

AMERICAN UNIVERSITY  
SCHOOL OF INTERNATIONAL SERVICE



**Human Rights and the Media**  
**SIS 319.011 – Fall 2011**  
**Thursdays 5:30pm-8:00pm**  
**Location: SIS 333**



**Professor Rebecca DeWinter-Schmitt**

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Office hours: Thursdays 3:00-5:00pm; Fridays 10-12pm. Do not hesitate to call or email me for an appointment at other times.

**COURSE DESCRIPTION:**

This course examines how different information and communication technologies that enable mass communication – be they more traditional media forms (print media, TV, radio, film, etc.) or newer outlets (blogs, video sharing, social media tools, geospatial mapping, crowdsourcing, wikis, etc.) – affect the realization of human rights. Students will be introduced to human rights concepts and debates through the close study of historical and contemporary examples of the role of mass media in facilitating, and hindering, human rights protections in the context of foreign policy, humanitarian intervention and the use of military force, social upheavals, and human rights advocacy. Students will also examine how media makers and users can, on the one hand, contribute to building a human rights culture by framing human rights problems and exposing human rights violations, but, on the other hand, may at times become the victims, and even facilitators, of human rights abuses. The idea of access to media as a human right will feature throughout the class, as will discussion of today's changing media landscape, marked by new technologies that allow for broader participation in the construction of human rights relevant knowledge. The course will be integrated with American University's annual Human Rights Film Series and provides a creative outlet for students eager to learn to use new media to advocate for human rights causes.

**COURSE OBJECTIVES:**

The course seeks to:

- Impart an understanding of the relationship between human rights and the media.
- Use the nexus of media creation, information consumption, and human rights promotion as a location to critically explore human rights concepts.
- Develop analytical skills to assess the nature of new and old media outlets and their impact on human rights protections.
- Help students understand today's changing media landscape.
- Familiarize students with the use of new social media and other technologies as tools for human rights advocacy.
- Increase familiarity with a set of historical and contemporary examples of media's impact on pressing human rights situations.
- Hone critical thinking and writing skills.

### **LEARNING OUTCOMES:**

Students will be able to:

- Have a more complete understanding of the complex relationship between human rights and the media.
- Critically analyze the role of media as a human rights witness, human rights promoter, and even facilitator of human rights abuses.
- Discuss the similarities and differences between new and old media, and convey how media is a site of consumption, participation, and creation.
- Recognize their own power as future media makers to evoke social change in the area of human rights.
- Demonstrate strong critical analytical skills.
- Express human rights concepts and advocate for rights using various media tools.

### **READINGS:**

This course has no books that you are required to purchase. We use excerpts from books, which will be available on the Blackboard (BB) class site, journal articles, all of which are available for download on the library's journal databases, e-books, and materials publicly available on the Internet. You can always choose to purchase books we only use portions of, but I leave that up to your discretion. With regards to the Human Rights Film Series, more information on each film is available on the series website at <http://www.centerforsocialmedia.org/tags/filmmakers/human-rights-film-series>.

### **COURSE REQUIREMENTS and GRADING SCALE:**

**Team Projects**

**30%**

<b>HRs Film Series Assignments</b>	
<b>Two movie reviews</b>	<b>30% (2x15% each)</b>
<b>Two blogs</b>	<b>20% (2x10% each)</b>

<b>Participation</b>	
<b>Attendance, assignments, and contributions</b>	<b>10%</b>
<b>Posts to class blog</b>	<b>10%</b>

*Team Projects – 30%:*  
See Annex 1 for assignment details

*HRs Film Series Assignments:*

*Two movie reviews – 30% (15% each):*

Students will write two, approximately 3-4 pages in length, double-spaced movie reviews. See below for due dates. Reviews are to be posted to the class blog on Blackboard. We will discuss how to write a movie review in class. The reviews are not to summarize what occurred in the film, but rather should discuss how the film frames the issue at hand as a human rights matter, how it explains or condones the particular human rights practice, how it picks and depicts perpetrators and victims, whether the film reveals any biases and/or has any unintended consequences, and whether the film is successful as a tool for human rights advocacy. Due to time constraints, films inevitably can only provide a snapshot and may not offer in-depth background on a human rights situation. Thus writing your review will require that you do additional research to familiarize yourself more thoroughly with the rights issue at stake. You also should research existing advocacy efforts already underway in order to assess the film's impact. Discuss whether the film is an effective tool that builds on, expands, or takes existing activism and awareness raising in new directions and that can move the audience from voyeurism to action.

*Two film-related blog posts – 20% (10% each):*

As noted above, films are limited in length and cannot provide background and updates on ongoing human rights situations. On the due dates specified below, post to the class blog on Blackboard two blogs – 1-2 pages, double-spaced in length – that are a response to or comment on a news item you have found that is relevant to the subject matter of two of the four film fest movies. We will discuss how to write a blog in class. Be sure to include in your blog a link to the news source on which you are remarking. If you are satisfied with your blog post, I highly encourage that you also post it to the comments section of the news source! If you do, please inform me, as well as if anyone further commented on your post.

