
POLS BC 3410 HUMAN RIGHTS IN A DIVERSE WORLD

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Spring 2009
POLS BC 3410
Tu 02:10-04:00 pm
Lewisohn Hall 701

INTRODUCTION

This course aims to inquire into some of the most challenging issues and problems related to human rights by focusing on citizenship in a diverse world shaped increasingly by international migration. Today around 200 million people are estimated to be living outside their country of birth. In conjunction with this massive human migration, there is an unprecedented increase in the number of people who lack the rights associated with citizenship and become vulnerable to various forms of violence, discrimination, and abuse. To what extent can these problems be addressed and remedied by appeals to human rights? In what ways does the contemporary condition of non-citizens reveal the limits, paradoxes, and promises of the discourse of human rights? What are some of the most illuminating theoretical frameworks that can help us grapple with the problems encountered by non-citizens and assess the limits and promises of human rights? These are among the questions that will guide our critical inquiry of human rights in this course.

The first section of the course addresses the political and normative implications of understanding rights and citizenship within the boundaries of the sovereign nation-state. We are particularly interested in how the tight connection that the modern nation-state establishes between rights and citizenship risks turning those who are not citizens into rightless subjects. The second section is centered on the question of whether the discourse of human rights can provide a solution to the predicament of non-citizens. We will discuss whether several international developments regarding human rights in the past decades have inaugurated a postnational era detaching rights and citizenship from the nation-state. The third section of the course aims to scrutinize some of the problematical assumptions and paradoxical effects of human rights. We will discuss whether and how the existing norms, institutions, and practices related to human rights can paradoxically perpetuate, and even aggravate, the various forms of violence, discrimination, and abuse encountered by non-citizens. The fourth section looks into some of the contemporary struggles for rights and citizenship. We will address how these struggles, drawing on, contesting, and reinventing the languages of citizenship and human rights, urge us to rethink these two crucial concepts of our political vocabulary.



LEARNING OBJECTIVES

This course has three main objectives: (1) to develop a theoretical understanding of the complex relationship between human rights, citizenship, nation-state, and sovereignty; (2) to acquire a critical, analytical understanding of the underlying assumptions and political effects of human rights; (3) to develop skills of close reading, analytical writing, and research.



COURSE REQUIREMENTS

Attendance and Participation:

The success of the colloquium depends on the intensive participation of each and every student. For this reason, attendance at every session and thoughtful contribution to our discussion based on a thorough analysis of the readings are crucial. Attendance will be taken, and regular attendance and class participation constitute 10% of your course grade. Since we meet only once a week, more than one unexcused absence will significantly affect your grade for the course.

Throughout the semester you are expected to submit 5 brief commentaries (2 short paragraphs) on course readings of your choice. These commentaries will give you time to develop and organize your thoughts about the readings prior to class so that our discussions are as lively as possible. The first paragraph of each commentary should focus on an issue addressed by the reading(s) of that particular week and briefly summarize the main arguments of the author(s) regarding that issue. The second paragraph should list two questions that you would like us to discuss in class that day, and a brief explanation of why those questions are interesting to you. Commentaries must be posted on Courseworks by 9 am on class days (Tuesdays). Students are expected to have looked at these postings before class, and to come prepared to talk about the issues that are raised in them. These commentaries will constitute 5% of your course grade.

Each week, one student will start class with a 7-10 min. presentation on the readings (Note: Depending on the size of our class, we might have two students for some weeks). An effective presentation will not summarize the reading but instead offer several focused comments on authors' arguments and raise a couple of stimulating questions for class discussion. The presentation is worth 5% of your course grade.

