



**Human Rights and Humanitarianism in International Relations since the 19<sup>th</sup> Century  
Winter Term 2019/20  
Tuesday, 08:15 – 09:45 (Room 319)**

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Room 207  
Office Hours: Monday, 17:00 – 18:00

**COURSE DESCRIPTION**

This course surveys the history of transnational advocacy for human rights from its missionary and anti-slavery ancestors to the present times. While we will cover the *longue durée* of international human rights activism, a major focus will be on the 1940s to 1980s. We will explore themes such as indigenous rights, the history of Prisoners of War, the rise of Amnesty International and its 1980s rock concerts, how pop musician Sting tried to save the tropical rainforest, and why German adventurer Rüdiger Nehberg set out to save the Yanomami.

In January 2020, the class also includes a (virtual) four-week cooperation with the history class of Dominique Marshall at Carleton University in Canada. Class sessions will be taught jointly during this time, and JFKI students will work together on common projects with Carleton University students.

Please note that, because of our transatlantic cooperation, meeting times will be different on January 14, 21, 28, and February 4; we will probably meet 14:30 to 17:30 on those dates.

## ASSIGNMENTS AND GRADING

### Active Participation

- **Participation:** Attendance alone will not count toward your participation credits. Please be also prepared to contribute your ideas each week.
- **Working out a joint policy briefing in the context of the transatlantic cooperation project.** The project will focus on indigenous rights; you will have to work out a joint policy briefing on a particular issue together with peers from Carleton University in Ottawa/Canada.
- **Presenting a Reading:** Seminar sessions will be organized around a mock panel setting, with a number of panelists (representing the readings), a chair, and the usual challengers from the audience. Presenters and challengers read the same text. Panel chairs briefly introduce the speakers (meaning the actual authors they represent), chair discussions and have a rigorous eye at the clock. The job of the challengers is to challenge what's been said by the presenter on the podium. Presenters introduce the text in 7 minutes by stating:
  - What the text is concerned with, and why it's concerned with this issue
  - What questions it raises
  - What arguments and essential points it makes
  - What answers it gives and how it proceeds
  - What is good about it and what we learn from it
  - What you would criticize about it

Please prepare short notes on those issues and copy them into the shared google-document after the class.

Everyone has to present one of the readings, chair a session, and be a challenger from the audience.

### Module Exam

Students wishing to do their module exam ("Modulprüfung") in this course have to complete all requirements listed above plus a final exam.

The paper should be 1,5 or double-spaced, with a 12pt standard size font, about 20 pages long, and be based on at least six books, six scholarly articles, and four to six primary sources.

The **final paper** is due on **March 31**. Please be aware that there will be no extension of the deadline.

## **COURSE OUTLINE**

- October 15 I. Introduction
- October 22 NO CLASS - Make up for Transatlantic Cooperation Project
- October 29 II. Do Human Rights have a History? Issues, Problems, Questions
- Readings:
- Nietzsche, On the Genealogy of Morals, Preface
  - Goodhart, Michael. "Origins and Universality in the Human Rights Debates: Cultural Essentialism and the Challenge of Globalization." *Human Rights Quarterly* 25, no. 4 (2003): 935-964
  - Moyn, *The Last Utopia*
  - Ishay, *History of Human Rights*
  - Cmiel, *The Recent History of Human Rights*
- November 5 III. Origins and Precursors: Rights in the Age of Transatlantic Revolutions, 1750s to 1850s
- Readings:
- Dubois, *A Colony of Citizens*, Chapter on: Insurrection and the Language of Rights
  - Lynn Hunt, *The Paradoxical Origins of Human Rights*
  - Elizabeth Clark, 'The Sacred Rights of the Weak': Pain, Sympathy, and the Culture of Individual Rights in Antebellum America
- November 12 IV. Wars and Humanitarian Law: Origins and Consequences, 1850s to 1950s – *A Conversation with Jean Michel Turcotte*
- Readings:
- Martha Finnemore, *Rules of War and Wars of Rule*
- Primary Sources:
- Dunant, the Battle of Solferino
  - The Geneva Convention
- November 19 NO CLASS – Make up for Transatlantic Cooperation Project

