

Human Rights and Science



America is always at its most powerful and most influential when it is combining innovation and **inspiration**, wealth-building and **dignity-building**, the quest for big profits and the **tackling of big problems**. When we do just one, we are less than the sum of our parts. When we do both, we are greater than the sum of our parts –much greater” - **Thomas L. Friedman, Hot, Flat, and Crowded**

Karen Kashmanian Oates, PhD
Peterson Family
Dean of Arts & Sciences
Professor of Biochemistry
Worcester Polytechnic Institute



Jessica Wyndham
Associate Director of the
Scientific Responsibility,
Human Rights and Law
Program
AAAS

What are human rights?

- fundamental entitlements
- guaranteed by law
- inherent to *all* human beings
- derived from the mere fact of being human

International Bill of Rights

**Universal Declaration of Human Rights
(1948)**

```
graph TD; A["Universal Declaration of Human Rights (1948)"] --- B["International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (1966)"]; A --- C["International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (1966)"]
```

**International Covenant on
Civil and Political Rights
(1966)**

**International Covenant on
Economic, Social and
Cultural Rights
(1966)**

**International Covenant on
Civil and Political Rights
(1966)**

- Life
- Torture
- Fair trial
- Information
- Expression
- Association
- Political participation ...

**International Covenant on
Economic, Social and
Cultural Rights (1966)**

- Work
- Housing
- Health
- Education
- Culture
- **Benefits of Scientific Progress ...**

Key Human Rights Treaties

- Civil and Political Rights (1966) - 168
- Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (1966) - 164
- Racial Discrimination (1965) – 177
- Discrimination Against Women (1979) – 189
- Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment (1984) – 158
- Rights of the Child (1989) - 195
- Protection of the Rights of all Migrant Workers and Members of their Families (2003) – 48
- Rights of People with Disabilities (2008) – 155

Key Human Rights Treaties: US Ratifications

- ➔ 1992 - Civil and Political Rights 1966 - 168
 - Economic, Social and Cultural Rights 1966 - 164
- ➔ 1994 - Racial Discrimination 1965 – 177
 - Discrimination Against Women 1979 – 189
- ➔ 1994 - Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment 1984 – 158
 - Rights of the Child 1989 - 195
 - Protection of the Rights of all Migrant Workers and Members of their Families 2003 – 48
 - Rights of People with Disabilities 2008 – 155

Key Human Rights Treaties: US Signed

- ➔ 1992 - Civil and Political Rights 1966 - 168
- ✂ 1977 - Economic, Social and Cultural Rights 1966 - 164
- ➔ 1994 - Racial Discrimination 1965 - 177
- ✂ 1980 - Discrimination Against Women 1979 - 189
- ➔ 1994 - Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment 1984 - 158
- ✂ 1995 - Rights of the Child 1989 - 195
 - Protection of the Rights of all Migrant Workers and Members of their Families 2003 - 48
- ✂ 2009 - Rights of People with Disabilities 2008 - 155

What are the connections between science and human rights?

- Scientists have human rights
- Science applied to human rights
- Human rights implications of science
- The human right to science
- Scientists as a constituency for human rights

Thinking about the intersection of human rights and science holds the potential for connecting learning in the arts and sciences in important new ways, just as it enables a critical consideration of the professional responsibilities and special obligations that scientists, engineers and health professionals enjoy and practice.

Science as a Human Right

Access to the benefits of science is a human right. For us in higher education, thinking about what this right means can serve two good purposes: (1) as a good in and of itself, as this a key element in a consideration of universal human rights, and (2) as a very attractive vehicle for integrating learning in science, the humanities, and arts.

1. recognize the right of everyone to enjoy the benefits of scientific progress and its applications,
2. conserve, develop, and diffuse science,
3. respect the freedom indispensable for scientific research and,
4. recognize the benefits of international contacts and co-operation in the scientific field.

1: Scientists have human rights

These rights include:

- freedom to associate with other scientists
- freedom to conduct research (responsibly)
- freedom to communicate scientific knowledge
- freedom of movement (including right to travel)
- right to cooperate internationally



Photo courtesy of Mazen Mahdi/
EPA, The Guardian, 09/29/11



The Economist, Feb. 25, 2012



Time, May 14,
1990



Photo courtesy of ScienceInsider,
Aug. 6, 2013

2: Science applied to human rights

- Forensic and genetic sciences
- Geospatial image analysis
- Statistical and information management techniques
- Geology
- Toxicology
- Budget analysis
- Environmental impact assessment
- Physical, psychiatric and psychological assessments, and more...



