

Fall 2012

Human Rights in Cross-Cultural Perspective
ANG 6453-1C19, Fall 2012
TUR 2341, R/Periods 3-5

Dr. Faye Venetia Harrison

B129 Turlington Hall

Office Hours: W 10-noon, T 2:30-4:00pm (or by arrangement)

fayeharr@ufl.edu

Increasingly, social justice movements, non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and governments (often with, at best, checkered track records) around the world are framing their issues in the language of human rights and drawing on the instruments of transnational and regional human right regimes. This seminar will examine this phenomenon through the prism of anthropology's complex and contradictory relationship with human rights as a multiplex site of theoretical engagement, social analysis, and the intended and unintended consequences of rights-claiming processes. The seminar will address anthropologists' role in a transnational conversation that has largely been led by legal scholars, political scientists, and philosophers. Our principal focus will be on how anthropologists have begun to rethink, reframe, and recontextualize human rights as well as, in some instances, concretely confront their violation through advocacy and activism. The literature we will read together explores the vexed relationship between culture and rights, the enabling and regressive or cooptive aspects of rights regimes, the process of translating ideas from transnational human rights arenas into local cultural practices, shifts in subjectivities due to the vernacularization of human rights consciousness, women's rights as human rights, and the impact of globalization and, in the past few years, the moral panic and security concerns of the War on Terror on human rights.

TEXTS

Harri Englund. 2006. *Prisoners of Freedom: Human Rights and the African Poor*. Berkeley: University of California Press.

Tanya Maria Golash-Boza. 2012. *Immigration Nation: Raids, Detentions, and Deportations in Post-9/11 America*. Boulder: Paradigm Publishers.

Mark Goodale, ed. 2009. *Human Rights: An Anthropological Reader*. Malden and Oxford: Wiley-Blackwell.

-----2009. *Surrendering to Utopia: An Anthropology of Human Rights*. Stanford: Stanford University Press.

Sally Engle Merry. 2006. *Human Rights & Gender Violence: Translating International Law into Local Justice*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Carole Nagengast & Carolos G. Vélez-Ibáñez, eds. 2004. *Human Rights: The Scholar Activist*. Oklahoma City: Society for Applied Anthropology.

Richard Price. 2011. *Rainforest Warriors: Human Rights on Trial*. Philadelphia; University of Pennsylvania Press.

Winifred Tate. 2007. *Counting the Dead: The Culture and Politics of Human Rights Activism in Colombia*. Berkeley: University of California Press.

Plus occasional RECOMMENDED READINGS accessible via AnthroSource, JSTOR, library e-reserves and other electronic links in the library's journal catalog.

REQUIREMENTS

Participation—25% (or 25 points)

Five short essays—25%

Paper proposal—10%

Seminar paper—40%

This course is a seminar; therefore, regular attendance and active engagement (e.g., in general discussions as well as through individual or team presentations and discussion facilitation) are imperative to create conditions conducive to collective learning. There are no exams, only five short essays and a culminating research paper. Critical reflections or short reaction papers on some aspect of the readings will be submitted periodically (see due dates below). These papers are to be at about 4-5 double-spaced pages long. The more elaborate seminar paper of about 20-25 pages is due on the last day of class, **November 29th**. Students must discuss their potential topics for this assignment with the professor as early in the semester as possible. A proposal for the paper is due on **October 4th**. These papers—or performance scripts of them—will be presented during the last three classes. Should additional time be necessary, we will use the December 11th (3-5 pm) examination period for the final round of presentations.

Effective and, ideally, eloquently compelling writing is an important skill anthropologists need to include in their professional tool kits. In the final papers, students should emulate the quality and format of juried journal articles, using those published in *American Anthropologist*, *American Ethnologist*, or *Cultural Anthropology* as models. The final papers will be evaluated on the basis of the following criteria: i- the effective application and articulation of an anthropological perspective or an interdisciplinary perspective informed by anthropological inquiry and analysis, ii- the clarity and cogency of exposition, iii- the quality of evidence used to support arguments, iv- the adequacy of organization and writing (i.e., word usage, grammar, spelling, and logical flow), and v- the relative quality and quantity of citations. *Most of these criteria, particularly i-iv, should be considered general guidelines for all writing assignments.*

GRADING

Based on the total number of points accumulated, the scale will be the following:

A=95-100 points, A- =90-94, B+ = 87-89, B=83-86, B- =80-82, C+ = 77-79, C=73-76

POLICIES

Extensions on Assignments

Students will be allowed extensions on writing assignments **ONLY** if there are serious extenuating circumstances that can be documented (e.g., illnesses, deaths in family, or religious observances). Otherwise, due dates are written in stone. You are to manage your time accordingly. The university, especially the Graduate School, is part of the *real world*.

