

D R A F T - NOT FINAL VERSION

**New York University SCPS**

**M.S. in Global Affairs**

**Human Rights Advocacy and Research**

**GLOB1-GC 2545001**

**Instructor: Renzo Pomi**

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**Office hours by appointment**

**Tuesdays, 6:30 – 9:10pm**

**Spring 2015**

**Course Overview:** This course is designed to develop practical advocacy and research skills to protect and promote human rights at the international level. Students will develop an advocacy strategy on a current human rights issue, including the identification of goals and objectives, appropriate advocacy targets, and appropriate methods. Students will also develop a research plan to document human rights abuses and discuss the necessary skills to narrow down the area of focus, identify the most effective research methodology, and hone interviewing skills. Students will explore broad-based human rights campaigns, use of the media, and advocacy with United Nations and regional intergovernmental bodies. Over the course of the semester, students will become familiar with a variety of mechanisms that can be used to advance human rights and tools to apply to a human rights issue of their choosing. Case studies will illustrate successful advocacy campaigns on particular issues such as arms control; torture; indigenous rights; and international justice.

Written assignments will focus on practical tools, including advocacy letters, the drafting of a submission to a regional or international human rights body, and the development of an overarching strategy incorporating both research and advocacy to expose a particular human rights problem.

### **Assignments:**

Papers will include the following:

- 3-4 page initial research and advocacy strategy on a chosen human rights issue;
- written submission to the UN Human Rights Council;
- A revised and expanded 6-8 page research and advocacy strategy.

There will be student paper presentations and debate during three consecutive classes.

**Grading:** Grade will be based on in-class participation (20%), class presentations (10%), and written assignments (70%).

**NYU Classes:** All written assignments are to be submitted electronically via the [Assignment Tool](#) on NYU Classes on the date indicated. All work will be scanned for plagiarism using Turnitin.

**CGA Incomplete Policy:** Incompletes are only granted in extreme cases such as illness or other family emergency and only where almost all work for the semester has been successfully completed. A student's procrastination in completing his/her paper is not a basis for an Incomplete.

**CGA Attendance and Lateness Policy:** All students must attend class regularly. Your contribution to classroom learning is essential to the success of the course. Any more than two (2) absences (with an explanation or not) during the semester will likely lead to a need to withdraw from the course or a failing grade.

**SCPS Statement on Academic Integrity and Plagiarism:** *Plagiarism is presenting someone else's work as though it were one's own. More specifically, plagiarism is to present as one's own a sequence of words quoted without quotation marks from another*

*writer; a paraphrased passage from another writer's work; creative images, artwork, or design; or facts or ideas gathered, organized, and reported by someone else, orally and/or in writing and not providing proper attribution. Since plagiarism is a matter of fact, not of the student's intention, it is crucial that acknowledgement of the sources be accurate and complete. Even where there is no conscious intention to deceive, the failure to make appropriate acknowledgment constitutes plagiarism. Penalties for plagiarism range from failure for a paper or course to dismissal from the University.*

### **Evaluation Criteria**

- **Research Paper:** Clear evidence of wide and relevant research and critical thinking about the data and sources; a strong thesis or problem to address; effective analysis that leads to a compelling conclusion; good, accurate and persuasive writing.
- **Policy Memo/Strategy Submissions:** Clear evidence of wide and relevant research and critical thinking about the data and sources; a strong thesis or problem to address; effective analysis that leads to a compelling conclusion; good, accurate and persuasive writing.
- **In-Class Exercises:** Contributions of insight to the analysis; raising questions showing insight into the implications of the analysis; accurate work.
- **Quizzes and Exams:** Mastery of the facts and scholarship involved; accurate answers; drawing insightful conclusions based on analysis.
- **Presentation:** Clear understanding of the issues at hand; ability to present them in an interesting, lucid and professional manner appropriate to the audience.
- **Class Participation:** Active, respectful and collegial engagement in class discussion; evidence of reading and preparation.

