

## **“HUMANITARIANISM IN WORLD POLITICS”**

**Graduate School of Public and International Affairs  
University of Pittsburgh**

**Instructor:** Dr. Charli Carpenter  
**Office:** WWPH 3805  
**Office Hours:** T/Th 10-12  
**Phone:** 412-648-8284  
**Email:** [charli@pitt.edu](mailto:charli@pitt.edu)

**Course #:** PIA 2343  
**Term:** Spring 2006  
**Day:** Mondays  
**Time:** 12:00-3:00  
**Location:** 3431 WWPH

### **COURSE DESCRIPTION**

This course examines the politics of humanitarianism in international society. We will consider what humanitarianism means to different actors, how humanitarianism should work in principle and how the “humanitarian sector” in world politics actually functions. The course will consider state-centered humanitarianism (such as military intervention) as well as transnational efforts (e.g. NGOs and IOs). Due to time constraints we will focus on assistance rather than development organizations, and on man-made rather than natural disasters. We will conclude with a consideration of whether or not current policy trends (humanitarian intervention, the war on terrorism) support or undermine humanitarian norms in international society.

### **COURSE READINGS**

The reading load for this course is relatively heavy. You are not required to read every word. Use your time strategically, but try to understand the main points of all the readings as well as similarities and contrasts between the arguments made by different authors.

Readings listed in the syllabus are the minimum essential to do well in the class and will form the basis of class discussions and exercises. You are expected to come to class having absorbed the basic substance of and prepared to raise questions about all the required readings. I recommend reading both with a highlighter (to make visible the basic points of the articles and books for later re-skimming) and with a pen (for writing comments and questions to yourself in the margins). Required readings are to be found in the course packet and the six course-books available for purchase (below). An additional bibliography of recommended readings is provided on the course Blackboard site under “Course Documents.”

#### **Required Course-books Available for Purchase @ University Bookstore:**

Thomas Weiss and Cindy Collins. 2000. *Humanitarian Challenges and Intervention: World Politics and the Dilemmas of Help* 2<sup>nd</sup> Ed. Boulder: Westview Press.

Mary Anderson. 1999. *Do No Harm: How Aid Can Support Peace – Or War*. Boulder: Lynne Reinner.

Larry Minear. 2002. *The Humanitarian Enterprise: Dilemmas and Discoveries*. San Francisco: Kumarian Press.

David Rieff. 2003. *A Bed for the Night: Humanitarianism in Crisis*. NY: Simon and Schuster.

Humanitarian Studies Unit, ed. 2001. *Reflections on Humanitarian Action: Principles, Ethics and Contradictions*. London: Pluto Press.

Julie Mertus. 2000. *War's Offensive on Women: The Humanitarian Challenge in Bosnia, Kosovo and Afghanistan*. San Francisco: Kumarian Press.

Additional required readings are available for purchase in the course reading packet.

### **COURSE REQUIREMENTS AND GRADING**

**Grading:** Your final letter grade is based on a 100 pt. scale. 90-100 = A; 80-89 = B; 70-79 = C; 60-69 = D; less than 60 = F.

**Attendance:** It is critical that you attend all sessions of the class and that you arrive on time, due to the interactive nature of the course. Lateness or missed classes *without an excused absence* will be penalized by a reduction of one third a letter grade. Excused absences due to GSPIA-related activities must be negotiated in advance with the instructor. In the case of an absence due to serious illness or death in the family please notify me as far in advance as possible. For last-minute notifications due to circumstances beyond your control, note my cell number: 412-849-9457.

**Critical Reading Responses (30 points):** Three times per semester you are required to turn in a 3-5 page (single-spaced) written response to the themes, arguments, and points of debate in the readings for that section of the course, up to and including those for the day on which the response is due. In addition to summarizing the literature you must make an argument about it or position yourself in a debate. (Imagine a review essay making an argument about the merit of several related pieces of scholarship.) Each critical reading response is worth 10 points.

