MULTIDISCIPLINARY ACADEMIC PROGRAM IN HUMAN RIGHTS STUDIES

The Multidisciplinary Academic Program in Human Rights Studies offers Yale undergraduates the opportunity to explore human rights from an interdisciplinary perspective, providing students with the analytical and practical skills necessary for human rights study and human rights-related careers. With administrative, financial and programmatic support from the Schell Center for International Human Rights, the Program connects students to faculty and peers with similar interests, supports student research projects and internship opportunities, and offers coherent career guidance in the field.

Human rights today constitute a profoundly influential moral language and legal system through which to understand contemporary global affairs, not simply political but also cultural, social, and economic. Anthropology, area studies, law, literature, philosophy, political science, and many other fields have explored human rights issues from their own particular disciplinary perspectives and with their particular methodologies. The Human Rights Program is meant to recognize this complexity and to support a diverse community of scholars across the university; since its founding in 2014, the Program has included students from departments across the University, including biology, computer science, environmental studies, history, and economics.

The Program fosters community and provides opportunities beyond the classroom. Human Rights Scholars come together for social events, workshops, symposia, human rights-related talks, and the annual Senior Capstone Symposium; they learn from one another not just in their classes, but also in weekly dinners and mentorships. Throughout their time in the Program, students receive academic, summer and post-graduate advising, and the Schell Center is able to provide limited financial support to pursue summer internships at human rights organizations or research projects on human rights issues.

Please e-mail humanrights.program@yale.edu with any questions. If you would like to receive information about the program—such as dates for information sessions or special events—or receive other information about human rights events at Yale, go to groups.bulldogs.yale.edu and join the EliList humanrightsatyale.

CONTACT

Browse the Schell Center’s website for information about affiliated faculty, Program requirements, and how to apply, and email humanrights.program@yale.edu with any questions. If you would like to receive information about the program—such as dates for information sessions or special events—or receive other information about human rights events at Yale, go to groups.bulldogs.yale.edu and join the EliList humanrightsatyale.

To be added to the Schell Center events mailing list, go to: mailman.yale.edu/mailman/listinfo/human.rights-list.

APPLICATION PROCESS

Program admission occurs in the fall of sophomore year. For the Class of 2022, the application for Human Rights Scholars (available online) will be due on Friday, November 1 by midnight. Applicants will receive notice of admission decisions before the start of spring semester.

REQUIREMENTS

The Multidisciplinary Academic Program in Human Rights has six required courses: a gateway lecture course, four electives, and a senior colloquium. In their senior year, Scholars complete a capstone project informed by their coursework, extracurricular activities, and summer internships or research.

Gateway Course

HMRT 100/PLSC 148 “Theory, Practices, and Politics of Human Rights,” offered in spring 2020, introduces students to the core ideas, issues, practices, and controversies regarding human rights. In doing so, its objective is to map the complex terrain that human rights and their study occupy, rather than (merely) to justify the concept’s existence.

Human Rights Scholars are required to take the course in spring of their sophomore year, unless they are studying abroad or receive permission from the Program Director for other extenuating circumstances.

Elective Courses

Each Human Rights Scholar is required to take four electives, drawn from existing Yale courses. Each Scholar’s elective courses should reflect the interdisciplinary nature of human rights study, including a diversity of perspectives and methodologies across departments and disciplines. For example, Scholars are encouraged to select courses that explore different geographic or thematic areas and that introduce them to both theoretical and practical concerns. Our formal criterion for a Program elective is that a course “engage with the language, ideas, and methods of human
rights.” We ask that you distinguish this from courses that address issues that affect people’s human rights, would be susceptible to a human rights analysis, or would simply be useful for understanding a human rights issue in which you are interested. Rather, with the Program’s goal of enabling a coherent study of human rights and with only four electives required, we expect your electives to focus on courses that will engage directly with and enhance your knowledge of and facility with the concepts, institutions, and development of human rights discourse. Scholars will be required to have their electives approved by the Program Director and will also have the opportunity to petition for additional courses in Yale College or for graduate courses to count as electives. Please note that only courses taken following the student’s admission to the Program will satisfy the elective requirement.

Capstone Project

Each Human Rights Scholar will undertake a capstone project in the fall of senior year, to be informed by the student’s extracurricular experience and developed in consultation with the Program Director. In order to complete the project, scholars will enroll in a weekly seminar (HMRT 400: Advanced Human Rights Colloquium) in which they will study advanced topics in contemporary human rights law and advocacy, develop their capstone projects in consultation with the instructors, present drafts of their projects to their peers, and offer peer reviews on one another’s work.

ADDITIONAL COMPONENTS

The Program will also provide students with faculty advising; support for peer collaboration; information about and access to related university events (speakers, lectures, conferences) and guidance on career and internship opportunities.

PEOPLE

Program Director: Prof. James J. Silk, Binger Professor of Law; Director, Allard K. Lowenstein International Human Rights Clinic; Director, Orville H. Schell, Jr. Center for International Human Rights, Yale Law School

Program Administrator: Prof. Hope Metcalf, Executive Director, Orville H. Schell, Jr. Center for Human Rights

Advisory Committee:
  Prof. Seyla Benhabib, Eugene Meyer Professor of Political Science and Philosophy
  Prof. Ned Blackhawk, Professor of History and American Studies
  Prof. Amity Doolittle, Senior Lecturer and Research Scientist at the School of Forestry and Environmental Studies
  Prof. Moira Fradinger, Associate Professor of Comparative Literature; Director of Undergraduate Studies, Comparative Literature
  Prof. Crystal Feimster, Assistant Professor of African American Studies and American Studies and History
  Prof. Inderpal Grewal, Professor of Women’s, Gender, and Sexuality Studies; Chair, WGSS
  Prof. Ben Kiernan, A. Whitney Griswold Professor of History; Director of the Genocide Studies Program; Chair, Council on Southeast Asia Studies; Director of Undergraduate Studies, Southeast Asia Studies
  Prof. Louisa Lombard, Assistant Professor of Anthropology
  Prof. Alice Miller, Associate Scholar for International Human Rights, Yale Law School; Assistant Clinical Professor, School of Public Health
  Prof. Jill Richards, Assistant Professor of English and Associate Director of Undergraduate Studies
  Prof. David Simon, Lecturer, Department of Political Science; Associate Director, Genocide Studies Program
  Prof. Quan Tran, Ethnicity, Race, and Migration and American Studies
  Prof. Elisabeth Wood, Professor of Political Science and International and Area Studies
  Paul Linden-Retek, Lecturer, Political Science; Schell Center Visiting Human Rights Fellow, Yale Law School
  Talya Lockman-Fine, YC ’15, LAW ’20
  Maddy Batt, MAPHR ’19, Community Human Rights Fellow, Schell Center