

Literature of Human Rights

FSU Department of English

Fall 2004

Course #: LIT 4205-01

T/Th 2-3:15

Room 318 Williams

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Course Description and Objectives:

This course presents students with the entire range of human rights issues that figure so prominently in contemporary politics. From conceptions of state sovereignty to the literary practice of social justice, this course gives students an overall picture of what the contemporary state of human rights discourse is all about. Focusing less on what the human means than how the “human” has authorized legal practices, social institutions, literary and media representations, public and private sentiments, forms of subjectivities, and war and peace initiatives, this course poses the question of what can be done with humanitarianism in a time of terror and counter-terror. We begin with a series of orienting documentaries and feature films centered on the question of how contemporary transnational political formations and economic structures have shaped the terrain of not only human rights, but also the human itself. We then turn to one of the most articulate and celebrated novelist writing on the terrain of human rights: Edwidge Danticat. We read this text along with international public policy discourses, critical theory, political philosophy, human rights reports, legal briefings, UN documents, literary criticism, and other kinds of discourses that touch on the question of contemporary human rights. We then turn to a memoir and a movie about the legacies of colonialism, the IMF/World Bank, and contemporary struggles in Jamaica and Antigua. We will consider these films and these novel in light of what Foucault once called “biopolitics”—the power of states to determine who lives and dies by touching the very biology of its subjects. Building on this theoretical framework we then turn to two examples of human rights “disasters”—the Occupied Territories in Israel-Palestine and Camp X-Ray at Guantanamo Bay. Students will be expected to build on these examples and frameworks to pursue their own research on a “state of exception” where human rights are being, or have been, contested.

Required Texts (in the order we will read them):

Movies:

21st Century: Civilization and Homeland Security

Pinjar/Gaddar

Zapatista films

Life and Debt

Manufacturing Consent

The Farming of Bones: A Novel

by [Edwidge Danticat](#), Penguin Books; (September 1, 1999)

- ISBN: 0140280499

"Society Must Be Defended": Lectures at the College de France, 1975-76

by [Michel Foucault](#), [David Macey](#) (Translator) Picador; 1st edition (January 1, 2003)

- ISBN: 0312203187

A Small Place

by [Jamaica Kincaid](#)

Farrar, Straus and Giroux; 1st Farrar edition (April 28, 2000)

- ISBN: 0374527075

Hayati: My Life (Arab American Writing)

by [Miriam Cooke](#)

Syracuse University Press; 1st ed edition (November 1, 2000)

- ISBN: 0815606710

The New Intifada: Resisting Israel's Apartheid

by [Roane Carey](#) (Editor), [Noam Chomsky](#), [Gila Svirsky](#), [Alison Weir](#)

Palestine

by [Joe Sacco](#), [Edward Said](#) Fantagraphics Books; (January 2002)

- ISBN: 156097432X

A COURSE READER on BlackBoard

Articles (listed by the name used on BlackBoard, and in the general order we will read them):

Universal Declaration of Human Rights.pdf

human rights now.htm (9)

claims of human rights.pdf (20)

haiti and clinton.pdf (23)
dayan on haiti.pdf (16)
impact of sanctions on health and human rights in haiti.pdf (6)
ins violating human rights on haitians.htm (3)
political economy of trauma in haiti.pdf (23)

humanitarianism and pornography of pain.pdf (33 pg)
humanitarian intervention debate.pdf (40 pp)
human rights law and the demonization of culture.pdf (24 pp)
human rights as common concern.pdf (14)
human rights and the laws of people.pdf (21)
human rights and global capital.pdf (20)
human rights at the turn of the millenium.pdf (10)
just war and justice in war after 9-11.pdf (18)
human rights in contemporary war.pdf (35)
a role for human rights norms in contemporary armed conflict.pdf (35)
judging the 9-11 as human rights.pdf (38 pp)
european court of human rights.pdf (40)
citizenship democracy and human rights.pdf (16)

women's studies and human rights.pdf (50)
strategic value of human rights for feminism.pdf (7)
women of color and human rights.pdf (4)
gender violence_files
gender violence.htm (3)

islamic human rights.pdf (18 pp)
ahmed on becoming an arab (30)
colonialism islam terrorism.pdf (50)
african perspective on human rights and feminism (30)
western vs islamic human rights conceptions.pdf (33)

human rights now in palestine.pdf (4)
negotiations in palestine no human rights component.pdf (13)
humanitarianism and law in occupied territories.pdf (7)
human rights and intifada in israel.pdf (9)
palestine listening to the inaudible.pdf (25)
palestine in america.pdf (18)
compassion and palestine.pdf (7)
conflict and public health in israel.pdf (2)
why palestine.pdf (8)
psychological effects of intifada on israel.pdf (10)
annihilation in palestine.pdf (25)
body politics in paletsinian narratives.pdf (26)
israeli violation and palestinian health.pdf (20)

