

POS 305: Politics and Film: Human Rights and Human Security through Film

Time and Place:

Thursday: 1:30-2:45 (Discovery 350)

Instructor Information:

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Office Hours:

T/Th: 3:00-4:30
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TA information:

Kevin Hubbard
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I. Course Overview

Objectives: This course is designed to introduce students to the concept of international human rights through the medium of film. At virtually all levels of politics, from the local to the international and across both geographic and cultural divides, “human rights” have entered the political discourse. Perhaps it is fair to say that a virtual “revolution” in human rights has occurred over the previous few decades. Until recently, how states treated their citizens was largely nobody else’s business. However, there now exists an extensive array of international laws protecting citizens from abuse and, in some cases, providing them legal remedies to abuse. There is also a generally accepted “norm” against the most serious abuses of human rights. In spite of this revolution, massive abuses persist and billions of the world’s citizens are effectively left without sufficient protections. In this course we will discuss both the successes and limitation of current efforts to protect and promote human rights. We will focus on topics ranging from the nature and origins of human rights, to the motives for abuse of these rights, to the remedies available to redress these abuses. Throughout the course, we will seek to answer a question that continues to plague people interested in human rights: If we all basically agree that abuse is terrible, why are we so often unable to stop it?

Format: This is a **hybrid course**. We will meet in class once a week to discuss the readings and the films. Most films will be available streaming via ASU library. In some cases, however, the films will be available from another website. I will inform you if the film is not available through the library. You should **watch the film and complete the readings prior class** so that we can discuss them in detail. Films will be accessed through this link:

<http://library.lib.asu.edu/search/?searchtype=r&SORT=D&searcharg=pos305>

Rationale: I believe that one of the most effective ways to provoke interest and debate on issues related to human rights and human security is through the medium of film. The usefulness of films is that they engross us and allow us to connect concepts about which we read to the very real (often very painful) experiences of individuals. We can see ourselves (or friends or family) in characters in ways we cannot when we read about historical events, legal cases, or abstract theories in a classroom. I have therefore chosen to structure this course around a select group of exceptional films that I believe help illustrate core issues in international human rights.

Evaluation: Final grades are based upon the following components.

Film & Reading Response Papers (70%): 7 short papers (2-3 pages) each. Each paper will analyze the human right(s) discussed in class that week (and possibly others) using the film. In these papers, you will discuss the relevant human right(s) as well as how that right was portrayed in the film. Papers are due on the day the film and readings are discussed—**I will not accept late papers**. I will provide more instructions in the first week or two of class.

In-Class Assignments (20%): There will also be in-class writing assignments, pop-quizzes, and related assignments.

Active Participation and Attendance (10%): Attendance is required. Since this is a once a week class, missing more than one class will adversely affect your grade. **More than two unexcused absences** will result in a score of “0” for this component of your grade. Frequently arriving late or leaving early will also adversely impact your attendance and participation grade.

Research Study Participation: Students enrolled in this course are required to complete a research assignment that can include up to 2 hours of research study participation. These studies require that students set up an appointment to complete participation at a laboratory on campus (or via an on-line survey). Students will learn how studies are conducted and will receive a synopsis at the conclusion of the semester describing the study’s goal, result, and relevance to the class. *Students who prefer not to participate in research as subjects may opt for an alternative that entails finding and reading one academic article about the experimental method and writing a three-page reaction paper.* The typical article is about 25-30 pages, and thus reading it and writing a three-page paper should take approximately two hours.

During the second week of the semester, students will receive an announcement and e-mail through Blackboard including details on how to complete either requirement. Note that if you are enrolled in multiple POS classes that require participation, you only need to satisfy the requirement one time per semester. Participation in former semesters does not carry over to the current semester. The following website will direct students to the SPAGS experimental website where they can find all necessary information to complete this requirement.

<http://spgslab.wordpress.com/experimental-participation-sign-up/>

Completing the research requirement is REQUIRED for you to pass this course.

