

Study Human Rights in South Africa

INTERNATIONAL HUMAN RIGHTS EXCHANGE

The world's only full-semester, multidisciplinary program in human rights
Bard College / University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg



ABOUT IHRE

The International Human Rights Exchange (IHRE) is the world's only full-semester, multidisciplinary program in human rights. The program is housed at the University of Witwatersrand (Wits) in Johannesburg, South Africa and is a joint venture with Bard College.

At IHRE, we believe that the subject of human rights provides an excellent framework for realizing the goal of liberal education. IHRE aims to provide a challenging and rewarding experience in both liberal education and human rights education by:

- Enabling critical and creative thinking about human rights;**
- Developing a democratic understanding of people's role in society;**
- Linking academic work with activism, advocacy, and building a culture of human rights;**
- Implementing student-centered learning; and**
- Establishing relationships of equality, mutuality, and exchange among African and North American participants.**

We seek to promote a critical understanding of human rights as part of a broad intellectual and social movement, not simply as a code or set of laws. We believe that human rights is a discourse in transformation (and often in contest) that is best understood through a multidisciplinary approach extending to the humanities, social sciences, arts, and sciences.

Each year – starting in July and ending in November – students and faculty from North America and Africa come together to participate in a deep and multifaceted intellectual engagement with human rights. In addition to a required core course introducing the human rights framework, students choose from 12 or more electives exploring human rights from the perspective of a variety of academic disciplines.

IHRE also opens up possibilities for substantive participation in human rights work. Students enrolled in the Engagement with Human Rights course intern with an NGO working on contemporary rights in post-apartheid South Africa.

In addition to their coursework, students will explore human rights challenges in rural South Africa through a Community Human Rights Workshop at Wits Rural, visit the Apartheid Museum and other relevant sites, and attend guest lectures by human rights experts from South Africa and around the world.

Dear Student:

Thank you for your interest in the International Human Rights Exchange (IHRE) program in Johannesburg, South Africa!

As an IHRE participant you will attend challenging classes examining human rights from a range of academic disciplines. The curriculum — which blends a core course on international human rights, a seminar and practicum on human rights advocacy, and a wide range of electives — offers a critical exploration of human rights topics in a multi-disciplinary forum. Taught by professors from both African and North American institutions in a seminar style, classes provide a highly interactive and cross-cultural context for discussion and debate.

Students will also explore the practice of human rights through participation in a hands-on, mentored internship. IHRE works with an impressive array of NGOs, all of which are working on the frontlines to promote and protect human rights in South Africa. Through these internships students gain invaluable experience working with programs effecting change in economic, cultural, social, political, and civil rights matters affecting South Africans today.

Many students credit IHRE with helping them to discover how best to apply their talents and interests to work in the field of social justice. A number of alumni have obtained jobs and fellowships as a result of their IHRE internship work. For a list of the organizations we work with, please visit our website at www.ihre.org.

The IHRE program intentionally connects students from diverse backgrounds. We do so because we value the reciprocal cross-cultural exchange of ideas. Students from Africa, the U.S., and other cultural backgrounds benefit significantly from the opportunity to engage jointly in the thought-provoking environment created by IHRE.

At its core, IHRE is designed to inspire and activate students by advancing their knowledge of human rights. Through engagement in the classroom, in the community, and among peers and faculty members, IHRE will challenge you, offer new insights, and broaden your horizons.

We look forward to the opportunity to work with you and we hope to see you in South Africa!

Warm wishes,



Ayesha Kajee
Program Director
**International Human
Rights Exchange**



“IHRE has allowed me to see that there is no longer a need to refer to ourselves as black or white, but rather as human beings working together toward achieving a better world for all.” —IHRE Participant Reflection



A BRIEF HISTORY

The **International Human Rights Exchange (IHRE)** was founded as a partnership among U.S. and Southern African colleges and universities. In its first five years, IHRE offered a month-long intensive summer course in South Africa. In 2007, IHRE became a joint semester program of Bard College and the University of the Witwatersrand.

