HUMAN RIGHTS IN INTERNATIONAL POLITICS

Professor: Anthony Dworkin
Academic Year 2017/2018: Spring semester

BIOGRAPHICAL INFORMATION:

Anthony Dworkin is a senior policy fellow at the European Council on Foreign Relations, where he leads the organisation’s work on human rights, democracy and justice. He has published papers for ECFR on subjects including EU human rights policies, US and European frameworks for counter-terrorism, drone strikes and military action against terrorist groups, international justice and its relation to atrocity prevention, and EU policy toward North Africa following the Arab revolutions. Before joining ECFR he was the executive director of the Crimes of War Project, and NGO that worked to raise awareness of the laws governing armed conflict among journalists, activists and the general public. He co-edited the book Crimes of War: What the Public Should Know (2nd edition, Norton, 2007). He has been a member of the Terrorism/Counter-Terrorism Committee and London Advocacy Advisory Committee of Human Rights Watch, and a contributing editor to the British magazine Prospect.

COURSE OUTLINE

Session 1: Introduction – human rights and the evolving shape of international society

How has the context for international human rights changed since the turn of the millennium? What are the reasons that states have historically incorporated (or claimed to incorporate) a concern for human rights into their foreign policy, and how have they been affected by developments in global politics?

- Joshua Kurlantzick, “The downfall of human rights”, Newsweek, 1 March 2010
• Good recent surveys of international politics can be found in Gideon Rachman, Easternisation (Bodley Head, 2016) (see in particular the chapters on the United States and Europe) and Pierre Hassner, “Feu (sur) l’ordre international?” in La revanche des passions (Fayard, 2015).

Session 2: The US “war on terror”

What principles and goals determined the US response to the attacks of 9/11? How far did the approach of President Obama represent a change from that of President Bush, and how far was it a continuation?

• John Bellinger, “Legal Issues in the War on Terrorism”, Speech at the London School of Economics, 31 October 2006.
• Rosa Brooks, “Drones and the International Rule of Law”, Ethics and International Affairs, Spring 2014

Session 3: Europe’s evolving response to the threat of international terrorism

How far have European countries succeeded in carving out a distinctive and principled response to the threat they face from Isis? Looking ahead, does a clear distinction between war and peace still make sense when confronting international terrorism?

Session 4: The politics of international criminal justice

How far is the credibility and effectiveness of the International Criminal Court and international justice more broadly compromised by the realities of global power politics?

- David Bosco, "Why is the International Criminal Court picking only on Africa?", Washington Post, 29 March 2013.

Session 5: The Arab Spring and its aftermath

Does the fate of the Arab revolutions of 2011 indicate that human rights and democracy are not a realistic short-term objective in this region? How should outside powers orient themselves towards the regimes of the region now?

Session 6: Libya and Syria – intervention and non-intervention

What are the implications of the dual experiences of intervention in Libya and non-intervention in Syria for the ideal of a “responsibility to protect” civilians from mass atrocity, including through military action where necessary?

Stewart Patrick, “Does Syria mean the end of the Responsibility to Protect?”, Atlantic, 13 June 2013
Christopher Chivvis, Toppling Qaddafi: Libya and the Limits of Liberal Intervention, (Cambridge University Press, 2013), Chapter 8 (“The Impact of the War and its Implications”).
Philip Gordon, “The Middle East is falling apart”, Politico, 4 June 2015

Session 7: The new authoritarianism and the “closing space” challenge

How have authoritarian states adapted in the ways they seek to establish and retain control over their societies? What is driving the increasing restriction on civil society, and how can democracies respond?

Ivan Krastev, “Paradoxes of the New Authoritarianism”, Journal of Democracy, April 2011
Peter Pomerantsev, “Russia: A Post-Modern Dictatorship?”, Legatum Institute, October 2013
Session 8: Human rights and the UN system

- How effective is the multilateral system in supporting human rights? Could any changes be made to make it work better?

Session 9: Enforcement measures for human rights: sanctions, leverage and double standards

Under what circumstances is it appropriate and effective to use trade measures and other sanctions to respond to human rights violations? Is it inevitable that enforcement measures will be selective and inconsistent, and does that matter?

- Peter A.G. van Bergeijk and Thomas Biersteker, “How and when do sanctions work? The evidence” in the EUISS report, *On Target: EU sanctions as security policy tools*

Session 10: The migration crisis: human rights at the intersection of international and domestic politics

How far does the European response to the migration crisis undermine its claim to put human rights at the centre of its policies? Are the obligations of rich countries to those fleeing violence or persecution politically sustainable in an era of mass displacement?

Session 11: Human rights and new technology – surveillance and “liberation technology”

How far do technological innovations offer greater empowerment to individuals, and how far conversely do they offer the prospect of greater infringement of human rights though government surveillance and other means?
Session 12: The rise of populism and the anti-liberal turn in Western democracies

How far does the rise of populist-nationalist movements within Western democracies threaten to undermine the foundations of the West's support for human rights and commitment to a liberal international order?

- “Trump and human rights – How should activists respond?” Open Democracy forum (see in particular the contributions by James Goldston and Cesar Rodriguez Garravito).
- Samuel Moyn, “Beyond Liberal Internationalism”, Dissent, Winter 2017-01-10