### **SCPS Grading Scale**

Grade	Meaning	GPA Conversion
A	Exceptional; superior effort	4.0

A-	Excellent	3.7
B+	Very good	3.3
B	Good; meets program standards	3.0
B-	Meets program standards in most respects	2.7
C+	Requires moderate improvement	2.3
C	Requires significant improvement	2.0
C-	Requires extensive improvement	1.7
F	Fail – Did not meet minimal course requirements	0

### **Session 1, Jan 27**

**Introduction to human rights advocacy and research:** Overview of the course, expectations, assignments, and grading. There will be an initial discussion on human rights, evolution and latest developments, existing human rights mechanisms and institutions, and advocacy and research methodologies.

#### **Suggested readings:**

Neier, Aryeh, "The Movement as of September 29, 2011," in *The International Human Rights Movement* (Princeton University Press: 2012), pp 1-25.

[Alternatively, read: Thomas Buergenthal, "The Evolving International Human Rights System", *100 AJIL (2006) 783*]

Universal Declaration of Human Rights, adopted 10 Dec. 1948, G.A. Res. 217A (III), U.N. GAOR, 3d. Sess, U.N. Doc. A/RES/3/217A (1948)

Kraph, Thomas M., "The Last Witness of the Drafting Process of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights: Interview with Stéphane Frédéric Hessel", in *Human Rights Quarterly*, Volume 35, Number 3, August 2013, pp. 753-768.

Benenson, Peter, "The Forgotten Prisoners", in *The Observer*, Sunday 28 May 1961, <http://www.theguardian.com/uk/1961/may/28/fromthearchive.theguardian>

**Assignment (due February 6):** Students will be asked to pick a human rights topic to focus on. Prepare a one-page paper concisely describing the topic and including a research outline you may think necessary, and come to class (session 3) prepared to discuss and defend your choice of issue, to learn from the constructive criticism from your colleagues, and to participate actively in the class discussion.

### **Session 2: Feb 3**

**Human rights research:** Documenting human rights abuses; how to develop a research plan, identify witnesses and other sources of information, interviewing techniques, etc. Discussion on the ethics of human rights research.

#### **Suggested readings:**

Pillay, Navi, "Human Rights Investigations and Their Methodology" (speech)  
at <http://unispal.un.org/UNISPAL.NSF/0/C9222F058467E6F6852576D500574710>

Human Rights Watch, "Our Methodology," at <http://www.hrw.org/en/node/75141>

Ole Solvang, "Tracking Down Torture in Syria," CNN Opinion, July 3, 2012.

<http://www.cnn.com/2012/07/03/opinion/solvang-syria-torture/index.html>

Eileen Pittaway, Linda Bartolomei and Richard Hugman, "Stop Stealing Our Stories": The Ethics of Research with Vulnerable Groups," *Journal of Human Rights Practice*, Vol. 2, No. 2, June 2010, pp 229-251.

Sarah McCum and Lotte Hughes, "Interviewing Children – A Guide for Journalists and Others", Second Edition,  
at: [http://www.savethechildren.org.uk/sites/default/files/docs/INTERVIEWING\\_CHILDREN.pdf](http://www.savethechildren.org.uk/sites/default/files/docs/INTERVIEWING_CHILDREN.pdf)

### **Session 3: Feb 10**

**Human rights monitoring by United Nations field presences:** Collection, verification, analysis and use of information by the United Nations as a form of human rights protection. We will discuss the techniques used by United Nations personnel in different settings, including human rights presences mandated by the Security Council, the Human Rights Council, or deployed directly by the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights. We will discuss selected sections of the current United Nations *Manual on Human Rights Monitoring*. Students will be also required to present and discuss their human rights topics (assignment that was due on February 6).

**Reading:**

Selected sections of the United Nations *Manual on Human Rights Monitoring* to be indicated by the instructor. The original and revised version of the manual can be accessed through the following link:

<http://www.ohchr.org/EN/PublicationsResources/Pages/MethodologicalMaterials.aspx>

**Session 4, Feb 17**

**Human rights advocacy:** Discussion will cover the basic components of an effective advocacy strategy, including goals, objectives, targets, and methods, and the role of external factors in achieving advocacy goals. There will be discussion on how to use the media or other public avenues to advance the advocacy goals. Students will be asked to present to the class their topic selection and the outline they have prepared.

