

HUMAN RIGHTS AND THE MEDIA COURSE 2011

Course Lecturer & Co-ordinator: Dr. Sarah Chiumbu

Office: Room 3163, 3rd Floor, Senate House

Tel: (011) 717 4248

Email: sarah.chiumbu@wits.ac.za

Consultation times: Wednesdays: 10h00-12h00

A. Course content

The course will address the interconnection between human rights and the media. Discussions will address issues that have to do with philosophical, legal and cultural aspects of the debate over human rights and the media. Students will develop foundational knowledge in media and human rights theory, policy and practice, and explore both historical developments and contemporary issues. Special attention will be directed towards the relationship between human rights and the media in a context of rapid social and technological change.

B. Learning outcomes

The students shall develop a critical understanding of:

- The key features of freedom theories
- The relationship between human rights and the media
- The changing nature of freedom of expression and human rights in the digital age

C. Lecture Information

Lecturers will be held on Mondays, 14h15-17h00.

D. Teaching

- Coursework will consist of lectures and seminar discussions.
- The lectures in the course will not go through the curriculum in any detail, but rather consist of discussions and additional perspectives to the texts that form the basis of the course. Consequently students are expected to read and make use of the curriculum and other relevant texts both in their studies and exams.
- The students are expected to make presentations in class during the course.

E. Reading Delivery and Course Information

- A reading pack with material for each lecture will be handed out to each student. Additional reading material may be handed out in class.
- Readers will be distributed in class, but can also be collected from the IHREP office.
- Students are encouraged to read beyond the reader. Such material includes books and articles.
- The readings provided will cover topics and issues for each lecture in each week. The readings are organized sequentially, i.e. in the order in which the lectures are organized.
- Key readings must be read before the lecture.

F. Assignment and Exam information

Your final mark is comprised as follows:

- **Assignments = 50%**
- **Final Examination = 50%**
- There will be one individual written assignment on a given topic. The submitted essay paper may be up to 2000.
- No essays will be accepted after the stipulated deadline. No extensions that have not been granted by the Course Convener 3 days in advance will be accepted. All requests for extensions must be in writing.
- All essays **MUST** be typed.
- Essays will be handed in at the Department of Media Studies, Room 3063, Third Floor, Senate House.
- There will be an exam in which you answer **2** questions in 3 hours.

G. Lecture Information

Lecture 1: Introduction to Media

This lecture introduced students to the field of media studies and the role the media play in society and the shaping of culture

Readings:

O'Shaughnessy, M and Stadler, J (2002) *Media and Society: An Introduction*. 2nd Edition. Oxford University Press. (p. 2-38)

Case study:

(a) Outfoxed: Rupert Murdoch Attack on Journalism – a documentary (78 mins)

Lecture 2: Foundational theories of freedom of expression and human rights

This lecture examines the theoretical foundations of freedom of expression and thought and introduces students to theories of early classical thinkers in the field of freedom of speech.

Readings:

Keane, J (1991) 'Liberty of the Press', *The Media and Democracy*. London: Polity. pp. 2-50

Barendt, E (2005) 'Why Protect Free Speech', *Freedom of Speech*. Oxford: Oxford University Press. p. 1-139)

Barendt, E (2005) 'Freedom of Speech in the Media', *Freedom of Speech*. Oxford University Press. (p 417-450)

Haworth, A (1998) *Free Speech*. London: Routledge. Chapter 1 (p.3-16); Chapter 2 (p.24-32); Chapter 9 (p. 174-194)

Case Studies:

- (a) Universal Declaration of Human Rights – retrieve it at <http://www.un.org/en/documents/udhr/index.shtml>
- (b) Declaration on Freedom of Expression in Africa – retrieve it at <http://www1.umn.edu/humanrts/achpr/expressionfreedomdec.html>

Lecture 3: Media, Human Rights and Democracy

Closely related to Lecture 2, this lecture gives a short historical perspective of the relationship between media-democracy by focusing on some of the major philosophical ideas related to the role of media (the press) in a democratic system. The inter-relationship between media and human rights is also explored.

