INT’L HUMAN RIGHTS LAW</td>
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<tr>
<td>HRTS UN3995 Human Rights Senior Seminar</td>
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<tr>
<th>Distributional Requirement</th>
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<tr>
<td>Students take one course in three of these four categories (three courses), for a minimum of 9 credit points.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Politics and history</td>
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<td>Culture and representation</td>
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<td>Political theory and philosophy</td>
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<td>Social and economic processes</td>
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**Specialization Requirement**


Students fulfill the specialization requirement by focusing on a particular discipline, taking four courses for a minimum of 12 credit points offered by a single department or institute.

* Please see the ISHR undergraduate course list for the current list of courses that fulfill the distributional requirement of the major.

** The goal of the specialization requirement is to equip students with the tools of a specific discipline. Students should inform the human rights program of their intended specialization before taking courses to fulfill this requirement. As a general rule, fields of study listed as academic programs on the bulletin are approved for the specialization requirement if a free-standing major is offered. Courses approved for that major are generally approved for the human rights specialization. However, language acquisition and studio courses may not be taken to fulfill the specialization requirement. Students are encouraged to take any core and/or methodology courses required by a program when fulfilling their specialization requirement. Students are also encouraged to take courses within their chosen specialization that focus on human rights issues, but the specialization requirement can be fulfilled by taking any four courses within the same discipline. For example, if a student’s specialization is Political Science, he or she can fulfill the specialization requirement by taking any four POLS courses.

Concentration in Human Rights

The concentration in human rights requires 8 courses for a minimum of 24 points as follows:

**HRTS UN3001 Introduction to Human Rights. 3 points.**

Evolution of the theory and content of human rights; the ideology and impact of human rights movements; national and international human rights law and institutions; their application with attention to universality within states, including the U.S., and internationally.

HRTS UN3001 INTL HUMAN RIGHTS LAW. 3.00 points.

This course will introduce students to the international law of human rights, and give a basic orientation to fundamental issues and controversies. The course has two principal focal points: first, the nuts and bolts of how international law functions in the field of human rights, and second, the value and limitations of legal approaches to a variety of human rights issues. Throughout the course, both theoretical and practical questions will be addressed, including who bears legal duties and who can assert legal claims, how these duties might be enforced, and accountability and remedy for violations. Attention will be given to how international law is made, what sorts of assumptions underlie various legal mechanisms, and how the law works in a variety of contexts.

### Fall 2021: HRTS UN3190

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<td>Belinda Cooper</td>
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### Spring 2022: HRTS UN3190

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HRTS UN3995 Human Rights Senior Seminar. 4 points.

The senior seminar is a capstone course required for the human rights major. The seminar provides students the opportunity to discuss human rights from a variety of disciplinary perspectives and to explore various theoretical approaches and research methodologies. Students undertake individual research projects while collectively examining human rights through directed readings and discussion.

### Fall 2021: HRTS UN3995

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HRTS UN3996 Human Rights Thesis Seminar. 3 points.

Priority given to human rights majors/concentrators.

Prerequisites: HRTS UN3995 Human Rights Senior Seminar. Additional information available at: [http://humanrightscolumbia.org/education/undergraduate](http://humanrightscolumbia.org/education/undergraduate)

This course is designed for human rights students who wish to write a honors-eligible thesis. The course will consist of group sessions, during which time students will present their work and participate in discussions, and individual meetings with the thesis supervisor. The course instructor is the thesis supervisor for each student.

### Spring 2022: HRTS UN3996

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HRTS GU4215 NGOs # THE HUMAN RIGHTS MOVEMENT. 3.00 points.
This class takes a social movement perspective to analyze and understand the international human rights movement. The course will address the evolution of the international human rights movement and focus on the NGOs that drive the movement on the international, regional, and domestic levels. Sessions will highlight the experiences of major human rights NGOs and will address topics including strategy development, institutional representation, research methodologies, partnerships, networks, venues of engagement, campaigning, fundraising and, perhaps most importantly, the fraught and complex debates about adaptation to changing global circumstances, starting with the pre-Cold War period and including some of the most up-to-date issues and questions going on in this field today.

