

Geography of Human Rights

GEOG 3640, Fall 2008

Professor Amy Ross

Office Hours: Wednesday 1-3PM by appointment.

206 GG Building. Tel: 542-1617

rossamy@uga.edu

"It is funny about wars, they ought to be different, but they are not."

Gertrude Stein, *Wars I Have Seen*, 1945

"A person stands a greater chance of being tried and judged for the killing of one human being than for killing 100,000."

Jose Ayala Lasso, UN High Commissioner for Human Rights, 1996

Interest in the protection of human rights has been expanding steadily since the end of WW2. And yet widespread and systematic violations of human rights continue, despite the growth of laws, institutions, and movements organized around their protection. A quality of schizophrenia defines the evolving identity of human rights. One of its personalities is a shining success: generating laws, organizing activists, denouncing crimes. Another personality reeks of gloomy failure: cataloging attacks, identifying offenders, counting corpses.

This course examines the problems, promises and paradoxes of the development of human rights. We will investigate how, where, and under what specific conditions massive violations of human rights occur. We will examine these issues by studying specific cases: apartheid in South Africa, the phenomena of 'disappearances' and state-sponsored terror in Latin America, ethnic cleansing in the former Yugoslavia, and violence in Uganda and the DRC.

As geographers, we will study the local, national and global aspects of the violation of human rights and the responses to such crisis. We will also address contemporary theoretical debates regarding violence and power, memory and history, trauma and testimony, and the dilemmas of recovering in societies that have experienced mass atrocity. Our focus is the pervasive problem of impunity invoked by Jose Ayala Lasso's observation. The aim of the course is to educate class members as to the particular experiences of the cases we address, while theorizing the 'sameness' of war to which Gertrude Stein alludes.

REQUIREMENTS:

All class members are expected to contribute regularly to discussions. In addition to class participation, grades will be determined as follows: A midterm (30%), final (30%) occasional **short** writing assignments and in-class exercises/discussions (20%), with the remaining 10% for class participation. Please be advised that final grades are determined by the professor, rather than by 'points.'

Dorfman, Ariel. *Death and the Maiden*. Nick Hern Books. 1991

Gutman, Roy, David Reiff, Anthony Dworkin eds. *Crimes of War: What the Public Should Know 2.0 (Revised and Updated Edition)*. W.W. Norton and Company; New York. 2007.

Manz, Beatriz. *Paradise in Ashes; A Guatemalan Journey of Courage, Terror and Hope*. University of California Press, Berkeley. 2004

O'Brien, Tim. *The Things They Carried*. Penguin Books: New York, 1990

Sands, Philippe. *Torture Team: Rumsfeld's Memo and the Betrayal of American Values* (Palgrave: New York, 2008)

Stover, Eric. *The Witnesses: War Crimes and the Promise of Justice in The Hague*. University of Pennsylvania Press; Philadelphia. 2005

Wexler, Laura. *Fire in a Canebrake: The Last Mass Lynching in America*. Simon and Schuster, New Jersey 2003

Additional REQUIRED readings are available on e-reserves. Password provided in class.

Recommended:

(Chapters of these books will be required and available on electronic reserve.)

Bullard, Alice. *Human Rights in Crisis*. Ashgate; Vermont.2008.

Neuffer, Elizabeth. *The Key to My Neighbor's House: Seeking Justice in Bosnia and Rwanda*. Picador, New York. 2001.

Power, Samantha. *"A Problem from Hell:" America and the Age of Genocide*. Basic Books 2002.

Reiff, David. *A Bed For The Night: Humanitarianism in Crisis*. Simon and Schuster, New York. 2002.

Roht-Arriaza, Naomi. *The Pinochet Effect: Transnational Justice in the Age of Human Rights*. University of Pennsylvania Press, Philadelphia. 2005

Saxon, Dan. *To Save Her Life: Disappearances, Deliverance and the United States in Guatemala*. University of California Press, Berkeley. 2007

Sewall, Sarah. B. and Carl Kaysen, eds. *The United States and the International Criminal Court*. Rowman and Littlefield Publishers, Inc Maryland. 2000

Sriram, Chandra Lekha. *Globalising Justice for Mass Atrocities: A Revolution in Accountability*. Routledge, New York. 2005

Straus, Scott. *The Order of Genocide: Race, Power and War in Rwanda*. Cornell University Press, 2006.

Copious amounts of terrific readings are available on specific topics—please come by office hours for more titles.

Required Films:

The Official Story
Cry From the Grave
The Fog of War
Project Kashmir

CLASS SCHEDULE: The majority of class-time will be used for lectures, with time reserved for class discussion and film/video viewing. Occasional 'movie nights' will be necessary. Please be advised that the schedule below provides an outline of the progress of topics. The particulars of the class (size, personality, international events) will shape its pace. Students are responsible for staying informed as to changes to the schedule, and for completing reading assignments at the beginning of each week. Thank you.

Introduction:

Human Rights and Wrongs

Description of course content and requirements, review of syllabus.

Part One: A Critical History of Human Rights

Laws of War, Crimes of War

Readings

Ross, Amy. "The Body Counts: Civilian Casualties and the Crisis of Human Rights" in Alice Bullard (ed.) *Human Rights in Crisis* (Vermont: Ashgate, 2008) pp 35-47. (e-reserves)

Gutman and Reiff, *Crimes of War: What the Public Should Know*. Review table of contents, and read the "Preface," "Forward" (Goldstone), and "International Humanitarian Law: An Overview" (Weschler).

The Post World War Two and the Human Rights 'Revolution'

"The United Nations Charter," "Universal Declaration of Human Rights," "Human Rights in History" (e-reserves, or easily accessible on the WorldWideWeb).

