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

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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:

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  
Seminar Presentation  
Seminar Participation  
Final Essay (13-15 pages) Due April 8
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


The full policy is set out here:


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

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