HRTS GU4230 Refugees, Forced Migration, and Displacement. 3 points.
Refugees, forced migration, and displacement: these subjects top the headlines of the world’s newspapers, not to mention our social media feeds. Over a million refugees have reached Europe’s shores in recent years, and conflicts in the Middle East and elsewhere continue to force people to flee their homes. In the aftermath of the financial crisis and 9/11, politicians in the Global North have focused on borders: who crosses them and how. Walls are being erected. Referendums are being held. We are consumed with thorny questions about who gets to join our political communities. Today there are over 65 million refugees, displaced persons, and stateless persons in the world, represented at last summer’s Olympics by their own team for the first time, a testament to their increasing visibility on the world stage. Global forced displacement recently hit a historical high. And while numbers are increasing, solutions are still elusive. The modern refugee regime, the collection of laws and institutions designed to address the problems faced by refugees, has developed slowly over the course of the last 100 years, first in response to specific crises. That regime has been shaped by a changing geopolitical landscape. At the end of the Cold War, institutions in the field expanded their mandates and preferred solutions to the “problem” of refugees changed. And yet today many scholars and policy makers argue the regime is not fit for purpose. They point to the European refugee crisis as the latest case in point. Why? What went wrong and where? Can it be fixed? This course will largely focus on the issues of forced migration, displacement and refugees related to conflict, although this subject is inevitably intertwined with larger debates about citizenship and humanitarianism. Taking an interdisciplinary perspective, this course will address both scholarly and policy debates. Utilizing human rights scholarship, it will draw on work in history that charts the evolution of institutions; legal scholarship that outlines international and domestic laws; work in political science that seeks to understand responses in a comparative perspective, and anthropological studies that address how refugees understand these institutions and their experiences of exile and belonging. These topics are not only the purview of those in the academy, however. Investigative journalists have most recently provided trenchant coverage of the world’s refugees, especially the current European crisis, where many have reported from the shores of the Mediterranean Sea. Policy makers scramble to keep up with a crisis literally in motion. We will read their communiqués as well. While we will only begin to skim the surface of these issues, in this course you should expect to gain the following expertise: 1) Knowledge of the modern refugee regime and its origins 2) An analysis of actors and institutions who are tasked with responding to refugee crises and how their roles have changed 3) An understanding of a few critical historical case studies, both in the United States and abroad 4) Critical analysis of the current refugee crisis in Europe and the Middle East 5) Knowledge of the asylum process in the US and in comparative perspective 6) An understanding of the debates about conducting research with vulnerable populations such as refugees and displaced persons.
HRTS GU4270 Social Media and Human Rights: Actors, Advocacy and Analytics. 3 points.

PRIORITY: HRTS. GRAD & UNDERGRAD (3&4YR) ON 1ST DAY OF TERM

This course examines how changes in information and communications technology have, over the past two decades, fundamentally transformed the practices of civil society actors engaged with human rights issues. New communications tools such as Twitter, blogs, and Facebook have changed the ways that organizations communicate with their followers and seek to influence public debate. The increasing accessibility of analytic tools for researching and visualizing changing patterns of human rights abuse has empowered groups to better understand and respond more forcefully to these issues. Indeed, the use of social media as a communications tool has made it a data source for those monitoring and analyzing patterns of activity, in ways that draw increasingly on the techniques of big data analysis.

HRTS GU4500 SOCIO-ECONOMIC RIGHTS. 3 points.

Socio-economic rights have emerged from the margins into the mainstream of human rights. We will explore conceptual issues through the lens of specific rights which will help us ground these principles and ideas in concrete cases. We will discuss developments on socio-economic rights and examine their relevance in the United States as well as selected other countries, particularly those with progressive legislation, policies and jurisprudence.

HRTS GU4600 Human Rights in the Anthropocene. 3 points.

In August 2016, a working group of the International Geological Congress voted to acknowledge a new geological epoch, following 11,700 years of the Holocene, and that it would be called The Anthropocene. The announcement indicated a new era in the earth's chronology marked by the consequences of human activity on the planet's ecosystems. Closely related to discussions of sustainability, investigations into the Anthropocene tend to focus on environmental and ecological issues while ignoring its social justice dimensions. This course will investigate how Human Rights has and will be impacted by the Anthropocene, with special attention paid to the human dimensions and consequences of anthropogenic change. Do new and troubling revelations about anthropogenic mistreatment of the earth and its resources modify or amplify the kinds of responsibilities that govern activity between individuals and communities? How do we scale the human response from the urban, to the periurban, to the rural? How must the study of Human Rights evolve to address violence and mistreatment associated not just among humans but also amid human habitats? What sorts of juridical changes must occur to recognize and respond to new manifestations of social injustice that relate directly to consequences of anthropogenic changes to the Earth system? Topics will include discussions of the Environmental Justice movement, agribusiness, access to (and allocation of) natural resources, population growth; its global impact, advocacy for stronger and more accountability through environmental legal change, biodiversity in urban environments, and the growing category of environmental refugees.