on camp xray.pdf (15 pp)

new behavioral models for adversaries.pdf (pp 26)
military commissions prosecute supposed terrorists.pdf (10 pp)
intl law and Guantanamo Bay.pdf (27 pp)
instructions for military commission trying aliens.pdf (5 pp)
human rights commission on Cuba detainees.pdf (3)
ability of detainees in Cuba to obtain habeas corpus.pdf (3)
decision not to regard persons detained as POW.pdf (7)
against military commissions.pdf (9)
using military comm against accused terrorists.pdf (10)
US nationals detained as unlawful combatants.pdf (6)
Inter-American Human Rights Commission decision on Cuba detainees.pdf (3)
habeas corpus for detainees.pdf (3)
US nationals detained as terrorist.pdf (6)
US intl law practices.pdf (12)
contemporary practice of US relating to intl law.pdf (12)

homeland insecurities Kaplan.pdf (12)
Bush's wars and civil rights.pdf (18)
Bush and biopolitics.pdf (18)
technologies of humanness biopolitics.pdf (38)
biovereignty and humanity (25)
Bare Sovereignty_ Homo Sacer and the Insistence of Law.pdf (25)

GRADING AND COURSE REQUIREMENTS

ATTENDANCE: 10% OF GRADE: Your active participation is crucial both to the success of this course and to your success in this course. So regular and timely attendance is a must. Classes begin promptly at the scheduled time, and you should sign the attendance sheet. Four absences (without medical excuse and/or prior communication with me) accumulated during the term will result in your being dropped from the roster. So if you cannot make a class for some reason, I expect you to inform me beforehand, and be responsible for the work you missed.

FSU policy states that students are in danger of failing if they accumulate more than two week's worth of absences (that's four TR classes). University policy also states that students involved with university-sanctioned events may not be counted absent on days scheduled by those programs as service work for the university. If you know you will be absent at any time during the semester for such activities, you must obtain from your advisor a signed statement on FSU letterhead noting the scheduled events for the semester. You must turn in the document by the end of the second week of classes.

PARTICIPATION in THREADED DISCUSSION ON BLACKBOARD: 20% OF GRADE: Each week half the class will post on Blackboard 3-4 questions, which the other half of the class will respond to individually. It will work like this: The class will be divided into two halves: Human 1 and Human 2. These two halves will alternate each week posting questions and answering. Depending on how many students there are in each

half, we will divide each half into three or four subgroups. So there will be Human 1-A; Human 1-B, Human 1-C, etc. Each subgroup (let's say Human 1-A) will meet and discuss what one question from the reading they want to pursue, and who will post that question. Then individual students from the other half of the class, Human 2, will respond on Blackboard. Switch the next week. Questions are to be posted by midnight every Monday. Replies are to be posted by midnight on Wednesday. You may post more often than scheduled, but you must post when scheduled (the schedule will be posted on Blackboard). Late work will not be accepted. You will be asked to evaluate your peers both on the quality and the regularity of their contributions. Members of your group will collectively assign 5% of your grade for the work you do together. Fifteen percent of your grade will be based on the best 5 of your replies. (SEE GUIDELINES BELOW)

TWO TERM PAPERS: 70% OF GRADE (35% each; approximately 5-6 pages each): After about two novels and/or films you will be required to hand in a position paper on a text, or texts. These are formal papers and should conform to MLA guidelines for writing papers, with a title, a consistent form of citation: footnotes, endnotes, or in-text citations, and always a list of Works Cited. **NO LATE PAPERS WILL BE ACCEPTED WITHOUT PRIOR APPROVAL.**

FSU General Bulletin contains an Honor Code. It is repeated verbatim in the Student handbook. You will be held responsible for knowing it and conforming to it.

FSU policy on plagiarism: Plagiarism is grounds for suspension from the university as well as for failure in this course. It will not be tolerated. Any instance of plagiarism must be reported to the Director of Undergraduate Studies. Plagiarism is included among the violations defined in the Academic Honor Code, section b), paragraph 2, as follows: "Regarding academic assignments, violations of the Academic Honor Code shall include representing another's work or any part thereof, be it published or unpublished, as one's own."