Response Papers:

Response papers aim to strengthen your analytical reading and writing skills. Each response paper (2-3 pages, double-spaced) should be submitted at the beginning of class. Response papers provide a succinct analysis of a specific aspect of the assigned reading(s). They are not summaries or a compilation of quotes from readings; instead they should provide carefully thought, reasoned interpretation and analysis of these readings, supported by textual evidence. You may challenge the author's definition of his/her concepts or analysis of the problem, raise relevant questions left unanswered by the author, present your own analysis of the problem or issue under examination, or discuss a common analytical trait or theoretical concern in the different readings for a particular week.

You must write a total of three response papers throughout the semester on course readings of your choice, but at least one paper must be handed in by February 17. It's important to pace yourself to avoid handing in your response papers in the final weeks of the semester when you are busy writing the research paper. You may write a response paper on the same topic as your presentation. These response papers will constitute 30% of your course grade (10% each).

Research Paper:

This requirement is designed to have you explore in-depth a theoretical problem or political issue related to the rights of non-citizens. The research paper (25-30 pages, double-spaced) should build on the material studied in class. It should work with the theories and concepts studied to analyze specific theoretical debates or cases of interest to students. An effective and feasible research paper will be anchored in a very specific and focused question; broad and general topics rarely make for successful papers.

While I will not read drafts of research papers, I will work with you closely at each step of the process by breaking it down into small, manageable preparatory assignments. Preparatory assignments will be due throughout the term:

paper topic due week 4 (5% of the final grade); revised paper topic and 10-item annotated bibliography due week 7 (10% of the final grade); paper abstract and detailed outline due week 9 (5% of the final grade); final paper due **April 28** (30% of the final grade).

Here are a couple of very useful websites with advice for research and writing:

* <http://www.library.ualberta.ca/guides/plagiarism/handouts/index.cfm>

* <http://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl> (the sections on “The Writing Process”, “General Academic Writing”, “Research and Citations”, and “Grammar and Mechanics” are especially helpful).



GRADING

* Participation: 20%

-- Attendance and class participation: 10%

-- 5 brief commentaries: 5% (1% each)

-- 1 presentation: 5%

* 3 response papers: 30%

-- 10% each

* 1 research paper: 50%

-- Topic statement: 5%

-- Revised topic statement and 10-item annotated bibliography: 10%

-- Abstract and outline: 5%

-- Final paper: 30%

POLICY ON LATE ASSIGNMENTS

For the research paper and preparatory assignments, late turn-ins will be significantly penalized (one-third of a letter grade per day after the deadline). For example, a “B” paper due Tuesday but handed in Thursday will receive a “C+”. Papers submitted more than four days after the due date will not be accepted. Extensions will be given only in the case of documented illness, family emergency, or other crisis situation (please bring any form of documentation available).

The response papers must be handed in at the beginning of class since they are designed to help you prepare for class discussion. No late response papers will be accepted under any circumstances.

Commentaries must be posted on Courseworks by 9 am on class days (Tuesdays). Late commentaries will not be taken into consideration in grading.

No grade of “Incomplete” will be assigned in this course, so please manage your schedule to hand in the research paper on time.



COURSE EXPECTATIONS

1. Read the syllabus thoroughly; you are responsible for all of its contents.
2. Complete all the assignments to qualify for a passing grade.
3. Read assigned texts in time for their presentation in class; come prepared with questions or issues to discuss.
4. Regular class attendance is imperative. Attend class and participate actively in ways that are constructive and respectful of your peers and the instructor. If you must miss a particular class meeting because of illness, family emergency, or a religious holiday that forbids work, you are expected to inform the instructor beforehand, and to turn in a 2 pp. double-spaced essay responding to the assigned readings of that week, to make up for your missed class participation.
5. Each class session will begin promptly at 2:10 pm with a student presentation; as a matter of respect for your peers and the instructor, please come to class on time and remain for the entire session. If for some reason you have to be late one day or must leave early, please tell me in advance (at least 2 days in advance), and then arrive/depart as unobtrusively as possible.
6. Please turn off all electronic and other modes of communication before the class starts. Because of extreme potential for distraction, no laptops are allowed in class. The purpose of the colloquium is an analysis of theoretical texts in depth through collective discussion and engagement; laptops are not conducive to this purpose. Exceptions can be made only if you have notified me of an individual need to be accommodated due to a disability.
7. Please do not bring food to class; water and beverages in sealed containers are fine.