*Participation:*

*Attendance, in-class and homework assignment, in-class contributions – 10%:*

This course will be conducted seminar style and is heavily grounded in classroom discussions, debates, and in-class assignments and contributions. Therefore, you are expected to actively participate in class and half of your participation grade (5%) will be based on your contributions in class, the questions and points you raise, thoughts and information you share, and completion and active collaboration on assignments. If you find public speaking particularly challenging, then come see me and we can try to address this. However, you are expected to actively contribute and not doing so will impact your grade. Note that at times I will randomly call on you by name for your input. (Another reason to be sure to do the readings!) Of course, quality is more important than quantity, and you are not expected to speak during every class session – rather when you speak up try to contribute something that furthers the discussion. An A (95) will be given to students who participate on a consistent, regular basis, i.e. once a week. A B (85) indicates that on occasion you have spoken up in class. And a C (75) will be given to students who rarely contribute. These grades will be adjusted slightly upwards (+) and downwards (-) in conjunction with attendance and completion of assignments.

The other half of your grade (5%) will be based on attendance, and will be a number reflecting the percentage of the 14 classes you attended. It goes without saying that attendance is required. The only acceptable reason for being unable to attend class is an emergency or medical situation. You must inform me, if at all possible, ahead of time about your absence and then afterwards provide me with some form of documentation that confirms your reason for not attending class. I will take attendance and you will be penalized for unexcused absences. Even if you do have excused absences, more than two will result in a deduction of a third of a grade, i.e. from an A to an A-.

*Posts to class blog (10%):*

This class will have a blog on Blackboard which you will be using to post movie reviews and comments on film-related current events, as described. In addition to these required postings, you will be expected to regularly contribute to the blog. You can post in response to others' movie reviews or current event blogs, you can comment on required readings, pose questions, or continue discussions started in class. If you have any trouble accessing Blackboard or posting your comments, please let me know as soon as possible. While I hope that you will actively use the class blog as a medium for discussion and shared learning, at a minimum I expect two posts.

*Extra credit – up to 2%:*

I am willing to entertain extra credit assignments for up to two additional points on your final grade. Please come see me with your ideas before you do an assignment.

*Grading scale:*

Grades are valued in the manner listed below. I do not grade on a curve. Your grade depends on the absolute value of your work. Grades will be assigned according to the following criteria:

A = outstanding work that exceeds expectations and indicates an extra effort  
B = solid, capable work that goes beyond expected requirements  
C = satisfactory work that meets the expected requirements  
D = unsatisfactory work fulfilling minimum requirements  
F = failure to meet minimum requirements

I will provide detailed feedback on your performance on assignments throughout the course of the semester so there will be plenty of opportunities to improve your grade. Of course, if you have any questions about my evaluation of your performance make an appointment to see me or drop by during my office hours.

<b>A</b>	94-100	<b>B+</b>	87-89	<b>C+</b>	77-79	<b>D+</b>	67-69	<b>F</b>	≤ 59
<b>A-</b>	90-93	<b>B</b>	84-86	<b>C</b>	74-76	<b>D</b>	64-66		
		<b>B-</b>	80-83	<b>C-</b>	70-73	<b>D-</b>	60-63		

*Note: All late assignments will be penalized by a third of a letter grade (e.g. A drops to A-) for each day late, unless you have spoken to me about receiving an extension in advance of the due date.*

## **COURSE POLICIES:**

- Class attendance is mandatory.
- Late assignments will be penalized unless you speak to me before the due date about an extension.
- Come to class prepared. All readings must be done before class.
- Contribute actively to classroom discussions. This can entail anything from raising questions and making comments on the readings to offering your personal views, experiences, and insights when they are relevant to the topic being covered.
- Human rights, especially their interpretation, application, assurance, and enforcement, can be a controversial topic. Many of the issues we will discuss can be approached from differing points of view. While we will hone in on controversies to elucidate important concepts, I ask that you practice the art of listening when someone expresses their views, seriously considering what they have to say, and respectfully responding with your own thoughts, even if they are in opposition to those of your classmates. We want to create a friendly environment, where everyone feels comfortable speaking up and we can learn from each others' range of views and experiences.
- Ensure that your cellphone is turned off during the class period.
- You can gladly take notes on your laptops and other electronic devices. However, if you are caught e-mailing, surfing the web, texting, playing video games, or using those devices as a form of distraction from class, then you will lose that privilege.

## **ACADEMIC INTEGRITY:**

Standards of academic conduct are set forth in the University's Academic Integrity Code. By registering, you have acknowledged your awareness of the Academic Integrity Code, and you are obliged to become familiar with your rights and responsibilities as defined by the Code. Violations of the Academic Integrity Code will not be treated lightly, and disciplinary actions will be taken should such violations occur. Please see me if you have any questions about the academic violations described in the Code in general or as they relate to particular requirements for this course.

I also encourage you to familiarize yourself with the AIC code found at <http://www.american.edu/provost/registrar/regulations/reg80.cfm>

Please remember to contact me if you have any questions regarding potential violations.

## **EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS FOR DISRUPTION OF CLASSES:**

In the event of an emergency, American University will implement a plan for meeting the needs of all members of the university community. Should the university be required to close for a period of time, we are committed to ensuring that all aspects of our educational programs will be delivered to our students. These may include altering and extending the duration of the traditional term schedule to complete essential instruction in the traditional format and/or use of distance instructional methods. Specific strategies will vary from class to class, depending on the format of the course and the timing of the emergency. Faculty will communicate class-specific information to students via AU e-mail and Blackboard, while students must inform their faculty immediately of any absence. Students are responsible for checking their AU e-mail regularly and keeping themselves informed of emergencies. In the event of an emergency, students should refer to the AU Student Portal, the AU Web site ([www.prepared.american.edu](http://www.prepared.american.edu)) and the AU information line at (202) 885-1100 for general university-wide information, as well as contact their faculty and/or respective dean's office for course and school/ college-specific information.

