The new Special Academic Program in Human Rights 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. 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. In recent years, academia has recognized the salience of human rights, with a growing number of scholars producing significant work on the topic and universities across the country offering majors, minors, and other programs for undergraduates in human rights. Human rights, however, is inherently an inter- or cross-disciplinary field, and no program of study located within a single department can adequately capture the range and diversity of human rights materials. Anthropology, area studies, economics, history, 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 Special Academic Program in Human Rights is meant to recognize this complexity and to support a diverse community of scholars across the university.

The Program is intended for students from a wide range of majors, with Human Rights Scholars completing the requirements of a Yale College major alongside the Program’s six courses. The Program will accept its first class of Human Rights Scholars in fall 2014.

The Schell Center for International Human Rights at Yale Law School provides administrative, financial and programmatic support for the Human Rights Program, offering students additional academic, summer and postgraduate advising and opportunities to attend human rights-related talks, workshops, symposia and other events.

CONTACT

Browse the website - http://humanrights.yale.edu - for information about affiliated faculty, Program requirements, and how to apply, and email hope.metcalf@yale.edu or 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.

APPLICATION PROCESS

Program admission occurs in the fall of sophomore year. For the Class of 2017, the application for Human Rights Scholars is available at http://humanrights.yale.edu/apply and is due November 7, 2014. Applicants will receive notice of admission decisions before the start of spring semester. In future years, students may apply to the Program in the fall of their junior year, but they must have taken the Gateway Course in order to be considered for admission.

REQUIREMENTS

Gateway Course

“Human Rights Theory and Politics” (spring 2015) will introduce students to the core ideas, issues, practices, and controversies regarding human rights.

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. Scholars will be required to have their electives approved by their advisor and by the Program Director and will also have the opportunity to petition for additional 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 his or her 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 or biweekly seminar in which they will receive guidance from the Program Director, share progress reports, and provide each other with feedback.

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. Scholars may be additionally required to attend a small number of events at the Schell Center each semester.

PEOPLE

Program Director: Prof. James J. Silk, Clinical Professor of Law, 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. Vanessa Agard-Jones, Assistant Professor of Women’s, Gender, and Sexuality Studies
Prof. Seyla Benhabib, Eugene Meyer Professor of Political Science and Philosophy
Prof. Crystal Feimster, Assistant Professor of African American Studies and American Studies and History
Prof. Moira Fradinger, Associate Professor of Comparative Literature; Director of Undergraduate Studies, Comparative Literature
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. Gilbert Joseph, Farnam Professor of History and International Studies
Prof. Alice Miller, Associate Scholar for International Human Rights, Yale Law School; Assistant Clinical Professor, School of Public Health
Prof. Thomas Pogge, Leitner Professor of Philosophy and International Affairs; Director, Global Justice Program
Prof. Thania Sanchez, Assistant Professor of Political Science
Dr. David Simon, Lecturer, Department of Political Science; Associate Director, Genocide Studies Program
Prof. Jay Winter, Charles J. Stille Professor of History
Prof. Elisabeth Wood, Professor of Political Science and International and Area Studies
Paul Linden-Retek, Student Member, LAW ’12, PhD Student, Department of Political Science
Talya Lockman-Fine, Student Member, YC ’15