“ETHICS AND GLOBAL AFFAIRS”

Instructor:

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Meeting time: Wednesday 1:00 to 3:50 PM (CON 454)
Office hours: after class on Wednesday by appointment

Course Overview

How many civilians is it acceptable to kill or injure in order to capture or kill a single terrorist? Why is it acceptable to launch a war against Muammar Gaddafi in Libya in the name of civilian protection but not Bashar al-Assad in Syria? Or in Bosnia but not Rwanda? When is it acceptable to tap the telephones of ordinary citizens in the name of national security? Why should we ask emerging economies not to pollute the earth when it is the foundation of the wealth of the global north? And who gets to decide that incarcerating criminal and terrorist suspects and illegal migrants for years on end in prisons scattered throughout the world without access to the legal system is consistent with the principles of liberal democracy?

In this course, we will examine these as well as other comparable questions. We will look at the foundations of ethics in public policy, and their role in answering some of the most pressing, topical and difficult challenges of this and successive generations. We will attempt to apply these principles by learning about some of the basic literature on ethics in international relations, debating the pros and cons of the various approaches, and there implications for public policies.

For students, the course’s objectives are to establish a solid foundation in the literature on ethics in international affairs, develop greater analytical agility in applying theoretical material to a wide array of recent cases, and expand proficiency in communicating concepts through weekly class participation as well as the presentation.

Course Structure

The first section of the course includes the presentation of the main concepts, followed by a overview of the main issues relating to the effective implementation of human/ civil rights and public morals in global structures of governance. Topics in this section include:

- The state and international human rights
Markets, states, and political equality
- The moral standing of states in their foreign policy
- The changing conception of sovereignty and security
- Justifying humanitarian interventions
- Problems of legitimacy, efficiency, and consistency
- Limits to the globalization of ‘good governance’

The second section is devoted to various empirical case studies such as the recent evolution of human rights regimes; genocide and humanitarian intervention; ‘just’ and ‘unjust’ wars; current issues raised by the impact of counter-terrorism policies on civil liberties, immigration policies and human rights; the development and the securitization of humanitarian aid; and non-Western conceptions of human rights and democracy.

The third section seeks to provide a critical evaluation of the complex relationships between ethics, politics, and state sovereignty, as well as the effective role of human rights efforts in contemporary global affairs.

Major Assignments (in-class presentation, paper, readings):

Each student will be requested to make an oral presentation (of about 15 minutes) from the subjects listed below. Students will be asked to present on one of these subjects in a given week.

Each student will also have to write a research paper of about 25 pages (double space), based on the selected oral presentation topic. This paper is due on May 11. Late papers will be penalized.

All the students are expected to come to each class session prepared to discuss the required readings. The recommended readings are listed for the convenience of those who wish to pursue a particular topic in more depth, especially for the purpose of the in-class presentation.

Grading:

Student grades will be based on the oral presentation (30%) and the final research paper (50%). Regular attendance, careful reading, and active participation (based on required readings) are also taken into account (20%).

Part One

1. Introduction – Jan 21

2. Key notions – Jan 28
   - Moral principles and moral laws
   - International human rights
   - Evolution and influence of norms in global affairs

   Required readings:

Suggested readings:

3. Moral globalism (I) – Feb 4
- Global ethics and global political praxis
- Human rights as politics
- Global justice

Required readings:
- Terry Nardin, “Middle Ground Ethics: Can One Be Politically Realistic Without Being a Political Realist?”, Ethics & International Affairs, vol.25, n°1, March 2011, pp. 7-16.

Suggested readings:

4. Moral globalism (II) – Feb 11
- Ethics and global responsibility
- Human security
- Global democracy

→Subject for oral presentation: Human rights and state sovereignty

Required readings:

Suggested readings:
No class on February 18

5. Global political praxis – Feb 25
- International human rights regimes
- Human rights, state actors and NGOs

→Subjects for oral presentation: 1) Regional human rights regimes; 2) Issues of ethical relativism

Required readings:

Suggested readings:

6. Human rights and foreign policy – March 4
- Humanitarian interventions
- Humanitarian violence
- Military humanism

→Subjects for oral presentation: 1) US interventions (Somalia, Afghanistan, Libya); 2) Interventions in former Yugoslavia

Required readings:
- Richard Miller, “The Ethics of America’s Afghan War”, *Ethics & International Affairs*, vol.25, n°2, June 2011, pp.103-131

Suggested readings:
- Alex Bellamy, “Libya and the Responsibility to Protect: The Exception and the Norm”, *Ethics & International Affairs*, vol.25, n°3, September 2011, pp.263-269
- Darrel Moellendorf, “Jus ex Bello in Afghanistan”, *Ethics & International Affairs*, vol.25, n°2, June 2011, pp.155-164 (critics of Miller)

7. Dilemmas of universalism – March 11
- Non Western Human Rights
- Cultural relativism and human rights

→Subjects for oral presentation: 1) Islam and Human rights; 2) Human rights in Asia

**Required readings:**

**Suggested readings:**

**No class on March 18**

**Part Two**

8. Ethics and security – March 25
- Terrorism and human rights
- Counterterrorism and civil liberties

→Subjects for oral presentation: 1) The ethics of terrorist violence; 2) Democracy and the lesser evil

**Required readings:**

**Suggested readings:**
9. Ethics and Migration – April 1st
- Rights of vulnerable populations
- Border controls and global mobility
- Immigration and global justice

→Subjects for oral presentation: 1) The rights of migrants in the US; 2) Asylum seekers in Europe

Required readings:

Suggested readings:

10. Ethics, poverty, development – April 8
- Ethics and global economy
- International economic rights
- The ethics of foreign aid
- Development v. ecological rights

→Subjects for oral presentation: 1) The ethics of economic sanctions; 2) Ecological rights and environmental crisis

Required readings:

Suggested readings:

11. Practices of Human wrongs – April 15
- Global violations of human rights
- International responses to mass atrocities
Subjects for oral presentation: 1) The impact of genocides on ethics; 2) The ICC

Required readings:
- Benjamin Schiff, “The ICC’s Potential for Doing Bad When Pursuing Good”, *Ethics & International Affairs*, vol.26, n°1, March 2012, pp. 73-81.

Suggested readings:

12. Human rights and legal issues – April 22
- Reconciliation commissions
- International Criminal Court and other international instruments

Subjects for oral presentation: 1) Ethics of retributive justice (Rwanda, Liberia, Kosovo); 2) Comparative analysis of political reconciliation (South Africa, Chile)

Required readings:

Suggested readings:

Part Three

13. US exceptionalism – April 29
- Exceptionalism and exemptionalism
- Politics and policies of legal isolationism

Subjects for oral presentation: 1) The Guantanamo controversy; 2) Why Libya and not Syria? Analysis of the Obama’s doctrine of “leading from behind”
Required readings:

Suggested readings:

14. European exceptionalism – May 6
- The ethics of the EU
- European “double standards”
- Normative dimension of European foreign policy

→Subjects for oral presentation: 1) The ECHR; 2) Human rights and EU’s foreign policy

Required readings:

Suggested readings:
- FRA (EU Agency for Fundamental Rights), *Annual Report 2010*. 