## **CLASS SCHEDULE and REQUIRED READINGS:**

### **Class 1: September 1: Course Introduction**

Introduction of instructor and students. Distribution and review of syllabus. Human Rights 101: What are human rights? Setting the stage: What is the link between human rights and the media?

*Required readings:*

J. Harrelson-Stephens and R. Callaway. 2007. "What are Human Rights?" pp. 4-10. In: R. Callaway and J. Harrelson-Stephens. Eds. *Exploring International Human Rights*. Boulder: Lynne Rienner Publishers. (Available on BB.)

Amnesty International USA. *Every Human Has Rights*. (Available on BB.)

Hamelink, Cees. 2001. "Introduction: Human Rights and the Media." *Critical Arts*. 15, 1 & 2: 3-11. (Available electronically via library website.)

*Reading questions:*

How are human rights defined? Where do rights originate? What are different typologies of rights - CPRs v. ESCRs, negative v. positive rights, generations of rights, etc.? Where are key human rights standards codified and how are rights protected? What is the link between media and human rights? Do mass media outlets have a responsibility to report on human rights violations, and what inherent limitations of mass media might prevent them from doing so? How might media outlets become complicit in human rights abuses and how might they promote human rights? Do the media have rights, and how can they be infringed upon? Is there a right to access to media? What do we mean by an 'independent' media and which human rights standards are central for a free press and informed citizenry?

*Additional readings:*

*Human Rights Here and Now, Part 1: The Fundamentals*

<http://www1.umn.edu/humanrts/edumat/hreduseries/hereandnow/Default.htm>

D. Beetham. 2007. "What Future for Economic and Social Rights?" pp. 11-15. And H. Shue. "Basic Rights," pp. 16-20. "In: R. Callaway and J. Harrelson-Stephens. Eds. *Exploring International Human Rights*. Boulder: Lynne Rienner Publishers.

Jerome Sheestack. 1998. The Philosophical Foundations of Human Rights. *Human Rights Quarterly*. 20, 2: 201-234.

AMIC. 2000. *Media and Human Rights in Asia*. Asian Media Information and Communication Centre. (See especially chapters by P. Thomas, Safeguarding Human Rights, and C. Hamelink, Media and Human Rights.)

International Council on Human Rights Policy. 2002. Journalism, media and the challenge of human rights reporting. Geneva, Switzerland.  
[http://www.ichrp.org/files/reports/14/106\\_report\\_en.pdf](http://www.ichrp.org/files/reports/14/106_report_en.pdf) (See Chapter II; Media and Human Rights in History)

**Class 2: September 8: Using geospatial mapping to advance human rights. Case study: Eyes on Nigeria. Skills workshop: Using Google Earth. Formation of project teams and description of the team assignment. Guest Speakers: Christoph Koettl, Amnesty International USA, Science for Human Rights and Ally Krupar (via Skype), AU/SIS, Project Coordinator, Geospatial Analysis and Data Visualization Project**

Discussion of the functionality of geospatial mapping tied to social media campaigns, utilizing Twitter, Facebook and other new media tools, as a means to foster HRs learning and activism. The potentials and limitations of such tools. Geospatial mapping's use in conflict analysis, depiction, and prevention. The basics of using Google Earth. Class discussion will be grounded in a case study of activism to improve the human rights situation in the Niger Delta - Amnesty International USA's Eyes on Nigeria project.

*Required readings:*

Thoroughly read through the Eyes On Nigeria website at <http://www.eyesonnigeria.org>

Christoph Koettl. 2008. When Science Meets Human Rights: Innovative Uses of Geospatial Technologies for Human Rights Monitoring and Conflict Prevention. *Bridges*. Vol. 19 <http://www.ostina.org/content/view/3526/1069/>

*Additional readings:*

Lisa Parks. 2009. Digging Into Google Earth: An Analysis of "Crisis in Darfur". *Geoforum*. 40, 4: 535-545.

Lars Bromley. 2009. Eye in the Sky: Monitoring Human Rights Abuses Using Geospatial Technology. *Georgetown Journal of International Affairs*. Winter/Spring. 159-168.

USIP. 2011. From Crisis to Community: Mapping as a Peacebuilding Tool. <http://www.usip.org/events/crisis-community-mapping-peacebuilding-tool>

*Assignment:*

For next week's class, bring in a movie review and/or blog discussing a human rights issue that you find particularly well written and be prepared to explain why you liked it.

**Class 3: September 15: Using film to advance human rights. Skills workshop: Writing movie reviews and blogs.**

*Required readings:*

Sam Gregory. 2006. "Transnational Storytelling: Human Rights, WITNESS, and Video Advocacy." *American Anthropologist*, 108, 1: 195-204. (Available electronically via library website.)

Sam Gregory and Patricia Zimmerman. 2010. The Ethical Engagements of Human Rights Social Media.

<http://blog.witness.org/2010/11/the-ethical-engagements-of-human-rights-social-media/>

Daniel Franklin. 2006. *Politics and Film: The Political Culture of Film in the United States*. New York: Rowman & Littlefield. Read Chapter 1. Film, the Media and American tales. (Available on BB.)

