

**ANTHROPOLOGY 476/876: HUMAN RIGHTS, ENVIRONMENT, DEVELOPMENT**

**Aims and Goals of the Course**

The aim of this course (Human Rights, Environment, and Development, Anthropology 476/876) is to ground students in anthropological approaches to human rights and sustainable development. It will address issues that are of significance in the area of international human rights, paying specific attention to issues such as (1) universalism vs cultural relativism, (2) Western and non-Western perspectives on human rights, (3) individual rights and collective (group) rights, (4) the debates over civil and political rights and social, economic, and cultural rights; (5) intellectual property rights (IPR) and indigenous knowledge systems, (6) planetary (environmental) rights, (7) indigenous peoples' rights and minority group rights, (8) women's rights, (9) children's rights, and (10) environmental justice. Particular attention will be paid to the rights to food, water, environmental protection, and to development.

A major focus of the course will be on the environment, and it will address issues relating to abuse of the environment (e.g. pollution), environmental racism, ecocide (the planned and purposeful destruction of the environment), and the victimization of those supporting environmental and human rights. A primary emphasis of the course will be on eco-justice, the linkage between human rights, the environment, and social justice.

Anthropological contributions to the study of individuals, communities, ethnic groups, classes, gender, states, nation-states, environmental, development, and human rights-oriented non-government organizations (NGOs), intergovernmental organizations (IGOs), and transnational corporations (TNCs) will be explored. The human rights framework for sustainable development and environmental management will be addressed in detail.

This course attempts to do the following: (1) serve effectively to integrate environmental and social sciences; (2) provide a systemic view of human rights, development, the environment, and cultures; and (3) draw together a broad range of issues relating to contemporary global problems and solutions. The course will emphasize strongly a number of major theoretical and policy issues concerned with human rights, development, the environment, and social systems. Emphasis will be at all levels, from that of the global system to world regions and from nation-states, within-state regions (e.g. the Great Plains of the United States, the savannas of Africa), communities, and individuals.

The major point of this course is to deal with human diversity and rights through time and across space. It deals with both Western and non-Western perspectives on human rights, environment, and development and will draw on examples from many of the world's 6,500-plus ethnic groups. Special emphasis is placed on gender, age, ethnicity, and class factors as they relate to human rights and development. Other topics addressed range from social equity to environmental justice, and from promoting of cultural rights to the protection of religious and intellectual freedom.

The course is designed to encourage students to think critically about their own behavior

vis a vis other people, the environment, and the states in which they live. Students are encouraged to undertake activities with community, state, or national organizations involved with human rights, health and human services, women's organizations, ones working with children, the elderly, GLBT issues, and population. These experiences can be drawn upon for course discussions about institutions and individuals and why humans, communities, and organizations behave the ways that they do.

### **Readings (Required)**

Johnston, Barbara Rose, ed. (2011) Life and Death Matters: Human Rights, Environment, and Social Justice. Second Edition. Walnut Creek, California: Left Coast Press.

Peluso, Nancy Lee and Michael Watts, eds. (2001) Violent Environments. Ithaca, New York and London: Cornell University Press.

Sachs, Aaron (1995) Eco-Justice: Linking Human Rights and the Environment. WorldWatch Paper 127. Washington, D.C.: WorldWatch Institute.

### **Readings (Recommended)**

Fabicius, Christo and Eddie Koch, eds., with Hector Magome and Stephen Turner, eds. (2004) Rights, Resources and Rural Development: Community-Based Natural Resource Management in Southern Africa. London: Earthsan

Forsythe, David P. and Patrice McMahon, eds. (2003) Human Rights and Human Diversity: Area Studies Revisited. Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press.

Homer-Dixon, Thomas F. (1999) Environment, Scarcity, and Violence. Princeton: Princeton University Press.

Kravchenko, Svitlana and John Bonine, eds. (2008) Human Rights and the Environment. Durham: Carolina Academic Publishers.

Leib, Linda Haihar (2010) Human Rights and Environment: Philosophical, Theoretical, and Legal Perspectives. Leiden, The Netherlands: Martinus Nijhoff.

Peet, Richard and Michael Watts, eds. (2004) Liberation Ecologies: Environment, Development, Social Movements. Second Edition. London and New York: Routledge.