ACCESSIBILITY

Students with disabilities who will be taking this course and may need disability-related accommodations are encouraged to make an appointment to see me as soon as possible. Disabled students who need accommodations related to assignments and/or classroom must be registered in advance with the Office of Disability Services (ODS) in 105 Hewitt.



ACADEMIC HONESTY

Students affirm that all work turned in is their own, and that they have fully and accurately cited every written source, including web-based sources, used in their writing. All students taking this course must adhere to the Barnard College honor code. The honor code considers it “dishonest to ask for, give, or receive help in examinations or quizzes, to use any papers or books not authorized by the instructor in examinations, or to present oral work or written work which is not entirely our own, unless otherwise approved by the instructor.” If in doubt about any of these provisions or you would like to discuss these matters further, please seek guidance from the instructor.

Here are some very helpful websites for all your questions on intellectual property, citing and documenting sources, etc.:

- * <http://www.library.ucla.edu/bruinsuccess>
- * <http://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/589/01>
- * <http://www.dartmouth.edu/~sources>



READINGS

The required readings include three books and additional materials that will be available online.

Books:

📖 Michael Dummett, *On Immigration and Refugees* (Routledge, 2001)

📖 Seyla Benhabib, *Another Cosmopolitanism* (Oxford University Press, 2006)

📖 Joan W. Scott, *The Politics of the Veil* (Princeton University Press, 2007)

These books can be purchased at **Book Culture** (536 W. 112th St., 212-865-1588). They are also available on reserve at Barnard Library.

Please note that the first two books (Dummett and Benhabib) are available on CLIO as e-books. However, it is very difficult to print these books online, and since you need to bring hard copies of readings to class, I highly recommend you purchase these books. Both have very affordable paperback editions, and Book Culture will be ordering these editions.

Online readings:

Additional required readings, which are marked as “CW” in the Course Calendar below, will be available for download on Courseworks – please check <https://courseworks.columbia.edu/> for regular updates.



COURSE CALENDAR AND SCHEDULE OF ASSIGNMENTS

Week I – 01/20 – Introduction to POLS 3410 (No reading)

I. Rights, Citizenship, and the Nation-state

Week II – 01/27 – Entangled Histories of the Modern Nation-state and the Rights of Man

* Hannah Arendt, “The Decline of the Nation-state and the End of the Rights of Man,” in *The Origins of Totalitarianism* (New York: Harcourt, 1968), pp. 267-302 (originally published in 1951). **CW**

* Seyla Benhabib, “Political Geographies in a Global World: Arendtian Reflections,” *Social Research*, vol. 69, no. 2 (Summer 2002), pp. 539-566. **CW**

* 1789 Declaration of the Rights of Man and Citizen – available online at http://avalon.law.yale.edu/18th_century/rightsof.asp

* The Universal Declaration of Human Rights available online at <http://www.un.org/Overview/rights.html>

Week 3 – 02/03 – Rights and Citizenship: Bound by the Nation-state?

- * Michael Walzer, “Membership,” in *Spheres of Justice: A Defense of Pluralism and Equality* (New York: Basic Books, Inc., 1983), pp. 31-63. **CW**
- * Peter H. Schuck and Rogers M. Smith, “Birthright Citizenship in the Contemporary Polity,” in *Citizenship without Consent: Illegal Aliens in the American Polity* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1985), pp. 90-115. **CW**
- * Jürgen Habermas, “Appendix II. Citizenship and National Identity (1990),” in *Between Facts and Norms: Contributions to a Discourse Theory of Law and Democracy*, tr. William Rehg (Cambridge, Massachusetts: The MIT Press, 1996), pp. 491-515 (footnotes – pp. 568-569). **CW**
- * Rogers Brubaker, “Citizenship as Social Closure” and “The French Revolution and the Invention of National Citizenship,” in *Citizenship and Nationhood in France and Germany* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1992), pp. 21-49. **CW**

Week 4 – 02/10 – Global Migration: Limits and Problems of the Nation-state Model

- * Michael Dummett. *On Immigration and Refugees* (London and New York: Routledge. 2001).

