This graduate class will focus on the idea of human rights as it has been understood and propagated in the non-Western world. “Human rights” are at once posited as a universal category, and critiqued as a specifically Western discourse. We begin with a foundational exploration of the origin of the concept of human rights, and then focus primarily on the twentieth century.

Who has defined human rights and for what purposes? What was the relationship of human rights to imperialism? To anti-colonialism? What role did human rights play in the establishment of the United Nations and in the creation of related international systems? In decolonization and self-determination movements? How have human rights related to questions of state sovereignty? What has been the relationship of human rights to categories of suffering and ideas of justice?

Each week, students will be required to submit a one-page critical response paper to the reading due. Students will also have to write a research paper of 25-30 pages in length on a topic of their choice, though the project must be approved by the instructor; a 20-25 minute presentation of this work (which will include questions and discussion from the class) will also be required.

**Grading:**

- **Class Participation** 20%
- **Weekly papers** 20%
- **Presentation of Research** 20%
- **Final Research Paper** 40%

**Texts:**

- Lynn Hunt *INVENTING HUMAN RIGHTS*
- Bonny Ibhawo *IMPERIALISM AND HUMAN RIGHTS*
- Normand and Zaidi *HUMAN RIGHTS AT THE UN*
- Manu Bhagavan *THE PEACEMAKERS*
- Mark Mazower *NO ENCHANTED PALACE*
- Matthew Connelly *A DIPLOMATIC REVOLUTION*
- Brian Simpson *HUMAN RIGHTS AND THE END OF EMPIRE*
- Carol Anderson *EYES OFF THE PRIZE*
- Jeffrey Wasserstrom *HUMAN RIGHTS AND REVOLUTIONS*
Preliminary Weekly Schedule

I. Meet the class; syllabus; what are human rights? What is the non-west?

II. Understanding the conceptualization of human rights as “Western”
   Read Lynn Hunt/Sam Moyn review/Sen and Thapar articles

III. The interaction of “Western” and “non-Western” rights discourses
   Read Ibhawoh

IV. The creation of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights
   Read Normand and Zaidi; Mazower article

V. The UN, rights, and power politics
   Read Mazower

VI. The UN, the nation-state, and the problem of sovereignty
   Read Bhagavan; Arendt selection; Agamben selection

VII. Falling short: human rights and justice for the “non-West”
   Read Anderson

VIII. On the end of empire, part 1
   Read Simpson; Burke article

IX. On the end of empire, part 2
   Read Connelly; Eckel article

X. An alternate history of human rights
   Moyn, Last Utopia

XI. Of rights and revolutions
   Read selections from Wasserstrom; Iriye; Hoffman; Asad article

XII. The Future of Human Rights
   Read Baxi

XIII-XIV. Student Presentations