**Readings:**

Johnson, Douglas A., "The Need for New Tactics," in *New Tactics in Human Rights* (Center for Victims of Torture, 2004), pp 12-18) at <https://www.newtactics.org/sites/default/files/resources/02needfornewtactics.pdf>

[the full version of the book could be found here: <https://www.newtactics.org/resource/english-collection-tactics-book>]

CARE, emergency toolkit, at <http://careemergencytoolkit.org/home/>

Shaw, Randy, "The Media: Winning More than Coverage," in *The Activist's Handbook* (University of California Press: 1996), pp 150-184.

**Assignment (due February 23):** Students will be asked to write a 3-4 page draft advocacy paper on the topic they have chosen and presented during the previous class. This paper would consider the comments and contributions made by classmates and the instructor to the initial outline, and would contain a description of the problem (the human rights topic you have chosen), whether a research plan is required, the remedies needed and an initial advocacy strategy. The draft paper will be shared with a classmate for review.

### **Session 5, Feb 24**

**Advocacy at the International level: general discussion on existing mechanisms; universal vs. regional (and sub-regional); political and human rights bodies; Charter-based and treaty-based mechanisms; non-governmental organizations: different types of organizations and NGO networks.**

#### **Readings:**

Thomas Buergenthal, "The Evolving International Human Rights System", *100 AJIL* (2006) 783

Keck, Margaret and Kathryn Sikkink, "Human Rights Advocacy Networks in Latin America," in *Activists Beyond Borders* (Cornell University Press, 1998), pp 79-120;

or,

Sikkink, Kathryn, "Human rights, principled issue-networks, and sovereignty in Latin America," in *International Organization*, Vol. 47, NO. 3 (Summer, 1993), pp.411-441. Published by: The MIT Press.

Explore at least two of the following websites:

Amnesty International – [www.amnesty.org](http://www.amnesty.org)

AVAAZ [www.avaaz.org](http://www.avaaz.org)

Coalition for the International Criminal Court, [www.iccnw.org](http://www.iccnw.org)

Crisis Action, <http://www.crisisaction.org>

Human Rights Watch — [www.hrw.org](http://www.hrw.org)

Human Rights First — [www.humanrightsfirst.org](http://www.humanrightsfirst.org)

Oxfam— [www.oxfam.org](http://www.oxfam.org)

Physicians for Human Rights – [www.physiciansforhumanrights.org](http://www.physiciansforhumanrights.org)

Save Darfur — [www.savedarfur.org](http://www.savedarfur.org)

Witness — [www.witness.org](http://www.witness.org)

**Assignment (due February 28):** No more than one page of written feedback on your classmate's initial advocacy strategy, highlighting strengths, weaknesses, possible additional ideas. Send to classmate and copy instructor.

### **Session 6, March 3**

**Human rights advocacy at the 'universal' level: the United Nations (UN) as legislator: the Human Rights Council (HRC) and the General Assembly (GA). Treaty-making processes and the creation of new human rights standards and mechanisms. Recent important 'soft-law' development: the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples. Other developments: outlawing the death penalty; defending the right to privacy and upholding non-discrimination rights (sexual orientation and gender identity).**

#### **Readings:**

'The UN Human Rights System', in *International Human Rights in a Nutshell*, edited by Thomas Buergenthal, Dinah Shelton and David P. Stewart, 4<sup>th</sup> Edition, (West, 2009), pp. **TBC**

Other readings to be added.

### **Session 7, March 10**

**Influencing Geneva-based UN human rights processes: the Human Rights Council and the special procedures system. The Universal Periodic Review: the new 'panacea'? How to 'use' the special procedures system and the universal periodic review. The Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) and the treaty monitoring bodies.**

#### **Suggested readings:**

UN General Assembly Resolution UN Doc A/RES/60/251, 3 April 2006 [Mandate of the Human Rights Council] available at:

[http://www2.ohchr.org/english/bodies/hrcouncil/docs/A.RES.60.251\\_En.pdf](http://www2.ohchr.org/english/bodies/hrcouncil/docs/A.RES.60.251_En.pdf)

Human Rights Council section at the OHCHR website, see

<http://www.ohchr.org/EN/HRBodies/HRC/Pages/HRCIndex.aspx>

A Practical Guide for NGO Participants - United Nations Human Rights Council (in 'Resources')

Report of the commission of inquiry on human rights in the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, 7 February 2014 (A/HRC/25/63 (in 'Resources'))