**Participation (35 points):** The class will be highly interactive. Class meetings will consist primarily of discussion over the readings, small-group exercises, and role-playing games. Engaged participation is essential both to your ability to absorb the information and to the effective functioning of the classroom environment. Each student has the obligation both to participate him or herself, and to facilitate the participation of others.<sup>1</sup> Different students will be called on during each class to provide a verbal analysis of the readings to the class in order to get discussion started. On any given day, be prepared to fulfill this role.

**Term Writing Project (35 points):** **On the last day of class**, each student will turn in **one** of the following written assignments, double-spaced in 12 pt Times New Roman font with 1-inch margins.

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<sup>1</sup>At a subtle level, the latter involves listening with respect while peers speak, responding thoughtfully but critically to their comments (aka providing constructive feedback), and providing space, leadership and encouragement for those less inclined to take initiative. At a more obvious and easily gradable level, it means not dominating the discussion, interrupting, or reacting disrespectfully to others' opinions you may not share.

Students are required to consult with the professor on their topic early in the semester and must submit either an abstract, executive summary, or letter of inquiry by **January 23**; and a working bibliography on **February 6**, each worth 2.5 points toward your project grade. You should be prepared to discuss your project in class on **February 27** and make a 15 minute presentation of your argument late in the semester. You are also strongly encouraged to turn in a rough draft well in advance of the deadline. **Rough drafts will not be reviewed after April 3.** 20 points of your grade will result from the quality of your written work; the other 5 points will be based on your in-class presentation.

*Option #1) Research Paper.* This must be a 20-25 page publication-quality paper answering a specific research question regarding humanitarian politics. Students writing research papers must submit a 100-word “abstract” by **January 23** and on **February 27** should be prepared to discuss their developing projects in class.<sup>2</sup> The papers will be evaluated based on their intellectual merit, including: originality, research design, analytical logic and consistency, and writing style (which should be scholarly, expressive and concise). For additional information on how to craft a scholarly argument, see Johnson, Teresa Pelton. 1991. "Writing for International Security: A Contributor's Guide." *International Security* 16(2): 171-180, also available online at [http://bcsia.ksg.harvard.edu/publication.cfm?program=CORE&ctype=article&item\\_id=380](http://bcsia.ksg.harvard.edu/publication.cfm?program=CORE&ctype=article&item_id=380) or

*Option #2) Policy Paper.* This option consists of a 20-25 pg paper discussing a specific current problem in humanitarian policy and proposing a solution. Policy papers differ from research papers in that they are problem-solving rather than explanatory. They aim to illuminate a particular issue and provide prescriptions based on a balanced analysis of two or more policy options. The key components of a successful policy paper are: an interesting and timely issue or problem, an analytical overview of the background to the issue, a comparison of 2-3 different policy options according to some clearly specific criteria, and a set of recommendations based on the analysis. An executive summary (generally written last) should precede the body of the paper. Policy papers will be evaluated according to clarity, comprehensiveness, analytical logic and consistency, writing style, and adherence to format guidelines (to be distributed). Students must submit a tentative executive summary of their project on **January 23** and discuss their ongoing work with their classmates on **February 27**.

***NOTE: PLAGIARISM WILL NOT BE TOLERATED ON ANY WRITTEN ASSIGNMENT.<sup>3</sup> PLAGIARIZED WORK OF ANY KIND WILL RESULT IN AN AUTOMATIC F FOR THE ASSIGNMENT.***

### Extra Credit Options

Extra credit may be earned by publishing letters to the editor on class-related topics. A letter published in a local Pittsburgh city paper earns 1 point of extra credit; a letter published in a

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<sup>2</sup> You are also encouraged to submit your abstract to a professional conference such as the American Political Science Association <http://www.apsanet.org>.

<sup>3</sup>Plagiarism means attempting to pass off someone else’s research or writing as your own. It is very easy to catch plagiarists, and I love to do it, so don’t risk your grade or your academic reputation. University of Pittsburgh’s plagiarism policy can be found at: [http://www.pitt.edu/~cidweb/faculty-development/ta\\_handbook/chapter-8.htm#PlagiarismPol](http://www.pitt.edu/~cidweb/faculty-development/ta_handbook/chapter-8.htm#PlagiarismPol).

national venue such as the *New York Times* or *Washington Post* will receive 2 points. Students should submit a copy of the printed letter to the professor in order to receive the points.

