

2015 Institute for the Study of Human Rights Summer Program

Session D:
 May 26– July 2

Session Q:
 July 6 – August 14

- Introduction to Human Rights
- Human Rights and Business
- Political Violence and Women’s Rights

- International Human Rights Law
- Human Rights and Visual Culture
- Human Rights and Global Economic Justice
- International Human Rights Movements:
 Past, Present, and Future

Summer Courses in Human Rights

The Institute for the Study of Human Rights and the School of Continuing Education at Columbia University offer 4000-level human rights summer courses for advanced undergraduate and graduate students. The two 6-week sessions take place from May 26 – July 2, 2015 and July 6 – August 14, 2015.

The program emphasizes the interaction between human rights theory and practice and offers students the opportunity to explore human rights both inside and outside the classroom.

Human Rights Summer Certification Program

In addition to taking individual courses, students may earn a four-course summer certification of professional achievement. The certification program is ideal for professionals, graduate

students, and advanced undergraduate students wishing to further their knowledge and understanding of human rights.

To complete the certification, students must take Introduction to Human Rights, International Human Rights Law and two elective human rights courses.

Events and Activities in New York City

Students have the opportunity to learn from human rights practitioners through in-class lectures, site visits, and meetings.

Throughout the summer, students are also invited to attend film screenings, including the Human Rights Watch Film Festival, social events, museum visits, trainings, performances, and other events related to human rights in New York City.

Summer Human Rights Courses

Session D: May 26 – July 2

Introduction to Human Rights

This course will provide a wide-ranging survey of conceptual foundations and issues in contemporary human rights. The class will examine the philosophical origins of human rights, contemporary debates, the evolution of human rights, key human rights documents, and the questions of human rights enforcement. This course will examine specific civil, political, economic, social and cultural rights, and various thematic topics in human rights.

Human Rights and Business

This course is an in-depth exploration of the relationship between business and human rights: from a theoretical perspective, as we discuss the evolution of the debate about corporate social responsibility, and from an applied perspective as we focus on particular cases, industries, and issues. Students will gain a solid grounding in the background and current issues related to business and human rights; understand the perspectives of different stakeholder groups; and critically evaluate the actions of key actors in situations where corporate-related human rights abuses have occurred.

Political Violence and Women's Rights

This course explores how women's experiences of violence in conflict are guided by traditional patriarchal views of femininity, and furthermore how this violence influences their agencies and their realization of human rights. Through academic texts, documents produced by the U.N. and NGOs globally, academic experts, and documentaries, we will explore a wide range of women's experiences of violence in conflict, including: the relationship between domestic violence in the private/home space and the violence of war in the public space; how the rape of women is used to decipher and forge the borders/boundaries of imagined, emerging nations, as in the 1994 genocide in Rwanda; debates on women terrorists, suicide bombers, and freedom fighters; and sexual violence against women in the U.S. military.

Session Q: July 6 – August 14

International Human Rights Law

This course introduces the fundamental concepts and problems of public international law. What are the origins of international law? Is international law really law? Who is governed by it? How are treaties interpreted? What is the relationship between international law and domestic law? We examine the interplay between law and international politics, in particular with reference to international human rights, humanitarian law, the use of force, and international criminal prosecutions. No prior knowledge of international law is required.

Human Rights and Visual Culture

This course examines the relationship between visual culture and human rights. It considers a wide range of visual media (photography, painting, sculpture), as well as aspects of visuality (surveillance, profiling). We will use case studies ranging in time from the early modern period (practices in which the body was marked to measure criminality, for example), to the present day. Within this framework, we will study how aspects of visual culture have been used to advocate for human rights, as well as how images and visual regimes have been used to suppress human rights.

Human Rights and Global Economic Justice

This seminar will introduce students to structures of global governance for development, trade, labor, finance, the environment, migration, and intellectual property and investigate their relationship with human rights. Students will learn about public, private, and mixed forms of governance, analyze the ethical and strategic perspectives of the various stakeholders and relate them to existing human rights norms. The course will examine the work of multilateral organizations such as the UN and the International Financial Institutions, as well as international corporate and non-governmental initiatives.

International Human Rights Movement: Past, Present, Future

The course will address the evolution of the international human rights movement and on the NGOs that drive the movement on the international, regional and domestic levels. Sessions will highlight the experiences of major human rights NGOs and will address topics including strategy development, institutional representation, research methodologies, partnerships, networks, venues of engagement, campaigning, fundraising and, perhaps most importantly, the fraught and complex debates about adaptation to changing global circumstances.