Human Rights and Health
GENERAL INFORMATION
Spring 2002

Instructors: Vincent Iacopino and Harvey Weinstein

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Course Purpose and Structure:
This course focuses on the relationship between health and human rights. How does one define and understand international human rights? What role do these rights play in assuring the World Health Organization's definition of health"? How can health professionals, lawyers, social scientists, and others concerned with human rights improve individual and community health and well-being by protecting and promoting human rights?

The course provides an overview of the epidemiology of human rights violations in the world and an analysis of the psychology of abuse. The course considers the role of health professionals and other health promoters in: documenting the health consequences of human rights violations, treating survivors of state-sponsored abuse, addressing specific human rights concerns of women and children, identifying the impact of health policy on human rights, and participating in human rights education and advocacy. It examines the relationship between bioethics and human rights and the relationship between human rights, the environment and multinational corporations. Also, the contemporary human rights issues of universality and accountability are addressed.

The course aims to provide students with a basic understanding of human rights issues relevant to health professionals. Lectures and in-class discussions will enable students to acquire knowledge and skills necessary for preventing and alleviating the human suffering caused by human rights abuses. In addition, research assignments will provide students with opportunities to raise meaningful questions by pursuing the study of original ideas. Students' conceptual understandings and knowledge will be assessed through their participation in class. Their abilities to develop original ideas and engage in critical thinking on human rights will be reflected in their research assignment selection, presentation and writing.

The Human Rights and Health course is offered through the UC Berkeley School of Public Health and will be offered to students from the UCB/UCSF Joint Medical Program, the UC Berkeley School of Public Health, and other graduate programs of the University. Ideally, the number of students taking the course should not exceed 20.

Course Information:

University of California, Berkeley Location: 460 Stephens Hall
Assignment:

Small groups of students will do a presentation on a human rights topic five weeks into the course. In addition, each student will be expected to write a 15-page paper on a health and human rights topic of their own choosing. The papers should include the following components: a research question or idea, background information, a description of significance (and methods if applicable), analysis of relevant material and conclusions. Students will present their research topics in class on and subsequently submit the paper to the course instructors.

Office Hours:
Dr. Iacopino: Office hours will be held before class and by appointment.
Dr. Weinstein: Thursday, 10:30 AM-12 Noon.

Grading:
40% In-class presentations and contributions to discussion
60% 15-page research paper

Required Books:
1. Iacopino V, Weinstein H. *Health and Human Rights Course Reader, PH 211*. 2001. (Readings not marked with an asterisk are in the Course Reader.)

HUMAN RIGHTS AND HEALTH
COURSE SYLLABUS

Spring Semester, 2002

**Week 1**
January 24

**Instructors:** Iacopino and Weinstein

How do our understanding of human rights and our definitions of human rights abuses compare to the way these are understood internationally? What are the historical and philosophical origins of human rights and how have human rights and humanitarian law developed?

What are the critical international documents that provide the world's framework for monitoring human rights abuses? What are non-derogable rights and what is meant by the interdependence and indivisibility of human rights? How can respect for human rights be enforced?

Course introduction: individual introductions, outline of subjects to be covered, course objectives, student responsibilities, grading, office hours, reading material and explanation of assignments

**Videotape:** The Case of Rwanda: Human Rights Violations and Lessons Learned

**Exercise:** What are Human Rights?

**Readings:**

Week 2  
January 31

Instructors: Iacopino and Weinstein

Origins of Health Concerns: How has ideology shaped our understandings of sickness, health and healing? How do concepts of disease and illness affect contemporary health practices? Are human rights valid health concerns? How are the interests of individuals and society represented in medical encounters and health policy?

Health and Human Rights. How has ideology shaped our understanding of sickness, health and healing? Is there a natural point of intersection between health and human rights? What is the legal foundation for a right to health and how is it applied in America and overseas?

Exercise: Analyze from a health and human rights perspective one of the ten great public health achievements, US, 1990-99, in MMWR 48,241-243 (Also in JAMA 281:16,1481.)

Readings:

Week 3  
February 7

Guest Speaker: To Be Announced

What is the relationship between social ideals and claims to universal human rights? Do human rights apply to all people and for all time? Does the "human rights idea" represent merely a "western" model? How does the practice of female genital cutting or lack of education for girls in Afghanistan or the former practice of foot binding in China exemplify the discourse on universality and cultural relativity? Consider other examples of this discourse.

Readings:
Week 4
February 14

Guest Speaker: Sosamma Samuel-Burnett, Coordinator for the Economic and Social Human Rights Program at Food First/Institute for Food and Development Policy, Oakland, CA

Unrealized Economic, Social and Cultural Rights: Overview of the International Covenant on Economic, Social, and Cultural Rights. What are the health consequences of development and global monetary policies? What is the extent of poverty, hunger, and overpopulation in the world today? What are the health consequences of militarism? How are these problems interrelated and how do they affect the environment? What is the role of International Monetary Fund and the World Bank. What are the effects of structural adjustment policies on poverty and health? What other models exist for developing countries? What is the relation between freedoms and unrealized human needs?

Readings:

Week 5
February 21

Instructors: Weinstein and Iacopino

Terrorism, Human Rights and September 11: With our discussions on cultural relativism and economic, cultural and social rights as a background, how can we analyze the events of September 11 and the American response from a human rights perspective? How do we define "terrorism?" What psychological factors enable acts of terrorism? How should health professionals respond to the threat of terrorism?