HRTS GU4650 Children's Rights Advocacy. 3 points.

This course is designed to introduce contemporary children's rights issues and help students develop practical advocacy skills to protect and promote the rights of children. Students will explore case studies of advocacy campaigns addressing issues including juvenile justice, child labor, child marriage, the use of child soldiers, corporal punishment, migration and child refugees, female genital mutilation, and LBGT issues affecting children. Over the course of the semester, students will become familiar with international children's rights standards, as well as a variety of advocacy strategies and avenues, including use of the media, litigation, and advocacy with UN, legislative bodies, and the private sector. Written assignments will focus on practical advocacy tools, including advocacy letters, op-eds, submissions to UN mechanisms or treaty bodies, and the development of an overarching advocacy strategy, including the identification of goals and objectives, and appropriate advocacy targets and tactics.

HRTS GU4810 Religion and Human Rights. 3 points.

Priority given to human rights studies M.A. students. Open to 3rd and 4th year undergraduates on first day of term with the instructor's permission.

The resurgence of religion over the past three decades has had a transformative influence globally and within nations. Religious nationalism, fundamentalism, and communalism have arisen to forcefully compete with secular democracy. With the fall of the Soviet bloc and the bilateralism of the Cold War, ethnic particularism, often of a religious character, has emerged as the locus of identity for people on all continents. These rapid changes engendered by a new, often commanding, role for religion challenge the very concept of individual and universal human rights. They raise difficult theoretical and painfully practical questions as to the preservation of individual human rights, and the relationship of democracy to religion. At the same time, recent currents such as economic globalization, the triumph of the free market, and the communications revolution promote individual autonomy, a cornerstone of human rights. There can be no doubt that religion will occupy an increasingly salient role in the social and political life of nations during the course of the 21st century. The relevance of religion to human rights in our time cannot be undervalued. The course examines the relationship of religion to human rights from several standpoints, including religion's role in abetting intolerance, religious minorities as victims of human rights violations, and religion as a framer of human rights ideals which inspire action.
HRTS GU4900 UN Human Rights Bodies: Impact -- Reform -- Advocacy. 4 points.
The course is part of the program's offerings in experiential learning. Students will engage in an applied research project with an NGO partner focused on the role of UN Special Rapporteurs and the strategies they employ. Students will become familiar with the intricacies of the UN human rights system, while also taking a bird's-eye view on the system, its challenges and the need for reform. The course seeks to combine critical reflection with practical application, including through the perspectives of practitioners and guest speakers who discuss their strategies for advocacy.

HRTS GU4915 Human Rights and Urban Public Space. 3 points.
Priority for 3rd & 4th yr CC/GS HUMR studs & to HRSMA studs

The course will explore the often-contested terrain of urban contexts, looking at cities from architectural, sociological, historical, and political positions. What do rights have to do with the city? Can the ancient idea of a "right to the city" tell us something fundamental about both rights and cities? Our notion of citizenship is based in the understanding of a city as a community, and yet today what do millions of people live in cities without citizenship? The course will be organized thematically in order to discuss such issues as the consequences of cities' developments in relation to their peripheries beginning with the normative idea of urban boundaries deriving from fortifying walls, debates around the public sphere, nomadic architecture and urbanism, informal settlements such as slums and shantytowns, surveillance and control in urban centers, refugees and the places they live, catastrophes natural and man-made and reconstruction, and sovereign areas within cities the United Nations, War Crimes Tribunals. At the heart of our inquiry will be an investigation of the ways in which rights within urban contexts are either granted or withheld.

Fall 2021: HRTS GU4915

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HRTS GU4930 International Humanitarian Law and Human Rights. 4 points.

This seminar will cover various issues, debates, and concepts in the international law of armed conflict (known as international humanitarian law), particularly as it relates to the protection of non-combatants (civilians and prisoners of war). In doing so, we will examine how international humanitarian law and human rights law intersect. Both sets of legal norms are designed to protect the lives, well-being, and dignity of individuals. However, the condition of armed conflict provides a much wider set of options for governments and individuals to engage in violent, deadly action against others, including killing, forcibly detaining, and destroying the property of those designated as combatants. At the same time, the means of waging war are not unlimited, but rather are tightly regulated by both treaty and customary law. This course will examine how these regulations operate in theory and practice, focusing on the principles of distinction, proportionality, and military necessity.

Spring 2022: HRTS GU4930

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HRTS GU4950 Human Rights and Human Wrongs. 3 points.
MAIL INSTR FOR PERM. PRIORITY: 3&4YR HUMAN RIGHT & HRSMA

Prerequisites: the instructor's permission. Please e-mail the instructor at bc14@columbia.edu.

This course will examine the tension between two contradictory trends in world politics. On the one hand, we have emerged from a century that has seen some of the most brutal practices ever perpetrated by states against their populations in the form of genocide, systematic torture, mass murder and ethnic cleansing. Many of these abuses occurred after the Holocaust, even though the mantra "never again" was viewed by many as a pledge never to allow a repeat of these practices. Events in the new century suggest that these trends will not end anytime soon. At the same time, since the middle of the twentieth century, for the first time in human history there has been a growing global consensus that all individuals are entitled to at least some level of protection from abuse by their governments. This concept of human rights has been institutionalized through international law, diplomacy, international discourse, transnational activism, and the foreign policies of many states. Over the past two decades, international organizations, non-governmental organizations, and international tribunals have gone further than any institutions in human history to try to stem state abuses. This seminar will try to make sense of these contradictions.

Fall 2021: HRTS GU4950

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HRTS GU4400 Sexual Orientation, Gender Identity, and Human Rights. 3 points.

PRIORITY: HRSMA. GRAD & UNDERGRAD (3&4YR) ON 1ST DAY OF TERM

Debates over the rights of lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender people have never been more visible in the international arena. Advocates are beginning to have some success in putting sexual orientation and gender identity on the agenda for inclusion in human rights instruments. But in many local and regional contexts, state-sanctioned homophobia is on the rise, from the official anti-gay stance of Russia featured during the Sochi Winter Games to the passage of Mississippi's anti-gay bill and Uganda's anti-homosexuality act. This course examines these trends in relation to strategies pursued by grassroots activists and NGOs and the legal issues they raise, including marriage and family rights, discrimination, violence, torture, sex classification, and asylum. We will also focus on current debates about the relation between sexual rights and gender justice, tensions between universality constructions of gay/trans identity and local formations of sexual and gender non-conformity, and legacies of colonialism.

Fall 2021: HRTS GU4400

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HRTS GU4880 Human Rights in the United States. 3 points.
The United States sees itself as a country founded on the norms of
equality under the law and inalienable rights but the modern reality is
quite different. Police brutality in Ferguson, Executive Orders banning
Muslims, protests at the Dakota Pipeline, the water crisis in Flint,
Michigan, raids by Immigration and Customs Enforcement, high levels
of domestic violence, wage stagnation, and the lack of a right to health
care, all point to a human rights crisis at home. Some scholars have even
argued that, for the majority of its citizens, the United States has the
standards of a “third world” country.

In which areas are the most violations of human rights occurring
and why? How have long-term trends, including historical legacies,
contributed to the current state of affairs? This survey course will provide
an overview of contemporary human rights issues in the United States
and will analyze them through the theoretical lenses of scholarship in
the fields of comparative politics (including social movements) and
law and society. It will outline the different actors in the human rights
landscape, and focus on the various forms and strategies of mobilization
around human rights issues with an eye to what has helped increase the
enjoyment of rights.

HRTS GU4340 Human Rights Accountability & Remedies. 3 points.
Not offered during 2021-22 academic year.

