

THE PROBLEM OF MINORITIES IN INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS

The purpose of this course is to introduce students to the historical problem of minorities and its contemporary implications. The presence of an ethnic, linguistic or religious minority within the borders of a state obviously has ramifications for nation-building, economic development and the domestic peace. When, however, a violent ethnic conflict involving a minority, particularly a minority related to a kin-state, arises, the conflict can also destabilize an entire region of the world. This course will examine both the domestic and international dimensions of the problem.

This course will also trace the historical origins of the minority problem and look for answers as to why a minority member's ethnic, linguistic or religious identity is so important to him or her and so threatening to host states and their dominant majorities. It will consider the various solutions to the minority problem that have been employed in the past including acculturation, assimilation, population transfers, and genocide/ethnic cleansing. Finally, it will explore the concept of minority rights, its origins and its efficaciousness as a means both of preventing and of resolving ethnic conflict.

Each student will be expected to prepare a paper intended to brief the U.S. Secretary of State or, if he or she is a foreign national, his or her Foreign Minister, about a particular minority problem. The paper should include an executive summary, a brief account of the origin of the minority the student has selected, the current human rights situation of that minority, the probability that there might be (or has been) an escalation to violence, possible means of preventing imminent conflict or resolving existing conflict, and policy recommendations. Prior to completion of the paper, students will be called upon to make a brief presentation to their classmates both to inform the class about

particular minority situations and to give the class an opportunity to make suggestions as to possible approaches to the minority problem at issue.

Required texts for this course are:

Richard D. Ashmore, Lee Jussim & David Wilder, Social Identity, Intergroup Conflict, and Conflict Reduction (Oxford University Press, 2001) Paperback

Ted Robert Gurr, Peoples versus States: Minorities at Risk in the New Century (United States Institute of Peace Press, 2000) Paperback

Donald L. Horowitz, Ethnic Groups in Conflict (Second Edition, University of California Press, 2000) Paperback

Will Kymlicka, Liberalism, Community and Culture (Clarendon Paperbacks, 1991)

Will Kymlicka, The Rights of Minority Cultures (Oxford University Press, 1995) Paperback

Timothy D. Sisk, Powersharing and International Mediation in Ethnic Conflicts (United States Institute of Peace Press, 1996) Paperback

There will also be a course reader. The following is a draft course syllabus. Although it does not yet include readings, it should give students guidance as to the subjects that will be covered.

COURSE SYLLABUS (DRAFT)

Week One

- I. What is a minority?
 - A. The anthropological and sociological view.
 - B. The international legal view.
- II. The value of diversity
 - A. The parallel to biodiversity.
 - B. The right to choose.
 - C. The cosmopolitan ideal.
- III. The costs of diversity.

Week Two

- IV. The origin of minorities.
 - A. Empire building.
 - B. Border changes.
 - C. Post-colonial border drawing.
 - 1. The decolonization process.
 - 2. The limits of self-determination.
 - D. Immigration.
 - E. The special case of indigenous peoples.

Week Three

- V. The problem of minorities and nation-building.
 - A. Conflicting political models.
 - B. Conflicting legal systems.
 - C. Self-determination and the right of a minority to its own state.

Week Four

- VI. Economic development.
 - A. The center vs. the periphery times two.
 - B. Economic pursuits as cultural artifacts.
 - C. The special case of indigenous peoples revisited.
 - 1. Traditional economies.
 - 2. Ties to the land.
 - 3. Population pressure.

Week Five

- VII. Kin-states.
 - A. Political ties to related minority.
 - 1. Cultural connection.
 - 2. Human rights concerns.
 - B. Logistical support for rebellion.
 - C. Irredenta and the fifth column threat.
 - D. Is there a positive role?

Week Six

VIII. Amoral historical solutions.

A. Genocide.

1. Physical.

2. Cultural.

B. Population transfers.

Week Seven

IX. Assimilation/Acculturation and Equality.

A. Conformity with the dominant majority.

B. The melting pot.

C. Cultural genocide?

Week Eight

X. The Cultural Mosaic.

A. Interspersed minorities and individual rights.

B. Interspersed minorities and group rights.

C. Minority enclaves.

D. Regional minorities.

E. Minorities and international borders.

1. Minorities residing in more than one host state.

2. Nomadic minorities.

Week Nine

XI. The importance of ethnic identity to the individual.

- A. The social sciences weigh in.
- B. The liberal model.
- C. The communitarian view.
- D. A synthesis.

Week Ten

XII. The concept of minority rights.

- A. In the Ottoman Empire.
- B. Wilson's Fourteen Points.
- C. The League Minority Rights Systems.
 - 1. The Minorities Treaties.
 - 2. The League Guarantee.
 - 3. Kin-states and disloyal minorities.
 - 4. Nazi Germany, German minorities and the start of World War II.
- D. The U.N. and the Minorities Treaties.

Week Eleven

XIII. The U.N. Human Rights System.

- A. The role of the principle of nondiscrimination.
- B. The inadequacy of individual equality.
- C. Cultural equality and Article 27 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights.

D. The Minority Rights Declaration.

Week Twelve

XIV. Types of minorities and their special problems.

A. Ethnic minorities and cultures.

1. The problem of cultural relativity and the tolerance paradox.
2. Illiberal minorities.
3. Inhumane practices.
4. A minimum standard of human rights.

B. Religious minorities.

1. Religious belief vs. practice.
2. Religion as a preference.
3. Separation of church and state.
4. Right to proselytize and convert.
5. Inadequacy of courts or science as mediators.

Week Thirteen

C. Linguistic Minorities.

1. Language as carrier of culture.
2. Language and the economy.
3. Language and political bureaucracy.
4. Language burdens.

D. Indigenous Peoples.

1. Special claims and special needs.

2. Self-determination and land rights.
3. Declaration on Indigenous Rights.

Week Fourteen

XV. Conflict prevention and the HCNM.

- A. In Post-Soviet Eastern Europe
- B. In Western Europe

XVI. Conflict resolution.

- A. The Yugoslavian Conflict.
- B. The Dayton Accords.

XVII. Cultural, religious and linguistic blocs at the global level.

- A. Is there an international parallel to the domestic problem of minorities?
- B. How can it be resolved?