

THE UNIVERSITY OF WESTERN ONTARIO
London **Canada**
Department of English and Women's Studies

Testimony, Youth and Human Rights

ENG 9112A
Wednesdays 12:30-3:30
ROOM NO. UC 377

Fall 2014

Office Hours: Wednesday 11-12:30
or by appointment

Prof. Julia Emberley
Graduate course 2014-15

Professor Julia Emberley
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Description:

In this course students will examine testimonial literatures written by and for young people in relation to Human Rights discourses. Students will examine primary documents on Human Rights, key theoretical texts on the subject of human rights, the field of "Human Rights literatures" and a selection of testimonial texts that challenge, intervene and expand upon contemporary Human Rights discourses. We will examine issues related to gender and sexuality, decolonization, the meaning of being "human," and consider key terms such as "freedom" and "equality."

Evaluation:

Seminar response papers & Participation	30%
Seminar Presentation/Outline	25%
Research Paper (Due Dec. 10)	45%

Response papers:

You are required to write 2-3 double-space pages engaging with weekly materials. Some weeks contain designated instructions for this assignment. For all other weeks, please write a "response" to the literary and/or theoretical work for that week. Engage in an argument with the theoretical material and how, if applicable, it contributes to an analysis of the literary or filmic texts.

Please upload your response papers at least 24 hours before class on the course OWL site.

10% of the 30% allotted for this assignment will be used to grade overall class participation.

Seminar presentations:

Seminar presentations are expected to be 30-40 minutes, including class discussion. Please do not read from a prepared essay. The emphasis here should be on developing oral presentation skills. Students are also required to submit to me a two-page outline and summary of their presentation before the seminar begins.

Final research essay.

20 pages or 5000 words on a topic related to the course. Your topic must be approved by me. The emphasis here is on a “research” essay, which means that you are expected to do a substantial amount of research to support your argument.

Required Readings:

Gabriella Ambrosio, *Before We Say Good Bye*

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

Lynn Hunt, *Inventing Human Rights: A History* (selected chapters)

Jean-Paul Sartre, *What is Literature?* Available On-line:

<https://archive.org/details/whatisliterature030271mbp>

<http://www.english.ufl.edu/mrg/readings/Sartre,%20What%20Is%20Literature.PDF>

Jean-Luc Nancy, *The Experience of Freedom*

Elie Wiesel, *Night*

Eden Robinson's *Monkey Beach*

Martha C. Nussbaum, *Poetic Justice: The Literary Imagination and Public Life*

Ghassan Kanafani, *Palestine's Children*

Richard Wright, *Black Boy*

Heather O'Neill, *The Girl That was Saturday Night*

Course Outline:

September 10 Introduction

Political Subjectivity and HR

September 17 i. *Before We Say Good Bye*, Ambrosio
ii. Donnelly, *Universal Human Rights* Chaps 1-4

September 24 i. Film: *Death in Gaza*
ii. Donnelly, *Universal Human Rights*, chaps 5-7

HR, Literature and Youth

October 1 i. Jean-Paul Sartre, *What is Literature?* Chaps 1-3
ii. Lynn Hunt, “Introduction” and “‘Torrents of Emotion’: Reading Novels and Imagining Equality” from *Inventing Human Rights*

For this week's "response paper" consider the significance of the concepts of "empathy" and "freedom" in relation to literary practices.

- October 8
- i. Ghassan Kanafani, *Palestine's Children*
 - ii. http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ghassan_Kanafani

For this week's "response paper" consider the information provided in the Wikipedia summary of Kanafani's life and how it sheds light on his novel.

Testimony and the Discourses of HR

- October 15
- 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. Dori Laub, "Bearing Witness, or the Vicissitudes of Listening," from Felman and Laub
 - iii. Dominick LaCapra, "Writing History, Writing Trauma" from LaCapra, *Writing History, Writing Trauma*. Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1996. (i, ii, iii and iv available on course OWL site)
 - iv. Elie Wiesel, *Night*

- October 22
- Jean-Luc Nancy, *The Experience of Freedom* Chaps 1-3, 7, 8, 11 & 12

- October 29
- i. http://www.un.org/esa/socdev/unpfii/documents/DRIPS_enpdf
United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples
 - ii. Eden Robinson's *Monkey Beach*
 - iii. *Universal Human Rights* Chaps 8-12

- November 5
- i. Film - *ABC Africa*. Dir. Abbas Kiarostami
 - ii. Film - *Rocked: SUM 41 in Congo*. War Child Canada
 - iii. Donnelly, *Universal Human Rights* Chaps 13 -16

Human Rights, Literature and Justice

- November 12
- Martha C. Nussbaum, *Poetic Justice: The Literary Imagination and Public Life*
- November 19
- No class this week but read Heather O'Neill, *The Girl That was Saturday Night* and submit response paper
- November 26
- Richard Wright, *Black Boy*

Celebrity and Human Rights

- December 3
- readings from *Stardom and Celebrity: A Reader*. Available on OWL course site
 - i. "Stars," Richard Dyer.
 - ii. "From *Beyond Control* to In Control: Investigating Drew Barrymore's Feminist Agency/Authorship," Rebecca Williams
 - iii. "The Economy of Celebrity," Graeme Turner
 - iv. "Doing it For Themselves? Teenage Girls, Sexuality and Fame," Catharine Lumby

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

Response paper this week should address an example from the media of celebrity HR in relation to the above readings
Consider, for example, Malala Yousafzi or Angelina Jolie and Brad Pitt, George Clooney and Amal Alamuddin, or another celebrity supporter of HR

December 10

No class. Term Essays Due