*Reading questions:*

How has the wide dissemination of video technology affected activists' ability to witness human rights violations? What kinds of filmmaking and storytelling strategies are effective? What are the best ways to target a specific audience or reach a mass audience? What are the ethical issues implicated in using film for social change? What principles should guide filmmakers? Do those being depicted have rights in regard to how they are portrayed? What American tales shape the stories that get told in full length feature films? How do those tales shape the human rights stories that get told (or not told)?

*Additional readings:*

Henry Jenkins. 2008. From Rodney King to Burma: An Interview with Witness's Sam Gregory (Part One - [http://www.henryjenkins.org/2008/03/from\\_rodney\\_king\\_to\\_burma\\_an\\_i.html](http://www.henryjenkins.org/2008/03/from_rodney_king_to_burma_an_i.html) and Part Two - [http://henryjenkins.org/2008/04/from\\_rodney\\_king\\_to\\_burma\\_an\\_i\\_1.html](http://henryjenkins.org/2008/04/from_rodney_king_to_burma_an_i_1.html))

P. Auferheide, P. Jaszi, M. Chandra. 2009. Honest Truths: Documentary Filmmakers on Challenges in Their Work. American University: Center for Social Media. [http://www.centerforsocialmedia.org/sites/default/files/Honest\\_Truths\\_-\\_Documentary\\_Filmmakers\\_on\\_Ethical\\_Challenges\\_in\\_Their\\_Work.pdf](http://www.centerforsocialmedia.org/sites/default/files/Honest_Truths_-_Documentary_Filmmakers_on_Ethical_Challenges_in_Their_Work.pdf)

***DUE DATE:***

Teams will hand in their project concept papers, of no more than 2-3 pages in length, detailing the idea behind their project, its human rights goals and foreseeable impacts, needed resources, and a timeline for project completion with at least two dates for intermittent deliverables.

**Class 4: September 22: Film Fest Film 1**

**[If A Tree Falls: A Story of the Earth Liberation Front](#)**

Filmmaker: Marshall Curry

If A Tree Falls follows the controversial story of Daniel McGowan who was arrested in 2005 on charges of domestic terrorism as a member of the Earth Liberation Front. The film details Daniel's wait for sentencing while under house arrest, intertwined with the dramatic history of the ELF who operated through anonymous cells and caused millions of dollars in damage to businesses believed to be destroying the environment. Daniel's story calls into question not only how we understand environmental activism but also terrorism and the justice system.

*Assignment:*

For next week, find an example of a new media tool (Twitter, Facebook, You Tube, Blogging, Ushahidi, games for change, and other new technologies) being used as part of a human rights advocacy campaign. Be prepared to present on it in class for no more than 5 minutes. In particular, assess what the tool's potential and limitations are as a means to advocate for human rights and end abuses.

**Class 5: September 29: Old media, new media, and convergence. Using new media tools to advance human rights. Twitter, Facebook, You Tube, Blogging, Ushahidi, games for change, and other new technologies: Opportunities and limitations. State and corporate control of new media. Skills workshop: Creating a social media campaign. Guest Speaker: Kyra Stoddard, Online Marketing Manager, AIUSA**

*Required readings:*

Henry Jenkins. 2008. *Convergence Culture. Where New and Old Media Collide*. New York: New York University Press. Read the Introduction, pp. 1-24, and Chapter 6, Photoshop for Democracy: The New Relationship between Politics and Popular Culture, pp. 217-250. (Available on BB.)

Human Rights Media Advocacy and Leadership. 2009. Conference at the Human Rights Center UC Berkeley. Watch the video.  
[http://fora.tv/2009/05/05/Human\\_Rights\\_Media\\_Advocacy\\_and\\_Leadership](http://fora.tv/2009/05/05/Human_Rights_Media_Advocacy_and_Leadership)

Rebecca MacKinnon. 2011. Let's take back the Internet! TED Talk.  
[http://www.ted.com/talks/rebecca\\_mackinnon\\_let\\_s\\_take\\_back\\_the\\_internet.html](http://www.ted.com/talks/rebecca_mackinnon_let_s_take_back_the_internet.html)

*Reading questions:*

Do new media replace old media or do they converge? What are some current examples of convergence underway? Does convergence allow for the emergence of a more participatory political culture? How are new media tools deployed by human rights NGOs for advocacy purposes? What are the potentials, but also limitations, of new

media tools? How do the companies, as well as governments, seek to limit and control their use?

*Additional readings:*

Jillian York. 2010. Policing Content in the Quasi-Public Sphere. OpenNet Initiative. <http://opennet.net/sites/opennet.net/files/PolicingContent.pdf>

Kenneth Roth. 2011. New Laws Needed to Protect Social Media. *Global Post*. <http://www.hrw.org/en/news/2011/04/15/new-laws-needed-protect-social-media>

Jesse Walker. 2004. Old media and new media. Like it or not, they are partners. *Reason.com*. <http://reason.com/archives/2004/09/15/old-media-and-new-media>

Jean Burgess and Joshua Green. 2009. *You Tube. On-line Video and Participatory Culture*. Cambridge: Polity Press.