Academic Honesty

An implied honor code is observed in all academic work at the University. Every student must operate according to an implied pledge that “any work submitted for credit the student has neither received nor given unauthorized aid.” In other words, cheating and plagiarism are breaches of

academic honesty subject to disciplinary action, which may include a failing grade for the course. For further details, consult the honor code website:

<http://www.dso.ufl.edu/studentguide/studentrights.php#studenthonorcode>.

Accommodations to Students with Disabilities

Students needing classroom accommodation should register with the Dean of Students Office, where the necessary documentation will be issued. Students must submit their documentation to the professor when requesting accommodation

SEMINAR SCHEDULE OF TOPICS, READINGS, & ASSIGNMENTS

08.23 **Introductions and Expectations**
Homework assignment for next week: Do some web research on human rights documents (e.g., the International Bill of Rights, selective conventions, etc.) and leading organizations (e.g., Amnesty International, Human Rights Watch, Global Rights, US Human Rights Network, Physicians for Human Rights, Cultural Survival, Survival, AAA Committee on Human Rights, etc.).

08.30 **Human Rights in Multivocality & Historical Trajectory** ***Critical reflection #1***
Discussion on i) web searches on major instruments and organizations, and ii) assigned readings on the tensions and/or middle ground between culture and human rights, universalism and relativism, and legal determinism and ethnographic methodology.

AAA Committee for Human Rights, <http://www.aaanet.org/cmtes/cfhr/index.cfm>

Mark Goodale, ed. *Human Rights: An Anthropological Reader*
Introduction, Part I “Conceptual & Historical Foundations” (all except Kymlicka’s ch 3 [which is assigned later on]), Part II “Anthropology & Human Rights Activism” (Messer Ch 7, Turner et al. Ch11)

Recommended

Sally Engle Merry, “Human Rights Law and the Demonization of Culture (and Anthropology along the Way),” *PoLAR: Political and Legal Anthropology Review* 26(1):55-76, May 2003

09.06 **Human Rights through the Prism of Recent Trends** ***Critical reflection #2***

Paul Farmer and Nicole Gastineau, “Rethinking Health and Human Rights,” Ch 9 in Goodale

Nancy Scheper-Hughes, “Rotten Trade...” Ch 10 in Goodale

Richard Wilson “Representing Human Rights Violations: Social Contexts and Subjectivities,” Ch 12 in Goodale

Ann-Belinda Preis, “Human Rights as Cultural Practice,” Ch 17 in Goodale

Buddhadeb Chaudhuri, “Human Security, Human Rights and Development,” In *IUAES Inter Congress on Mega Urbanization, Multi-Ethnic Society, Human Rights, and Development*. Volume 3, *Anthropology and Human Rights in*

Contemporary Era. B. Chaudhuri and S. haudhuri, eds. Pp. 408-419. New Delhi: Inter-India Publications, 2007 [pdf]

- 09.13 Toward a Critical Anthropology of Human Rights **Critical reflection #3**
Mark Goodale, *Surrendering to Utopia*
- 09.20 Engaged Witnessing and Human Rights Activism in Contexts of Violence
Winifred Tate, *Counting the Dead*
Victoria Sanford, “Excavations of the Heart: Healing Fragmented Communities,” Ch 8 in Goodale reader
- 09.27 **No class; Assoc. for the Study of African American Life & History meeting**
- 10.04 Human Rights Gendering **Term paper proposal**
Sally Engle Merry, *Human Rights and Gender Violence*
Shannon Speed, “Gendered Intersections: Collective & Individual Rights in Indigenous Women’s Experience,” Ch 13 in Goodale reader
- 10.11 Poverty, Democracy, Rights
Harri Englund, *Prisoners of Freedom*
- 10.18 Maroons Take Suriname to Court **Critical reflection #4**
Richard Price, *Rainforest Warriors*
Will Kymlicka, “The Good, the Bad, and the Intolerable: Minority Group Rights,” Ch 3 in Goodale reader
Recommended
Kamari Clarke, “Introduction: The Rule of Law and its Imbrications—Justice in the Making,” in *Fictions of Justice: The International Criminal Court and the Challenge of Legal Pluralism in Sub-Saharan Africa*
- 10.25 Bringing Human Rights Home—to Homeland Security **Critical reflection #5**
Tanya Maria Golash-Boza, *Immigration Nation*
- 11.01 Anthropologists as Human Rights Activists
Carole Nagengast & Carlos Vélez-Ibáñez, *Human Rights: The Scholar Activist*.
- 11.08 Student research presentations
- 11.15 **No class; American Anthropological Association meeting**

- 11.22 **No class. Thanksgiving Day Holiday**
- 11.29 Final meeting: student presentations *Seminar papers due*
- 12.11 The time set aside for final can be used for seminar paper presentations, *if needed*

Happy Holidays!