Founded in 1860, **Bard College** is a four-year residential college of liberal arts and sciences in New York State. The College has developed an ethos particularly sensitive to issues of justice and injustice and is a place of refuge and a haven for iconoclastic thinking and action. Bard was the first institution of higher education in the U.S. to offer an undergraduate degree program in human rights.

The University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg, is renowned for its intellectual leadership and its commitment to nurturing critical thinkers, creative innovators, problem-posers, and problem-solvers. Wits is home to over 25,000 students and is an urban, comprehensive university. With over 1,500 international

students from more than 90 countries and speaking 130 languages, Wits offers a unique mix of academic excellence, cultural diversity, and an exciting social life.

IHRE STUDENT PROFILE

IHRE is proud of its diversity and inclusiveness. Approximately two-thirds of participants come from Wits and other African universities, and one-third are students from North American institutions. Participants represent a broad range of ethnic, social, and disciplinary backgrounds; all demonstrate strong interest in and/or previous experience in human rights and social justice.

In recent years, special effort has been made to include students from universities in the Southern African region. Scholarships are available to students who might otherwise not have the financial resources to participate in IHRE.

ACADEMICS

We encourage students to consider enrolling directly in a regular course at Wits. Students may choose from any first-year Wits course offering in Humanities, or from among a number of pre-approved 2nd and 3rd level courses.

IHRE is a rigorous multi-disciplinary academic program that emphasizes intellectual openness. In keeping with liberal arts pedagogical principles, classes are small (average size 20). Students are encouraged to think critically, question received ideas, and subject theory to the test of experience. Courses are taught by professors from Wits and North American institutions.

Structurally, IHRE is a hybrid of the British lecture and marking system used at Wits and the American seminar and grading system. Students from North American institutions are full-time and usually earn 16 credits. At the end of the semester students receive a transcript from Bard College.

CORE CURRICULUM

Human Rights: Perspectives from the Disciplines

Drawing on the South African experience, among others, this course introduces significant materials on human rights, discusses different disciplinary perspectives within the field, and considers issues of apartheid and transitional justice as a lens through which to explore issues of human rights. (Required)

Engagement with Human Rights

The core seminar examines the varied practices of human rights advocacy. It is supplemented by an optional internship of approximately 10 hours per week at a human rights organization in Johannesburg.

"I learned that the human rights discourse is not always positive.

People also use it to justify oppression

IHRE made me conscious that I can use the human rights discourse to oppress if I am not aware – I am not immune to such things."

—IHRE Participant Reflection

ELECTIVES

Development, Welfare Economics, and Human Rights

The course covers emerging trends in inequalities of growth and levels of development among countries as well as individuals. Areas of development and welfare economics are explored in the broader context of human rights.

Gender and Human Rights

This course includes a broad overview of the movements toward gender equity from the early 20th century to the present, and of gender and rights in the political, economic, and socio-cultural spheres.

Human Rights and African Literature

This course explores traditional African understandings of human rights as they are expressed in the literature of personal narrative. It considers indigenous concepts of fairness and justice in proverbs, legends, myths, poems, tales, and novels.

Human Rights and Culture

Topics for consideration include the paradigm of universal human rights and its consistency with the reality of diverse cultures, the problems and opportunities of "global culture," and the relationship between the "right to culture" and other human rights.

Human Rights and the Media

The course investigates the politics of "manufacturing consent" about the legitimacy of conflict and trauma during times of war, and provokes questions about the validity of the ways in which the media create popular memories, and their relationship to human rights.

Islamic Law and Human Rights

Given the increasing debate surrounding the situation of human rights and Islam, this course examines the profound tension between the competing paradigms of universal human rights, cultural and religious relativism, and Islamic law.

Migration and Human Rights

The course explores the complex relationships between nationality, citizenship, migration, and human rights. Particularly, it will ask how mobility across national borders challenges the state form and the human rights of both citizens and international migrants.

The Philosophy of Human Rights

This course analyzes questions including: How do human rights differ from other kinds of rights? Are individuals alone capable of having human rights, or can groups such as nations also have them? Are we justified in believing in human rights?