Shira Golding. 2006. "Games for Change: Serious Fun." (Available at [http://www.mediarights.org/news/Games\\_for\\_Change\\_Serious\\_Fun/](http://www.mediarights.org/news/Games_for_Change_Serious_Fun/))  
Also peruse Games for Change website <http://www.gamesforchange.org>)

Jennifer Earl and Katrina Kimport. 2011. *Digitally Enabled Social Change*. Cambridge: MIT Press.

## **Class 6: October 6: Film Fest Film 2**

### **[How to Die in Oregon](#)**

Filmmaker: Peter Richardson

Since 1994, Oregonians have had the right to physician-assisted suicide. Filmmaker Peter Richardson, known for his ability to make deep emotional connections on camera, reveals the highly complex and intimate decision to end one's own life through the stories of the terminally ill in Oregon. Examining both sides of this controversial issue, Richardson poignantly leads audiences to explore what it means to die with dignity.

*Assignment:*

By COB (5pm) Friday, October 7, post to the class blog a movie review of one of the first two movies as well as a current event blog on a news item relevant to one of the two movies.

## **Class 7: October 13: Film Fest Film 3**

### [The Redemption of General Butt Naked](#)

Filmmakers: Daniele Anastasion + Eric Strauss

Joshua Milton Blahyi is an evangelical Christian preacher, he is also formerly one of the most feared and bloodthirsty warlords of the 14-year Liberian civil war. Known as "General Butt Naked," Joshua believed he was invincible when fighting naked with an AK-47, as did his troops. Today we find him spreading the good word, telling his story of redemption, and seeking the forgiveness of his victims, his soldiers, and the courts. Beautifully shot and surprisingly up close, the filmmakers present the chilling portrait of a man whose culpability and idea of reconciliation are inherently at odds.

#### *Assignment:*

Each project team will schedule a time to meet (in person or via Skype) with the instructor and a representative from AIUSA and Ally Krupar to assess mid-term progress on the projects.

### **Class 8: October 20: Film Fest Film 4**

#### [Not in Our Town: Light in the Darkness](#)

Filmmaker: Patrice O'Neill

In 2008, Ecuadorian immigrant Marcelo Lucero was murdered in Patchogue, New York. Marcelo's death was the tragic culmination of a wave of anti-immigrant violence in the community. Light in the Darkness chronicles the journey of Marcelo's family and community members as they react to their loss, the crime and the root causes of violence. The latest in the Not in Our Town series, the film carries on the tradition of documenting how communities organize and act together to prevent and repair the problems of hate crime to create an environment of safety and respect.

#### *Assignments:*

By COB (5pm) Friday, October 21, post to the class blog a movie review of one of the final two movies as well as a current event blog on a news item relevant to one of the two movies.

For the next class, based on Andrew Cline's post on "Media and Political Bias" (<http://rhetorica.net/bias.htm>) identify one news article in a major national newspaper that in one way or another addresses a human rights issue and that you think reflects one of the nine examples of bias in the news media that he discusses.

### **Class 9: October 27: The dilemmas of framing: Constructing human rights problems. Case study: News media, bias, and human rights reporting.**

*Required readings:*

G. Lakoff. 2004. "Framing 101". In particular pp. 1-5 and 7-8.

[http://andrelevy.net/lakoff\\_framing101.pdf](http://andrelevy.net/lakoff_framing101.pdf)

Travis Linn, Chapter 3: Media Methods that Lead to Stereotypes, pp. 23-28, and Susan Dente Ross, Chapter 4: Unconscious, Ubiquitous Frames, pp. 29-34. In: P. Lester and S. Ross. (Eds.) 2003. *Images that Injure*. Westport, CT: Praeger. (Available on BB.)

Makau Mutua. 2001. Savages, Victims, and Saviors: The Metaphor of Human Rights. *Harvard International Law Journal*. 42, 1. Read an excerpt from pages 201-209.

(Available electronically via library website.)

International Council on Human Rights Policy. 2002. Journalism, media and the challenge of human rights reporting. Geneva, Switzerland. Read Chapter 5: Bias, Advocacy, and Precision [http://www.ichrp.org/files/reports/14/106\\_report\\_en.pdf](http://www.ichrp.org/files/reports/14/106_report_en.pdf)

Carroll Bogert. 2011. Whose News? The Changing Media Landscape and NGOs.

Human Rights Watch. <http://www.hrw.org/en/world-report-2011/whose-news>

*Reading questions:*

What is a frame and who propagates frames? How do we come to recognize something as a human rights problem? What and who do human rights frames include and exclude? Are there possible drawbacks to speaking of human rights "victims"? Are there ways to ensure that people suffering human rights abuses shape how they are represented? What is the process of reporting on human rights news and do new information trends affect the quality of reporting? Do the media report on human rights issues consistently and accurately? What are the responsibilities of media outlets for reporting human rights issues? How do media outlets interact with HRs NGOs? Is objectivity in journalism possible? In your opinion, are mainstream media outlets biased? What are "media watchdog" NGOs doing to uncover bias and ensure access to accurate information?

*Additional readings:*

Clifford Bob. 2002. The Merchants of Morality. *Foreign Policy*.

[http://www.foreignpolicy.com/articles/2002/03/01/merchants\\_of\\_morality](http://www.foreignpolicy.com/articles/2002/03/01/merchants_of_morality) (Condensed version of Clifford Bob. 2005. *The Marketing of Rebellion: Insurgents, Media and International Activism*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.)

