COURSE OVERVIEW:
This course explores the emergent, yet rapidly evolving, field of Business and Human Rights. Traditionally, international human rights law has been assumed to regulate only states. Human rights advocates focused on improving the human rights conduct of governments, not companies. Corporate executives understood their responsibilities to be maximizing profits. Over the last decade, human rights advocates have mobilized to transform norms about the responsibilities of the private sector to uphold human rights, and stakeholders have engaged in intense debates about the human rights obligations of businesses.

This course has two core objectives. First it will examine the current BHR regime: its unusually compressed evolution, its legal structure, current policy debates and the political dynamics driving change. The goal will be not only to introduce the substantive issues but also to analyze these issues from three key vantage points: human rights NGOs, the private sector and governments.

Second, the course seeks to bridge the classroom-real word divide by including a lab component. Students will work in teams on a policy project for either a U.S.- based or a coalition of Indian-based NGOs (details will be discussed in class). These projects have been selected because they will make truly important contributions to the field. Here, students will do a combination of research/data gathering and analysis, and write short memos. The main project, due at the end of the semester, is a final report and in-class presentation. The goal will be not only to develop practical human rights and policy skills (efficient research; effective writing tailored to audience) but to discuss some of the ethical challenges of human rights and policy advocacy, which are specific to the business and human rights field.

Duke University rules about plagiarism apply to this class.

Except when otherwise mentioned, this is a “no-device” class (no laptops, iphones etc).

Attendance is mandatory –all absences must be excused in advance.

This course is being offered for research, writing and service learning credit.
COURSE REQUIREMENTS:

(1) **Class Participation** (=20%) Your thoughtful and engaged participation, based on careful reading of the assigned material, is crucial for the success of this class. The class participation grade covers: attendance in class, weekly comments posted on Sakai, participation in class, one in class essay (full class), mid-semester and end of the semester in-class presentations, participation in “lab” meetings.

(2) **Shorter Memos/Data Collection Summaries** (=30%) Over the semester, there will be three shorter writing assignments. The first will relate to Part I of the class and be a traditional short paper, based on course readings. The second and third will relate primarily to your policy projects – summarizing your research, drawing on inclass readings – all geared to help you with the final project. More details forthcoming.

(3) **Final Project*** (=20%) The final project will be the compilation of data and analysis you collect and conduct for your partner NGO; it builds on the memos and data collection summaries # 2 and 3.

(4) **Research Report** (=30%): The report will be a 15-20 page research report – which may be compiled into a collective report for our partner NGOs – decision on that will be made as the semester progresses. More details about the project and length, style, structure of report forthcoming.

*Please note that NGO project-related grade = 40 percent of the final grade for this course.

COURSE OUTLINE:

** READING ASSIGNMENTS NOTED BELOW ARE TENTATIVE UNTIL THE MATERIALS ARE POSTED IN THEIR WEEKLY FOLDER UNDER RESOURCES ON SAKAI**

SECTION ONE: FOUNDATIONS

**Week One: Introductions and Overview 1/13**

**Week Two: Overview of the Human Rights Regime 1/20 (no class 1/18)**
  - No reading!

**Week Three: What are “Business and Human Rights” and how has the BHR Regime Evolved? 1/25, 1/27**
Please read three examples of corporate human rights abuse and “suggested practical actions,” taken from Human Rights Translated. Please choose three from the list below. (8-9 pages)
- Right to life, p. 9-10 &12 – Coke in Colombia
- Right to be free from torture, p.15-16, Private Security in Iraq
- Right not to be subject to slavery, forced labor, p.17-20 – Coca in Ivory Coast and Ghana
- Right to privacy, p.43, 45-46, Yahoo in China
- Right of child protection, p.69-72, Child labor in India


Seppala, “Business and International Human Rights Regime: A Comparison of UN Initiatives,” Journal of Business Ethics (2009) (17 pages) --This was written before the UN adopted the 2011 Guiding Principles (GPs) on Business and Human rights. To learn about the GPs - -which his the current international framework, please read:
- The 2011 UN Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights - *skim to get a sense of structure and what the principles entail*

**Week Four: The UN Guiding Principles: Critiques and Debates 2/1, 2/3**
- Chapter 4, “Contextualizing the Business Responsibility to Respect: How Much is Lost in Translation?” in The UN Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights: Foundations and Implementation (about 20 pages)
- Chapter 5, “Remodeling Responsible Supply Chain Management,” in The UN Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights: Foundations and Implementation (about 20 pages)
- “The Shirt on your back” Interactive website – [http://www.theguardian.com/world/ng-interactive/2014/apr/bangladesh-shirt-on-your-back](http://www.theguardian.com/world/ng-interactive/2014/apr/bangladesh-shirt-on-your-back) (click on enter). - *This should take about 30 minutes to complete.*

**Week Five: Other Policy Approaches to Business and Human Rights 2/8, 2/10**

*Treaty debate:*
- Letter to the President – Puvan Selvanathan – 3 pages
- BHR Treaty_Why activists should be worried - 6 pages

*****2/12, Paper 1 due by 5:00 pm, by email*****
SECTION TWO: ACTORS

Week Six: NGO Advocacy and BHR, Part I: How Should We Understand NGOs and What are their Strategies? When are their state 2/15, 2/17

Week Seven: NGO Advocacy and BHR, Part II: Action Aid Case Study 2/22, 2/24
- Action Aid Case Study, available for purchase here: https://cb.hbsp.harvard.edu/cbmp/access/47229217 -you will need to create an account to log in. The case is $4 to purchase.

Week Eight: BHR and The Corporate Perspective: Change from Within? 2/29, 3/2
- Christine Bader, The Evolution of a Corporate Idealist, prologue and chapters 1-3
- THURSDAY: AMELIA EVANS SKYPE

Optional:
- “How I Did It: Timberland’s CEO on Standing Up to 65,000 angry Activists,” https://hbr.org/2010/09/how-i-did-it-timberlands-ceo-on-standing-up-to-65000-angry-activists

Week Nine: BHR and The Corporate Perspective: Case Study - 3/7, 3/9
- Vodafone in Egypt Case Study, for purchase here: [Will include link soon]

*******3/11, Memo 1 and new sheets due by 3:00 pm, by email******

Week Ten: Spring Break! 3/14, 3/16

SECTION THREE: The BHR Advocacy Lab

Week Eleven: Multi-Stakeholder Initiatives, Part I: What are they and EITI Case Study 3/21, 3/23
Week Twelve: Multi-Stakeholder Initiatives, Part II: How Should We Assess them Normatively? 3/28, 3/30


Week Thirteen: The India Business and Human Rights Landscape 4/4, 4/6

- Reading TBD

******4/8, Memo 2 and new sheets due by 5:00 pm, by email*******

Week Fourteen: Measuring Business and Human Rights 4/11, 4/13

- Reading TBD

Week Fifteen: Class Presentations 4/25, 4/27

******Final Project and Policy Report due during Reading – Date TBD******