November 26

V. The 1940s Moment: Triumph, Transformation, and Tragedy

Readings:

- Mark Mazower, *The Strange Triumph of Human Rights*
- Borgwardt, *A New Deal for the World*
- Ignatieff, *Lemkin's Word*
- Loeffler, *The Conscience of America": Human Rights, Jewish Politics, and American Foreign Policy at the 1945 United Nations San Francisco Conference*

Primary Sources:

- Jackson, *Opening Address*
- *Universal Declaration of Human Rights (1948)*
- *Convention on the Punishment and Prevention of Genocide (1948)*

December 3

VI. Decolonization and Human Rights

Readings:

- Erez Manela, *Dawn of a New Era: The Wilsonian Moment*
- Jan Eckel, "Human Rights and Decolonization: New Perspectives and Open Questions" *Humanity* (2010)
- Meredith Terretta, 'In the Colonies, Black Lives Don't Matter.' *Legalism and Rights Claims Across the Interwar French Empire.*"
- Jensen, *The Making of International Human Rights: The 1960s, Decolonization, and the Reconstruction of Global Values*

Primary Sources:

- *Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples (1960)*
- *International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination (1965)*
- *UN International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights and UN International Covenant on Economic, Social, and Cultural Rights (1966)*
- *International Convention on the Suppression and Punishment of the Crime of Apartheid (1973)*

December 10

NO CLASS – Make up for Transatlantic Cooperation Project

December 17

VII. The Breakthrough? Human Rights in the 1970s

Readings:

- Keys, Reclaiming American Virtue
- Slezkine, From Helsinki to Human Rights Watch
- Cmiel, The Emergence of Human Rights Politics
- Eckel, The International League for the Rights of Man, Amnesty International, and the Changing Fate of Human Rights Activism from the 1940s through the 1970s

Primary Sources:

- Amnesty International – Founding Article
- Amnesty International – Nobel Lecture (1977)

January 7

VIII. Indigenous Rights in the Global Arena

*Readings to be announced in class.*

January 14

14:30 – 17:30

IX & X. . Transatlantic Cooperation Project on Indigenous Rights

January 21

14:30 - 17:30

XI & XII. Transatlantic Cooperation Project on Indigenous Rights

January 28

14:30 – 17:30

XII&XIII: Transatlantic Cooperation Project on Indigenous Rights

February 4

14:30 – 17:30

XIV&XV: Transatlantic Cooperation Project on Indigenous Rights

February 11

XVI: Wrap-Up Session

**FINDING BOOKS AND ARTICLES**

*We will discuss good resources during one of our meetings.*

**WRITING A HISTORICAL ESSAY**

- Find an interesting and researchable topic
- Do not choose a topic that is: obscure; vague; unfocused; too well known; too big; un-researchable.

- Do choose a topic that is: clear; focused; interesting to you and your reading audience; narrow enough to cover in a 20 page paper.
- Choose a topic that has sparked some debate among historians, since you need to discuss arguments put forward by other historians in the introduction and throughout the paper. The purpose of your paper is not only to write about issue xyz, but to position yourself in the research landscape around the issue xyz and make your own argument in this context.

#### How to develop a thesis

- A thesis is an argument or a hypothesis. It is the point of your essay. You will collect material and evidence in support of your thesis. You should state your argument in your opening paragraphs in a thesis statement.
- **Example of a weak thesis:** "This paper is about the status of African-Americans during the Civil War". It is weak because it does not make an argument or answer a question.
- **Example of a strong thesis:** "After the Civil War, many of the freed African-American slaves believed that their children would have substantially better lives and greater opportunities than they had as slaves. However, their hopes were not fulfilled. As this paper argues, in the 1880s, the lives of most African-Americans were not much better than those of their parents". That makes an argument readers can agree or disagree with.
- Think of a question that you want to answer. Always "why", not "what" or "how."
- Engage in preliminary research by searching for literature, background information, specific information, controversies in research etc.
- Refine or reformulate your question on the basis of your findings.
- Use your new questions to narrow and focus your topic.
- Continue your research, in an effort to find answers to your questions.
- Develop hypotheses to test with your research (a hypothesis is a guess about what the answer to your question will be)
- If you cannot explain your argument in a few sentences, refine your thesis; if you cannot phrase your thesis in the form of a "why" question, refine your thesis statement.
- **IMPORTANT:** Keep your thesis in mind as you conduct your research.

