**BOSTON UNIVERSITY**

SCHOOL OF PUBLIC HEALTH

LW740 - Human Rights and Health

**Instructors:**
- Michael A. Grodin, MD email: <grodin@bu.edu>
- George J. Annas, JD, MPH email: <annasgj@bu.edu>

**Office:** Health Law, Talbot 3W
**Phone:** 638-4626  **Fax:** 414-1464

**Time:** Tuesdays 2:30-5:00 p.m.  **Location:** T 307C

**Office Hours:** By appointment

**COURSE DESCRIPTION**

The health of people worldwide is closely linked to the realization of human rights. For example, preventable illness, infant mortality, premature death, malnutrition, and epidemics are closely tied to discrimination, limits on freedom of expression, oppression of women, lack of education, and inhumane labor practices. This course explores the relationship between human rights and health by examining relevant international declarations (e.g., UDHR, ICCPR, ICESCR) in historical context, exploring the meaning of “human rights” and their challenge to state sovereignty, discussing the meaning of “health” and its relationship to human fulfillment, and analyzing specific case studies that illuminate the problems, prospects, and potential methods of promoting health by advocating for human rights on the national and international levels.

**Goals and Objectives:**

By the end of this course the student will:
1. Understand the relationship between human rights and health.
2. Be familiar with the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the International Conventions on Human Rights and relevant documents related to health and human rights.
3. Describe the impact of human rights abuses on health
4. Cite case examples of the interrelatedness of public health and human rights.
5. Identify the role of public health practitioners in the field of health and human rights
6. Understand the history, role, and function of Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) in addressing human rights problems.
7. Be able to determine when human rights have been violated, as well as to suggest strategies to protect and promote human rights.
8. Identify strategies for human rights advocacy within public health program planning.

**Students:**
This course will be of special interest to the non-U.S. students (who are exempt from the introductory U.S.-focused Health Law courses) as well as U.S. students interested in international health, international law, and human rights.

**Prerequisites:**
None
**Course Texts:**

  Available at [http://web.amnesty.org/rmp/hponline.nsf/ethics](http://web.amnesty.org/rmp/hponline.nsf/ethics)

**Additional Resources:**

World Wide Web  

**Course Info**

**Course Requirements:**

A 20 page research paper (80% of final grade) addressing a specific problem in the area of human rights and health. The topic, outline, and bibliography must be submitted and discussed with faculty prior to writing final paper. The paper will be written in two parts.

★ **Part I:**

- Define the nature, scope, and context of a human rights and health problem;
- identify the impediments that have thus far prevented effective action to solve the problem;

★ **Part II:**

- prepare a detailed proposed policy agenda for problem resolution that includes identifying foes and allies, funding considerations, implementation strategies, and mechanisms for review of plan efficacy.

The final submission package will include:
1. Topic Proposal (approved)
Students will also give a brief (12-15 minute) oral presentation of their proposals to the class (10% of final grade). Class participation, preparation of the readings and quizzes will also be considered in the final grade (10% of final grade).

Class Logistics:

**Late assignments:** While we would like to be lenient with late assignments, giving full credit to late work (without a valid excuse or prior arrangement) is unfair to the students who hand their work in on time. If you are absent, arrange the delayed submission in advance with Prof. Grodin.

**Absences:** Because we care about each of you, you will be missed if absent!!! Attendance will be taken at all classes. If you are or have been ill or if you are unable to attend a class, you should contact Prof. Grodin as soon as possible. The positive side of this is that we care enough about you to be concerned when you are missing important parts of the course.

**Academic conduct:** You should read the *Academic Conduct Code*, which you can pick up in the office of student affairs. All work handed in for credit must be your own, with the exception that you may quote or paraphrase from other sources if you also cite the reference and page number. If you need help, consult with Prof. Grodin or Annas.

**Lecture and assignment schedules:** The lecture and assignment schedule is on the following pages. These schedules and topics are subject to change, in which case announcements will be made in class.
CLASS ONE:  (September 5)
Health and Human Rights in the Shadow of the Holocaust; Introduction to Health and Human Rights; the Link Between Health Status, Vulnerability, and Rights

Wiesel (entire book)
Questions
Documents pp. 27-34, for complete text of documents see “Documents 25”
Reader Pp. 1-34
Perspectives Pp. xiii-xx, 1-70, 607-609

CLASS TWO:  (September 12)
Human Rights Instruments and Documents:  The International Bill of Human Rights

Codes
Reader Pp. 453-481
Perspectives Pp. 1-70 re read

CLASS THREE: (September 19)
Human Rights in Public Health Practice – Universality vs. Cultural & Ethical Relativism, From Theory to Practice (Case Study: Female Genital Cutting, Informed Consent, Sexual and Reproductive Rights)

Documents Pp. 212-249 for complete text of documents see “Documents 25”
Reader Pp. 336-372
Perspectives Pp. 223-291

PAPER TOPIC DUE

CLASS FOUR:  (September 26)
Non-Governmental Organizations: Amnesty International, Physicians for Human Rights, Global Lawyers and Physicians

Reader Pp. 397-438
Perspectives Pp 517-525, 537-548, 569-605.

OUTLINE OF PAPER DUE
CLASS FIVE: (October 3)

Documents Pp. 322-343, 353-361, 363-374 for complete text of documents see “Documents 25”
Perspectives Pp. 379-426, 179-222
UN Millennium Statement

CLASS SIX: (October 17)

Documents Pp.113-132, 133-144, 306-318. for complete text of documents see “Documents 25”
Reader Pp. 75-112.

