

POL300-03: Human Rights and Mass Media
University of Dayton, Spring 2015
Art Street Studio B | MWF | 10:00a-10:50a

n: Dr. Joel R. Pruce
e: jpruce1@udayton.edu / joel.pruce@gmail.com
t: @profpruce
o: St. Joe's 217
h: Tuesdays 10a-2p, and by appointment

Description

Two central questions within the broad area of human rights and mass media inform this course:

1. How is human dignity visually expressed and represented?
2. How do advocacy efforts utilize mass media?

To focus our attention on these crucial issues, we will develop a set of conceptual tools to help us approach the process of interpreting texts: prose, music, photographs, video, and others. Understanding the context in which media is produced and transmitted informs the way it is absorbed and retained; our role as an audience matters too. And when the subjects are crises like war or famine or torture, a human rights perspective would suggest that the expression of human dignity in media should be central, compelling us to investigate what it means for a photo to contain an appropriate level of respect for the individual captured in frame. Relatedly, human rights actors, like non-governmental organizations (NGOs), have evolved into savvy media producers in their own right. Whether in the form of reports or video documentation of atrocities, or as Facebook and Instagram accounts, NGOs seek multiple audiences for their content and navigate a complex, fast multimedia environment in that pursuit. With a critical eye, this course explores issues that we as media consumers confront daily. As students of human rights, we approach these issues with particular questions in mind.

Overview

I consider this syllabus to be a contract between instructor and student. We are both responsible for everything that is spelled out herein. For me, this means a pledge to deliver the material in an engaging way so as to challenge you and cultivate critical thought of human rights issues. For students, there is an expectation that you come to class prepared, having completed the reading and ready to discuss it in depth. I employ a hybrid style approach to the classroom, based on a weekly presentation to contextualize and expand on the assigned reading, while relying on a seminar-style discussion to propel our understanding of the material. If we each keep up our ends, we have a high likelihood of being successful in the course and getting the most out of this experience.

I conduct class in an open fashion, which is to say directed toward meeting the needs and suiting the interests of students. If there are particular aspects of the topic that you are particularly curious about, please let me know. However, don't be mistaken. This is not a democracy in any

robust sense of the word, even if it is a space where your personal concerns matter. Class is more like the Security Council than the General Assembly: eventually everyone gets a turn to be heard, but power remains situated in a particular place, on a permanent basis, and the veto may be exercised at any moment!

Materials

Richard Ashby Wilson and Richard Brown. *Humanitarianism and Suffering: The Mobilization of Empathy* (Cambridge U Press, 2011).

In addition to the books above, articles and chapters required week-to-week are available on Isidore and are marked below with an *asterisk*. Please note that you are required to bring copies of the assigned readings to each class, either hard or electronic copies.

Evaluation

Attendance and Participation	10%
Requirements beyond the Classroom	10%
Weekly Video Journals	25%
Midterm Exam	20%
Creative MultiMedia Project	20%
Stander presentation	10%
Week 15 Film Reflection	5%

Attendance and Participation

This course can only be effective if students are invested. Investment requires consistent attendance, deliberate preparation, and focused attention. You cannot be successful in this class without showing up every time and completing every assignment. Preparation entails close study of all the reading—not simply browsing the material while on Facebook *and* Twitter *and* SnapChat *and* YikYak. Participation is not measured in quantity, but in quality.

Requirements Beyond the Classroom

During the course of the semester there will be many excellent opportunities to attend films, lectures, panel presentations, and other events relevant to this course. I will announce these opportunities periodically, and you will be required to attend and write-up **three (3)** events. For each one you attend you will need to write and submit to me a ~1000 word response essay. This essay should include a brief summary and then a longer reflection on what you learned. What surprised you? What other questions did you have? What did you agree or disagree with? And most importantly, how can you relate this to concepts, theories or ideas from course readings or class discussion? **These essays will be due within one week of the event and can be submitted on Isidore.**

Weekly Video Journals

Every week of class (aside from Weeks 1, 7-8) students are required to submit a video journal reflection. Think of this as an exercise to, not only engage with course reading and debates from class discussion, but also explore the content for yourself: How did the images make you feel? How did you react to classmates' comments? What struck you when you left class, once the questions started to sink in? In order to submit video journal entries, **record a ~3 minute video** on your laptop or phone, upload it to YouTube, and send the URL to me via Isidore. I will curate all videos into weekly playlists, but guarantee to make all videos "unlisted" so they will not appear in search engines. I plan to share some students' reflections in class each week. If you're uncomfortable with any of this, please let me know in advance. Journals are due the Monday following the week being covered.