Politics and Human Rights

The course looks at the origins of rights-talk in political discourse, what rights involve, and how social movements have invoked rights to advance their cause as well as criticized rights irrelevant to their cause.

Psychosocial Perspectives on Human Rights and Social Justice

Considering the human dimensions of human rights, this course explores the meaning and practice of “rights” from the perspectives of psychology, social work, and critical (post)colonial studies.

State Sovereignty and Human Rights

Looking at the relationship between human rights and state sovereignty, the course considers the role played by various actors in human rights – states, intergovernmental organizations, NGOs, and multinational corporations.

Sample course syllabi from previous IHRE courses can be downloaded on our website: www.ihre.org/academics.



"IHRE was a great chance to get a glimpse of the world of NGOs and human rights. My internship gave me a unique opportunity to learn about a country and people in turmoil and bring that knowledge back to the human rights work I have been doing in the U.S." —Maura Donovan, Hamilton College



INTERNSHIP

One integral component of IHRE is an internship at a Johannesburg civil society organization. Students undertake substantive work under the guidance of an in-house mentor, working approximately 10 hours a week, on Thursday and Fridays. *Separate academic credit is not given for the internship; rather, it is a component of the 4-credit core seminar, Engagement in Human Rights.*

For more information on the mission and work of each of these organizations, please visit our website where you can access a direct link to each organization's homepage:

www.ihre.org/internship

INTERNSHIP HOSTS

Action Support Centre
AIDS Consortium
Anti-Privatisation Forum (APF)
Central Methodist Church/
Albert Street School
Civil Society Watch/CIVICUS
The Edge Institute
Freedom of Expression Institute
Forced Migration Studies Programme
Gay and Lesbian Memory in Action
Habitat for Humanity - South Africa
Homeless Talk
Human Rights Institute of South Africa
Jet Education Services
Khulumani Support Group
Lawyers for Human Rights
Legal Resources Centre
Market Photo Workshop

Planact
ProBono.org
Reproductive Health and
HIV Research Unit
SABC News International - African Views
Sonke Gender Justice Project
Soul City Institute for Health &
Development Communication
South African Human Rights Commission
South African Institute of Race Relations
South African Non-Governmental
Organization Network
Steve Biko Foundation
Street Law Project
Transparency International South Africa
Tshwararang Legal Centre
Women's Net



South Africa has an incomparable culture of human rights. Its constitution, its history of successful struggle against apartheid, and its search for transitional justice have endowed it with a global leadership role in human rights theory and practice.

PRE-DEPARTURE WORKSHOP & ORIENTATION AT WITS

Prior to arriving in South Africa, students traveling from North America meet at Bard College for a pre-departure workshop. Topics discussed include program goals and expectations, cultural adjustment to South Africa, and initial discussions related to South Africa's history. Students then travel with Bard staff on a group flight to Johannesburg.

Upon arrival in Johannesburg, students from North American institutions receive a comprehensive orientation at Wits, including an overview of academics at Wits, safety and health, student life, etc.

COMMUNITY HUMAN RIGHTS WORKSHOP

IHRE students participate in a Community Human Rights Workshop at Wits Rural. The CHRW offers students a directed opportunity for exchange and dialogue with members of a rural South African community. The program includes, in situ, lectures and discussions on human rights issues facing many rural communities in South Africa, visits with local organizations, homestays, and a visit to Kruger Park.

LIFE IN JOHANNESBURG

Johannesburg is South Africa's most intellectually and culturally vibrant city with a rich human rights history and culture. Located in Guateng Province, near South Africa's government capital of Tshwane (Pretoria), Johannesburg is the capital of South Africa's flourishing non-governmental sector.

WITS STUDENT SERVICES & ACTIVITIES

All IHRE students are directly enrolled at the University of the Witwatersrand and enjoy the services and amenities provided to the Wits student body.

Particularly, Wits offers students a wide range of social and extracurricular activities. It is home to a number of student clubs and organizations, houses over 97 sports clubs and societies, and features the Wits Theatre. The Wits campus also boasts 14 museums and two art galleries, containing collections of rare art and South African cultural heritage.