Criteria used to grade papers (in decreasing order of value):

1. Does the paper have an effective structure (why does one paragraph follow after another)? Is the structure one that the reader can follow?
2. Has the paper been proofread to clean up type-o's, grammatical mistakes, problems of structure and formatting?
3. Was the paper handed in on time?
4. Does the paper engage in a substantive way with the readings from the course?
5. Do the arguments used question, open up and/or critique the various theories that we have discussed in class?
6. Does the paper consider opposing readings of the texts? Are the arguments taken up by the paper put in critical dialogue with other possible arguments?
7. Does the paper have a thesis statement and a specific argument? Is it clearly stated? Is the argument of the paper complex enough to account for contradictions, lapses, silences or other problems in the text analyzed?

Guidelines for Posting and Answering Questions on Blackboard:

Questions

Focusing on the reading for the week, work with your group to come up with a question you think helps clarify one of the central ideas in reading. The question should refer specifically to the reading either by quoting a sentence or two, or, at the very least, by pointing to particular page numbers. Your group will need to elect someone to be responsible for posting by midnight on Monday (you may take turns), but you must meet at least once collectively to decide on what the question is and why it is one. Be sure to include the name of the reading and some indication of the topic in the subject line of the posting. Remember that the question should facilitate a conversation.

At the end of the semester, I will ask each member of your group to assign 5% of your final grade according to the following scale.

- 5 Was well prepared for every discussion and consistently contributed useful insights to the group
- 4 Was well prepared and participated regularly, but missed a few discussions or could have contributed more
- 3 Participated in about half of the discussions and/or was not so well prepared
- 2 Participated rarely or did not contribute meaningfully to group discussion when there
- 1 Participated once or twice and/or actively obstructed the group's work
- 0 Never heard from this person

In addition, I will assign up to five points of extra credit to those groups that I feel do an outstanding job.

Answers:

Your answer should be about 150 words. It should speak directly to one of the questions posed by one of the groups OR that develops one of the answers already given by another student. Be sure to refer specifically to the reading for the week, and ground your own opinions in a response to those readings. You may wish to take issue with the way the question has been posed, or point to a different passage than the questioners used in posing it.

The grading scale will be as follows.

- 5 An exceptionally insightful post.
- 4 You wrestle with the central concerns of the reading in a clear and concise manner.
- 3 You make a good point, but the post strays from that point, does not develop it in relationship to the reading, or contradicts itself.
- 2 You make an effort, but you don't really grapple with the question or the reading. I find the post difficult to follow.
- 1 You posted, but the post has little to do with reading or is impossible to follow.
- 0 You did not post; your post is totally irrelevant to class; or it shows disrespect for your classmates.

Remember for Both Questions and Answers:

- Use informal, but correct, language.
- There is no need to provide a full citation for sources that are on the syllabus, but do provide a full citation for any source not on the syllabus (in the rare event you use one).
- Make sure to choose topic and subject lines carefully; include the last name of the theorist you discuss.
- Employ basic netiquette

Schedule of Readings/Assignments/Papers

8/24 to 9/9: Danticat, *The Farming of Bones*

Secondary readings on Blackboard:

haiti and clinton.pdf (23)

dayan on haiti.pdf (16)

impact of sanctions on health and human rights in haiti.pdf (6)

ins violating human rights on haitians.htm (3)

political economy of trauma in haiti.pdf (23)

Films:

21st Century: Civilization and Homeland Security

Manufacturing Consent

9/14 to 9/30: Foucault, *"Society Must Be Defended"*

Secondary Readings on Blackboard:

humanitarianism and pornography of pain.pdf (33 pg)

homeland insecurities kaplan.pdf (12)

bush's wars and civil rights.pdf (18)

bush and biopolitics.pdf (18)

technologies of humanness biopolitics.pdf (38)

biosovereignty and humanity (25)

Bare Sovereignty_ Homo Sacer and the Insistence of Law.pdf (25)

10/5 to 10/14: Kincaid, *A Small Place*

Movie: Life and Debt

10/19 to 11/4:

Cooke, *Hayati: My Life*

The New Intifada: Resisting Israel's Apartheid

Secondary Readings on Blackboard:

human rights now in palestine.pdf (4)

negotiations in palestine no human rights component.pdf (13)

humanitarianism and law in occupied territories.pdf (7)

human rights and intifada in israel.pdf (9)

palestine listening to the inaudible.pdf (25)

palestine in america.pdf (18)

compassion and palestine.pdf (7)

conflict and public health in israel.pdf (2)

why palestine.pdf (8)

psychological effects of intifada on israel.pdf (10)

annihilation in palestine.pdf (25)

body politics in palestinian narratives.pdf (26)

israeli violation and palestinian health.pdf (20)

PAPER #1 DUE 10/19

11/9 to 11/18:

Palestine

11/23 to 12/2: Secondary Readings on Camp X-Ray

FINAL PAPER DUE: 12/10, 5 pm