Creative Multimedia Project

Students will assemble groups that will be tasked with designing and producing a human rights campaign advertising commercial. Each group will identify the human rights issue they wish to address and create a video to be shown at the Stander Symposium. In addition, each group member will submit a write-up of his or her work and contribution. Specific guidelines to follow.

Midterm Exam

Written, short-answer responses to questions derived from course material in Weeks 1-7.

The Honor Pledge

I understand that as a student of the University of Dayton, I am a member of our academic and social community. I recognize the importance of my education and the value of experiencing life in such an integrated community. I believe that the value of my education and degree is critically dependent upon the academic integrity of the university community, and so in order to maintain our academic integrity, I pledge to:

- Complete all assignments and examinations by the guidelines given to me by my instructors;
- Avoid plagiarism and any other form of misrepresenting someone else's work as my own;
- Adhere to the Standards of Conduct as outlined in the Academic Honor Code.

In doing this, I hold myself and my community to a higher standard of excellence and set an example for my peers to follow.

As well, the classroom is a space that We all inhabit together and, therefore, We must all work to maintain an open and permissive environment every time We meet. This requires that We treat each other with respect at all times, hear each other out, and respond appropriately. Failure to do so will compromise Our collective ability to grow as thinkers and may result in stifling Our capacity to explore the important questions that confront Us.

Decorum

In addition to your attendance, preparation, attention, and participation, you have an obligation to maintain proper decorum in the classroom. Decorum corresponds largely to common sense kinds of stuff, which I generally assume you know but will let you know in the event of transgression. Generally, this asks of you to act like a professional. Don't saunter in late. Perform the courtesy of notifying me of absences in advance. Also, ***I do not want to see or hear mobile phones at all during class***. There is no reason for phones to be out or for you to be on them. If you are waiting for an urgent call or message, I expect you'll let me know in advance.

Finally, decorum also extends to our communication. Again, act like a professional. If we have an appointment scheduled and you can't make it, even at the last minute, let me know. When emailing with me, please use a greeting at the outset, write in complete sentences, and sign-off with your name. When I respond, if I've answered your question or approved some request, it is conventional to reply in turn with "thank you." I don't mean to be overly formal about this at all, but I think that communicating appropriately with instructors during college will help students understand what will be expected of you elsewhere.

I also promise to always grant you the same level of decorum—as an expression of my respect.

Physical/Learning Disabilities

The University of Dayton is committed to providing equal access to students with disabilities. Students requesting accommodations based on disability should register with the Learning Assistance Center. If you have special needs, please inform me privately and I will do my best to accommodate you. I can only help if you talk to me.

The Writing Center

Writing is an important component of this class, and is critical to your success at the University of Dayton and beyond. This is an acquired skill that requires practice, and you are strongly encouraged to visit the Write Place when working on your Part II writing assignment. Staffed by a talented pool of tutors from all academic disciplines, this free University service is there to support you. Through individual consultations, the Write Place will work with you to hone your writing skills. Drop-in consultations are welcome; appointments are encouraged. For more information, see <http://academic.udayton.edu/writeplace/>.

Weekly Program

Week 1

M 1/12 Me, You, and the Syllabus

W 1/14 Jack Donnelly, Universal Human Rights in Theory and Practice, 2nd ed., Ch. 2*
[Universal Declaration of Human Rights](#)

F 1/16 Safia Swimlear, “Making Human Rights Visible through Photography and Film”*
Laurie Essig, “[Trigger Warnings Trigger Me](#)”

Week 2

M 1/19 No Class – MLK

W 1/21 Meg McLagan, “Principles, Publicity, and Politics: Notes on Human Rights Media”*
Margaret Keck and Kathryn Sikkink, “Transnational Advocacy Networks in
International and Regional Politics”*

Th 1/22 MLK Panel on Social Change; 7pm; Torch Lounge

F 1/23 “Introduction,” [Humanitarianism and Suffering](#)

Week 3 – Seeing

M 1/26 Walter Benjamin, “[The Work of Art in an Age of Mechanical Reproduction](#)”

W 1/28 Catch-up day

F 1/30 Barbie Zelizer, “Journalism, Memory, and the Voice of the Visual”*

Week 4 – Storytelling

M 2/2 Sam Gregory, “Transnational Storytelling: Human Rights, WITNESS, and Video
Advocacy”*
Rachel Kurzyp, “[NGOs Need to Tell Better Stories](#)”

W 2/4 No Class, as regularly scheduled; Thursday workshop instead

Th 2/5 Workshop with Leora Kahn, founder, PROOF: Media for Social Justice
1:30pm, 238 Fitz Hall

