Course Syllabus for

**The Global Diffusion of Multiculturalism and Minority Rights**

Prof. Will Kymlicka

Nationalism Studies Program
Central European University

February-March 2013

**Aim of the Course:**

For much of the post-war period, international organizations showed little if any interest in the protection of ethnocultural minorities. In recent years, however, particularly since 1990, there has been an explosion of interest in promoting ideas of multiculturalism and in codifying minority rights, both at the global level (e.g., within the United Nations), and within regional bodies, such as the Council of Europe or the Organisation of American States. This course considers a number of important issues relating to this development, including (a) why minority rights has emerged as a priority issue for the international community, and how this relates to broader changes to the functions of the international community in the post-Cold War era; (b) the categories that are being used to identify different types of minorities, such as “indigenous peoples”, “national minorities”, and “migrant workers”, and how these are viewed as raising different types of challenges; and (c) the complex and sometimes unintended consequences of this process for state-minority relations around the world, as particular ideals or models of multiculturalism and minority rights, often based on Western experiences, are diffused to different regions of the world. More generally, the course will attempt to identify both the progressive potential in this process, but also some of the moral ambiguities and political complexities involved.

**Assignment:**

- One term paper of approx. 5000 words.

**Text:**

The main text will be my book *Multicultural Odysseys: Navigating the New International Politics of Diversity* (Oxford University Press, 2007), supplemented by a number of international documents (conventions, declarations, recommendations etc) relating to state-minority relations, and other secondary literature.
**Key International Declarations on Minority/Indigenous Rights**

CEU, Feb. 2013

UNITED NATIONS ([http://www2.ohchr.org/english/law/index.htm#core](http://www2.ohchr.org/english/law/index.htm#core))
- Declaration on the Rights of Persons Belonging to National or Ethnic, Religious or Linguistic Minorities (1992)
- Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (2007)


WORLD BANK ([www.worldbank.org/indigenouspeoples](http://www.worldbank.org/indigenouspeoples))

COUNCIL OF EUROPE
- European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages (1992) ([www.coe.int/T/E/Legal_Affairs/Local_and_regional_Democracy/Regional_or_Minority_languages/](http://www.coe.int/T/E/Legal_Affairs/Local_and_regional_Democracy/Regional_or_Minority_languages/))

ORGANISATION FOR SECURITY AND COOPERATION IN EUROPE ([www.osce.org/hcnm](http://www.osce.org/hcnm))

ORGANIZATION OF AMERICAN STATES
A Note on Background Readings

As the syllabus notes, the main reading for the course is my book Multicultural Odysseys: Navigating the New International Politics of Diversity (Oxford UP, 2007). The book explores recent attempts by international organizations to set standards for how states should treat their ethnocultural minorities, and examines the relationship between these emerging international standards of minority rights and Western models of liberal-democratic multiculturalism. The book asks whether international organizations are attempting to promote distinctly Western models of liberal multiculturalism around the world, and if so, is this a feasible or desirable goal?

Students who are new to this topic and who wish to prepare for the course may want to do some additional background reading on either (i) the minority rights standards of international organizations; and/or (ii) the theory and practice of liberal multiculturalism. Regarding the former, the second page of the syllabus lists a number of Conventions, Declarations and Recommendations adopted by international organizations in the area of minority rights. They can all be easily found online. A number of helpful academic studies exist of these international standards. For general overviews, see Patrick Thornberry, International Law and the Rights of Minorities (Oxford UP 1991), Steven Wheatley, Democracy, Minorities and International Law (Cambridge UP 2005), or the special issue of The International Community Law Review on "Minority Rights in International Law" (Volume 13/4, 2011). For studies specifically on the European framework of national minority rights, see Marc Weller (ed) The Rights of Minorities in Europe (Oxford UP 2005), Tove Malloy, National Minority Rights in Europe (Oxford UP 2005), D.J. Galbreath and J. McEvoy The European Minority Rights Regime: Towards a Theory of Regime Effectiveness (Palgrave 2011), Kristen Henrard (ed) Double-Standards Pertaining to Minority Protection (Martinus Nijhoff 2010) or Tawhida Ahmed, The Impact of EU Law on Minority Rights (Hart 2011). For studies focusing on the rights of indigenous peoples, see James Anaya, Indigenous Peoples in International Law (Oxford UP 2004), Stephen Allen and A. Xanthaki (eds) Reflections on the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (Hart 2011), Luis Rodriguez-Pinero, Indigenous Peoples, Postcolonialism and International Law (Oxford UP 2005), Thalia Anthony et al (eds.) Indigenous Peoples in International and Comparative Law (Hart 2012), or recent special issues of The International Journal of Human Rights (Volume 16/1, 2012) and The International Journal on Minority and Group Rights (Volume 18/4, 2011).


If you have any questions, please feel free to contact me (kymlicka@queensu.ca).