#### How to write a well-constructed paper

- A good paper has: a clear structure; no mistakes in grammar, spelling or punctuation
- A good paper is: jargon-free; lucid, clear, intelligible; not filled with unnecessary detail; compelling to the reader
- A good paper is always written in past tense, except where a clear, defined reference to the presence/future is mentioned.
- Organization is the key to your paper. A well-organized and structured paper has an introduction, a structured body, and a conclusion.

You can find a succinct introduction on how to write an essay here:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=d1zYBI3oAe0>

**ESSAY ASSESSMENT FORM**

In grading your essay, I will use the following form. Please make sure your essay includes what I am looking for.

Mistakes and weaknesses we often see in papers are for example:

- The paper neither has a clear question nor an argument.
- The introduction does not have a literature review in which the author introduces and discusses the relevant scholarly literature on the issue in question. Also, the author forgets to position herself/himself within this literature.
- The topic is too broad and therefore too unfocused.
- The primary and secondary sources are taken from random online sources, but do not include serious academic and scholarly work.
- The paper makes a claim but does not have the primary sources to back it up.
- The paper does not use footnotes (we as historians are very passionate about this)

1) *Structure*

Grading Criteria	Evaluation
<u>Introduction</u>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ has a good lead-in and opening theme which captures the reader's attention (example, concrete situation/event, quote, statistics, atmosphere etc.)</li> </ul>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ establishes the problem (Where and when are we?), explains why the topic/problem is relevant/important</li> </ul>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ has a clear research question and formulates its own argument</li> </ul>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ explains how the paper is going to proceed/address its questions</li> </ul>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ includes a literature review which discusses the secondary literature available on the topic; positions itself within this literature; explains how and why the paper is going to enrich current scholarship</li> </ul>	
<u>Main body</u>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ essay structured into different sections which build on another, organize and support the argument</li> </ul>	
<u>Conclusion</u>	

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○ sums up the argument and the findings	
○ provides an outlook	
<u>Comments</u>	

2) Content/Critical Engagement/Command of subject

Grading Criteria	Evaluation
○ essay makes a good, creative, and original argument	
○ narrative works with primary source evidence and quotes; uses it to support its argument; discusses and interprets the material it uses;	
○ grasp of subject matter and level of critical evaluations; evidence of extensive knowledge base; good order of facts and information provided	
○ essay engages with secondary literature and comments on it, also in the footnotes	
○ emplotment: essay builds a narrative arc which stimulates curiosity, creates a sense of constant forward-movement, and is compelling to the reader	
<u>Comments:</u>	

3) Style

Grading Criteria	Evaluation
○ paragraph made the unit of organization	
○ use of organizational sentences (topic sentences and transition clauses) within and between	

paragraphs, transitions	
○ author uses short sentences, active voice, literary forms such as rhetorical questions, alliterations etc.	
○ author uses footnotes to reference which ideas he/she took from others	
<u>Comments:</u>	

4) Final Grade & General Comments

**GRADING CRITERIA AND GRADING SCALES**

1,0 – 1,3	Exceptional performance: strong evidence of original thinking; good organization; capacity to analyze and synthesize; superior grasp of subject matter with sound critical evaluations; evidence of extensive knowledge base.
1,66 – 2,3	Competent performance: evidence of grasp of subject matter; some evidence of critical capacity and analytic ability; reasonable understanding of relevant issues; evidence of familiarity with the literature.
2,66 – 4,0	Adequate performance: understanding of the subject matter; ability to develop solutions to simple problems in the material; acceptable but uninspired work, not seriously faulty but lacking style and vigour.
Fail	Inadequate performance: little or no evidence of understanding of the subject matter; weakness in critical and analytic skills; limited or irrelevant use of the literature.