PART ONE OF PAPER DUE

CLASS SEVEN: (October 24)
International Criminal Court and Criminal Tribunals for the Former Yugoslavia and Rwanda—Truth and Reconciliation Commissions

Documents Pp. 144-161. for complete text of documents see “Documents 25”

CLASS EIGHT: (October 31)
Families, Women, and Children and Human Rights – Problems of Gender and Sexual Orientation Discrimination, Empowerment of Women and Children, Population Control, CRC, CEDAW, Cairo, Beijing

Documents Pp. 248-279. for complete text of documents see “Documents 25”

CLASS NINE: (November 7)
Economics and Human Rights – Development, Economic, Social, and Cultural Rights; Sanctions, Multinational Corporations, World Bank, IMP, Structural Adjustment, Debt Relief

CLASS TEN: (November 14)
Biotechnology, Genetics, and the Environment

Documents Pp. 47-79, 375-392 for complete text of documents see “Documents 25”.
Reader Pp. 380-394.
Perspectives Pp. 131-178.

CLASS ELEVEN: (November 21)
Human Rights Education, Oral Presentations, Use of Media
Guest: Rob Schadt, Office of Teaching, Learning and Technology

CLASS TWELVE: (November 28)
Oral Presentations and Discussion of Individual Papers

CLASS THIRTEEN: (December 5)
Oral Presentations and Discussion of Individual Papers

CLASS FOURTEEN: (December 12)
Human Right to Health

Re-read Documents Pp. 80-97, 98-108. for complete text of documents see “Documents 25”
Perspectives Pp 469-516.

FINAL PAPER DUE

CLASS FIFTEEN: (December 12)
Future of Health and Human Rights, Human Rights Advocacy; Lobbying; Course Review

Reader Pp. 439-452.
Perspectives Pp. 549-567.
PAPER TOPIC AREAS IN HUMAN RIGHTS AND HEALTH

1. Generally:
   Sexual rights and health in [country or region]
   Refugees and internally displaced people in [country]
   Mental health and human rights in [country]
   Environment, health and human rights [focusing on specific environmental problem]
   Universalism and cultural relativism [in specific context]
   HIV/AIDS: New frontiers in Prevention
   Health professionals and the legacy of Nuremberg: Where should we go from here?
   Complex humanitarian emergencies: Lessons from past failures (e.g. Somalia)
   Homelessness: Is it a human rights issue?
   Women’s health and human rights in [country]
   Child labor: Necessary evil for economic development?

2. Specifically (Paper Topics from Past Years):
   Truth-telling and Patients Rights in Japan: The Case of HIV
   Child Prostitution in Brazil
   Rape as a War Crime in Bosnia
   Persecution of Coptic Christians in Egypt
   Palestinian Human Rights in the West Bank
   Economic Sanctions in South Africa
   Needle Exchange Program in Anchorage, Alaska
   Group Consent Human Genome Diversity Project
   Child Soldiers - the role of children in armed conflict
   Trafficking: Sale of women/children into forced prostitution in Thailand-effects on health
   Corporal Punishment in U.S. Schools
   Mandatory HIV testing of infants & women's rights
   Dowry-related crimes in India
   Canadian Red Cross Tainted Blood Scandal
The Ogoni situation in Nigeria
HIV vaccine in developing countries
Routine Episiotomy as violation of women's human rights
TB in developing countries in a context of human rights & health
Human Rights: A new basis for public health?
Guatemalan Human Rights abuses: The 1996 Peace Accord
Environmental Protection & Disease Prevention
Physicians’ Role in Torture in Turkey
Human Rights Violation in Orphanages in China
Capital Punishment in U.S. Death Row Inmates - Human Rights Violations
Torture and the Medical Profession in Chile
Female Genital Mutilation in Egypt
Enforcing the Biological Weapons Convention
Environmental Degradation as a Human Rights Violation
HIV Clinical Trials in Africa
Involuntary Sterilization
Women, Reproductive Rights, and Pregnancy Discrimination in Mexico
Disability Rights in China
Effectiveness of the Truth Commission and Human Rights in El Salvador
Human Rights of the Elderly- A New Convention on Human Rights
The Media Campaign to Abolish the Death Penalty
Native American Land Claims
Embargos Including Food and Medicine as a Political Weapon
Human Rights and China's Orphan Policy
Genocide and Unaccompanied Children in Rwanda
Chernobyl: Environmental Contamination from Nuclear Power Plants
The Taliban's Rule Over Women
Human Rights, Political Asylum Seekers, and Victims of Torture
The Problem of Early Marriage within a Health and Human Rights Framework
HIV/AIDS Vaccine Clinical Trials
Human Rights of the Mentally Ill
Combatants and Prisoners in Guantamomo
Psychiatric Medicating Prisoners on Death Row to be Executed
Small Arms and Liberia
Persecution of the Baha’i in Iran
Child Labourers in the Carpet Weaving Belts of India
Cameroon and the Anglophones: Health and Human Rights Context
Life after Landmines: Survivor Assistance Programs in Cambodia
Caring for Mauritanian Slaves
Creation of a Declaration on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Sexual Minorities
New Mechanisms for Protecting Informed Consent in East Africa
Child Soldiers in Sri Lanka
The Role of Physicians in War: Health and Human Rights Violations at Abu Ghraib Prison
Juvenile Detention Centers in Rio de Janeiro