Photo courtesy of Mercedes Doretti, EAFF



Screen image courtesy of Amnesty International, USA



Ball, P. (2000), Policy or Panic? The Flight of Ethnic Albanians from Kosovo, March – May 1999



Photo courtesy of Global Rights



Human Rights Watch

3: Human rights implications of science

- Scientific research and its applications may impact human rights negatively
- International human rights law prohibits certain forms of experimentation
- Codes of ethics increasingly reference international human rights standard



Photo courtesy of trutv.com



Photo courtesy of the Presidential Commission for the Study of Bioethical Issues



USAF Photographic Archives, Dec. 17, 2007



Photo courtesy of Margaret Killjoy, June 17, 2007

4: The human right to science

Article 15, International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights obligates governments to:

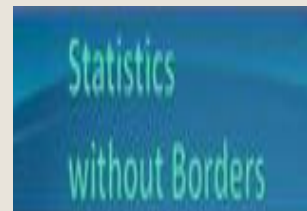
1. recognize the right of everyone to ... (b) enjoy the benefits of scientific progress and its applications
2. conserve, develop and diffuse science
3. respect the freedom indispensable for scientific research
4. encourage international contacts and co-operation in science



5: Scientists as a constituency for human rights

Independent inquiry, rigorous analysis and peer review are compatible with human rights. On this basis, scientists can:

- participate in human rights-related policy debates
- research and teach human rights
- speak out against human rights abuses in their discipline
- promote science funding to support human rights concerns



Integrating Human Rights into STEM Education

Syllabi on Science and Human Rights

This collection of syllabi related to Science and Human Rights is intended for use by educators from across the scientific disciplines who are interested in incorporating human rights into their curricula and training, as well as for scientists seeking to explore how human rights relate to the practice of their discipline. Each listing is linked to a PDF copy of the corresponding syllabus. We are grateful to all the professors who voluntarily submitted their syllabi to this compilation.

- General
- Anthropology
- Bioethics
- Demography
- Earth Science
- Engineering
- Geography
- Health
- Linguistics
- Medical Ethics
- Medicine
- Philosophy
- Physical Science
- Psychology
- Sociology
- Human Rights Training Modules
- Degree Programs
- Further Resources

Science, Engineering and Human Rights: A Select Annotated Bibliography

This select annotated bibliography provides a guide to the literature on the relationships between science, engineering and human rights. The following citations are grouped under a variety of headings that encompass disciplinary fields of science and engineering and topics where science, technology and human rights intersect. Whenever an article listed is available online without restrictions, the URL link is provided. The bibliography is meant as a starting point for scientists, engineers, human rights practitioners, educators, and interested students to begin to explore the larger literature. The last section in this bibliography provides links to online databases and other resources containing further human rights documents and literature.

[View the full bibliography](#)

Contents by subject area:

- Anthropology
- Biological Sciences
- Chemistry
- Economics
- Engineering
- Forensic Anthropology
- Forensic Sciences
- Geography

- Science and Human Rights syllabi
- Campus event kit
- Student delegates
- Student Section
- Co-circular campus clubs and associations

Case Study: Psychologists and Military Interrogation

“As mental health professionals, our first obligation must be to our patients,” said Dr. Kerry Sulkowicz, psychiatrist and vice chair of the Physicians for Human Rights board of directors. “The American Psychological Association’s collusion with the government’s national security apparatus is one of the greatest scandals in U.S. medical history. Immediate action must be taken to restore health professional ethics and to ensure this never happens again.”