Picolotti, Romina and Jorge Daniel Tallant, eds. (2002) Linking Human Rights and the Environment. Tucson: University of Arizona Press.

Zarsky, Lyuba, ed. (2002) Human Rights and the Environment: Conflicts and Norms in a Globalizing World. London and Stirling, Virginia: Earthscan Publications.

## **Course Requirements**

All students in this course will be required to write a research paper (12-15 pages for undergraduates, 20-25 pages for graduate students). Alternatively, they can work on a project relating to human rights, environment, and development and do a poster session or summary report on the activities that they engaged in.

By the middle of the semester, all students will be required to submit an abstract of their proposed paper, research project, or poster presentation. Research papers receive written evaluations in terms of (1) significance of research topic(s), (b) depth and breadth of research conducted, (3) quality of the literature review, (d) clarity and directness of writing, (e) structure and organization of the paper, and (f) analytical strength.

Examinations are required in the course, with a mid-term and final examination being part of the activities in which students must take part. These will be graded with an eye toward similar concerns as outlined above for the research papers. Students will be asked to address issues raised in class lectures and class discussions as well as in the readings, guest lectures, and audiovisual presentations. Students who choose to get involved in an activity or project will also be required to keep journals and to write up experiences gained during activities with community, state, or national institutions or non-government organizations involved with human rights, environment, and development.

Students are encouraged to raise issues in class and to take part in class discussions. Students are also encouraged to work with one another and to meet individually and in groups with the instructor and with each other. Students are also invited to make comments and suggest resources that they feel may be of use to other people in the class. Students are also invited to provide comments and suggestions and detailed feedback to the instructor on issues that they feel are of significance or that need to be addressed in order to enhance the quality of the course.

## **Student Rights and Responsibilities:**

As in all courses at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln, the rights and responsibilities of students in this course are governed by the *Student Code of Conduct*, a copy of which can be found in the *UNL Undergraduate Bulletin*.

## **Paper and Project Report Formats**

The course papers and project reports should include (a) a title page with the paper title, course name and number, student name, identification number, and date, (b) an abstract - a brief, one- paragraph statement summarizing the project, (c) the body of the paper or field project document, and (d) a list of any relevant research material or references. All papers and reports should be typed. Standard referencing should be used. Full citations for website data are expected, including the http number, title, author(s), and date.

Another method of handling the field research or applied project is to do it in the form of a presentation with pictures and typed material describing the work. A poster presentation should be done on one side of a cardboard sheet, with a title, set of photographs, text describing

what is shown in the pictures and what the field project or organization's activities consisted of and what the impacts were. The poster presentation should be done on one side of the cardboard sheet only. A margin of at least one to two inches on the top and bottom and left and right of the page should be used.

Citation Style: APA style can be used for referencing, or follow the style presented in American Anthropologist or Human Organization. If you wish to use footnotes, you can follow the style in Human Rights Quarterly. For website citation, cite the full website address and the date of access and any names of authors or research teams and papers or materials.

### **Field Project Option**

Though most students in anthropology courses and courses dealing with human rights and conflict and conflict resolution may never have the opportunity to carry out a full-scale field project, they can enjoy a taste of what it is like to "do conflict resolution work." Ours is a large, complex culture in a sociological and anthropological sense, a culture so extensive and intricate that none of us is familiar with all of it. One can experience much of what a conflict manager gets to deal with in communities and institutions by seeking out and exploring a part of our own diverse world.

One can begin this exploration by working with a community organization, an environmental group, or an agency involved in conflict resolution or social work. During the course of this exploration, you can take part in a project or set of activities that can be documented in the form of a journal, set of notes, or audio tapes (which must be obtained with the permission of the people involved). The report on the field project can be a problem-oriented analysis of the work you did, observed, or learned about, and/or an assessment of the goals, objectives, and successes or failures of the organization.

One way to approach the field project would be to do what in development terms is an institutional analysis by looking at the structure, function, and strategies of the organization or group. Another way to do it would be to monitor the work of the group or organization, examining through time its activities. A third way to do the field project is to do an evaluation of the work of the group or organization. An evaluation is an examination of the activities at the end of the time that you observed, worked with, or interviewed them and what kinds of impacts they had.