*Exhibition Opening – “Picturing Moral Courage: The Rescuers”
7pm, Roesch Library, first floor gallery*

F 2/6 Meet in Roesch Library first floor gallery
Thomas Lacquer, “Mourning, Pity, and the Work of Narrative in the Making of
‘Humanity,’” in [Humanitarianism and Suffering](#)

Week 5 – Witnessing

M 2/9 Texts

W 2/11 Tamar Ashuri and Amit Pinchevski, “Witnessing as a Field”*

F 2/13 Lilie Chouliaraki, “[Mediation and Public Life](#)”

Human Rights Center Colloquium, Theme: Media Advocacy

Week 6 – Reporting

M 2/16 Alexandra C. Budabin and Joel R. Pruce, “The Strategic Logic of Media Advocacy: New Modalities of Information Politics in Human Rights”*

W 2/18 Stanley Cohen, “Government Responses to Human Rights Reports: Claims, Denials, and Counterclaims”*

Ron Dudai, “‘Can You Describe This?’ Human Rights Reports and What They Tell Us About the Human Rights Movement,” in Humanitarianism and Suffering

F 2/20 No Class – International Studies Association Annual Meeting

Week 7

M 2/23 In-class meeting of creative project groups

Human Rights Week: “Life in a War Zone: Growing Up in Afghanistan,” Farah Ahmedi 7p; KU Ballroom

Tu 2/24 *Human Rights Week: “Children and the Sex Trafficking Industry,” Anti-Trafficking League and Theresa Flores of Save Our Adolescents from Prostitution; 7p; KU Ballroom*

W 2/25 Midterm Review

Human Rights Week: “Child Abuse Education and Awareness,” Prevent Child Abuse America; 7p; Torch Lounge

Th 2/26 *Human Rights Week: “Juveniles in the Criminal System,” A Conversation with Sister Helen Prejean; 10:30a; Sears Recital Hall*

Distinguished Speaker Series presents Sister Helen Prejean; 7p; RecPlex

F 2/27 Midterm Exam

Rites/Rights/Writes event: Guided Discussion and Film, Mandela: Long Walk to Freedom; Art Street Studio B; 1p

Week 8

M 3/2 Creative Project group meeting in class

W 3/4 No Class – Spring Break

F 3/6 No Class – Spring Break

Week 9 – Holocaust

M 3/9 Texts

W 3/11 Marianne Hirsch, “Surviving Images: Holocaust Photographs and the Work of Postmemory”*
Richard Brody, “[Hitchcock and the Holocaust](#)”

F 3/13 Stephen Hopgood, “Holocaust Metanarrative”*

Week 10 – Famine/Poverty

M 3/16 Texts

W 3/18 Laura Suski, “Children, Suffering, and the Humanitarian Appeal,” in Humanitarianism and Suffering

Janice Nathanson, “The Pornography of Poverty: Reframing the Discourse of International Aid’s Representations of Starving Children”*

F 3/20 Joel R. Puce, “The Spectacle of Suffering and Humanitarian Intervention in Somalia”*

Human Rights Center Colloquium; details TBD

Week 11 – War on Terror

M 3/23 Texts

W 3/25 Douglas Kellner, “9/11, Spectacles of Terror, and Media Manipulation: A Critique of Jihadist and Bush Media Politics”*

James Der Derian, “9/11: Before, After, and In Between”*

F 3/27 Abu Ghraib

Dora Apel, “Torture Culture: Lynching Photographs and the Images of Abu Ghraib” *

Judith Butler, “Torture and the Ethics of Photography”*

Susie Linfield, “The Dance of Civilizations: The West, the East, and Abu Ghraib”*

Week 12 – Outreach

M 3/30 Texts

W 4/1 Matthew Powers, “The Structural Organization of NGO Publicity Work: Explaining Divergent Publicity Strategies at Humanitarian and Human Rights Organizations”*

Irene Bruna Seu, “‘Doing Denial’: Audience Reaction to Human Rights Appeal”*

F 4/3 No Class – Easter Break

Week 13 – Pop Culture

M 4/6 No Class – Easter Break

W 4/8 Reebee Garofalo, “Understanding Mega-Events: If We Are the World, Then How Do We Change It?”*

F 4/10 Alexandra C. Budabin, “Documentarian, Witness, and Organizer: Exploring Celebrity Roles in Human Rights Media Advocacy”*

Human Rights Center Colloquium, details TBA

Week 14

M 4/13 Stander prep

W 4/15 Stander Symposium – Creative Media Projects presentations

F 4/17 Stander de-brief

Week 15 – Film

M 4/20 Film Screening Pt1

W 4/22 Film Screening Pt2

F 4/24 Film discussion