Welcome to Literature and Human Rights
The first decade of the twenty-first century has been defined, on the one hand, by a strong global effort to promote Human Rights and "freedom." On the other hand, it has been a decade marked by grave Human Rights violations and new public debates over what constitutes a "Human Right" and what it means to "have" basic rights.

In this course, we will explore the cultural, ideological, and philosophical foundations of Human Rights, examining the ways authors of fiction have grappled with the evolution of these ideas through time and across societies. Tracing the genealogy of the concept of rights as well as the concept of a human being, we will look at how these concepts emerge in literature.

What is the relationship between art, literature, history, politics, and culture? In this course, we will examine the formal properties of the literature, focusing on the way literature's techniques of representation construct particular visions of human beings. Secondly, we will explore the way in which Human Rights are constructed across different cultures.

List of Required Books
Note: It is very important to get these exact editions (identified by the ISBN number) because translations, paginations, and supplementary materials to the text vary.

• Micheline Ishay, The History of Human Rights: Ancient Times to the Globalization Era (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2008). This text will guide us through the semester.

Grade breakdown
10% Attendance
10% First analytical essay (1,500 to 2,000 words)
10% Second analytical essay (1,500 to 2,000 words)
20% Weekly Quizzes
20% Final Exam
30% Final synthetic essay (8 to 10 pages; about 4,000 words)

Weekly Quizzes: The ten weekly quizzes are designed to make sure students keep up
with the course literature. Weekly quizzes will not deal with the philosophical or
historical component of the class. Instead, weekly quizzes will be on only the literature of
the course. Quizzes are numbered 1 through 10 on the syllabus. There will be three extra
credit quizzes. The highest extra credit quiz grade will replace the lowest quiz grade of
the semester.

Analytical Essays: For the two analytical essays, students are encouraged to think freely
and openly about an their own thoughts and reactions to the readings. Each analytical
essay must contain close textual readings of at least two pieces of literature on the
syllabus and one of the philosophical or historical readings from the syllabus. Extended
quotations and block quotes do not count towards the essay's word minimum.

Most importantly, these essays must contain a clear thesis in the first paragraph, and deal
with a theme that cuts through each reading. Essays that are merely summaries of the
readings will receive a C, at best.

Final Synthetic Essay: Each student will write a comprehensive synthetic essay of 8 to 10
double-spaced pages. Essay topics can be either 1) a comparative close reading of two or
more pieces of literature from the course, or 2) a close reading of one piece of literature
from the course with a discussion on the historical and philosophical pieces read in class.

Because this is a synthetic essay and not a research paper, students will be limited to
using only the books, articles, writings, and websites that appear on this syllabus. The
goal of this assignment is to allow students to synthesize the course material in a way that
is meaningful and beneficial to them. Final synthetic essays can be continuations of a
short analytical essay that approach the topic in a new direction.

Final essays must be writing in MLA, Chicago, or Turabian style.

Final exam: The exam will cover key course themes and test student's knowledge of key
concepts. The exam will include an identification component where students will be
presented with significant passages from the course literature and asked to identify the
author. Students will also be asked to explain in a short essay why those passages were
important in the particular piece of literature and the course as a whole.
Late assignments: All late assignments will be penalized by one full letter grade for each week they are late. All extensions must receive the professor's written permission in an e-mail (in case I forget that I gave you an extension).

Missed Quizzes: There are no make-ups for the quizzes, for any reason. The quizzes are intended to make sure students complete all readings for class.

Attendance policy: In accordance with Rutgers University regulations, attendance is required at all regularly scheduled meetings. Having 3 unexcused absences is grounds for failure.

Cheating and plagiarism: No cheating will be tolerated. No plagiarism will be tolerated. Students who are found cheating and plagiarizing will be reported to the Dean's office.

Outside resources for students looking to catch up on Human Rights issues: Here are the news sources you may use. (The goal is to avoid the CNN/MSNBC style news reporting and engage more complex and detailed stories that can be found in leading newspapers and journals).

Academic Sources:
• hrcolumbia.org
• logosjournal.com
• www.press.jhu.edu/journals/human_rights_quarterly (Access free via RU computers)

Popular Media Sources:
• globalpost.com
• iht.com
• nytimes.com
• washingtonpost.com
• cfr.org
• hrw.org
• amnesty.org
• theatlantic.com
• trialwatch.org
• genocidewatch.org

The following are posted on blackboard. We will discuss these throughout the semester:
• The Magna Carta
• The English Bill of Rights
• Declaration of the Rights of Man and of the Citizen
• Declaration of Independence of the United States of America
• The Bill of Rights of the United States of America
• Universal Declaration of Human Rights
• Vienna Declaration and Programme of Action
• Declaration on the Rights of National, Ethnic, Religious or Linguistic Minorities
• Draft Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples
• Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide
• Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women
• Draft Declaration of Principles on Human Rights and the Environment
Class Schedule

Key:  

= Print the in-class readings from blackboard and bring them to class.

= Bring the weekly reading to class.

= Quiz on weekly readings

= Paper Due

Due Dates:

Essay 1: 2/22/2011
Final Paper: 4/26/2011
Final Exam: TBA

1/18 Week 1 — Ancient voices: What are rights? Who gives us rights?

The first half of the class will draw on the first chapter of Ishay, "Early Ethical Contributions to Human Rights"

The second half of class will examine excerpts from the following, all of which are on Blackboard:
1. Plato The Republic
2. Aristotle Politics, Physics
3. Al-Kindi, selections
4. Saadia Gaon, selections
5. Al-Ghazali, selections
6. St. Thomas Aquinas, Summa Theologica
7. Thomas Hobbes, Leviathan
8. John Milton Areopagitica
10. Mo Tzu Universal Love
11. The Buddha Foundation of the Kingdom of Righteousness

1/25 Week 2 — European Enlightenment: What is a right? What is a human?

