UCL SUMMER SCHOOL

INTERNATIONAL POLITICS OF HUMAN RIGHTS

Key Information

Module code: ISSU0009
Taught during: Session One: Monday 1 July - Friday 19 July 2019
Module workload: 45 teaching hours plus approximately 100 study hours
Module leader: Dr. M. Rodwan Abouharb
Department: Political Science, Faculty of Social & Historical Sciences
Credit: 15 UCL credits, 7.5 ECTS, 4 US
Level: Level 1, first year Undergraduate
Pre-requisites: Standard entry requirements
Assessment: Presentation (25%), examination (75%)

Module Overview

Week One
- Introductions
- What are human rights? Where do they come from?
- A social science approach to human rights
- Excursion 1

Week Two
- Why governments violate human rights: what we know
- The role of domestic institutions: democracies and human rights practises
- Excursion 2
- The consequences of domestic human rights violations: political instability, civil war and refugees

Week 3
- The role of international institutions: the international human rights regime and government human rights practices
- The role of international institutions: the international financial regime, program lending and government human rights practices
- Excursion 3
- Myanmar: An in depth examination of the consequences of human rights violations on refugees, and civil conflict

Please note that this module description is indicative and may be subject to change.
Module Aims
This module will introduce students to the idea of what human rights are and different explanations about where rights come from. From there we will briefly examine how human rights have changed and become imbedded in international law since World War II. Next we will ask why governments repress the rights of their citizens. In particular we will try to understand the political advantage governments seek through violating human rights. Next we will examine what are the economic and social consequences of repression. Finally we will examine if previous cycles of repression like slavery for example make countries more likely to use violence today. Throughout the class we will use examples from the world around us to test and illustrate the arguments made in the literature, the conflicts in Myanmar, Syria and Iraq, and the former conflicts in Sri Lanka and the United Kingdom in Northern Ireland are a few examples.

Teaching Methods
Lectures and seminars (led by the tutor but with input from one of our PhD students with expertise in the field), student presentations, classroom debates, private reading, outlines/assignments, and a student research project. There will be three field trips to related human rights organizations. Readings will be available on Moodle, with required book available on short-term loan from the Library. Student support will be provided via seminars/tutorials and weekly office hours.

Learning Outcomes
Upon successful completion of this module, students will:

- Understand why governments violate human rights through a critical understanding of both academic texts and real world examples of government policy choices.
- Understand the substantive topical questions, which have been asked concerning the repression of human rights.
- Have developed a conceptually and empirically informed understanding of the debates surrounding human rights repression and respect.
- Be able to critically engage with the debates in the literature on human rights repression and respect.
- Be qualified to proceed to further specialised study of human rights and/or employment in a related field.
- Have better developed the skills associated with: reading about, understanding and discussing conceptual issues and theoretical debates; applying concepts and theories to the empirical study of human rights; writing essays and participating in group discussions.

Assessment Methods

- 10-minute presentation (25%)
- 2-hour examination (75%)

Key Texts

Please note that this module description is indicative and may be subject to change.