Effective remedies for violations of human rights is a core tenet of
human rights law. Yet in practice, victims are rarely able to rely on
formal accountability mechanisms to deliver remedies. This course
examines how advocates combine political, legal and reputational
accountability strategies to hold violators accountable where formal
enforcement mechanisms are unavailable. The course will look beyond
the international criminal legal system, and instead draw on case
studies from contexts where the accountability gap is particularly stark:
transnational actors who lack direct accountability relationships with
rights-holders, including in international development, peacekeeping and
and corporate activities.

By delving into practical and tactical considerations, students will build
an understanding of how various strategies work together to build a
successful campaign for accountability that results in remedies for
victims. Students will engage in simulated exercises in media advocacy,
political lobbying, engaging with the UN human rights system, and public
campaigning. Students will learn how to build empowering narratives
that shape public opinion, center victims in their work, and nurture
transnational partnerships to overcome power differentials. Through
discussions grounded in both theory and practice, students will also
critically interrogate the practice of human rights advocacy.

HRTS UN3994 Human Rights Senior Seminar: Research Methods. 4
points.
This course aims to introduce students to human rights research
methods, while providing them with practical research tools. The
course will be tailored to students' interests, disciplinary backgrounds
and research areas. The specific topics students will research and
the methods they will employ will determine the substantive focus of
readings.

During the course we will ask the following questions: 'what is human
rights research?', 'how do you carry out research in an interdisciplinary
field?', 'what distinguishes academic research from applied research and
advocacy? While answering these questions, you will become familiar
with the literature on human rights methodologies, and you will engage
in analysis and critical assessment of important human rights research
literature.

In addition, the course gives a practical approach to research
methodology. You will learn about a diverse set of methodologies, such
as interviewing and focus groups, archival research, ethnographic and
participant observation, interviewing focus groups, conducting online
research, interpretive and non-empirical methods and basic quantitative
methodologies to be employed in the study of human rights. As you learn
about different methodological approaches, you will develop your own
research project.

Scholars and practitioners in the field of human rights research will
present their work and engage in discussions with students about their
own research, challenges, successes and publication venues.

NB: This course is geared towards students who commit to writing a senior
thesis. It is part of a two-course sequence: HRTS UN3994 Section 001 Human
Rights Senior Seminar: Research Methods in the fall and HRTS UN3996
Human Rights Thesis Seminar in the spring. Students who do not intend
to write a thesis should enroll in HRTS UN3995 section 001 Human Rights
Senior Seminar, which is a one-semester course taught each semester
focused on writing a seminar paper.

HRTS GU4185 Human Rights and Global Economic Justice. 3 points.
The world economy is a patchwork of competing and complementary
interests among and between governments, corporations, and civil
society. These stakeholders at times cooperate and also conflict over
issues of global poverty, inequality, and sustainability. What role do
human rights play in coordinating the different interests that drive global
economic governance? This seminar will introduce students to different
structures of global governance for development, trade, labor, finance,
the environment, migration, and intellectual property and investigate
their relationship with human rights. Students will learn about public,
private, and mixed forms of governance, analyze the ethical and strategic
perspectives of the various stakeholders and relate them to existing
human rights norms. The course will examine the work of multilateral
organizations such as the United Nations and the International Financial
Institutions, as well as international corporate and non-governmental
initiatives.
HRTS GU4195 Topics in History, Memory and Transitional Justice. 3 points.

How do societies address their “bad pasts” in order to create “good futures” in the aftermath of conflict, state-sponsored repression, dictatorship, and genocide? Transitional Justice has generated numerous strategic and tactical approaches for redressing often irreparable harms. These include: international criminal tribunals, national or local legal proceedings, truth commissions, restitution, the accurate revision of history, public apologies, the establishment of monuments and museums, and official commemorations.

The aim of this course is to examine and analyze from a historical perspective the characteristics and problems of transitions from non-democratic/dictatorial/totalitarian/criminal political regimes to the beginnings of democracy and civil society. We shall focus on concepts and comparative cases, and current and past transitional justice-related questions, including historical reconciliation. We will study, among others, the experience of Germany at and after the Nuremberg proceedings, transitional justice in Africa, post-Soviet efforts at coming to terms with its Communist past, the ICTY/ICTR/ICC, amnesty and amnesia, and the legacy and memory of genocide and mass political repression. Students will gain a substantive framework for understanding the questions and challenges related to transitional justice today.

Of Related Interest

Please see the ISHR undergraduate course list for additional courses approved for the human rights major and concentration.