Grading Scale. The following grading scale is used for this course:

99-100: A+, 94-98: A, 90-93: A-, 87-89: B+, 83-86: B,

80-82: B-, 77-79: C+, 70-76: C, 60-69: D, < 60: E

Appropriate Behavior. Most weeks we will watch a film (documentary or feature) that reflects specific core human rights issues. We will then discuss the film as well as the relevant assigned readings. Given the topic of course, many of these films necessarily deal with mature subject matter and may include graphic imagery, *including but not limited to killing, torture, rape, sexual violence, and other degrading or inhumane treatment.* Viewing these films may (and

probably should) cause you some discomfort. Many of the films are quite simply difficult to watch, though they are all exceptional films. However, if you are terribly uncomfortable with this subject matter or believe you will be unable to address/discuss these issues in a mature and respectful manner, this may not be the course for you.

Given the unease that some of films and discussions may cause some students, I expect that you remain respectful of other students. I will not hesitate to ask you to leave if you fail to conduct yourself in a respectful manner.

Students are expected to show respect for the professor, teaching assistants, and other students. This means arriving a few minutes prior to the start of class, so that lectures and sections can begin on time without disruption; refraining from distracting behaviors during lectures and sections (texting, playing with your smart phone, reading the newspaper or anything not related to the course); and generally paying attention to what is being said in class.

Required Readings: There are four required texts for the course. Each is available used or new on numerous websites for a very reasonable price. One is available online via ASU's library.

****Chang, Leslie (2008) *Factory Girls: From Village to City in a Changing China***

****Alex Kotlowitz (1991) *There Are No Children Here: The Story of Two Boys Growing Up in the Other America***

****Nikolas Kristof and Cheryl WuDunn (2010) *Half the Sky: Turning Oppression into Opportunity for Women Worldwide***

****Samantha Power (2003) *A Problem from Hell: America and the Age of Genocide* [ASU library online]**

Other reading materials are available on Blackboard.

Student Obligations to Academic Integrity: Each student must act with honesty and integrity, and must respect the rights of others in carrying out all academic assignments. A student may be found to have engaged in academic dishonesty if, in connection with any Academic Evaluation or academic or research assignment (including a paid research position), he or she:

- A. Engages in any form of academic deceit;
- B. Refers to materials or sources or uses devices (e.g., computer disks, audio recorders, camera phones, text messages, crib sheets, calculators, solution manuals, materials from previous classes, or commercial research services) not authorized by the instructor for use during the Academic Evaluation or assignment;
- C. Possesses, reviews, buys, sells, obtains, or uses, without appropriate authorization, any materials intended to be used for an Academic Evaluation or assignment in advance of its administration;
- D. Acts as a substitute for another person in any Academic Evaluation or assignment;
- E. Uses a substitute in any Academic Evaluation or assignment;
- F. Depends on the aid of others, including other students or tutors, in connection with any Academic Evaluation or assignment to the extent that the work is not representative of

- the student's abilities;
- G. Provides inappropriate aid to another person in connection with any Academic Evaluation or assignment, including the unauthorized use of camera phones, text messages, photocopies, notes or other means to copy or photograph materials used or intended for Academic Evaluation;
 - H. Engages in Plagiarism;
 - I. Uses materials from the Internet or any other source without full and appropriate attribution;
 - J. Permits his or her work to be submitted by another person in connection with any Academic Evaluation or assignment, without authorization;
 - K. Claims credit for or submits work done by another;
 - L. Signs an attendance sheet for another student, allows another student to sign on the student's behalf, or otherwise participates in gaining credit for attendance for oneself or another without actually attending;
 - M. Falsifying or misrepresenting hours or activities in relationship to an internship, externship, field experience, clinical activity or similar activity; or
 - N. Attempts to influence or change any Academic Evaluation, assignment or academic record for reasons having no relevance to academic achievement.

*Note: There are severe sanctions for cheating, plagiarizing and any other form of dishonesty. An initial incident will result in the student receiving an E and zero points for exam. A second incident will result in a failure (E or possibly an XE – failure for academic dishonesty) for the course. All work must be yours and it must be original to this class. If you have questions about this, please ask us. All instances of academic dishonesty will, per CLAS policy, be reported to the appropriate authority in CLAS.

Disability Accommodations: Qualified students with disabilities who will require disability accommodations in this class are encouraged to make their requests to me at the beginning of the semester either during office hours or by appointment. **Note:** Prior to receiving disability accommodations, verification of eligibility from the Disability Resource Center (DRC) is required. Disability information is confidential.