HOUSING

All students from North American institutions are housed on the main campus of the University of the Witwatersrand. **There are two different housing options:**

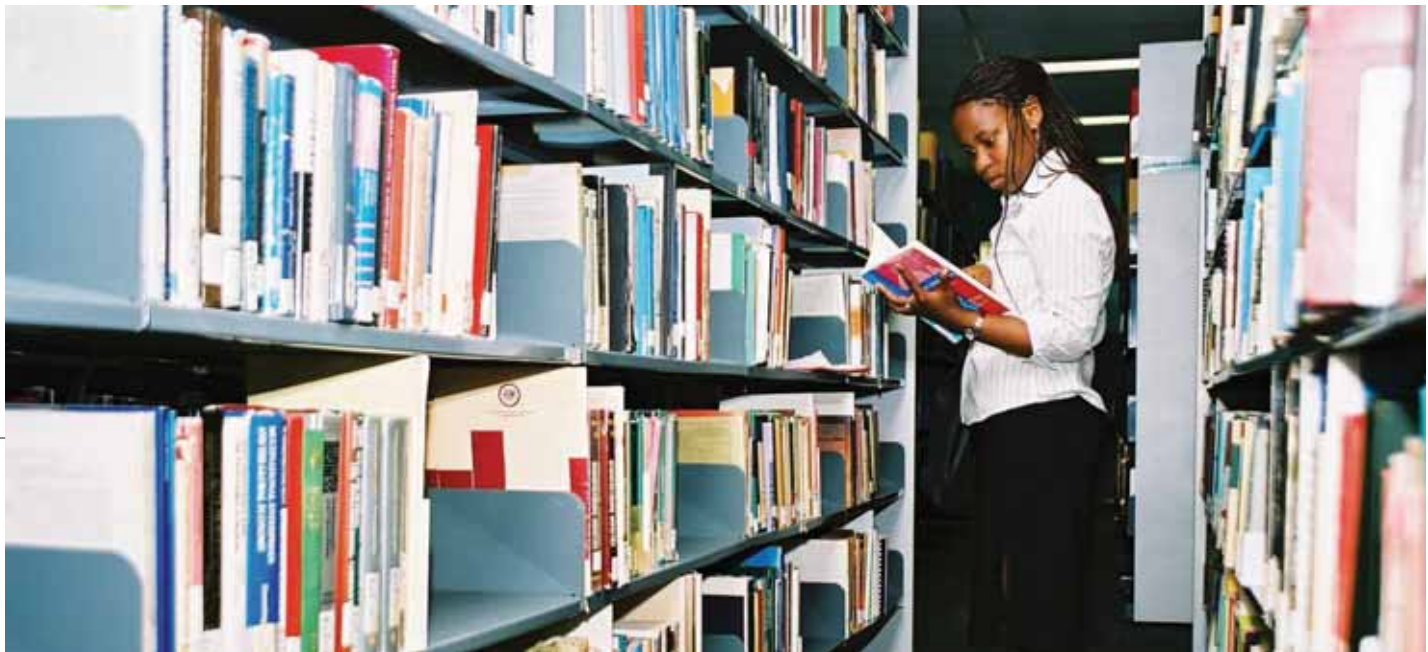
The vast majority of students will live in International House, which is made up of small efficiencies. A bathroom, refrigerator, and hot plate are provided. Students must cook for themselves. As its name suggests, International House attracts international students coming from both African countries and from outside the continent. This allows students a maximum of flexibility in terms of schedule, dietary needs, and convenience.

Students from North American institutions may also be housed in a residence all on the main Wits campus. This option allows students to sign up for a meal plan via Wits.



“The IHRE program gave me a strong multi-dimensional theoretical grasp on human rights coupled with hands-on experience at an internship site. This way, I could internalize what I had learned in class and apply it in the field/put my classroom learning to practice. I also found the IHRE program to be helpful for anyone looking to discover what particular aspect of human rights they are best able to focus on . . . be it law, medicine, or information technology!

