

WESTERN UNIVERSITY
Department of English and Writing Studies

Human Rights and Testimonial Literatures
ENG 4060G
Wed 11:30-2:30 Rm UC 282

Winter 2014

Office Hours: Wed 9:30-11:00
or by appointment

Professor Julia Emberley

Department of English and Writing Studies

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Course Description:

This course will examine cultural practices, including literary, visual and filmic texts, in relation to the discourses on human rights. Students will examine the discourses of human rights, the field of “Human Rights literatures” and a selection of testimonial, literary and visual texts that challenge, intervene and expand upon contemporary human rights discourses. We will discuss issues related to human rights in war-torn contexts, the figure of the child and human rights, the meaning of being “human,” and consider key terms such as “freedom” and “equality.”

Required Texts:

Jack Donnelly, *Human Rights: Theory and Practice*. 3rd Edition

Amnesty International, *Freedom: Short Stories Celebrating the Universal Declaration of Human Rights*

Gabriella Ambrosio, *Before We Say Good Bye*

John Boyne, *The Boy in the Striped Pajamas*

Ghassan Kanafani, *Palestine's Children*

Marjane Satrapi, *Persepolis*, Vols. 1 & 2

Ishmael Beah, *A Long Way Gone: Memoirs of a Boy Soldier*

Malala Yousafzai, *I Am Malala: The Girl Who Stood Up for Education and Was Shot by the Taliban*

Course Evaluation:

Short Paper (4-5 pages) Due Feb 25	30%
Seminar Presentation	25%
Seminar Participation	10%
Final Essay (13-15 pages) Due April 8	35%

Course Outline:

- Week 1: Jan 7 Introduction
- Week 2: Jan. 14 i. *Before We Say Good Bye*, Ambrosio
ii. Donnelly, *Universal Human Rights*, chaps 1-2
- Week 3: Jan 21 i. Shoshana Felman, “Education and Crisis, or the
Vicissitudes of Teaching” from Shoshana Felman and Dori
Laub, *Testimony: Crises of witnessing in literature,
psychoanalysis, and history*. 1993.
ii. Amnesty International, *Freedom: Short Stories Celebrating
the Universal Declaration of Human Rights* (approximately first
half)
- Week 4: Jan. 28 i. Amnesty International, *Freedom: Short Stories Celebrating
the Universal Declaration of Human Rights* (approximately
second half)
ii. Donnelly, *Universal Human Rights*, chaps 3-4
- Week 5: Feb. 4 i. Ghassan Kanafani, *Palestine’s Children* (pp. 1-112)
ii. Riley “Ghassan Kanafai: A Biographical Essay” and Riley and
Harlow, “Introduction” in *Palestine’s Children*
iii. Donnelly, *Universal Human Rights*, chaps 5-6
- Week 6: Feb 11 i. Ghassan Kanafani, *Palestine’s Children* con’t (pp. 112-198)
ii. Donnelly, *Universal Human Rights*, chaps 7-8
- Week 7: Feb 16- 20 READING WEEK
- Week 8: Feb 25 **Short Paper Due**
i. Satrapi, *Persepolis*, Vols. 1 & 2
ii. Donnelly, *Universal Human Rights*, chaps 9-10
- Week 9: March 4 i. Boyne, *The Boy in the Striped Pajamas*
ii. Donnelly, *Universal Human Rights*, chap 11
- Week 10: March 11 i. Ishmael Beah, *A Long Way Gone: Memoirs of a Boy Soldier*
ii. Donnelly, *Universal Human Rights*, chaps 12-13
- Week 11: March 18 NO CLASS this week.
- Week 12: March 25 i. Film: *Death in Gaza*
ii. Donnelly, *Universal Human Rights*, chaps 14-15
- Week 13 April 1 i. Malala Yousafzai, *I Am Malala: The Girl Who Stood Up
for Education and Was Shot by the Taliban*

ii. Donnelly, *Universal Human Rights*, chap 16

Week 14 April 8

Final Essay Due

The following must be included on all course outlines:

PLAGIARISM

Students must write their essays and assignments in their own words. Whenever students take an idea or a passage from another author, they must acknowledge their debt both by using quotation marks where appropriate and by proper referencing such as footnotes or citations. Plagiarism is a major academic offence (see Scholastic Offence Policy in the Western Academic Calendar, pp. 32-33). Plagiarism Checking: The University of Western Ontario uses software for plagiarism checking. Students may be required to submit their written work in electronic form for plagiarism checking.

Senate Policy Regulations, UWO

ACADEMIC ACCOMMODATION

Students seeking academic accommodation on medical grounds for any missed tests, exams, participation components and/or assignments worth (either alone or in combination) 10% or more of their final grade must apply to the Academic Counselling office of their home Faculty and provide documentation. Academic accommodation cannot be granted by the instructor or department.

Documentation shall be submitted, as soon as possible, to the Office of the Dean of the student's Faculty of registration, together with a request for relief specifying the nature of the accommodation being requested. The Student Medical Certificate (SMC) can be found at

<http://www.uwo.ca/univsec/handbook/appeals/medicalform.pdf>

The full policy is set out here:

http://www.uwo.ca/univsec/handbook/appeals/accommodation_medical.pdf

Students who are in emotional/mental distress should refer to MentalHealth@Western <http://www.uwo.ca/uwocom/mentalhealth/> for a complete list of options about how to obtain help.

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