Erik Heinze and Rosa Freedman. 2010. Public Awareness of Human Rights Distortions in the Mass Media. *International Journal of Human Rights*. 14, 4: 491-523.

Deutsche Welle Conference. 2011. Human Rights in a Globalized World: Challenges for the Media. <http://www.dw-world.de/dw/0,,14143,00.html> (All sessions have audio

recordings, see in particular sessions on June 22 on advocacy versus objectivity and social media.)

*In-class group assignment:*

Examine one of Project Censored's "Top 25 Censored Stories of 2010" at <http://www.projectcensored.org/top-stories/articles/category/top-stories/top-25-of-2010/>. Why do you think this information did not make it into mainstream news outlets in the way it is presented by Project Censored?

*Assignment:*

Before next class make the time to visit the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum <http://www.ushmm.org/> and view two exhibits: The State of Deception: The Power of Nazi Propaganda <http://www.ushmm.org/propaganda/> and From Memory to Action: Meeting the Challenge of Genocide [http://www.ushmm.org/genocide/take\\_action/](http://www.ushmm.org/genocide/take_action/)

### **Class 10: November 3: Human rights, media, and the use of force: Part 1: Media as a tool for human rights violations. Prosecuting incitement to genocide. Case study: Holocaust**

*Required readings:*

Susan Benesch. 2007-8. Vile Crime or Inalienable Right: Defining Incitement to Genocide. *Virginia Journal of International Law*. 48, 3: 485-528. (Available electronically via library website.)

*Reading questions:*

How can the media be appropriated by state and non-state actors to commit human rights violations? What kinds of interventions are legitimate when the media is being used to incite human rights violations? What is propaganda and how is it different from other forms of information and political speech? How are enemy depictions created and propagated? Why is freedom of the press essential to protecting human rights? When and why was genocide codified a special category of extreme human rights violation? What is incitement to genocide and how is it different from hate speech?

*Additional readings:*

Noam Chomsky. 2002. *Media Control: The Spectacular Achievements of Propaganda*. New York: Seven Stories Press.

Gregory Gordon. 2008. From Incitement to Indictment? Prosecuting Iran's President For Advocating Israel's Destruction and Piecing Together Incitement Law's Emerging

Analytical Framework. *Journal of Criminal Law and Criminology*. 98, 3: 853-920.  
[http://www.law.northwestern.edu/jclc/backissues/v98/n3/9803\\_853.Gordon.pdf](http://www.law.northwestern.edu/jclc/backissues/v98/n3/9803_853.Gordon.pdf)

**Class 11: November 10: Human rights, media, and the use of force: Part 2: Media effects on humanitarian interventions. Case study: Rwanda**

*Required readings:*

Monroe Price and Mark Thompson. 2002. *Forging Peace: Intervention, Human Rights, and the Management of Media Space*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press. Read Chapter 1: Mark Thompson. Defining Information Intervention and Chapter 8: Alison Des Forges. Silencing the Voices of Hate in Rwanda. (Available on BB.)

Brookings/Harvard Forum. January 2002. "The CNN Effect": How 24-Hour News Coverage Affects Governmental Decisions and Public Opinion." (Just skim and be able to define the CNN Effect.)

[http://www.brookings.edu/events/2002/0123media\\_journalism.aspx](http://www.brookings.edu/events/2002/0123media_journalism.aspx)

Susan Moeller. 1999. *Compassion Fatigue: How the Media Sell Disease, Famine, War and Death*. New York: Routledge. Read Chapter 1 (Available on library website as an electronic book.)

Stanley Cohen. 2001. Chapter 1: The Elementary Forms of Denial, pp. 1-20. In: *States of Denial: Knowing About Atrocities and Suffering*. Cambridge: Polity Press. (Available on BB.)

*Reading questions:*

What role do the media play in encouraging or limiting humanitarian interventions? What is information intervention? What specific role do visual images, satellite communications, cable news formats, and other media trends play? What is the CNN effect? How is shame used to advocate for an end to human rights abuses? Does sensationalizing suffering induce compassion fatigue? Do media outlets have a responsibility towards those whose suffering they depict?

*Additional readings:*

Samantha Power. 2001. "Bystanders to Genocide."  
<http://www.theatlantic.com/doc/200109/power-genocide>

Warren Strobel. 1997. Introduction, pp. 1-17, and Chapter 4: The Push: The News Media and Intervention. In: *Late breaking foreign policy. The news media's influence on peace operations*. Washington, DC: United States Institute of Peace.

**Class 12: November 17: Role of media in truth, justice, and reconciliation. Case study: Chile after Pinochet.**

*Required reading:*

Kristin Sorenson. 2009. *Media, Memory and Human Rights in Chile*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan. Read chapters 1,2,3,5, and 7. (Available as an electronic book on the library website.)

*Reading questions:*

How do different types of media, mass commercial media and alternative media, address past human rights violations in regimes that have transitioned away from repressive governance? What opportunities and limits are there in using media, particularly new media, to start a dialogue about and address the past? Who controls and who can participate in dialogues about the past, who constructs remembrance? How do national and international media interact in the process of remembering?

*Additional readings:*

Christopher Merritt. 2001. A Tale of Two Paradoxes: Media censorship in South Africa, Pre-Liberation and Post-Apartheid. *Critical Arts*. 15, 1 & 2: 3-11.