📖 *1 paragraph statement of research topic due in class (February 10)*

II. Age of Human Rights: Towards a Postnational Order?

Week 5 – 02/17 – Political and Normative Ascendancy of Human Rights

- * Jack Donnelly, “The Concept of Human Rights” and “The Universal Declaration Model” in *Universal Human Rights in Theory and Practice* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2nd ed.), pp. 7-37. **CW**
- * Margaret E. Keck and Kathryn Sikkink, “Human Rights Advocacy Networks in Latin America,” *Activists Beyond Borders: Advocacy Networks in International Politics* (Ithaca, New York: Cornell University Press, 1998), pp. 79-120. **CW**
- * Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, *The Rights of Non-citizens* (New York and Geneva: United Nations, 2006).
Available online at <http://www.ohchr.org/Documents/Publications/noncitizensen.pdf>

📖 *Week 5 (February 17) is the last week to hand in your first response paper*

Week 6 – 02/24 – Rise of Human Rights, Decline of Citizenship?

- * Yasemin Soysal, “The Membership Rights and Status of Migrants,” “Toward a Postnational Model of Membership” and “Conclusion,” in *Limits of Citizenship: Migrants and Postnational Membership in Europe* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1994), pp. 116-167. **CW**
- * David Jacobson, “*Novus Ordo Seclorum*” and “The United States and the Age of Rights,” in *Rights Across Borders: Immigration and the Decline of Citizenship* (Baltimore and London: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1996), pp. 1-11; 94-106. **CW**
- * Linda Bosniak, “Citizenship Denationalized,” *Indiana Journal of Global Legal Studies*, vol. 7 (2000), pp. 447-509. **CW**

Week 7 – 03/03 – Human Rights as Cosmopolitan Norms?

* Seyla Benhabib, “The Philosophical Foundations of Cosmopolitan Norms” and “Democratic Iterations,” in *Another Cosmopolitanism*, ed. Robert Post (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 2006), pp. 13-80.

* Bonnie Honig, “Another Cosmopolitanism? Law and Politics in the New Europe,” in *Another Cosmopolitanism*, ed. Robert Post (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 2006), pp. 102-127.

* Jacqueline Bhabha, “‘Get Back to Where You Once Belonged’: Identity, Citizenship, and Exclusion in Europe,” *Human Rights Quarterly*, vol. 20, no. 3 (August 1998), pp. 592-627. **CW**

📖 *Revised paper topic and 10-item annotated bibliography due in class (March 3)*

III. Paradoxes of Human Rights

Week 8 – 03/10 – Human rights as politics and anti-politics

* David Kennedy, “The International Human Rights Movement: Part of the Problem?” *Harvard Human Rights Journal*, vol. 15 (2002), pp. 101-125. **CW**

* Wendy Brown, “‘The Most We Can Hope For...’: Human Rights and the Politics of Fatalism,” *The South Atlantic Quarterly*, vol. 103, no. 2/3 (Spring/Summer 2004), pp. 451-463. **CW**

* Giorgio Agamben, “Politicization of Life” and “Biopolitics and the Rights of Man,” in *Homo Sacer: Sovereign Power and Bare Life*, trans. Daniel Heller-Roazen (Stanford, California: University of Stanford Press, 1998), pp. 119-135. **CW**

* Costas Douzinas, “The politics of human rights” in *Human Rights and Empire: The Political Philosophy of Cosmopolitanism* (Routledge-Cavendish, 2007), pp. 90-110. **CW**

