

HDS 2800 (Religion 2040)

SEMINAR: RELIGION AND HUMAN RIGHTS

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121 Andover Hall

Harvard Divinity School

Fall Semester, 2004-2005

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Andover 302

Office hours: Thursdays, 12:00-4:00 pm.

This course will consider the legal, historical, theoretical, and practical connections between religion and human rights. Debates over the 'universality' and 'absoluteness' of human rights will be considered, as will controversies over the appropriateness of 'rights talk.' Special attention will be given to competing theological and philosophical assessments of human rights, and, more specifically, to different perspectives on the freedom and equality of religion, gender equity, and minority protection. Recent theoretical and empirical work, particularly in regard to Europe, Asia, Africa, and the Middle East will be taken up.

Requirements

Each student will make at least one class presentation for one week's readings. This will consist of a three-page critical analysis of the readings to be distributed to the class by email one day before class (through Eric Unverzagt).

Two Options for papers:

- 1) One 25 pp. paper, due at the end of the semester.
- 2) Two 12 pp. papers, one due at midsemester, the second at semester's end.

Books to Purchase

Tad Stahnke and J. Paul Martin, eds., *Religion and Human Rights: Basic Documents*, (**BDHR**).

Michael J. Perry, *The Idea of Human Rights* (**IHR**).

Natan Lerner, *Religion, Beliefs, and International Human Rights* [**RBHR**].

Abdullahi An-Na'im, ed., *Proselytization and Communal Self-Determination in Africa* [**PCSA**].

Ann Elizabeth Mayer, *Islam and Human Rights: Tradition and Politics*, 2nd Edition [**IsHR**]

Brian Barry, *Culture and Equality: An Egalitarian Critique of Multiculturalism* [**CE**].

September 23, **Introduction**

September 30, **Human Rights: Background and Orientation**

BD, "International Bill of Rights," pp. 56-85.

Johannes Morsink, *The Universal Declaration of Human Rights*, ch. 1, "The Drafting Process Explained"; ch. 2, "World War II as Catalyst"; ch. 8, "Article 1, the Preamble and the Enlightenment" [**On Reserve**].

Henry J. Steiner and Philip Alston, eds., *International Human Rights in Context: Law, Politics, and Morals*, 2nd edition, pp. 56-85; 126-146. [**On Reserve**]

Sumner Twiss, "History, Human Rights, and Globalization," *Journal of Religious Ethics* 32.1 (Spring 2004), pp. 39-70 [**On Reserve**].

October 7, **"Religious Human Rights"**

David Little, "Studying 'Religious Human Rights': Methodological Foundations," *Religious Human Rights: Legal Perspectives*, Johan D. van der Vyver and John Witte, Jr., eds., pp. 45-77 [**On Reserve**].

BD, "International Standards of Human Rights Related to Religion and Belief," pp.87-138; "Documents on the Rights of Religious Minorities," pp. 161-181.

RBHR, Introduction; ch. 1, "Religious Human Rights under the United Nations"; ch. 2, "Regional Protection of Human Rights."

Johannes Morsink, *UDHR*, ch. 7, "Duties and Communities" [**On Reserve**].

October 14, ***Philosophical and Theological Issues I***

IHR, Introduction, ch. 1, "Is the Idea of HRs Ineliminably Religious?"; ch. 2, "Rights Talk: What Does It Mean and Is It Problematic?"; ch. 3, "Are Human Rights Universal?", and ch. 4, "Are Human Rights Absolute?"

October 21, ***Philosophical and Theological Issues II***

Steiner and Alston, eds., *International Human Rights in Context*, ch. 5, "Rights, Duties, and Cultural Relativism." [**On Reserve**].

Bhikhu Parekh, "Cultural Diversity and Liberal Democracy," in Gurpreet Mahajan, ed., *Democracy, Difference, and Social Justice*, pp. 207-227 [**On Reserve**].

David Little, "Rethinking Human Rights: Religion, Relativism, and Other Matters," *Journal of Religious Ethics* (Fall, 1999) (**On Reserve**).

October 28, ***Differing Religious Perspectives I***

David Novak, "Religious Human Rights in Judaic Texts," in John Witte, Jr., and Johan van der Vyver, *Religious Human Rights: Religious Perspectives*, pp. 175-202. [**On Reserve**].

