

## **PS 145: Human Rights in Global Politics**

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This course aims to familiarize students with the principal historical and sociological explanations behind the rise of human rights, its principal actors, institutions and legal frameworks, and the main international, regional and national settings in which the debates and practices of human rights take place. The course is divided into three core sections. The first explores the origins of the notion of human rights, taking into consideration the importance of such historical developments as the atrocities of World War II, especially those committed by Germany's Nazi regime, and sociological explanations derived from theories of modernization and globalization and the main actors and institutions in the human rights arena, from the basic legal framework of human rights standards (e.g., the United Nations Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the Geneva Convention, to name a few), to the role of major international players, such as the United States and the European Community, to powerful non-governmental actors such as Amnesty International, Human Rights Watch, Freedom House, and the Center for Transitional Justice. The second part examines human rights activism in action, such as humanitarian interventions against genocide and the process of transitional justice in nations exiting political regimes notorious for their human rights abuses. The third and final section examines the dominant debates within the human rights movement, such as the rejection of the expansive "Western" view of human rights in many parts of Africa, Asia and the Middle East, and the increasing scrutiny being paid to how mature democracies, like the United States, often fail to conform to internationally-accepted human rights norms. *Class size: 22*