Statement by H.E. Mr. Sergey V. Lavrov, Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation at the high-level segment of the 25th session of the UN Human Rights Council, Geneva, 3 March, 2014 (in 'resources')

Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights, "The Human Rights Council," in *Working with OHCHR: A Handbook for NGOs*, pp 36-57 at <http://www.ohchr.org/Documents/Publications/NGOHandbooken.pdf>

Office of the High Commissioner on Human Rights, "Treaty Bodies," in *Working with OHCHR: A handbook for NGOs*, pp 58-82 at  
<http://www.ohchr.org/Documents/Publications/NGOHandbooken.pdf>

**Assignment (due March 13):** Students will be asked to submit their revised 3-4 page draft advocacy paper.

### **March 19 – NO CLASS (Spring break)**

### **Session 8, March 24**

**Protecting human rights in conflict and post-conflict situations: the role of the Security Council. Thematic and country-specific agenda items. Review of recent developments on thematic issues: women, peace and security and children and armed conflict. Country resolutions: how consistent is the Security Council in addressing situations of humanitarian and human rights crises?**

#### **Readings:**

Keating, Colin: The Role of the UN Security Council, in *Responding to Genocide – The Politics of International Action*, Adam Lupel and Ernesto Verdeja, editors... 181 – 211

Statement by the President of the Security Council of 12 February 2014 (S/PRST/2014/3) (including "Aide Memoire for the consideration of issues pertaining to the protection of civilians in armed conflict", posted in 'Resources')

Familiarize yourself with Chapters VI and VII of the United Nations Charter: <https://treaties.un.org/doc/publication/ctc/uncharter.pdf>

**Assignment (due March 27):** Write a submission on a topic of your choosing (the same topic of your draft advocacy strategy or a different one) to the UN Human Rights Council.

## Session 9, March 31

**Advocacy at the regional level: the American region. The Organization of American States, its political structure and human rights system. Advancing human rights: advocacy or/and litigation? Examples of landmark cases and its consequences (impunity, enforced disappearances, indigenous rights). Protecting the System from the States that created it.**

### **Readings:**

Go back to relevant parts of: Thomas Buergenthal, 'The Evolving International Human Rights System', *100 AJIL* (2006) 783

We will watch in class: *Children of the Jaguar*,  
at: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Ma1QSmtuiLQ>

Read relevant paragraphs (to be indicated) of:

Kichwa Indigenous People of Sarayaku judgment  
at: [http://corteidh.or.cr/docs/casos/articulos/seriec\\_245\\_ing.pdf](http://corteidh.or.cr/docs/casos/articulos/seriec_245_ing.pdf)

Barrios Altos judgment  
at: [http://www.corteidh.or.cr/docs/casos/articulos/seriec\\_75\\_ing.pdf](http://www.corteidh.or.cr/docs/casos/articulos/seriec_75_ing.pdf)

Velasquez Rodriguez judgment  
at: [http://www.corteidh.or.cr/docs/casos/articulos/seriec\\_04\\_ing.pdf](http://www.corteidh.or.cr/docs/casos/articulos/seriec_04_ing.pdf)

**Assignment (due April 4):** Write a one or maximum two- page advocacy letter to the Security Council (to all members, to the President of the month, or to a particular Security Council member) describing why the Security Council has the mandate and should act on a particular situation, and what should do (end the letter with at least a couple of recommendations).

Students are also expected to be preparing for the advocacy presentations during sessions 11/12/13. We will be drawing the names of those presenting during each session in Session 9. Students are welcome to volunteer to go first.

## **Session 10, April 7**

**Advocacy at the regional level: the African continent. The fledging African justice and human rights system and the political and peace and security arrangements. The African Union and its anti-atrocity, anti-impunity statute: double standards? African solutions to African problems?**

### **Readings:**

Go back to relevant parts of: Thomas Buergenthal, 'The Evolving International Human Rights System', *100 AJIL (2006) 783*

Please also familiarize yourself with the African Union by going to its website:

[www.au.int](http://www.au.int)

And in particular check the Constitutive Act, at:

[http://www.au.int/en/sites/default/files/ConstitutiveAct\\_EN.pdf](http://www.au.int/en/sites/default/files/ConstitutiveAct_EN.pdf)

You will find of particular interest article 3 (objectives), specially article 3 e) and h), as well as article 4 (principles) at h), l), m) and even o).