Establishing Eligibility for Disability Accommodations: Students who feel they will need disability accommodations in this class but have not registered with the Disability Resource Center (DRC) should contact DRC immediately. Their office is located on the first floor of the Matthews Center Building. DRC staff can also be reached at: 480-965-1234 (V), 480-965-9000 (TTY). For additional information, visit: www.asu.edu/studentaffairs/ed/drc. Their hours are 8:00 AM to 5:00 PM, Monday through Friday.

Course Schedule

Week 1: Introduction: History & Law (1/12)

Universal Declaration of Human Rights
Glendon, *A World Made New*

Film: *Night and Fog*

Week 2: Whose Rights? Norms, Rights and Evolutionary Change (1/19)

Donnelly, "Cultural Relativism and Universal Human Rights"
Nadelmann, "Global Prohibition Regimes: The Evolution of Norms in International Society"
Shestack, "The Philosophical Foundations of Human Rights"

Film: *Amistad*

Week 3: Genocide, Mass Killing and Crimes against Humanity (1/26)

Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide
Power, *A Problem from Hell* (Chpts 1-5)

Film: *Enemies of the People*

Week 4: Intervention and Prosecution (2/2)

Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court (arts. 1-11, 25-28)
Power, *A Problem from Hell* (Chpts 6-7, 9-10, 13)

Film: *Sometimes in April*

Week 5: Civil-Political Rights (Physical Integrity Violations) (2/9)

Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment
Luban, "Liberalism, Torture and the Ticking Bomb"
Mayerfield, "Playing by Our Own Rules: How US Marginalization of International Human Rights Law Led to Torture"
Mazetti, "CIA Report Found Value of Brutal Interrogation Was Inflated"

Film: *Taxi to the Dark Side*

Week 6: Civil-Political Rights (Free Expression & Association) (2/16)

International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights

Richards, "The Danger of Surveillance"

Starr et al., "The Impact of State Surveillance on Political Assembly and Association"

Film: *The Lives of Others*

Week 7: Civil-Political Rights (Protest & Civil Resistance) (2/23)

Chenoweth and Stephan, "Drop Your Weapons: When and Why Civil Resistance Works"

Human Rights Watch, "All According to Plan" (pgs. 1-30; 140-150)

Zunes, "The Role of Non-violent Action in the Downfall of Apartheid"

Film: *Bloody Sunday*

Week 8: Social, Economic & Cultural Rights (Poverty & Social Security) (3/1)

The International Covenant on Social, Economic and Cultural Rights

Kotlowitz, *There Are No Children Here*

Film: *The Interrupters* (link available in Blackboard)

Spring Break: No Class (3/8)

Week 10: Social, Economic & Cultural Rights (Globalization & Development) (3/15)

Pogge, "Severe Poverty as a Human Rights Violation"

Ho, "Structural Violence"

Tepperman, "Brazil's Antipoverty Breakthrough"

Roodman, "Think Again: Microfinance"

Film: *City of God*

Week 11: Women's Rights (3/22)

Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW)

Nussbaum, Martha, "Capabilities and Human Rights"

Merry, *Human Rights & Gender Violence* (Chpts 1 & 3)

Film: *Water*

Week 12: Gender-based Violence and Trafficking (3/29)

Kristof and WuDunn, *Half the Sky*

Film: *The Whistleblower*

Week 13: LGBTQ Rights (4/5)

Human Rights Watch, *License to Harm*

Kollman and Waites, “The Global Politics of Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender Rights”

Dicklitch et al., “Building a Barometer of Gay Rights”

Film: *We Were Here* or *Call me Kuchu*

Week 14: Refugees and Asylum Seekers (4/12)

United Nations, “Convention and Protocol Relating to the Status of Refugees”

Guterres, “Millions Uprooted”

Worster, “The Contemporary International Law Status of the Right to Receive Asylum”

Film: *God Grew Tired of Us*

Week 15: Labor Rights and the Right to Form Unions (4/19)

ILO Declaration on Fundamental Principles of Rights at Work

HRW, “You’ll Be Fired if You Refuse”

McKay, “The Squeaky Wheel’s Dilemma”

Film: *Norma Rae*

Week 16: Workers’ Rights, Development, and Globalization (4/26)

Factory Girls: From Village to City in Changing China

Film: *The Last Train Home*