**ANTH 282 Summer 2016**

**Anthropology of Human Rights**

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**Monday-Thursdays**

**1:00 – 3:00 PM Car Barn 303**

**Dr. Laurie King,**

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# This course explores the history, construction, and practice of human rights from an anthropological perspective. Where anthropology is committed to exploring the diversity of human experience ethnographically through local frames of meaning, human rights organizations, United Nations bodies, and international humanitarian law and conventions have historically emphasized universal norms that transcend cultural differences and local particularities. To what extent can these two perspectives be reconciled? What can anthropology tell us about the potential and limitations of the human rights discourses? How are conceptions of individual and collective rights constructed in contemporary political contexts? Can anthropology help us rethink our conception of what it is to be human? What it means to have rights? How can anthropology help us trace the cultural underpinnings and trajectories of genocide and torture? What is the role of mass media in our comprehension of and reaction to human rights abuses? How do anthropologists grapple with the ethical questions implicit in doing research in settings where human rights violations have impacted the communities they are studying, and where dangers might still be present? Should anthropologists be advocates as well as analysts? Witnesses as well as researchers?

**By the end of the semester you will be able to:**

* Identify the cultural and historical bases of contemporary conceptions of human rights.
* Appreciate the role of mass and social media in shaping conceptions of and actions related to struggles for human rights.
* Rethink the meanings of “universal” and “relative” in human rights discourses and practices.
* Think critically and comparatively about the meanings of equality, difference, justice, accountability, and conflict resolution.
* Gain an understanding of the international legal machinery of human rights protection and humanitarian intervention.
* Question the idea of “natural law.”
* Apply an anthropological frame of analysis to new, emerging human rights issues in a globalizing world.
* Examine the ethical challenges of anthropological practice.
* Turn a critical eye on anthropology to understand how knowledge is formed and what its ethical and political stakes are.

**REQUIRED TEXTS**

Borneman, John. 2005. *The Case of Ariel Sharon and the Fate of Universal Jurisdiction* (Princeton Institute for International and Regional Studies monograph series).

Brennan, Denise. 2014. *Life Interrupted: Trafficking into Forced Labor in the United States*. Duke University Press.

Terrio, Susan. 2009. *Judging Mohammed: Juvenile Delinquency, Immigration, and Exclusion at the Paris Palace of Justice*. Stanford University Press.

\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_. 2015*. Whose Child am I? Unaccompanied, Undocumented Children in U.S. Immigration Custody. University of California Press.*

Smith, David Livingstone. 2012. *Less Than Human: Why We Demean, Enslave, and Exterminate Others*. St. Martin's Griffin.

**REQURED READING: KEY DOCUMENTS ONLINE**

The Universal Declaration of Human Rights

<http://www.un.org/en/documents/udhr/>

The Core International Human Rights Instruments and their Monitoring Bodies

<http://www2.ohchr.org/english/law/index.htm#core>

International Covenant on Social, Economic, and Cultural Rights

<http://www2.ohchr.org/english/law/cescr.htm>

Cairo Declaration of Human Rights in Islam <http://www1.umn.edu/humanrts/instree/cairodeclaration.html>

Draft Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous People

<http://www1.umn.edu/humanrts/instree/declra.htm>

UN High Commissioner On Human Rights: Report on Rights of LGBT Individuals

<http://www.hrw.org/news/2011/12/20/united-nations-landmark-report-high-commissioner-human-rights-discriminatory-laws-an>

***All books will be on reserve in the Lauinger Library.***

***Readings and videos will be available on BlackBoard.***

**GRADING:**

Two 1200-word (5-6 pages) reaction papers: 40%
In-class presentation of an assigned reading: 15%

Comments on two presentations: 10%

Op Ed essay 15%

Attendance and participation: 20%

**ABOUT THE ASSIGNMENTS:**

**Reaction papers:** One week before each is due, I will give you three prompts. You will choose ***one*** to answer. These papers will require you to analyze, compare, critique, and explore course concepts and readings.

**In-class presentation of an assigned reading**: Beginning at the end of the first week of the semester, each student will present ***one*** BlackBoard reading to the class. ***This does not mean that you are not responsible for all the readings.*** Every Friday, the presentations will be posted to BlackBoard. This will create a shared “encyclopedia” of course readings. You will be expected to comment on ***two*** of these presentations by the end of the semester.

**Op Ed essay**: Choose a human rights topic that is in the news. Write an Op Ed column, from an anthropological perspective, about this issue. (800 words.)