= Quiz 1 on Pope and Dante

Read for this week:
1. Selections from Dante's Inferno (on blackboard)
2. Selections Alexander Pope Essay on Man (on blackboard)
3. Ishay, Chapter 2 "Human Rights and the Enlightenment" pages 63-84
   • Focus on Ishay's argument on the relationship between Islamic & Hindu ideas and European Enlightenment thought.

In class readings:
1. Selections from Immanuel Kant Critique of Practical Reason
2. John Locke The Second Treatise of Government
4. Oxford English Dictionary entries for "human" and "person"
2/1 Week 3 — European Enlightenment: Why do we need Human Rights?
☞ Quiz 2 on Voltaire
📖 Read for this week:
   1. Voltaire *Candide*
   2. Ishay, Chapter 2 "Human Rights and the Enlightenment" pages 84-98
☞ In class readings:
   3. Leibniz "Metaphysics Summarized" in *Candide and Related Texts*
   4. Selections from Samuel Richardson's *Pamala*

2/8 Week 4 — Humans in the industrial age
☞ Quiz 3 on Shelley
📖 Read for this week:
   1. Mary Shelley *Frankenstein*, first half
   2. Ishay, Chapter 3 "Human Rights and the Industrial Age" p117-145
☞ In class readings:
   1. The Magna Carta "You shall have your body"
   2. The Declaration of Independence "All men are endowed by their creator"

2/15 Week 5 — Rights and the industrial age
☞ Quiz 4 on Shelley
📖 Read for this week:
   1. Mary Shelley *Frankenstein*, second half
   2. Ishay, Chapter 2 "Human Rights and the Enlightenment" pages 99-116
☞ In class readings:
   1. Selections from Mary Wollstonecraft *Vindication of the Rights of Women*

2/22 Week 6 — Humans and Rights in the industrial age: Gender, labor, and war
☞ Analytical Essay 1 due on readings from weeks 1 through 6
☞ Quiz 5 on Davis
📖 Read for this week:
   1. Rebecca Harding Davis "Life in the Iron-Mills" p. 39-74. It would be wise to read the introduction to the short story
   2. "Social Reform and the Promise of Dawn" in Davis p. 203-208
   3. Herman Melville "The Tartarus of Maids" in Davis p. 176-188
   4. Ishay, Chapter 3 "Human Rights and the Industrial Age" p145-172
   5. Look at the pictures in Davis!
☞ In class readings:
   1. Charter of the International Committee of the Red Cross
   2. Selected Civil War poems of Herman Melville

3/1 Week 7 — Nationalism and rights & the Bolshevik revolution
☞ Quiz 6 on Said
📖 Read for this week:
   1. Kurban Said, *Ali and Nino* First half
   2. Ishay, Chapter 4 "Two World Wars" 174-182; 199-206
3/8 Week 8 — Institutionalization of Human Rights & dealing with different ontologies
☞ Extra Credit Quiz 1 on Said
📖 Read for this week:
   1. Kurban Said, *Ali and Nino* Second half
   2. Ishay, Chapter 4 "Two World Wars" 182-191
☞ In class readings:
   1. Excerpts from Sudanese jurist Abdullahi Ahmed An-Na'im

3/15 SPRING BREAK

3/22 Week 9 — Human Rights and the great wars: The anti-colonial struggles
☞ Quiz 7 on Camus
📖 Read for this week:
   1. Albert Camus, *The Stranger* First half
   2. Ishay, Chapter 4 "Two World Wars" review 191-199;
☞ In class readings:
   1. Poetry of Léopold Sédar Sanghor

3/29 Week 10 — Human Rights and the great wars: The formerly colonized
☞ Extra Credit Quiz 2 on Camus
📖 Read for this week:
   1. Albert Camus, *The Stranger* Second half
   2. Ishay, Chapter 4 "Two World Wars" 191-199
☞ In class readings:
   1. Selections from Frantz Fanon's *The Wretched of the Earth*

4/5 Week 11 — Prison and torture, from Stalin and Hitler to the Korean War
☞ Analytical Essay 2 due on readings from weeks 7 through 11
☞ Quiz 8 on Ha Jin
📖 Read for this week:
   1. Ha Jin, *War Trash* First half
   2. Ishay, Chapter 4 "Two World Wars" 199-225
☞ In class readings:
   1. Confucius, *The Analects*
   2. Mo Tzu *Universal Love*
   3. The Buddha *Foundation of the Kingdom of Righteousness*

4/12 Week 12 — Global approaches to Human Rights in the beginning of the Cold War
☞ Extra Credit Quiz 3 on Ha Jin
📖 Read for this week:
   1. Ha Jin, *War Trash* Second half
   2. Ishay, Chapter 4 "Two World Wars" 225-229
☞ In class readings:
   1. Samphoas Huy's translation of *So Ben Ko Ma*
   2. Selections from the Book of Ezekiel
4/19 Week 13 — Rights for whom? A Universal Declaration of Human Rights?
☞ Quiz 9 on Allende
📖 **Read for this week:**
1. Isabel Allende, *House of Spirits* First half
2. Ishay, Chapter 4 "Two World Wars" 229-243

4/26 Week 14 — Human Rights and state terror (a.k.a, the "Rights" of governments)
☞ Quiz 10 on Allende
⚠️ **Final Paper Due**
📖 **Read for this week:**
1. Isabel Allende, *House of Spirits* Second half

📜 **In class readings:**
1. Poetry of Akhmatova: "Requiem"