### Students with Disabilities

If you have a disability for which you are or may be requesting an accommodation, you are encouraged to contact me as well as Disability Resources and Services (216 William Pitt Union, 412-628-7890) as early as possible in the term. DRS will verify your disability and determine reasonable accommodations for the course.

## **TENTATIVE COURSE OUTLINE**

### **PART 1: HUMANITARIAN PRINCIPLES AND POLITICS**

#### **January 9: Introduction: The Concept of “Humanitarianism”**

*Required Readings:*

Minear, ch. 1

Weiss and Collins, “Introduction.”

Reiff, ch. 2

Roberts, “Humanitarian Principles in International Politics,” in *Reflections*, pp. 23-55.

Barnett, “What is the Future of Humanitarianism?”

#### **January 16: NO CLASS – MARTIN LUTHER KING DAY**

#### **January 23: The Humanitarian Sector in World Politics**

*Abstracts and Executive Summaries Due*

*Required Readings:*

Minear, chs. 7 & 8

Weiss and Collins, ch. 2

Reiff, ch. 3

(Reading Packet): Maren, “Introduction: Darkness and Light”

#### **January 30: Humanitarian “Principles” v. “Politics”**

*First Critical Reading Response Due in Class*

*Required Readings:*

Minear, ch.5

Weiss and Collins, ch. 1

Etxeberria, “The Ethical Framework of Humanitarian Action,” in *Reflections*, pp. 78-99.

(Reading Packet): Weiss, “Principles, Politics and Humanitarian Action.”

#### **February 6: Explaining Humanitarianism in Foreign Policy**

*Bibliographies Due in class.*

*Required Readings:*

Weiss and Collins, ch. 3 and ch. 6

(Reading Packet) Olsen et. al. "Humanitarian Crises: What Determines...?"  
(Reading Packet) Gibbs, "Realpolitik and Humanitarian Intervention."

### **February 13: The Global Media in Humanitarian Politics**

*Required Readings:*

Reiff, ch. 1

Aguire, "The Media and the Humanitarian Spectacle" in *Reflections*, pp. 157-176.

(Reading Packet): Hammock and Charny, "Emergency Response as Morality Play"

### **February 20: Beyond Borders Film Screening and Online Discussion**

*Professor Carpenter will be in Sarajevo conducting research. Students will view the film together in class and submit two posts on Blackboard answering questions over the film and readings, and responding to one another's posts. 1<sup>st</sup> post due: Wednesday 22<sup>nd</sup> @ midnight; 2<sup>nd</sup> due: Sunday 26<sup>th</sup> @ midnight.*

*Required Readings:*

Sogge, "Subalterns on the Aid Chain" in *Reflections*, pp.120-141

### **February 27: Peer Feedback Day**

*Students will share term project ideas with class and should be prepared to provide feedback to their peers on their developing projects.*

### **March 6: NO CLASS – SPRING BREAK**

## **PART 2: HUMANITARIAN OPERATIONS**

### **March 13: Modes of Action**

*Required Reading:*

Weiss and Collins, ch. 4 and 5

Minear, ch. 2.

### **March 20: Assistance**

*Second Critical Reading Response Due in Class*

*Required Reading:*

Anderson, 1-76

Reiff, ch. 5

### **March 27: Protection**

*Required Reading:*

Weiss and Collins, pp. 150-156.

Minear, ch. 3

Reiff, ch. 4.

(Reading Packet): *Protection in Practice*, ch. 3: "Protecting Endangered Groups."

**April 3: Gender Mainstreaming in Humanitarian Assistance**

***Last Day to Submit Drafts of Papers and Grant Proposals***

***Required Reading:***

Mertus, *War's Offensive on Women*.

**PART 3: CONCLUSION**

**April 10: Student Presentations**

**April 17: Student Presentations**

**April 24: Humanitarianism After 9/11**

***Research Papers, Policy Papers and Grant Proposals Due in Class.***

***Third Critical Reading Response Due in Class***

***Required Readings:***

Minear, *Epilogue*.

Reiff, ch. 8 and 9.

(Reading Packet): Weiss, "September 11, Afghanistan and Iraq..."