U.S. Justice Department Must Investigate American Psychological Association’s Role in U.S. Torture Program

New Report Confirms Health Professionals Violated Core Ethics

New York, NY - 07/10/2015



Case Study: Psychologists and Military Interrogation

Our investigation determined that:

- key APA officials colluded with important DoD officials to have APA issue loose, high-level ethical guidelines that did not constrain DoD in any greater fashion than existing DoD interrogation guidelines. ...
- APA's principal motive in doing so was to align APA and curry favor with DoD. There were two other important motives: to create a good public-relations response, and to keep the growth of psychology unrestrained in this area. ...
- APA officials engaged in a pattern of secret collaboration with DoD officials to defeat efforts by the APA Council of Representatives to introduce and pass resolutions that would have definitively prohibited psychologists from participating in interrogations at Guantanamo Bay and other U.S. detention centers abroad. ...
- during the time that APA officials were colluding with DoD officials to create and maintain loose APA ethics policies that did not significantly constrain DoD, APA officials had strong reasons to suspect that abusive interrogations had occurred.

David Hoffman, Independent review relating to APA ethics guidelines, national security interrogations, and torture, July 2, 2015

Case Study: Psychologists and Military Interrogation



The Board recommended that the Council:

- Adopt a policy prohibiting psychologists from participating in interrogation of persons held in custody by military and intelligence authorities, whether in the U.S. or elsewhere, but allowing training of military personnel on recognizing and responding to persons with mental illnesses, on the possible effects of particular techniques and conditions of interrogation and other areas within their expertise;
- Create a Commission to evaluate and recommend changes to APA ethics processes;
- Adopt formal guidelines to ensure that all relevant policies are anchored in APA core values, including promoting human rights, human welfare and ethics;
- Approve the substitute motion of Council New Business Item #23B, which clarifies the role of psychologists related to interrogation and detainee welfare in national security settings and safeguards against acts of torture and cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment in all settings.

APA, Press Release and Recommended Actions: Independent Review Cites Collusion Among APA Individuals and Defense Department Officials in Policy on Interrogation Techniques, July 10, 2015

Let's Look at How One of Our Associations Responded Publically to HRS

ACS Position Statement

We recognize that science and scholarship flourish when scientists collaboratively pursue and publish research and communicate without externally imposed impediment, limitation or restriction.

It remains important for organizations that represent scientists and educators go on the record in favor of the most open and fair exchange among scientists without limitations imposed by national and global political concerns.

ACS believes scientists should not participate in the transnational isolation of colleagues; rather they should work vigorously to create occasions for scholars to convene, to discuss topics of mutual interest, and to build scientific networks. It is through such networks that scientific collaboration can grow and be sustained over time for the benefit of all humankind.

Questions to think about (3 Group)

Question 1: How does the work we do as scientists and educators relate to the work of human rights?

Question 2: How do/can we relate the work of NCSCE/ SENCER to the work of human rights?

Question 3: Do standards and obligations relate to each other? If so, do we, as scientists, take on the obligation of human rights to benefit from science and its application?

Question 4: If you were going to introduce Human Rights in your course, how would you do it?

Question 1: How does the work we do as scientists and educators relate to the work of human rights?

Group 1: Provide 5 Responses to Questions

Group 2: Choose 3, add 2 and eliminate 2

Group 3: Choose 2 and add one more

Group 4: Report the top responses your group agrees with

Question 2: How can we relate the work of the NCSCE/SENCER to the work of human rights?

Group 2: Provide 5 responses to question

Group 3: Choose 3 of the best responses and 2 new responses

Group 4: Choose 2 and add 1 new response

Group 1: Report the group's top responses

Question 3: Do standards and obligation relate to each other? If so, do we then take on the obligation of human rights?

Group 3: Provide 5 responses to question

Group 4: Choose 3 best responses from above, add two new responses

Group 1: Choose 2 from above and add 1 new response

Group 2: Report out your top choice

Question 4: If you were to introduce human rights into your course, how would you do it?

Group 4 – Provide 5 Responses

Group 1 – Choose 3 (from above, add 2 new responses)

Group 2 – Choose 2 from above, add 1 new response

Group 3 – Report Top Response

Raising the Profile of Science and Scientists as Our Work Relates to Human Rights

- Scientific communities are among founding societies of the AAAS Science and Human Rights Coalition. NCSCE is a member!
- Get involved through the Leadership of the Steering Committee and/or one of the Working Groups.
- Write about the subject.
- Link human rights to subjects that matter to specific disciplines including water and health.
- Propose National Meeting Symposia - perspectives on the history, needs and new strategies for addressing human rights and infringements to scientific freedom.
- Create case studies.
- Create modules.