03/17 – No class – Spring holiday

Week 9 – 03/24 – Non-citizens as Subjects of Rights: The Case of “Refugees”

* Nevzat Soğuk, “Change and Continuity: Making, Unmaking, and Remaking the International Refugee Regime,” *States and Strangers: Refugees and Displacements of Statecraft* (Minneapolis and London: University of Minnesota Press, 1999), pp. 143-178. **CW**

* Patricia Tuitt, “Human rights and refugees,” *The International Journal of Human Rights*, vol. 1, no. 2 (Summer 1997), pp. 66-80. **CW**

* Carol Bohmer and Amy Shuman, “Producing epistemologies of ignorance in the political asylum application process,” *Identities*, vol. 14, no. 5 (October 2007), pp. 603-629. **CW**

* Jacqueline Bhabha, “Internationalist gatekeepers? The tension between asylum advocacy and human rights,” *Harvard Human Rights Journal*, vol. 15 (2002), pp. 155-181. **CW**

📖 *Paper abstract and detailed outline due in class (March 24)*

Week 10 – 03/31 – Humanitarianism and its Notion of “Human”: Non-citizen as Bare Life?

* Guglielmo Verdirame and Barbara E. Harrell-Bond, selections from “Refugee Protection: What is Going Wrong?” in *Rights In Exile: Janus-Faced Humanitarianism* (New York: Berghahn Books, 2005), pp. 271-319. **CW**

* Liisa H. Malkki, “Speechless emissaries: refugees, humanitarianism, and dehistoricization,” *Cultural Anthropology*, vol. 11, no. 3 (1996), pp. 377-404. **CW**

* Didier Fassin, “Compassion and repression: the moral economy of immigration policies in France,” *Cultural Anthropology*, vol. 20, no. 3 (2005), pp. 362-387. **CW**

* Miriam Ticktin, “Where ethics and politics meet: the violence of humanitarianism in France,” *American Ethnologist*, vol. 33, no. 1, pp. 33-49. **CW**

Week 11 – 04/07 – Sovereignty and Human Rights: Non-citizens and states of exception

* David Cole, “Enemy Aliens,” *Stanford Law Review*, vol. 54 (May 2002), pp. 953-1004. **CW**

* Judith Butler, “Indefinite Detention,” in *Precarious Life: The Powers of Mourning and Violence* (London and New York: Verso, 2004), pp. 50-100. **CW**

IV. Reinventing Human Rights and Citizenship

Week 12 – 04/14 – Contested Terrain of Universality and Rights

* Joan W. Scott, *The Politics of the Veil* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2007).

Week 13 – 04/21 – Rethinking Politics of Human Rights: Democratic Possibilities?

* Jacques Rancière, “Who is the Subject of the Rights of Man?” *The South Atlantic Quarterly*, vol. 103, no. 2/3 (Spring/Summer 2004), pp. 297-310. **CW**

* Cissé, Madjiguène, “The *sans-papiers* – a woman draws the first lessons,” trans. Selma James, Nina Lopez-Jones, and Helen West (1997).

Available online at <http://bok.net/pajol/madjiguene2.en.html>

* Étienne Balibar, “*Droit de cite* or Apartheid?” in *We, The People of Europe? Reflections on Transnational Citizenship*, tr. James Swenson (Princeton and Oxford: Princeton University Press, 2004), pp. 31-50. **CW**

* Laurent Dubois, “*La république métissée*: citizenship, colonialism, and the borders of French history,” *Cultural Studies*, vol. 14, no. 1 (2000), pp. 15-34. **CW**

* Anne McNevin, “Political belonging in a neoliberal era: the struggle of the *sans-papiers*,” *Citizenship Studies*, vol.10, no. 2 (2006), pp. 135-151.

Week 14 – 04/28 – Conclusion

📖 *Research paper due in class (April 28)*