Film: Preparing for Biological/Chemical Warfare

* Mastny V. Terrorism. Available at: http://encarta.msn.com/find/Concise.asp?ti=03256000
Week 6
February 28

Assignment: Small Group Presentations on Health and Human Rights Topics

Week 7
March 7

Instructors: Weinstein and Iacopino


Health Consequences of Armed Conflicts and Human Rights Violations: What are the immediate and long-term effects of death and disability, destruction of infrastructure, supplies of food, water, housing, health services during times of war and civil conflicts. How do the laws of war aim to protect people in times of war? What constitutes medical neutrality?

Health Status of Refugees and Displaced Persons: What are the immediate and long-term health needs triggered by mass migrations of people during armed conflicts? What constitutes appropriate health services for humanitarian assistance?

Readings:
Toole MJ. Complex emergencies: refugee and other populations. In: Noji EK ed.. The Public


Week 8
March 14

Guest Speaker: Iacopino and Weinstein

Human Rights Violations/Reports From the Field: What is the role of health professionals in documenting the health consequences of conflict and human rights violations? Overview of efforts to document violations of international human rights and humanitarian
law, including the problems of genocide, extrajudicial executions, torture, rape, excessive use of force, prison condition, landmines, and chemical weapons.

Methods of Documenting Human Rights Violations: What are the general conditions for a human rights investigation? How can epidemiology and other research methods be applied to the documentation of human rights violence? What forms of evidence should be collected?

Readings:

Week 9
March 21

Guest Speaker: Nomfundo Walaza, Visiting Fellow, Human Rights Center, Director, Center for Survivors of Violence and Torture, Cape Town, South Africa.

Torture: How is torture defined? What is the scope of its practice and its prevalence among refugees and asylum seekers? What are the physical, psychological, and social health consequences of torture? How can survivors be helped? What are the possible conceptual and clinical limitations of post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) as a diagnosis? How do literary accounts by survivors inform health professionals' efforts to prevent and alleviate suffering?

The Psychology of Abuse: What are the origins of abuse? How do processes of moral disengagement and dissociation promote abuse? What is the unconscious structure of torture? Why does causing death and injury seem to confer power to the victimizer?

Resettlement and Asylum: What health issues arise in countries of asylum? What factors determine the asylum process and how do refugees integrate into new cultures?


Readings:
Status of Refugees.

**SPRING BREAK**
March 25-29

**Week 10**
April 4

**Guest Speaker:** To Be Announced

Health and Women's Human Rights: What are women's human rights? How has feminism contributed to human rights discourse? How does gender discrimination manifest as abuses of women's human rights? What are reproductive rights and how have they been challenged?

**Readings:**


**Week 11**
April 11

**Guest Speakers:** Margaret Brodkin, Executive Director, Coleman Advocates for Youth, San Francisco, CA.

Health and Human Rights of Children: What are the rights of children? How are they violated. What are the immediate and long-term health consequences of such violations? What is the impact of psychological trauma on development and family dynamics? How does the conceptualization of childhood influence treatment approaches? What are the causes of child labor, hunger and malnutrition and what remedies can be identified?

Human Rights Education: What is the significance of human rights education? What role should health professionals play in building a culture of human rights within the health sector and in the world community? What strategies should be considered to achieve this.

**Exercise:** Develop a 3-year plan for a children's health and human rights organization (Group A). Develop a Public Health Action Plan for Human Rights Education; OR Develop a California ballot initiative for human rights education in public schools (Group B).

**Readings:**
Week 12
April 18

**Guest Speaker:** Speaker from Business for Social Responsibility

Environment, Multinational Corporations, Health and Human Rights. What are the effects of industry practice, pollution, and dumping on the health rights of populations? Are human rights and a free market compatible? What is the role of government policy in making trade-offs between growth and health? How can multinational corporations be held accountable for human rights abuses?

**Exercise:** Develop a human rights impact assessment methodology to assess the human rights implications of development programs (Working Group A) and Health Policy (Working Group B).

**Readings:**


Week 13
April 25

**Guest Speaker:** Helene Lipton, Professor of Pharmacy and Health Policy, Schools of Medicine and Pharmacy, UCSF, San Francisco, CA

Human Rights and Health policy: How can health professionals assess the impact of health policy on human rights, both on civil and political rights and on the economic, social and cultural rights?

Analysis of the Intersection Between Health Policy and Human Rights: Tobacco and HIV, access to health care, denial of health care to undocumented immigrants, and discrimination against disabled persons.

**Readings:**


Bioethics and Human Rights: What are the professional ethics of healers? What is the relationship between bioethics and human rights? How have people become unwitting participants in human experimentation? How have governments, scientists, and health professionals colluded in the misuse of their own citizenry? How have public health officials participated in human experimentation? Historical examples of this include the eugenics movement, Nazi medicine and the concentration camp experiments, the Tuskegee experiments, human radiation, mind control, and chemical and biological warfare. What is known about the role of health professionals in experiments and torture?

Readings:
Brennan T. Proposed revisions to the Declaration of Helsinki - will they weaken the Ethical principles underlying human research? NEJM. 1999; 341(7):527-530.
Levine R. The need to revise the declaration of Helsinki. NEJM. 1999; 341(7):531-534.

Week 14
May 2

Guest Speaker: Jeffrey Burack, Assistant Adjunct Professor of Bioethics, Division of health and Medical Sciences, School of Public Health, UC Berkeley.

Truth, Justice and Reconciliation: How can we define truth, justice, and reconciliation? How should perpetrators of human rights abuses be held accountable for their actions? Is there any relationship between justice and reconciliation? What is the role of a truth commission? What does justice and reconciliation have to do with the protection and promotion of human rights?

Human Rights Education: What is the significance of human rights education? What role should health professionals play in building a culture of human rights within the health sector and in the world community? What strategies should be considered to achieve this.

Readings:


