

Course Purpose and Goals

The Universal Declaration of Human Rights proclaims that "the inherent dignity and...the equal and inalienable rights of all members of the human family [are] the foundation of freedom, justice and peace in the world." Who speaks to human rights in East Asia? What ethical perspectives do they voice? Case studies presented through memoirs, films, reports and multidisciplinary analyses provide our material for exploring diverse normative claims about individual rights in East Asia.

This advanced seminar is dedicated to exploring the ethical frameworks invoked in human rights' cases in East Asia. Before studying several cases in depth, we will develop a basic conceptual vocabulary of ethical reasoning. We will consider Christian, Buddhist, Confucian, liberal democratic and relativist perspectives on human rights' standards and law. Finally, we will analyze case studies on genocide, political rights, and gender rights. Throughout the course our discussion will be guided by three questions:

1. Who are the actors involved in human rights cases in Asia?
2. What are the most important human rights conflicts in Asia? How do we judge?
3. What ethical perspectives are articulated in laws, policies, and debates about human rights?

You will earn [WRI](#) and [EIN credit](#) for this course. In light of the general education goals which come with those credits, I expect you to consider, with full intention, how your study this term facilitates your ability to write well and approach complex issues from diverse moral perspectives. Towards this end, you should keep track of each in your note taking as you read and participate in class.

Required Texts

I require you to buy four texts, all of which should be available at the campus bookstore. I post additional readings to Moodle or make them available through library databases as indicated on the syllabus. Be sure you buy the proper edition of the texts.

- De Bary, Wm. Theodore. 2004. *Nobility and civility: Asian ideals of leadership and the common good*. Cambridge, Harvard University Press
- Demick, Barbara. 2010. *Nothing to envy: Ordinary lives in North Korea*. Spiegel and Grau.
- Merry, Sally Engle. 2006. *Human rights & gender violence: Translating international law into local justice*. Chicago, University of Chicago Press.
- Runzo, Joseph and Nancy M. Martin. *Human rights and responsibilities in world religions*. One World Publications, Oxford, UK.

Additional readings are linked through the Moodle page. You may choose to print these materials at your own expense (this may require you to add additional \$ to your printing account with IIT) or to bring them to class on a laptop or tablet, as you wish.

You may also wish to purchase a copy of Kate L. Turabian's *A manual for writers of term papers, theses, and dissertations* (6th edition), University of Chicago Press, since we will use it as the style guide for all seminar project papers. Multiple copies are available in the library as well.

Expectations

Academic honesty – I expect you to be diligent about avoiding plagiarism or cheating in any form. Refer to "The Book" if you are in doubt about how to conduct yourself honestly, or as to the consequences of lapses. Pertinent sections are available online [here](#).

Attention to detail in writing - All papers should be typed; double-spaced (unless specified otherwise); have numbers on pages; include your name, my name and the course title; and use reasonable margins and fonts. Plan enough time to proofread your work for spelling, grammar, syntax, paragraph construction, and so on. I will provide rubrics for grading your papers; please copy them into your complete work, save as a PDF, then upload to Moodle for me to grade.

Communication. I post many valuable materials for the course to the Moodle page and send periodic clarifications, reminders and updates to your stolaf.edu email account. Plan on consulting both daily. Additionally, you may need to make appointments with me via Google Calendar. I prefer that you contact me in person or via email with questions, rather than via the phone or voice mail.

Grading - I follow the College's official grading benchmarks, which are worth your time to read. You can access them [here](#). For each grade, I assign within a range, which I enter into a spread sheet to calculate your total grade for the course. A+ = 97-100; A = 93-96; A- = 90-92; B+ = 87-89; and so on.

Participation – Come to class ready to discuss assigned readings and seminar prep papers. The course is offered as an advanced seminar, which I understand as requiring sustained intellectual engagement from all participants. Quality matters more than quantity. In cases of exceptional participation, I may raise your final grade one step (from B+ to A-, for example). The opposite also holds true: in cases of multiple absence or marked intellectual laziness in seminar, I may lower your final grade one step.

Timeliness – Readings should be finished before class; papers should be turned in on time. In the case of a genuine emergency, contact me as soon as you are reasonably able to do so. I may request documentation in such cases. Turning in assignments late will lead to a reduction in your grade for that material (one step for each day late, except for response essays and mini-conference materials, which will receive an F if not shared before class in all non-emergency situations).

If you have a documented disability for which accommodations may be required in this class, please contact Connie Ford (ford@stolaf.edu) or Laura Knobel-Piehl (knobel@stolaf.edu) in the Academic Support Center (507-786-3288, Buntrock 108) as soon as possible to discuss accommodations. If you have already arranged accommodations through Student Accessibility Services, please arrange for the submission of your accommodation letter within the first two weeks of class. Accommodations will only be provided after the letter is submitted to me and with sufficient lead-time for me to arrange testing or other accommodations. Although I will receive the letter electronically, I expect you to initiate a conversation with me about the accommodations.

Assignments & Grading

Response Papers/Public essay [10% each, for total of 30% of course grade]

1. Each student will write two brief response papers (500-600 words each) to stimulate class discussion. As you start your paper, ask yourself: what is the main point of this reading? What are the secondary points? How does the reading relate to others we have done for the seminar? To what extent does the author's logic and/or evidence make sense to you? Now – with these questions answered for yourself, find a discussion question that lets us explore some aspect of the reading together productively, in a way that increases everyone's ability to answer these questions. All seminar members will read all papers prior to class, so that everyone can come to class ready to hit the ground running. Good response papers will offer critical review and propose ONE (and only one) compelling discussion question. Your discussion question should come at the beginning of your paper: the rest of the paper can then be used to explain and contextualize that question, as well as to present alternative answers to it.

By the way, "critical review" means you engage in the process I describe above – highlight some dimension of the reading and justify your focus. You need not necessarily disagree with an author. Nor should you summarize the entire reading: remember that your classmates have read the same material. A "compelling discussion question" might draw our attention to the internal logic (whether successful or unsuccessful) of an author's argument, point out ways in which previous readings relate to those at hand, or push us to think about the consequences of an argument for other issues. Post as Moodle assignment by 5:00 pm on the day prior to class meeting. Also, be sure to post your paper to Moodle forum so that other students can read the papers before coming to class. By the way, my first concert was to see Cheap Trick, and I met the band.

Response papers are due on Moodle no later than 5:00 pm the day we are to read them.

2. You will also write one public essay that contributes to the project linking Asian and Environmental Studies at St. Olaf. Our goal will be to share the different ethical perspectives on e-recycling introduced in the environmental case study with people who are not part of this course, but interested in the larger issue.

Seminar Project (60% of course grade, in three parts)

Each of you will work all semester long on a project exploring a specific debate about human rights in Asia. Contemporary and historical cases are both acceptable; likewise, debates within a single country or across several countries are also both acceptable. Your research should allow you to explore the three course questions listed above on this syllabus. Consequently, you will need to accurately explain the origins and development of the debate, identify who is participating in it, and what positions they are advocating. Most importantly, you will need to explore the ethical perspectives that the different participants in the debate invoke to justify their behavior and/or policies. Finally, since Asian Studies is an interdisciplinary field, I expect you to be sensitive to diverse disciplinary (e.g., sociology, history, philosophy, political science, etc.) perspectives on your topic. Each paper should begin with a review of pertinent scholarly literatures, indicating just how you are approaching interdisciplinarity.

There are three graded components to the seminar project, as follows:

1. Prospectus and preliminary bibliography [20% of course grade]. Your prospectus must be uploaded to Moodle by **noon on Friday, October 18**. Your prospectus should explain/include:
 - a. Your project topic
I should know what your topic is no later than **September 24**. Come to my office hours as soon as you think you have a topic, to make sure that I agree with you. If time allows, we will briefly discuss research topics in class. Write a short paragraph on your theme, including initial keywords, and begin working with one of the reference librarians once you meet with me.
 - b. Why it is important
 - c. Which cases you will study and why
 - d. At least three researchable questions
 - e. A research plan for the rest of the semester, outlining what you will do by what date
 - f. A preliminary annotated bibliography (we will follow a template that I will make available to you in February).

2. Draft paper presentation and workshop [20% of course grade]. During four late-semester class periods, each student will receive comments on their drafts during 15-25 minutes in class (actual presentation times depend upon the number of students in the class). Students must make their draft papers available to the class, and to me, on **Tuesday, November 26**. You will read each other's papers, and comment on them using a rubric I provide. During class, you will discuss how each author should revise their draft into a final paper. Participation in these discussions will figure into your grade for this stage of the research project.

3. Seminar paper [20% of course grade]. 3500-5000 words, due via Moodle no later than the end of the final exam period assigned to this class, which **Thursday, December 19 at 4:00 pm**. I will give you my template for grading seminar papers at the mid-point of the semester; however, the fundamental objective is for you to write a substantive research paper that is fact-based, tightly reasoned, and engaged with ethical philosophies.

Portfolio (10% of course grade)

The core of this assignment is a cover letter of 800-1000 words that assesses how your response papers and research project fit into the seminar overall, and the intellectual growth you achieved (or not) by completing this course. Where do you now stand on the debates about human rights in Asian contexts, and why? Which ethical perspective seems most compelling as you look back over the entire semester? Why? What comments or corrections would you make in response to your response papers from your vantage point now at the end of the seminar? Your cover letter must include specific references to the notes you took all semester to prepare for class discussions, supplemented with an appendix that highlights key portions of your writing. Pay attention to the comments I provide on your work throughout the semester. Due at the end of the final exam time, on Moodle- **Thursday, December 19, 4:00 p.m.**

Class Schedule

Date	Prepare for class	Work due
<i>Introductions</i>		
Th Sept 5	Introductions	
Tu Sept 10	<u>On Moodle:</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Human Rights Watch World Report 2013 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Read Introductory chapter ○ Read any <u>three</u> Asian country reports – be prepared to introduce to your classmates ○ Skim the rest of the Asian Studies • Amnesty International – Read the report for one of the three countries you followed, for comparison. Be prepared to introduce in class. 	
Th Sept 12	<u>On Moodle</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • UDHR • State department on China • China on State Department 	Response Paper #1
<i>Foundations</i>		
Tu Sept 17	Runzo et al	Response Paper #2

			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Introduction, pp.1-5 • ter Haar, Rats..., pp.79-95 • UDHR by the World's Religions, pp. 141-147 • Irish, Christian Response to UDHR by WR, pp. 159-166 • Hussain, Muslim Response, pp. 169-177 • Chapple, Indic Perspectives, pp. 179-185 • Chappell, Buddhist Reflections, pp. 187-196 • Berthrong, Confucian Perspective, pp. 199-205 	
Th	Sept	19	<u>On Moodle</u>	Response Paper #3
			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Internet Encyclopedia of Philosophy, Ethics • Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy, Virtue Ethics 	
Tu	Sept	24	<u>On Moodle:</u>	Response Paper #4
			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy, Deontological Ethics • Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy, Consequentialism 	
<i>Case Studies</i>				
Th	Sept	26	Genocide	
Tu	Oct	1	Genocide	Response Paper #5
Th	Oct	3	Totalitarianism	
Tu	Oct	8	Totalitarianism	Response Paper #6
Th	Oct	10	Catch up/individual work	
Tu Oct 15 Fall Break				
Th	Oct	17	Individual research & writing	Research proposal & initial bibliography due on Friday, noon
Tu	Oct	22	Gender Violence	
Th	Oct	24	Gender Violence	
Tu	Oct	29	Gender Violence	Response Paper #7
Th	Oct	31	Environmental Justice	
Tu	Nov	5	Environmental Justice	Public essay due by 5pm
<i>Cultural and Religious Context</i>				
Th	Nov	7	de Bary, Preface & Chs. 1-5	Response Paper #8
Tu	Nov	12	de Bary, Chs. 6-9	Response Paper #9
Th	Nov	14	<u>Runzo et al</u>	Response Paper #10
			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Quinn, Christian, pp. 233-244 • Fredericks, Buddhism, pp. 247-261 • Martin, Hindu, pp. 267-278 	
Tu	Nov	19	<u>Runzo et al</u>	Response Paper #11
			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Twiss, Confucian, pp. 283-296 • El Fadl, Islam, pp. 301-340 	
Th	Nov	21	Individual research & writing	
Tu	Nov	26	Individual research & writing	Draft papers due by noon
Th Nov 28 Thanksgiving				
Tu	Dec	3	Paper workshop	Peer reviews due
Th	Dec	5	Paper workshop	Peer reviews due
Tu	Dec	10	Paper workshop	Peer reviews due
Th	Dec	12	Paper workshop	Peer reviews due
Final papers & portfolio due, Thursday, December 19, 4:00 pm				