—Karen Mwaniki, Wellesley College



PROGRAM STAFF

IHRE students are supported by a network of professionals in the U.S. and South Africa with extensive international education experience.

The **Institute for International Liberal Education (IILE)** at Bard College supports students from North American institutions in the application, selection, and pre-departure processes. The IILE staff also arranges the transfer of credit to students' home institutions.

In Johannesburg, the IHRE program has a dedicated staff and office which maintains primary responsibility for overseeing the well-being of all students participating in the IHRE program. Along with the International Office at Wits, this IHRE staff team is a

helpful resource for students from North American institutions as they work to integrate fully into academic and student life at Wits and adjust to life in Johannesburg.

FACULTY

The IHRE faculty is primarily comprised of professors from African and North American institutions. Given the multi-disciplinary nature of the IHRE program, faculty represent a wide range of disciplines and perspectives. The common thread is that all IHRE faculty are dedicated human rights scholars and practitioners who are eager to foster student engagement in the issues through rigorous intellectual debate and demanding coursework.

You can find biographies for previous IHRE faculty on our website at the following link: www.ihre.org/academics/faculty.shtml.

PROGRAM COST

Below are **estimated** program expenses for one semester of study at Wits with the IHRE program (based on available figures for the 2009/2010 academic year). Please note that these estimates are for students from North American institutions and do not take into account any financial aid or scholarships that may apply.

For the most recently updated estimates and for additional information on program expenses, please visit our website at www.ihre.org.

Bard Tuition	\$19,540
Room	Included in tuition
Airfare	\$ 2,000
Meals	\$ 1,500
Personal Expenses	\$ 1,500
Estimated Total	\$24,540

SCHOLARSHIPS & FINANCIAL AID

Bard staff work closely with study abroad staff at the student's home institution to ensure that, whenever possible, financial aid packages (including federal and state scholarships) may be applied to IHRE tuition and fees. Additionally, students may be eligible for need-based financial assistance directly from the Institute for International Education at Bard College. Information on how to apply for available scholarships is included in the program application.

PROGRAM DATES

The IHRE program takes place from late June through mid-November (in accordance with the second semester of the Wits academic calendar). Students from North American institutions forgo their fall semester of studies to participate in IHRE. Prior to the start of the formal semester, North American students gather at Bard for a pre-departure workshop, typically scheduled around two weeks in advance of the start of the formal semester at Wits. IHRE students also participate in the Community Human Rights Workshop the week before classes begin.

Please consult www.ihre.org for the most up-to-date information on program dates and schedules.

Students with a commitment to social justice and/or a history of academic or personal involvement with human rights issues are particularly encouraged to consider IHRE. The breadth and depth of the IHRE curriculum, combined with the exposure to human rights issues seen from African perspectives and in the context of South Africa's recent history, are especially valuable for students preparing to embark on a career in social justice or human rights.

APPLICATION INFORMATION

Students from North American Institutions

Admission to the IHRE program is competitive and works on a rolling basis. *Students are strongly encouraged to apply in advance of the deadline.*

The annual application deadline is March 1st.

Applications can be downloaded from the IHRE website at: www.ihre.org/apply.

For additional information, contact:

Bard College | Institute for International Liberal Education

P.O. Box 5000, Annandale-on-Hudson, NY 12504-5000

Tel (845) 758-7081 **Fax** (845) 758-7040 **E-mail** ihre@bard.edu **www.ihre.org**

Students from African Institutions

The IHRE program office at the University of Witwatersrand handles all applications and inquiries from students enrolled at Wits or other African institutions as well as international students from outside North America. For more information please contact:

Ms. Ayesha Kajee, Program Director | International Human Rights Exchange

Tel +27-11-717-4391 **E-mail** Ayesha.Kajee@wits.ac.za

“Change the way people think,
and things will never be the same.”

—Stephen Biko, South African Anti-apartheid Activist
and Founder of Black Consciousness Movement



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Institute for International
Liberal Education**

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