The flexibility of the minor in human rights complements majors in any of the disciplines.

Human rights are the prime defense of freedom against all manner of tyranny and the foundation for worldwide initiatives to redress injustice and to advance peace. They are “a common standard of achievement for all peoples and all nations, to the end that every individual and every organ of society . . . shall strive by teaching and education to promote respect for these rights and freedoms” (Universal Declaration of Human Rights). Although a fragile standard, human rights have proven remarkably robust and have withstood many challengers. Although historically and philosophically tied to European and Atlantic traditions, they have become the focus of worldwide debate on how to constitute a global commons for the 21st century.

Sample Courses

Sex Trafficking and Human Rights: Migration, Coercion, Choice, and Justice
This course addresses the global phenomenon of the sex trade, with regional case studies to illuminate its elusive and multifaceted nature. Students engage in debates on global capitalism, foreign investment, immigration policy, HIV/AIDS, slavery, justice, and human rights.

Human Rights III: Contemporary Issues in Human Rights
Students learn about the challenges of human rights advocacy in the international, regional, and domestic spheres. They examine contemporary human rights problems, including universalism, cultural relativism, and American exceptionalism, while dealing with such topics as women’s rights and the prohibition against torture.

Democracy, Torture, and Mass Incarceration
In this discussion-based class, students examine how the criminalization of particular populations has helped naturalize their hyper-incarceration, tracing these developments historically from racial slavery and Jim Crow segregation through the prison rebellion years and the ongoing “war on terror.”

This survey course demonstrates the long history of human rights discourse among African societies—an indigenous debate that has taken place in Africa for as long as it has been engaging with the West in the modern age.

Hiroshima, Nagasaki, and Beyond
This course considers the history of Hiroshima and Nagasaki through literature, film, photo essays, and nonfiction writing. Students grapple with the shifting understanding of the bomb and continued nuclear testing, and compare nuclear bombing with its peaceful use as a source of energy.

The Human Rights Program of the University of Chicago provides a forum for three key dimensions of human rights. It makes human rights an integral part of liberal arts education; it engages in the vigorous scholarly debate on human rights; and it explores, in both research and teaching, the possibility of a practice of human rights at the cusp of the academy and the world. It takes on human rights as a challenge that is eminently intellectual and, at the same time, immensely practical. Human rights education has been and continues to be the core activity of the Human Rights Program. The fusion of academic endeavor and the engagement...
with the world of human rights practice is the defining feature of the program.

**Curriculum**
The University of Chicago Human Rights Program is an initiative unique among its peers for the interdisciplinary focus of its faculty and students. Courses reflect the interdisciplinary nature of the program. They are taught by faculty from the Departments of Anthropology, Cinema and Media Studies, English, History, Philosophy, and Political Science, as well as the Divinity School, Law School, Pritzker School of Medicine, and the School of Social Service Administration. Human rights courses are open to all University of Chicago students.

The human rights curriculum includes a core sequence and other courses that address human rights from a range of disciplinary, thematic, and regional perspectives. The Human Rights Internship Program provides summer fellowships at organizations in the United States and around the world. Through conferences, workshops, lectures, and film series, the program incorporates the broader community into its educational mission by bringing the world to campus.

Students wishing to pursue a systematic study of human rights are encouraged to take the core sequence: Philosophical Foundations of Human Rights (Human Rights I), History and Theory of Human Rights (Human Rights II), and Contemporary Issues in Human Rights (Human Rights III). Recent electives have included:
- Practices of Othering and the Logic of Human Rights Violations: Race, Eugenics, and Crowds
- Secularism and Religious Freedom in America and South Asia

College students may elect a minor in human rights, which requires two of the three core courses and three other human rights courses. Additionally, undergraduates minoring in human rights may find their interests overlap with courses taught in a number of University of Chicago graduate programs, among them social thought, sociology, and social service administration. Each of these programs grants the PhD, and the School of Social Service Administration has a master’s degree option as well.

**Human Rights Internship Program**
The Human Rights Internship Program offers a select group of undergraduate students an opportunity to learn the skills and understand the difficulties inherent in putting human rights into practice. Since its establishment in 1998, the Internship Program has funded summer placements for over 200 students with nongovernmental organizations, governmental agencies, and international bodies around the world.

The Internship Program is unique in its flexibility, awarding $5,000 grants to afford all interns the freedom to explore their interests, whether thematic or regional in focus. Recent interns have worked on a wide range of issues, including workers’ rights in Mexico, the exoneration of wrongfully convicted felons in the United States, and women’s access to employment in Rwanda.

**Events**
The Human Rights Program creates space for dialogue between the University community and the wider world through conferences, film series, and visits to campus by prominent human rights activists and scholars, including a number of University alumni. Programs for visitors have included the Activist Fellows Roundtable, a three-year cycle of meetings with senior activists from the United States, Mexico, El Salvador, and Guatemala, as well as extended visits by distinguished human rights scholars and practitioners.

The Human Rights Program sponsors conferences and symposia on international and domestic human rights issues each year. Recent themes have included genocide, migrant rights, and human rights in the new human sciences. In spring 2011, the program presented a symposium on corporate social responsibility and human rights. The program also sponsors photo exhibitions and films. Every spring, the Robert H. Kirschner, MD, Memorial Lecture carries on the legacy of one of our founding faculty, presenting a talk by a prominent writer or human rights advocate and a celebration of student awardees and our graduates.

Thanks to the generosity of Dr. Richard Pozen, AB ’69, and Ann Silver Pozen, the Human Rights Program welcomed Professor Rodolfo Stavenhagen, former United Nations special rapporteur on the rights of indigenous peoples and professor emeritus in sociology at El Colegio de México, as the Richard and Ann Silver Pozen Visiting Professor in Human Rights in Spring Quarter 2011. Each year, the Pozen Professorship brings a distinguished human rights scholar to campus to teach one quarter in the College.