# Spring 2022 HIS 371-01 Human Rights in Asia

Classroom: N3110 Prof. Weiwei Luo luoweiwei@grinnell.edu

# **Course Description:**

Few things are more prominent in contemporary political discourse than discussions of human rights. But which ideals are included at the core of this concept and what kinds of practices give it expression? This seminar explores the historical origins and development of human rights thinking and politics in the West and Asia by analyzing the intellectual, legal, and political background of the concept of human rights. To begin, the course seeks to understand how and why humanity as a whole came to be valued in the West, and then examine the parallel or similar development in Asian cultures, with a sensitivity to the politics of comparisons. This course explores what it means to think historically about a concept that today is taken for granted and whose existence seems natural. The goal will be to produce a research paper on a topic concerning the history of human rights in Asia.

# **Books:**

Samuel Moyn. The Last Utopia: Human Rights in History

Other readings will be provided on Pweb as PDFs

# **Requirements:**

- a) The seminar paper (50%.) This paper will be a 20-to-30-page research paper (6000-7500 words) based on work with primary and secondary sources. Detailed grading rubric will be posted under Assignments on PWeb.
- b) Class participation (30%.) You are expected to attend class on time and participate actively throughout the semester. All readings are to be completed prior to the class period for which they have been assigned. You should come to class prepared to discuss them in detail.
- c) Paper proposal and peer comments (20%.) You will be required to write a five-page (double-spaced) proposal for your seminar paper, which will be due on April 4 (15%). You will read and give feedback on your classmates' proposals (5%,) which are due on April 11.

**Grading Scale:** 

93-100% A 83-86% B 70-76% C

90-92%	A-	80-82%	B-	60-69%	D
87-89%	B+	77-79%	C+	below 60%	F

## **Policies**

### **Student Accessibility Services:**

If you need and want accommodations in this class, please contact Autumn Wilke, in Academic Advising (wilkeaut@grinnell.edu, (641) 269-3124). She will work with you to specify the accommodations and give you a letter outlining these. This process ensures your equal participation in the class while protecting your privacy. If your access needs have already been specified, please provide me with the letter.

### **Religious holidays:**

Grinnell College offers alternative options to complete academic work for students who observe holy days. Please contact me within the first 2 weeks of the semester if you would like to discuss a specific instance that applies to you.

### Attendance and extension policies:

If you have legitimate reasons to miss class or turn in an assignment late, please let me know in advance and supply relevant documentation. Everyone is allowed <u>2 absences</u> without penalty during the semester. If you have 3 or more absences (regardless of reasons,) you will incur deduction of attendance grade. You are encouraged to come to talk to me about ways to make up for absences if you have legitimate reasons to miss more than 2 classes. Everyone is allowed <u>1 extensions of 24 hours on 1 writing assignments</u> without penalty. If you have 2 or more late submissions (regardless of reasons) you will incur grade deduction on the assignment depending on the amount of time lapsed. You are encouraged to come to talk to me about ways to make up for the grade.

### **Academic honesty:**

In all assignments written for this course, you must abide by the College's rules on plagiarism. (http://catalog.grinnell.edu/content.php?catoid=12&navoid=2537#Honesty\_in\_Academic\_Work) Do not submit someone else's work as your own, quote from a source without citing it, or provide inappropriate help to a classmate on exams and assignments. If you paraphrase or quote any text from another you must indicate where the text comes from. Failure to comply with the requirement of academic honesty may result in receiving no credit for the assignment in question or even failing the course in cases of serious academic dishonesty. If you are in doubt about any of the rules, please consult with me, or the professionals in the Writing Lab, *before* submitting your class materials and assignments.

### **Schedule**

(Reading assignments are subject to change)

#### **Section 1 Introduction**

#### Jan 24 Introduction to Class

**Syllabus** 

Jan 26 The "Who" "Why" and "What" of Writing

You are writing a research paper... what does that mean?

