A human right is an obligation of justice that we owe to one another in virtue of our shared humanity. In this class we will explore the philosophical foundations of such rights, investigating theories of how our shared humanity in the context of an interdependent world gives rise to obligations of justice, and of how these obligations differ from those of charity or benevolence. We will begin with important historical treatments of this idea, starting with the philosopher and statesman Cicero’s defense of universal justice on the basis of cosmopolitanism. We will then consider Hugo Grotius’ treatment of just war, and Immanuel Kant’s criticism of the just war tradition in his famous essay *Perpetual Peace*. We will then move on to contemporary theories of human rights, focusing first on John Rawls’ liberal reimagining of Kant’s project in on *The Law of Peoples*, and then Martha Nussbaum’s rival capabilities approach. Finally we will consider an extremely pressing but contested region of human rights: the rights of people in poorer countries to a just international economic order. (This course is the first of three courses in the core sequence of the Human Rights Program. For more information on the human rights program, visit [http://humanrights.uchicago.edu/](http://humanrights.uchicago.edu/).)

**Course Website**: This course has a chalk. You should get in the habit of checking the website at least once a week. To access the chalk go to [www.uchicago.edu](http://www.uchicago.edu) and click on “student”. Chalk should appear as a button on the left hand side. Clicking on that should take you to a list of chalks for the courses in which you are enrolled. All readings, aside from John Rawls can be found on the chalk for this course under the “assignments” button, grouped in folders by week. You will also be able to find this syllabus, and contact information for your CA and me. Course material (paper assignments, handouts, study guides, etc.) will regularly be made available on the site. You will also submit all written assignments through chalk.

**Grading**:  
*In Class Exam*: 25%  
*Paper One*: 30%  
*Paper Two*: 30%  
*Participation*: 15%

For exam dates and due dates for papers, consult the syllabus below. Participation credit accrues to those who regularly attend both the lecture and discussion sections, and who participate actively in discussions there. Credit is also given for evident effort and improvement.
Syllabus of Readings

Part I: Historical Precursors

Week 1: Introductions

9/27 Introductions

9/29 Rosh Hashanah—No Class
Begin optional background readings:
Universal Declaration of Human Rights
Charles Beitz, The Idea of Human Rights
Chapter 2, pages 13-47
Mary Ann Glendon, A World made new

Week 2: Cicero’s Cosmopolitanism & Hugo Grotius on The Rights of War

10/4 Cicero, On Obligations
Book I, Sections 1-59

10/6 Cicero, On Obligations
Book I, Sections 1-59

Week 3: Finishing Grotius & Introducing Kant

10/11 Hugo Grotius, On the Rights of War and Peace
Book I, Chapter I, Sections I-XV
Book I, Chapter II, Sections I-IV
Book III, Chapter III, Sections I-IV & VI-VII

10/13 Hugo Grotius, On the Rights of War and Peace
Book II, Chapter I, Sections I-VII & XI & XVI-XVIII
Book II, Chapter xvii, Sections I, IV-VII, XII-XVI
Book II, Chapter XX, Sections I-IX, xxxviii-xl
Book II, Chapter XXII, Sections I-XII
Book II, Chapters XXIII & XXIV entire

Week 4: Kant on a Just International Order & Midterm Exam

10/18 Immanuel Kant, Perpetual Peace
First Section & Second Section, pages 93-108
Optional: Martha Nussbaum, “Kant and Stoic Cosmopolitanism”

10/20 Immanuel Kant, Perpetual Peace
Appendix I & Appendix II, pages 116-130

Part II: Contemporary Approaches
**WEEK 5: Midterm and John Rawls on the Law of Peoples I**

10/25  Midterm Exam in class

10/27  John Rawls, *The Law of Peoples*
       Introduction and Part I, 3-58

**WEEK 6: John Rawls on the Law of Peoples II**

11/1   John Rawls, *The Law of Peoples*
       Part II, 59-88

11/3   John Rawls, *The Law of Peoples*
       Parts III-IV, 89-128

**WEEK 7: The Capabilities Approach I**

11/8   Martha Nussbaum, *Frontiers of Justice*
       Chapter 4, Section i-v, pages 224-264

11/10  Martha Nussbaum, *Sex and Social Justice*
       Chapter 1, pages 29-54

11/13  First paper due in digital dropbox by 5pm

**PART III: GLOBAL POVERTY AND HUMAN RIGHTS**

**WEEK 8: The Capabilities Approach II and The Problem of Global Economic Justice**

11/15  Martha Nussbaum, *Frontiers of Justice*
       Chapter 5, pages 273-324

11/17  Peter Singer, “Famine, Affluence and Morality” Thomas

**WEEK 9: Skepticism about Global Economic Justice**


11/24  Thanksgiving Break—No class

**WEEK 10: Skepticism Defeated?**

11/29  A.J. Julius, “Nagel’s Atlas”
       Cohen and Sabel, “Extra Republicam Nulla Justitia?”

12/1   Thomas Pogge, “Severe Poverty as a Human Rights Violation”

12/4   Second paper due in digital dropbox on Chalk by 5pm