

To: International Studies Convening Group, AIS Curriculum Committee, AIS Unit Council, ARC, Faculty Assembly, Provost, and Board of Trustees

From: Hassan Nejad, Michael Riff and Rebecca Root

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Re: Human Rights and Genocide Studies Minor

**Background:** We hereby propose the establishment of an interdisciplinary minor in Human Rights and Genocide Studies to begin in Fall 2010. A rich array of relevant courses, a robust co-curricular program, and enthusiastic student and faculty interest have motivated us to propose this minor. While faculty from across half a dozen convening groups in AIS, SSHS and CA support and plan to contribute to this minor, it will be housed under the auspices of the International Studies Convening Group in AIS. The minor will be open to students of all majors and schools. Research indicates that our proposal meets or exceeds the standards and goals of similar programs at private and public institutions around the country.

**Rationale:** The program will emphasize the study of human rights and genocide as academic and practical pursuits and will aim to prepare students for graduate school as well as career opportunities in international organizations, government, non-profits, multi-national corporations, and the media. It will be firmly anchored in the belief that establishing legal frameworks and erecting viable international support systems represent the best hope that humankind has in preventing genocide, torture, religious persecution, and other assaults upon human dignity and rights.

Students will achieve an understanding of the origins, theory and practice of international human rights and the treatment of genocide as a crime under international law. Linkages to human rights and genocide prevention organizations and agencies located in the New York metropolitan area will be developed. Students will be encouraged to understand and question the implementation of human rights and genocide prevention theories and policies as well to acquire practical work experience through internships and other experiential learning opportunities. The development of communication skills, foreign language proficiency, and participation in study abroad opportunities will be promoted and supported. Student-faculty research projects will be encouraged. Co-curricular opportunities related to human rights will be provided by AIS colloquia, guest lectures, and film screenings, as well as by events organized by the Center for Holocaust and Genocide Studies. The Cahill Center will provide valuable assistance in developing meaningful experiential learning opportunities for students.

To assess student interest in this proposed minor, we conducted an online survey open to all AIS students. Of the 127 students that responded, 73 of them said they would consider enrolling in this minor. 94% of respondents supported the creation of the minor.

**Program Specifics:** The Human Rights and Genocide Studies Minor will be comprised of five courses, as follows:

<b>Required (Foundations):</b>			
INTL 250	Root	AIS	Contemporary International Human Rights
HIST 329	Riff	AIS	Paradigms of Genocide
<b>Choose 3:</b>			
HIST 264	Riff	AIS	The Jews in 20 <sup>th</sup> Century Europe
POLI 357	Nejad	AIS	International Law
LITR 348	Scheckner	AIS	Literature of the Holocaust
INTL 337	Root	AIS	Human Rights in Latin America
SOCI 215	Augis	SSHS	Sociology of Race Relations
SOCI 302	Augis	SSHS	Third World Women
PHIL 333	Cassidy	AIS	Ethics
ANTH 310	Castellanos	AIS	Politics, Culture and Identity
SOCI 202	Ecker	SSHS	Social Inequality
HIST 357	Elovitz	AIS	Hitler, the Holocaust and Genocide
ANTH 320	Hangen	AIS	Nationalism and Ethnicity
HIST 290	Kayaalp	AIS	Women in Middle Eastern Societies
POLI 312	Peterson	AIS	UN: World Politics
AMER 309	Riff	AIS	Media and the Holocaust
POLI 360	Root	AIS	Conflict Resolution
POLI 309	Unger	AIS	Civil Rights
SOCI 250	Yaghmaian	SSHS	Globalization, Human Rights, and Migration Narratives

**Curricular Impact:**

As with other minors, the Human Rights and Genocide Studies Minor is intended to complement the disciplinary specialization and methodological training inherent in a major. Students will achieve the necessary background for eventual career and graduate study opportunities in advocacy organizations, journalism, teaching, policy analysis, or service in government or intergovernmental entities. As the minor consists of courses already offered, it does not require the addition of new courses.

**Staffing:** All instructors of the above course offerings have submitted syllabi and have indicated their willingness to meet demand for the minor on a regular basis.

**Fiscal Impact:** Since all course offerings are taught in-load by regular faculty, instituting the minor will not result in the expenditure of any additional resources

**Summary:** Given the high level of student as well as faculty interest and the availability of relevant course offerings across a wide span of disciplines, we believe that the time has come at Ramapo College to undertake a freestanding, interdisciplinary minor in Human Rights and Genocide Studies. While based in AIS under the International Studies Convening Group, not only will the minor be open to students from all schools and majors, but it will also involve the participation of faculty on a college-wide basis.