History 600, Fall 2010
The History of the Idea of Human Rights

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This seminar will investigate the development of the idea of "human rights" from ancient times to the present. We will look at secular and religious visions of human rights, considering arguments about "natural rights," "universalism," and "cultural relativism." We will focus particular attention on the development of the modern idea of human rights—and will look in depth at the connections among war, retribution, and international human rights law.

**Format:** This is an advanced seminar that requires your regular attendance and full participation. **Weeks 2 through 10 we will conduct the class like a reading group.**
- Each week all students will come up with two discussion questions based on the readings. The questions must be sent to me and to the week's discussion facilitator(s) via e-mail by noon the day before the seminar meets.
- Each week students will write one-page "response papers." These papers are due no later than 10 p.m. the evening before the seminar meets. The response papers also should be sent to me via e-mail.

**Weeks 11 and 12 students will focus on their research and writing.**
**Weeks 14 and 15 students will give short research presentations.**
- Please note: Students are expected to begin work on their research papers during the first weeks of the semester—and are encouraged to come to office hours throughout the semester to discuss paper topics.

**Grades:** Course grades will be determined on the basis of participation, response papers, and a 20-page research paper.

**Readings:** Books with an * are available at the University Bookstore. All books are also on reserve at College Library. All (E) readings are available on-line through My UW. Please bring copies of the readings to class to facilitate a close discussion of the texts.

**Introduction**
**Week 1 (9/13): "Human Rights"—Definitions, Ideals, and Politics**

**Part I: The Search for Historical Precursors**
**Week 2 (9/20): Human Rights as Natural Rights?**
(E) Aristotle, *Politics* (c. 350 BCE)
(E) Cicero, *On the Laws* (c. 52 BCE)
(E) Saint Augustine, *The City of God* (c. 413-426)
(E) Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Theologica* (c. 1265-1274)
(E) Juan Gines de Sepulveda, *The Second Democrats* (1547)
(E) Bartolome de La Casas, *Defense of the Indians* (1550)
(E) John Locke, *The Second Treatise of Government* (1690)
(E) Denis Diderot, *Natural Law* (1755)

Week 3 (9/27): The French "Revolution" in Human Rights?
* Marquis de Condorcet, *Reflections on Negro Slavery* (1781)
* Abbe Sieyes, *What is the Third Estate?* (1789)
* Declaration of the Rights of Man and Citizen* (1789)
* Marquis de Condorcet, *On the Admission of Women to the Rights of Citizenship* (1790)
* Petition of the Jews of Paris, Alsace, and Lorraine to the National Assembly* (1790)
* Address to the National Assembly in Favor of the Abolition of the Slave Trade* (1790)
* Olympe de Gouges, *The Declaration of the Rights of Women* (1791)
* Admission of Jews to the Rights of Citizenship* (1791)
* Degree of the National Convention Abolishing Slavery in All the Colonies* (1794)

Week 4 (10/4): Human Rights and International Laws of War
* Hugo Grotius, *The Rights of War and Peace* (1625)
* The Hague Congresses* (1899, 1907)
* The Fourteen Points Address* (1918)
* The Covenant of the League of Nations* (1919)
* The Kellogg-Briand Pact* (1928)

Part II: Nuremberg, the Universal Declaration, and "Modern" Human Rights

Week 5 (10/11): Nuremberg and the "Rebirth" of International Law
* Sheldon Gluck, *The Nuremberg Trial and Aggressive War* (1946), pp. 3-45

Week 6 (10/18): The Universal Declaration and Beyond
* Lauren, *Evolution of International Human Rights*, pp. 135-270
* United Nations Charter* (1945)
* United Nations Universal Declaration of Human Rights* (1948)
* European Convention for the Protection of Human Rights* (1950)
Week 7 (10/25): Human Rights and Cold War Politics
(E) Joshua Rubenstein, Soviet Dissidents: Their Struggle for Human Rights (1980), pp. 31-96
(E) Andrei Sakharov, "How I Came to Dissent" (1974)
(E) Articles from Time Magazine (Feb. 25 and April 22, 1974)
(E) The Helsinki Agreement (1975)

Part III: Human Rights as a Means for Global Justice?
Week 8 (11/1): Human Rights and the Problem of Genocide
*Samantha Power, A Problem from Hell (2003)

Week 9 (11/8): Human Rights and Medical Ethics

Week 10 (11/15): Courts, Truth Commissions, and Justice

Part IV: Research Consultations and Presentations
Week 11 (11/22): Research Consultations
Week 12 (11/29): Research Consultations
Week 13 (12/6): Research Presentations
Week 14 (12/13): Research Presentations
Human rights, right that belong to an individual or group of individuals simply for being human, or as a consequence of inherent human | Find, read and cite all the research you need on ResearchGate. The term 'Human Rights' is comparatively recent in origin, but the idea of human rights is as old as the history of human civilization. It has formally and universally, become recognized only after the formation of the United Nations in 1945. It is a milestone in the history of the human rights movement. The Universal Declaration of human rights consists of a preamble and 30 articles setting forth the human rights and. A Brief History of Human Rights. The Cyrus Cylinder (539 B.C.) The decrees Cyrus made on human rights were inscribed in the Akkadian language on a baked-clay cylinder. From Babylon, the idea of human rights spread quickly to India, Greece and eventually Rome. There the concept of 'natural law' arose, in observation of the fact that people tended to follow certain unwritten laws in the course of life, and Roman law was based on rational ideas derived from the nature of things. Documents asserting individual rights, such as the Magna Carta (1215), the Petition of Right (1628), the US Constitution (1787), the French Declaration of the Rights of Man and of the Citizen (1789), and the US Bill of Rights (1791) are the written precursors to many of today's human rights documents. Edward Hirsch on falling in love with poetry. Transcription. Contents. Regarding the frequent comparisons of Hirsch's Cultural Literacy to Allan Bloom's The Closing of the American Mind, which was published around the same time, Hirsch has stated: "That was just bad luck...Allan Bloom really was an elitist." In reality, critics of Hirsch come from both progressive and conservative circles. As Jason R. Edwards explains On the political right, Hirsch has been assailed as totalitarian, for his idea lends itself to turning over curriculum selection to federal authorities and thereby eliminating the time-honored American tradition of locally controlled schools. Influence in the UK. First Right of Nation in the World, Cyrus the Great entered Babylon during the Iran vs. Iraq war without a fight. He freed the slaves and established equality. He wrote his goals down on a piece of brittle clay now known as the Cyrus Cylinder. It was a step forward for human rights, because it was the first Right of Nation in the world, and the idea traveled to Greece and Rome. Natural Law and Citizenship in Rome. Roman law existed of 12 tablets. It was a significance to Human Rights because wrote on this declaration "All men are created equal" which is also stated in the Human Rights. Constitution of the USA + Bill of Rights. These were the basic law and principles that defines the rights of American citizens, they were 7 articles about how the government worked. Peter N. Stearns, Human Rights in World History, Paul Gorden Lauren, The Evolution of International Human Rights: Visions Seen, 3rd ed. Walter Laqueur & Barry Rubin, eds., The Human Rights Reader, rev. ed. Electronic Reserves (ER), on the course Canvas website. The required texts are available for purchase at area or online bookstores. Readings: Stearns, pp.1-23; Kenneth Minogue, 'The History of the Idea of Human Rights', in Laqueur & Rubin, pp.3-17; Hunt pp.15-34; Moyn, pp.1-10. Week Two (Sep 1, 3): Human Rights: A Prehistory. Readings: Stearns, pp.24-53; Lauren, pp.1-18; Moyn, pp.11-20.