Guy Berger. 2001. Problematising Race for Journalists. Critical Reflections on the South African Commission Inquiry into Media Racism. *Critical Arts*. 15, 1 & 2: 3-11.

*Assignment:* For next class, bring in an example of how social media was used in the Arab uprisings and an example of how governments have used ICTs to maintain control over the population. Each student should be prepared to report out for no more than 5 minutes.

***DUE DATE:*** Each project team will submit to the instructor a rough draft of their final products.

**November 24: Thanksgiving Break**

**Class 13: December 1: New media tools role in political and social change. Case studies: Wikileaks, and new social media and the Arab revolutions. Guest speaker: Courtney Radsch, Senior Campaign Officer, Freedom of Expression Campaign, Freedom House and SIS PhD Candidate**

*Required readings:* (All articles available electronically via library website.)

Peruse Courtney Radsch's relevant blog posts on her website at <http://www.radsch.info/> and her recent Huffington Blog post at [http://www.huffingtonpost.com/courtney-c-radsch/doubleedged-sword-social-b\\_826354.html](http://www.huffingtonpost.com/courtney-c-radsch/doubleedged-sword-social-b_826354.html)

Marc Lynch. 2011. After Egypt. The Limits and Promise of Online Challenges to the Authoritarian Arab State. *Perspectives on Politics*. 9, 2: 301-310.

Conversation between Clay Shirky and Malcolm Gladwell:

Malcolm Gladwell. 2010. Small Change: Why the Revolution Will Not Be Tweeted. *The New Yorker*. October 4.

Clay Shirky. 2010. The Political Power of Social Media. *Foreign Affairs*. 90,1: 28-41.

Malcolm Gladwell and Clay Shirky. 2011. From Innovation to Revolution. Do Social Media Make Protests Possible? *Foreign Affairs*. 90, 2: 153-154.  
<http://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/67325/malcolm-gladwell-and-clay-shirky/from-innovation-to-revolution>

Evgeny Morozov. 2010. Think Again: The Internet. *Foreign Policy*. May/June.

*Reading questions:*

How were social media – such as YouTube, Facebook, and Twitter – utilized in the recent protest movements in the Arab world? How do optimists versus pessimists evaluate the impact of social media in creating political change? How has the Arab state reacted to the uprisings? How do new media challenge the Arab state and to what extent are more permanent regime changes in the region likely?

*Additional readings:*

USIP. 2010. Blogs and Bullets. New Media in Contentious Politics. C-Span video event and report. Available at <http://www.usip.org/events/blogs-and-bullets-evaluating-the-impact-new-media-conflict>

Phillip Howard. 2010. *The Digital Origins of Democracy and Dictatorship*. New York: Oxford University Press. (Available as an electronic book on library website.)

Larry Diamond. 2010. Liberation Technology. *Journal of Democracy*. 21, 3. 69-83.  
<http://www.journalofdemocracy.org/articles/gratis/Diamond-21-3.pdf>

Golnaz Esfandiari. 2010. The Twitter Devolution. *Foreign Policy*.  
[http://www.foreignpolicy.com/articles/2010/06/07/the\\_twitter\\_revolution\\_that\\_wasnt](http://www.foreignpolicy.com/articles/2010/06/07/the_twitter_revolution_that_wasnt)

Ethan Zuckerman. 2011. The First Twitter Revolution? *Foreign Policy*  
[http://www.foreignpolicy.com/articles/2011/01/14/the\\_first\\_twitter\\_revolution](http://www.foreignpolicy.com/articles/2011/01/14/the_first_twitter_revolution)

Samantha Shapiro. 2009. Revolution, Facebook Style. *New York Times Magazine*.  
<http://www.nytimes.com/2009/01/25/magazine/25bloggers-t.html>

Abbas Milani. 2010 Iran's Hidden Cyber Jihad. *Foreign Policy*.  
[http://www.foreignpolicy.com/articles/2010/06/07/irans\\_hidden\\_cyberjihad](http://www.foreignpolicy.com/articles/2010/06/07/irans_hidden_cyberjihad)

Deutsche Welle. 2011. Quadriga. Human Rights: The Social Media Revolution.  
<http://www.dw-world.de/dw/article/0,,15102355,00.html>

**Class 14: December 8: Team Presentations and Project Write-Ups Due**

**Final Exam Date = Flex Date**

## Annex 1

### Team Projects: Geospatial Mapping and Human Rights in Nigeria

Geospatial mapping tools, such as Google Earth, provide the means to collect, depict, and explore data related to conflict and human rights violations. This raw data can be manipulated to serve a range of academic, educational, and advocacy purposes, from understanding the causes of conflicts and rights abuses, to raising public awareness and, when paired with a social and traditional media strategy, encouraging action to mitigate violence and end rights violations.

Amnesty International USA's Science for Human Rights Program's Eyes on Nigeria project (<http://www.eyesonnigeria.org>), carried out in collaboration with the American Association for the Advancement of Science, is an exemplary use of geospatial technology for human rights advocacy. Students will have the opportunity through participation in one of six teams to learn about this project, understand the human rights applications of geospatial technology, explore the innovative use of new media strategies, use their creative talents to add to the project, and provide a concrete contribution to a leading international human rights organization. In addition, this assignment will serve as a test pilot for the extension of the International Peace and Conflict Resolution Program's Geospatial Conflict Analysis and Data Visualization project, which is seeking, amongst other things, to enhance classroom pedagogy for teaching conflict analysis using new technologies and geospatial mapping, to build students' and faculty's capacities, and to create a space for the publication of student work with the potential for feedback from wider communities interested in human rights and conflict analysis and resolution.