Watch the linked video on "expert writing" (<a href="https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vtIzMaLkCaM">https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vtIzMaLkCaM</a>)

Or

Watch the linked video on "History, Identity, Politics and the Art of Writing" (https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=aiIKTkGFK7s)

### **Section 2 Foundational Concepts**

### Jan 31 Do Human Rights Have/Need a History?

Summary of Lynn Hunt, *Inventing Human Rights (PDF)* 

Video of Lynn Hunt: (<a href="https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-7pD6Oogdeg&list=WL&index=2&t=286s">https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-7pD6Oogdeg&list=WL&index=2&t=286s</a>)

Begin reading: Sam Moyn, *The Last Utopia* (Please read at least the first two chapters)

### Feb 2 Critique of Human Rights in Western History

Finish reading: Sam Moyn, The Last Utopia

#### **Section 3 Cultural Relativism and Comparative Values**

Feb 7 "Work Differently Day" No Class

### Feb 9 Human Rights and Asian Values I?

Benedict Anderson. "Chapter 4: Frameworks of Comparison." In A Life Beyond Boundaries.

Samuel Huntington, "The Clash of Civilizations" and response by F. Ajami

### Feb 14 Human Rights and Asian Values II?

Amartya Sen, "Human Rights and Asian Values"

Choose One: response to Sen by either Daniel A. Bell or by Leigh Jenco

Stephen Angle, Confucian Human Rights (excerpt) and \*optional: response by Metzger

\*The Universal Declaration

#### Optional:

Elizabeth Perry, "Chinese Conceptions of 'Rights': From Mencius to Mao--and Now"

### Section 4 Women's Rights are Human Rights

#### **Feb 16 General Considerations**

Gayle Binion, "Human Rights: A Feminist Perspective." *Human Rights Quarterly*,

Hilary Charlesworth. "What are 'Women's International Human Rights?"

#### Feb 21 Geographical and Cultural Differences

\*Case finding exercise

Samples (optional):

Human Rights Watch. *Marry Before Your House is Swept Away: Child Marriage in Bangladesh.* New York: HRW, 2015.

Land Watch Asia. "Issue Brief: Women's Land Rights in Asia." Philippines: Asian NGO Coalition for Agrarian Reform and Rural Development (ANGOC), 2015.

### Section 5 Power, Personhood, and the Body

### Feb 23 Theoretical Underpinnings

Michel Foucault, "Right of Death and Power over Life," History of Sexuality

Thomas Lemke, "The Government of Living Beings", in Bio-Politics: An Advanced Introduction

\*Optional:

G. Agamben, "Introduction", "The Politization of Life", "Biopolitics and the Rights of Man", *Homo Sacer: Sovereign Power and Bare Life*, (Stanford, 1998)

Thomas Lemke, "Sovereign Power and Bare Life", Bio-Politics: An Advanced Introduction

### Feb 28 "Biopower" in action

Richard Baxtrom, "Governmentality, Bio-Power and the Emergence of the Malayan-Tamil Subject on the Plantations of Colonial Malaya," *Crossroads*.

## Section 6 Displacement and Refugees

### **March 2 Migration and Statelessness**

N. Saunders, "Hannah Arendt and the Refugee Problem" in International Political Theory and the Refugee Problem

SKIM: Sunil Amrith, "Asia's Great Migrations, 1850-1930" in *Migration and Diaspora in Modern Asia* 

\*Optional: Viet Thanh Nguyen, *The Refugees* 

### **March 7 Self-Determination**

Erez Manela, The Wilsonian Moment (Excerpt)

Fiona McConnell, "Constructing and Negotiating Tibetan Identities in Exile"

### Section 7 Massacres, War Crimes, and Genocide

#### **March 9 Dissidents and National Memories**

Liu Xiaobo, No Enemies, No Hatred (Excerpt)

Louisa Lim. "Introduction," "Student," "Chengdu," and "Afterword." *The People's Republic of Amnesia: Tiananmen Revisited.* 

### March 14 East Asia after WWII

Mikyoung Kim, Memory and Reconciliation in East Asia (excerpt)

Joshua Fogel: The Nanjing Massacre in History and Historiography (excerpt)

# March 16 Cold War Legacies

Film Screening: The Act of Killing

Spring Break (March 19-April 3)

Weeks 9-13: Individual and Small Group Meetings (to be scheduled)

**Week 14: In Class Presentations** 

Final Paper due on Friday, May 20, noon