Keywords from *Crimes of War* (to be discussed)

Disappearances and Deniability, Torture and Terror

Readings:

Dorfman, Ariel. *Death and the Maiden* Penguin Books, 1991

Langbein, John H. "The Legal History of Torture," Dershowitz, Alan, "Tortured Reasoning," and Scarry, Elaine, "Five Errors in the reasoning of Alan Dershowitz" in *Torture: A Collection*, Sanford Levinson, ed. Oxford University Press 2004. (e-reserves)

Sands, Philippe. *Torture Team: Rumsfeld's Memo and the Betrayal of American Values* (Palgrave: New York, 2008)

Movie: *The Official Story*

Part Two: Cases Studies in Mass Atrocity

Guatemala, 1960-1996

Manz, Beatriz. *Paradise in Ashes; A Guatemalan Journey of Courage, Terror and Hope*. University of California Press, Berkeley. 2004

"Guatemalan Death Squad Dossier Uncovered" (Press release and selected pages from document, (e-reserves)

"Conclusions" from *Guatemala: Memory of Silence* (Report of the Guatemalan Historical Clarification Commission). (entire document available at

<http://hrdata.aaas.org/ceh/report/english>). See also the appendices, especially the excellent tables, graphs, and maps.

Ross, Amy. 2006. "The creation and conduct of the Guatemalan Commission for Historical Clarification," *Geoforum* Volume 37, Issue 1, pgs. 69-81. (e-reserves)

Ross, Amy. 1999. "Truth Commissions as Sites of Struggle," in *Guatemala, Thinking about the Unthinkable*, Ruth M. Gidley and Cynthia Klee, eds. Association of Artists for Guatemala, London, England, pgs. 64-80. (e-reserves)

South Africa, 1948-1994

Reading:

Krog, Antjie. "The Sound of the Second Narrative," and "The Wet Bag and Other Phantoms," in *Country of My Skull: Guilt, Sorrow, and the Limits of Forgiveness in the New South Africa* Times Books, New York 1998 (e-reserves)

Ross, Amy. "Chapter Five, the South African Truth and Reconciliation Commission in *The Body of the Truth* (e-reserves).

Video: human rights violation hearings and amnesty hearings.

Midterm: October 9th.

Part Three: International Tribunals and the Pursuit of Justice

The International Criminal Tribunal for the ex-Yugoslavia.

Readings:

Bass, Gary Jonathan. 2001. "The Hague" (Chapter Six) in *Stay the Hand of Vengeance: The Politics of War Crimes Tribunals*. Princeton University Press. (e-reserves)

Mertus, Julie. 2000 "Truth in a Box: The Limits of Justice through Judicial Mechanisms," in *The Politics of Memory: Truth, Healing and Social Justice*, Ifi Amadiume and Abdullahi An-Na'im, editors. Zed Books, London. (e-reserves).

Stover, Eric. *The Witnesses: War Crimes and the Promise of Justice in The Hague*. University of Pennsylvania Press; Philadelphia. 2005

Video: testimony from the Krstic case at the ICTY (Srebrenica) and the trial of Slobodan Milosevic.

Movie: "*A Cry From the Grave.*"

A Permanent International Criminal Court. Transnational Justice: El Caso Pinochet. Universal Jurisdiction?

Readings:

Kissinger, Henry. "The Pitfalls of Universal Jurisdiction," in *Foreign Affairs*, July/August 2001. (e-reserves)

Roht-Arriaza, Naomi. "The Legal Legacy of Pinochet: Universal Jurisdiction and its Discontents," Chapter 7 in *The Pinochet Effect: Transnational Justice in the Age of Human Rights*, University of Pennsylvania Press, 2005. (e-reserves)

Sriram, Chandra Lekha. *Globalising Justice for Mass Atrocities: A Revolution in Accountability*. Routledge, New York. 2005 (recommended)

Weschler, Lawrence. "Exceptional Cases in Rome: The United States and the Struggle for an ICC" in Sewall, Sarah B. and Carl Kaysen, editors. *The United States and the International Criminal Court: National Security and International Law*. Rowman and Littlefield, Publishers. 2000. (e-reserves)

Part Four: Critical Approaches to Truth and Justice

Trauma (and Testimony)

Reading:

Hernan, Judith. 1992 "Introduction" and Chapters 1 and 2 in *Trauma and Recovery: the aftermath of violence --from domestic abuse to political terror*. Basic Books. (e-reserves)

Sontag, Susan. Chapter 2 and 3 (pages 18-58) in *Regarding the Pain of Others*, Farrar, Staus and Giroux, New York. 2003. (e-reserves).

Video from the South African TRC Human Rights Hearings.

Memory (and History)

Readings:

Borges, Jorge Luis. "Funes the Memorios" in *Labyrinths*, New Directions Publishing Corporations, 1962. Pages 59-66. (e-reserve)

Wexler, Laura. *Fire in a Cane Brake: The Last Mass Lynching in America*. Simon and Schuster, New Jersey 2003

Amnesty (and Forgetting)

Reading: Neier, Aryeh. "The Trouble With Amnesty," in *War Crimes: Brutality, Genocide, Terror, and the Struggle for Justice*. Times Books, 1998. (e-reserves)

Video from the South African TRC Amnesty Hearings.

"How to Tell a True War Story"

Readings: O'Brien, Tim. *The Things They Carried* Penguin Books, 1990

Movie: The Fog Of War

Conclusion: The Place of Justice. The Space of Justice.

Final Exam: December 16th.

UGA requires that the following text appear on course syllabi:

"All academic work must meet the standards contained in 'A Culture of Honesty.' Each student is responsible to inform themselves about those standards before performing any academic work."

"The course syllabus is a general plan for the course; deviations announced to the class by the instructor may be necessary."