COURSE SYLLABUS

The Global Diffusion of Multiculturalism and Minority Rights

Instructor:
Will Kymlicka, Visiting Professor
Nationalism Studies
Central European University
Winter term 2016
Course level (MA, PhD)
# Credits (# ECTS Credits)
Pre-requisites (if applicable)
Course e-learning site:
Office hours: days, location

Course Description
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 (eg., 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 developments in `world culture’, and 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.

Learning Outcomes
By the end of this course, students will be able to:

- critically evaluate international discourses and rhetoric about diversity;
- situate developments regarding diversity in relation to broader global trends in human rights, globalization, neoliberalism, regional politics etc.
- identify strengths and weaknesses in the international protection of minorities;

Course Requirements
(1) **Attendance/Participation (25% of the final grade):** Class participation will be considered satisfactory if you regularly participate in class discussions, and excellent if you exhibit a good grasp of the issues involved and of the required readings.

(2) **Term Paper (75% of the final grade):** All students are expected to write an original research paper of 5000 words, double-spaced, with bibliography added, **due on**. All students are expected to submit a one-page paper proposal in class on Tuesday Feb. 9th. The topic should relate to the broad themes of the course and class discussions. Both the outline and final research paper are expected to be products of each student's individual effort. Evaluation will be based on the quality of research, its originality, and soundness of content. It constitutes plagiarism if a student quotes or adopts ideas from a source without appropriate attribution (for example, by failing to utilize endnotes or footnotes properly). Similarly, direct quotations must be attributed and indicated by quotation marks. Please note that late papers submitted after the deadline will be marked down by half of a letter grade per day.

**COURSE SCHEDULE**

**Feb 1:** The Rise of multiculturalism and minority rights in theory and practice  
We begin the class by exploring the rise of multiculturalism, as a concept and as a set of policies, in the 1960s and its gradual if uneven diffusion across the Western democracies. We will discuss the different forms this has taken (e.g., for immigrants as compared to indigenous peoples), and the different explanations for this development. We will consider in particular debates about whether it should be seen as an extension of liberal-democratic principles of freedom and equality or as a threat to these principles.

Required Readings:

**Feb. 2 and 4:** The development of the European regime of rights for national minorities  
We then consider attempts to incorporate ideas of multiculturalism and minority rights into the norms of the international community, a process that picked up steam after 1989. The first such effort involved developing norms for “national minorities” in Europe. We will discuss the complex motivations for focusing on this particular category of group - including reasons of both justice and security – and the difficulties in gaining consensus on their rights.

Required Readings:

Feb. 8-9: The development of a global indigenous rights regime
We turn then to the second major attempt to codify international norms regarding ethnocultural diversity – namely, the UN’s regime of indigenous rights. We will discuss why indigenous peoples have been treated as a separate category within international law, sharply distinguished from national minorities, and why they have been more successful in gaining recognition of their rights (although some critics view this “success” as a Pyrrhic victory). We will also discuss whether this dichotomy between indigenous peoples and national minorities is sustainable.

Required Readings:

Feb. 11: Backlash and the future of multiculturalism
Finally, we will consider the future of multiculturalism and minority rights. It is widely believed that multiculturalism is currently “in retreat”, and while the evidence suggests that this claim is overstated, it is certainly true that much of the impulse and enthusiasm that underpinned the global diffusion of multiculturalism has faded. We will consider what is living and what is dead in multiculturalism, and what the “post-multiculturalist” alternatives might look like.
Further Readings:

(Princeton UP, 1999), and Charles Taylor, Multiculturalism and the Politics of Recognition (Princeton UP, 1994). A helpful collection of essays that surveys the debate on liberal multiculturalism is Anthony Laden and David Owen (eds), Multiculturalism and Political Theory (Cambridge UP, 2007). A recent introductory text is Michael Murphy, Multiculturalism: A Critical Introduction (Routledge, 2012). For an attempt to more systematically explore how the international standards of minority and indigenous rights relate to normative theories of multiculturalism, see my Multicultural Odysseys (Oxford University Press, 2007).

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