Eliot N. Dorff, "A Jewish Perspective on Human Rights," ch. 16 in Joseph Runzo, Nancy M. Martin, and Arvind Sharma, *Human Rights and Responsibilities in the World Religions* [**On Reserve**].

IsHR, ch. 1, "Comparisons of Rights Across Cultures"; ch. 2, "International and Islamic Human Rights"; ch. 3, "International Human Rights: The Historical Background"; and ch. 9, "An Assessment of Islamic Human Rights Schemes."

Khaled Abou El Fadl, "The Human Rights Commitment in Modern Islam," ch. 21 in Runzo, Martin, and Sharma, *Human Rights and Responsibilities in the World Religions* [**On Reserve**].

November 4, ***Differing Religious Perspectives II***

David Little, "A Christian Perspective on Human Rights," *Human Rights in Africa*, Abdullahi An-Na'im, Francis M. Deng, eds., *Human Rights in Africa*, pp. 59-103 (**On Reserve**).

David Little, "Religion, Human Rights and Secularism: Preliminary Clarifications and Some Islamic, Jewish, and Christian Responses" [**On Reserve**].

Philip Quinn, "Christian Ethics and Human Rights," ch. 17 in Runzo, Martin, and Sharma, *Human Rights and Responsibilities in the World Religions* [**On Reserve**].

Joseph Chan, "A Confucian Perspective on Human Rights for Contemporary China," and Yash Ghai, "Rights, Social Justice, and Globalization in East Asia," in Joanne R. Bauer and Daniel A. Bell, eds., *The East Asian Challenge for Human Rights* [**On Reserve**].

Sumner B. Twiss, "Confucian Values and Human Rights," ch. 20 in *Human Rights and Responsibilities in the World Religions* [**On Reserve**].

November 18, ***Religious Freedom I***

RBHR, ch. 4, "Proselytism and Change of Religion."

IsHR, ch. 8, "Freedom of Religion in Islamic Human Rights Schemes."

CE, ch. 1, "Introduction," ch. 1, "The Strategy of Privatization," and ch. 2, "Dynamics of Identity: Assimilation, Acculturation, and Difference."

PCSA, ch. 5, "Religious Freedom in African Constitutions."

December 2, ***Religious Freedom II***

T. Jeremy Gunn, "Adjudicating Rights of Conscience under the European Convention on Human Rights," in *Religious Human Rights in Global Perspective: Legal Perspectives*, pp. 305-330 [**On Reserve**].

PCSA, ch. 1, "Introduction," ch. 2, "Religious Proselytization," ch. 4, "Church and State Relations," ch. 7, "Returning to My Roots," ch. 8, "Scramble for Souls," ch. 10, "Radical Christian Revivalism in Nigeria and Ghana," and ch. 12, "Islamism in Algeria."

December 9, **Religion, Gender, and Rights**

Jean Bethke Elshtain, "Thinking about Women, Christianity and Rights," in *Religious Human Rights: Religious Perspectives*, John Witte Jr. and Johan D. van der Vyver, eds., pp. 143-156 [**On Reserve**].

Michael S. Berger and Deborah E. Lipstadt, "Women in Judaism from the Perspective of Human Rights," *Religious Human Rights: Religious Perspectives*, pp. 295-32 [**On Reserve**].

IHR, ch. 5, "Discrimination against Women and Non-Muslims," and ch. 6, "Restrictions on the Rights and Freedoms of Women."

Diane Bell, "Considering Gender: Are Human Rights for Women, Too? An Australian Case," in Abdullahi An-Na'im, ed., *Human Rights in Cross-Cultural Perspectives*, pp.339-362 [**On Reserve**].

December 16, **Rights of Minorities**

CE, ch. 4, "Theories of Group Rights," ch. 5. "Liberal States and Illiberal Religions," ch. 6. "Public Stake in the Arts and Education," and ch. 8, "Politics of Multiculturalism."

Recommended Reading:

IsHR ch. 7, "Islamic Human Rights Schemes and Non-Muslims."

RBHR, ch. 3, "Protecting Groups from Persecution and Incitement."

Nathan Glazer, "Individual Rights against Group Rights," pp. 123-138; Darlene M. Johnston, "Native Rights as Collective Rights: A Question of Group Self-Preservation," pp. 179-201; Chandran Kukathas, "Are There Any Cultural Rights," pp. 228-256; Leslie Green, "Internal Minorities and their Rights," pp. 257-272, in Will Kymlicka, ed., *Rights of Minorities*. [**On Reserve**].