### **Course Examinations and Grades**

There will be two examinations in the course, a midterm and a final. There will also be quizzes that will be given periodically, and a research paper or student project.

### **Questions?**

If questions arise about the best way in which to approach the course, the paper, the field project, or any other matter, please contact the instructor.

COURSE SYLLABUS

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Week	Topic(s)	Readings
1 Jan 9-13	Human Rights, Environment, Development: Introduction	Sachs, pp. 1-23 Peluso, Ch. 1
2 Jan 16-20	Human Rights: Definitions	BRJ, Introduction Sachs, 23-68, Peluso 2
3 Jan 23-27	Universalism & Cultural Relativism	Peluso, Ch. 9, BRJ, Ch. 1
4 Jan 30- Feb 3	Human Rights and State Systems	Peluso, Ch. 7, BRJ, Chs. 10, 11
5 Feb 6-10	Civil Rights, Minority Rights	Peluso, Chs. 8, 13 BRJ, Ch. 3, 12
6 Feb 13-17	Basic Human Needs, Governance Socioeconomic Rights	BRJ, Chs. 4-7, 13
7 Feb 20-24	Self-Determination, Planetary Rights, Rights to Peace	BRJ, Ch. 8 Peluso, Ch. 12
<b>MID-TERM EXAMINATION: Thursday, Feb 23<sup>rd</sup></b>		
8 Feb 27- Mar 3	International Approaches to Environmental Rights	BRJ, Chs. 14-18 Peluso, Ch. 10
<b>PAPER/PROJECT ABSTRACTS DUE: Thursday, March 2<sup>nd</sup></b>		
9 Mar 6-10	International Approaches to Human Rights Implementation and the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe, the Law Of the Sea	Peluso, Ch. 14
10 Mar 13-17	<b>Spring Break</b>	

11 Mar 20-24	Non-Government Organizations (NGOs) Approaches to Human Rights	Peluso, Chs. 3, 6, 15
12 Mar 27-31	Multinational (Transnational) Corporations and Human Rights	Peluso, Ch. 16
13 Apr 3-7	National Approaches to the Environment United States Domestic Policies, the Environmental Protection Agency, Clean Air Act, Clean Water Act, Endangered Species Act	Peluso, Ch. 5
14 Apr 10-14	Individual Approaches to Human Rights, Rights Implementation: The Courts, International Human Rights issues: Radiation Victimization in Russia	Peluso, Ch. 12
15 Apr 17-21	The U.S. Commitment to Human Rights: State and local Levels	Reading on Reserve
16 Apr 24-28	International Human Rights, Environment, Development: Past, Present, and Future	Reading on Reserve

**RESEARCH PAPERS/PROJECTS DUE: Thursday, April 27**

17 May 1-5 Final Examination Week

**FINAL EXAMINATION, Tuesday, May 2<sup>nd</sup>, 3:30-5:30 p.m.**

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**Readings (Required)**

BRJ: Johnston, Barbara Rose, ed. (2011) Life and Death Matters: Human Rights, Environment, and Social Justice. Second Edition. Walnut Creek, California: Left Coast Press.

PELUSO: Peluso, Nancy Lee and Michael Watts, eds. (2001) Violent Environments. Ithaca, New York and London: Cornell University Press.

SACHS: Sachs, Aaron (1995) Eco-Justice: Linking Human Rights and the Environment. WorldWatch Paper 127. Washington, D.C.: WorldWatch Institute.