#### *Team Projects:*

Students can choose to participate in one of the following six project teams. If, after exploring the Eyes on Nigeria website, a group of students has an additional project idea, the instructor is open to considering it.

#### *1. Managing and deploying data*

One of the human rights themes explored in the Eyes on Nigeria project is the human rights and environmental impacts of gas flaring. Amnesty is calling for transparency around the health effects of gas flaring and a moratorium on the practice. There are data sources available that relay information on flaring and where fires are burning. This team will reformat that data to present it in a useable visual form. In addition, the team will devise a social media campaign strategy to use that stream of data in an innovative way to foster grassroots activism to further the campaign goals.

#### *2. Developing new data sets*

Currently the Eyes on Nigeria interactive map focuses on Forced Evictions, Policing and Justice, Communal Conflict, Conflict in the Niger Delta, and Impact of the Oil Industry. Some of the data is displayed in terms of singular data points, e.g. images and stories of victims that suffered rights abuses, while other information has a temporal element, e.g. displaying trends over time, such as the destruction of communities or the spread of gas flares. Students will conduct research to identify and map additional sources of data that can enhance users' understanding of at least two of these issue areas.

3. *Creatively using Facebook and Twitter to create a campaign to advertise the project*

Social media, such as Facebook and Twitter, have become important tactics in advocacy campaigning, international communication, and conflict monitoring. Students will strategize, plan and implement a social media campaign using Facebook and Twitter, with the potential of using other sites in consultation with the instructor. The final product must include a description of the campaign's goals, objectives, resources, target audiences, tactics, and a time line executable within one semester.

4. *Development of a platform for gathering crowd-sourced data on oil pollution*

The team tackling this project will learn about crowdsourced data, gathering it, evaluating it, and manipulating it to tell a story about the ongoing problem of oil pollution in the Niger Delta. Since to date, crowdsourced data on the spread of pollution does not exist, the team will develop a project proposal to create a platform to gather crowdsourced data to monitor oil spills. The data eventually collected could feed into a into a social media campaign to stop the spread of pollution and encourage clean up of the damaged environment.

5. *Social networking in Nigeria*

Any successful transnational activism must link the affected community with the larger transnational advocacy network in a way that ensures those affected are actively participating in determining how an issue is portrayed and campaign strategy. Too often, the voices of those on the ground are a distant consideration. This project will seek to foster those transnational ties and give unmitigated space to those in the local context in Nigeria. Students will research how social networking tools are deployed in Nigeria and seek to foster linkages to ongoing international activism on the Eyes on Nigeria project. Some possibilities to identify relevant communities and networks include outreach to Nigerian diasporas, contacting Nigerian specialists, and examining online Nigerian news outlets and other online international forums addressing issues in the Niger Delta that reference local social media.

6. *Sharing campaigning, fostering a community of learning*

Recently, a new element was added to the Eyes on Nigeria's interactive map. It depicts vignettes of global activism on the project's HRs themes. This project team will build out this element of the project with the goal of creating a landing point for the global movement engaged in advocacy on the Niger Delta to showcase successful actions, share and analyze potential activist tools, connect activists with each other, and foster a community of learning with the potential of multiplying the impact of grassroots advocacy. Students will begin by mapping groups in Nigeria and around the world working on human rights and the environment in the Niger Delta, and then will identify ways to visually depict and link their activities.

*Deliverables:*

This team project will count as 30% of students' final grade. It will run throughout the course of the semester with intermittent deadlines to ensure teams have a clear project concept and are progressing apace to deliver their final project presentations and write ups. (There is no final exam, and the exam date can serve as an "overflow" time slot should we not get through all team presentations in one class.) Each team will be allotted 15 minutes to present their projects, but since the projects vary, students will be given leeway in how they present their final outcomes to the class. The write-ups should be about 5-8 pages in length and include the team project concept, including the human right goals of the project and an explanation of how the team's activities would contribute to attaining those goals, a summary of the activities undertaken during the semester, and a two-fold assessment of the pluses and deltas of the project and a broader analysis of the use of geospatial mapping and social media as tools to address human rights abuses. Specifics on the oral presentation and written assignment will be provided in class.

Students will be given tips on undertaking successful team work. Free-riding will be penalized! In addition to the grade provided by the instructor, students will be asked to fill out a form grading each one of their peers in the team. These peer evaluations will factor in the final grade for the project. Details will be provided in class.

*Timeline:*

September 8:

Using geospatial mapping to advance human rights. Case study: Eyes on Nigeria. Skills workshop: Google Earth. Formation of project teams and description of the assignment.

September 15:

Deadline: Teams will hand in their project concept papers, of no more than 2-3 pages in length, detailing the idea behind their project, its human rights goals and foreseeable impacts, needed resources, and a timeline for project completion with at least two dates for intermittent deliverables.

October 13:

Deadline: Each team will schedule a time to meet (via Skype) with the instructor and a representative from AIUSA and Ally Krupar to assess mid-term progress on the projects.

November 17:

Deadline: Rough draft of final projects due.

December 1:

Team presentations and project write-ups due.