# *Please Note:*

# Course expectations: The success of the course -- and your individual success in the class -- requires regular attendance, participation, and preparation. Students are expected to come to class having done the assigned readings for the day and to be prepared to engage actively in discussion about those readings and their connection to broader themes in the class. Discussions will form a crucial part of the class, and be a central space for your learning. You should bring your copy of the day’s reading to each class.

# Course policy on electronics: Your active presence and participation in our discussions is crucial to its success – and to your personal success in the class. You may only use a laptop to take notes. No one should be online or using their smart phones during class sessions.

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# A note on communicating with the professor: Email is an excellent method of communication for simple questions or to set up a meeting. It is not, however, a good way to get advising (e.g., help on a paper, further discussion of readings and lectures, etc.). For the latter you should always come and seem me during office hours or by appointment. I will not do advising on email. You should also be aware that I am not on email at all times. I will respond to any email as quickly as I can, but it may take a day or two (especially over weekends).

# COURSE SCHEDULE

***Week One:***

***What is a “right”? What is a human? Where do rights come from? Who has rights? What does one do with rights? How do people gain and lose rights? Does Anthropology have any special contributions to make towards the understanding of human rights?***

* Radio Lab Audio: “Lucy the Chimp” -- What are the boundaries and characteristics of “the human”? <http://www.radiolab.org/2010/feb/19/>
* Key Declarations and the Question of Universality
* Declaration of Independence
* Declaration of the Rights of Man and Citizen
* Universal Declaration of Human Rights
* Cairo Declaration of Human Rights in Islam
* Declarations on Anthropology and Human Rights, Committee for Human Rights of the American Anthropological Association (1947 and 1999)
* Selected chapters from Lynn Hunt, *Inventing Human Rights.*
* Dembour, “Four Schools of Human Rights.”\*

***Week Two:***

***Cultures of Rights and the Anthropological Approach.***

* Messer, Ellen. “Anthropology and Human Rights.”\*
* Scheper-Hughes, Nancy. “The Primacy of the Ethical: Propositions for a Militant Anthropology.” \*
* [Goodale, M. “Anthropology and human rights in a new key”](http://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.1525/aa.2006.108.1.1/abstract)\*
* Smith, David Livingstone. 2012. *Less Than Human: Why We Demean, Enslave, and Exterminate Others*. St. Martin's Griffin. (entire)
* Film**:** “The Triumph of Evil”
* Barnett, Michael. "The UN Security Council, Indifference, and Genocide in Rwanda."\*

*\* potential readings for in-class presentations.*

**FIRST REACTION ESSAY DUE AT END OF WEEK TWO**

***Week Three:***

***Crossing Borders: The Human Rights of Labor Migrants and Refugees from an Anthropological Perspective***

* Brennan, Denise. 2014. *Life Interrupted: Trafficking into Forced Labor in the United States*. Duke University Press. (entire)
* Bourgois, Phillipe “Confronting Anthropological Ethics: Ethnographic Lessons from Central America.” \*
* Green, Linda. “Fear as a Way of Life.” \*
* Terrio, Susan. 2015*. Whose Child am I? Unaccompanied, Undocumented Children in U.S. Immigration Custody.* University of California Press*.* (entire)

***Week Four:***

***Human Rights in Action: Focus on Middle Eastern Cultures in National and International Legal Frameworks***

* Terrio, Susan. 2009. *Judging Mohammed: Juvenile Delinquency, Immigration, and Exclusion at the Paris Palace of Justice*. Stanford University Press.
* King-Irani, Laurie. “To Reconcile, or to *Be* Reconciled.”\*
* Borneman, John. 2005. *The Case of Ariel Sharon and the Fate of Universal Jurisdiction* (Princeton Institute for International and Regional Studies monograph series).

**SECOND REACTION PAPER DUE AT THE END OF WEEK FOUR**

**OP ED ESSAY DUE ON AUGUST 10TH**

**Organizations of Note**:

* http://www.icrc.org (International Committee of the Red Cross and Red Crescent)
* http://www.hrw.org/ (Human Rights Watch)
* <http://www.crimesofwar.org> (Crimes of War Project)
* http://www.amnesty.org/ (Amnesty International)
* http://www.unhchr.ch/ (Office of the United Nations High Commissioner on Human Rights)
* http://www.cidh.org/ (Inter American Commission on Human Rights)
* http://www.ictr.org/ (International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda)
* http://www.aaanet.org/committees/cfhr/index.htm/ (American Anthropological Association Committee for Human Rights)