**HUMAN RIGHTS, ENVIRONMENT, DEVELOPMENT:  
POTENTIAL RESEARCH PAPER TOPICS**

Note: this list is not exhaustive

The Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR)  
The Global Human Rights Regime  
Civil and Political Rights, Social, Economic, and Cultural Rights  
International action vs. multilateral action vs. bilateral action on human rights  
Individual human rights and Collective human right (group rights)  
Globalization and the state  
Minority rights  
Indigenous peoples' rights  
Women's rights and CEDAW (Convention on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women)  
Children's Rights  
Western vs. non-Western Conceptions of Human Rights  
Climate change and human rights  
Universalism vs. cultural relativism  
Generations of Rights: 1<sup>st</sup>, 2<sup>nd</sup>, 3<sup>rd</sup>, 4<sup>th</sup>, and 5<sup>th</sup>)  
The morality of human rights (the ethics of human rights)  
Religion and Human Rights  
Human rights in Christianity, Islam, Buddhism, Judaism, Hinduism, etc.  
Human Rights and Poverty  
The World Trade Organization (WTO) and human rights  
Ecocide: the purposeful destruction of environments to undercut human populations  
Human rights and conflict, human rights and war  
Human Rights and Peace  
Slavery and the anti-slavery movement  
The Right to development  
The United Nations and Human Rights  
The International Labour Organization and Human Rights  
The Human Rights Commission of the United Nations  
The United Nations Environment Program  
Population, family planning, and human rights  
Democracy and Human Rights  
Cultural Rights, the right to cultural identity  
Human rights and Gays, Lesbians, Bisexuals, and Transgendered Persons; the rights of sexual minorities  
The Patriot Act and civil and political rights in the United States  
Sustainable development and non-sustainable development and human rights  
The World Court and International Criminal Courts  
Non-governmental organizations and human rights (e.g. Amnesty International, Human Rights Watch)  
Torture  
Humanitarian assistance, peace-keeping, and peace-making  
Human rights and food: the right to food  
Planetary rights; the right to a healthy environment and the right to health  
The role of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights  
Regional application of human rights norms and standards  
Human rights and race: the Convention on Racial Discrimination

Corruption and misappropriation of funds and resources  
Environmental justice  
Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe and Human Rights, the Organization of American States and human rights  
The League of Nations and human rights  
The Geneva Accords and the rights of Prisoners  
Multilateral development banks (MDBs) and their impacts on human rights  
Multinational corporations (transnational corporations) and human rights  
Apartheid and human rights: South Africa  
The Holocaust and the Third Reich  
Human rights and health: e.g. HIV/AIDS  
TRIPS: Trade-Related Intellectual Property Rights; The World Intellectual Property Organization (WIPO)  
Intellectual Property Rights (IPR)  
The Fair Labor Standards Act (FLSA) and the Fair Labor Association (USA)  
Human rights and foreign policy  
Human rights and state sovereignty  
Humanitarian relief and private groups: Red Cross/Red Crescent, Doctors Without Borders, Physicians for Human Rights  
International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda (ITR), International Criminal Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia  
Truth Commissions (South Africa, Guatemala, Sierra Leone, etc.)  
Human rights education  
Ethnic conflict, ethnic cleansing  
Multiculturalism and diversity issues in Human Rights  
Affirmative action: benefits and costs  
Animal rights  
Food rights, food systems, genetically modified organisms (GMOs), the Green Revolution, biotechnology  
Immigration and human rights; migrant labor in the global economy  
Human Rights and the world arms trade, land mines, gun control issues  
Human rights and the information revolution: the worldwide web (the internet)  
Human rights, drugs, and alcohol in society  
Human rights, homelessness and welfare assistance  
Water and society: the debate over dams  
Resettlement and human rights  
Terrorism and counter-terrorism, terrorism prevention, 'the war on terrorism', ecoterrorism  
Case studies of specific human-rights related conflicts or conflict resolution activities  
The World Bank, human rights, development, and the environment  
Capital Punishment: the death penalty  
The Millennium Development Goals: A Compact among Nations to end poverty  
Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)  
Structural Adjustment Programs (SAPs) and human rights and equity  
Social movements and human rights, development, and the environment: grassroots approaches, networking  
Decentralization, development, and human rights  
Public-private partnerships  
Bank loans for the poor: the Grameen bank and micro-lending  
The Human Development Index (HDI): measures of well-being  
Growth, modernization, and development  
Conflict Resolution and human rights, peace, and development  
Monitoring and evaluation of development projects  
State apologies and individual apologies for past actions, reparations for injustice



Environmental exploitation and human rights (e.g. the logging industry, the fishing industry)

Tourism and human rights

Development aid and the Foreign Assistance Act in the United States

Community-based organizations (CBOs) and development, environmental protection, and human rights

Pollution as a human rights issue: transferring toxins