In terms of the African Commission of Human and Peoples' Rights, you can go to its website:

[www.achpr.org](http://www.achpr.org)

And perhaps skim through the African human rights Charter:

[http://www.achpr.org/files/instruments/achpr/banjul\\_charter.pdf](http://www.achpr.org/files/instruments/achpr/banjul_charter.pdf)

Also: Ademola Abbas, "The Proposed International Criminal Jurisdiction for the African Court: Some Problematic Aspects", *Netherlands International Law Review*, LX: 27-50, 2013

## **Session 11, April 14**

**Addressing a grave international human rights crisis: the cases of the Central African Republic/Syria/South Sudan. Developing an advocacy strategy for international action to combat serious and on-going human rights violations. Students will be expected to use knowledge of UN and other mechanisms gathered throughout the course.**

**Readings:**

Go back to previous readings, in particular those for session 7 on the Security Council

Oral Update of the independent international commission of inquiry on the Syrian Arab Republic, 18 March 2014 (in Resources)

Security Council resolution 2139 (2014) on the Syrian Arab Republic (in Resources)

Secretary-General report on the Central African Republic of 3 March 2014 (in Resources)

(Reading may be updated to reflect more recent developments on these crises)

**Assignment.** Students will make in-class presentations of their advocacy strategy papers and get the feedback from the class and the instructor [1/3 of the class presenting. Those classmates who submitted comments to the initial advocacy paper of the presenting students are expected to comment after the presentation]

**Session 12, April 21**

**Examination of multi-faceted human rights campaigns, messaging, and methods to mobilize public opinion and government action to establish new international norms and institutions: the creation of the International Criminal Court. From success to crisis? The current African 'rebellion' against the Court.**

**Readings:**

Alette Smeulers, Barbora Hola and Tom van den Berg, "Sixty-Five Years of International Criminal Justice: The Facts and Figures" ...

Pace, William R. and Mark Thieroff, "Participation of Non-governmental Organizations," in *The International Criminal Court: The Making of the Rome Statute* (Kluwer Law International: 1999), Roy S. Lee, ed pp. 391-398.

Pace, William R. and Jennifer Schense, "The Role of Non-Governmental Organizations," in *The Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court: A Commentary* (Oxford University Press: 2002) Antonio Cassese, Paola Gaeta, and John R.W.D. Jones, eds, pp. 105-143.

"Ten Years On: Reflections on the Impact of the Rome Statute", ICTJ podcast with ICC Judge Silvia Fernandez de Gurmendi, 29 June 2012, available at:

<http://www.ictj.org/multimedia/audio/ten-years-reflections-impact-rome-statute>[17:45 minutes]

["They Enslaved and Colonized Us, and Now They Want to Judge Us"](#)

[http://thecable.foreignpolicy.com/posts/2013/11/19/african\\_union\\_takes\\_on\\_the\\_international\\_criminal\\_court%20](http://thecable.foreignpolicy.com/posts/2013/11/19/african_union_takes_on_the_international_criminal_court%20)

"Is the International Criminal Court Really Picking on Africa?" by Stephen A. Lamony, at: <http://africanarguments.org/2013/04/16/is-the-international-criminal-court-really-picking-on-africa-by-stephen-a-lamony/>

(Reading may be added or changed in order to reflect recent developments on the topic)

**Assignment.** Students will make in-class presentations of their advocacy strategy papers and get the feedback from the class and the instructor [1/3 of the class presenting. Those classmates who submitted comments to the initial advocacy paper of the presenting students are expected to comment after the presentation]

### **Session 13: April 28**

**Two recent examples of successful campaigning: the fight for the rights of persons with disabilities and the Control Arms Campaign**

**Readings:**

Readings to be added

**Assignment:** Students will make in-class presentations of their advocacy strategy papers and get the feedback from the class and the instructor [1/3 of the class presenting. Those classmates who submitted comments to the initial advocacy paper of the presenting students are expected to comment after the presentation]

**Session 14: May 5**

**Wrap-up session, final discussion of lessons learned, etc.**

Readings:

**Final assignment (due May 8):** Submit revised 6-8 page paper describing a fully-realized and detailed advocacy strategy.