Readings:

McQuail, D (2005) *Mass Communication Theory*. London: Sage Publications. 5th Edition, Chapter 7 (p. 161-188)

Berger, G (2002) 'Theorising the Media-Democracy Relationship in Southern Africa', *International Journal for Communication Studies*, Vol. 64(1):21-45

Case study:

- (a) Media Appeals Tribunal in South Africa

Lecture 4: Freedom of Speech, Culture and Religion

This lecture examines tensions and contradiction in the relationship between freedom of expression, religion and culture. What cultural and religious conflicts arise within notions of Western conceptualisation of human rights and freedom of expression?

Readings:

Penna, D and Campbell, P (1998) Human rights and culture: beyond universality and relativism. *Third World Quarterly*, Vol 19, No 1, pp 7-27, 1998

Sturges, P (2006) 'Limits to Freedom of Expression? Considerations arising from the Danish Cartoons affair', *IFLA Journal* 32(3):181-188

Case Studies:

- (a) The Danish Cartoon affair

Lecture 5: Internet and Freedom of Expression

New media technologies, most specifically the Internet, are challenging traditional notions of freedom of expression, human rights and notions of privacy. How should our theories of freedom of expression change to take these technologies into account? The digital revolution offers unprecedented opportunities for creating a vibrant system of free expression, but at the same time presents new dangers for freedom of speech. This lecture discusses these challenges.

Readings:

Barendt, E (2005) 'Freedom of Speech and the Internet', *Freedom of Speech*. Oxford University Press. (p 451-474)

LaCharte, J (2002) Electronic Decentralisation in China: A Critical Analysis of Internet Filtering Policies in the People's Republic of China, *Australian Journal of Political Science*, Bol. 37, No. 2, pp. 333-346

Gomez, J (2004) Dumbing down democracy: Trends in internet regulation, surveillance and control in Asia, *Pacific Journalism Review* 10(2) 2004

Lynch, Lisa (2010) "We're Going to Crack the World Open": Wikileaks and the future of investigative reporting, *Journalism Practice*, Vol.4, No 3: 309-318

Pilger, J (2010) 'Why Wikileaks Must Be Protected', *Z Space: A Community of people committed to Social Change*. August 2010, available at <http://www.zcommunications.org/why-wikileaks-must-be-protected-by-john-pilger>, accessed 31 May 2011

Case Studies:

- (a) The Great Firewall of China
- (b) Wikileaks

Lecture 6: Social Media and Human Rights

The role of Internet and social media as carriers of freedom of expression has been highlighted, especially in light of revolutions in the uprisings in North Africa and Middle East in 2011. This lecture examines the relationship between social media and freedom of expression. The lecture in addition interrogates whether social media are threatening rights to personal privacy.

Bohler, Muller, N and Van der Merwe, C (2011) 'The potential of social media to influence socio-political change on the African continent', *African Institute of South Africa Policy Brief*, No 46.

Maher, Heather (2009) *Twittering The Tyrants: New Media's Role in Authoritarian Regimes*, RadioFreeEurope/Radio Liberty, Available at http://www.rferl.org/content/Twittering_The_Tyrants_New_Medias_Role_In_Authoritarian_Regimes/1860083.html, accessed on 31 May 2011

Pippidi, A & Munteanu, I (2009) Moldova's "Twitter Revolution", *Journal of Democracy*, Vol, 20, No. 3, July 2009

Mulholland, H & Bowcott, O (2011) 'Footballer's injunction challenged by the Sun': Newspaper's high court bid to lift ruling comes after David Cameron calls for current law on privacy 'unsustainable', *The Guardian*, 23 May 2011. Available at <http://www.guardian.co.uk/politics/2011/may/23/privacy-law-social-media-america/print>, accessed 31 May 2011

Halliday, J (2011) Twitter faces legal action by footballer over privacy. *The Guardian.co.uk*, 20 May 2011 Satter, R (2011) UK Privacy Law Thrown Into Turmoil by Media, Twitter. *The Huffingtonpost.com*, 23 May 2011

Case Studies:

- (a) Privacy laws and social media – the UK Superinjunction case

Lecture 7: Media, Social Justice and the Poor

This lecture examines the role of the media in promoting economic and social rights. Research has shown that mainstream media, often driven by commercial interests, provide very little space for marginalised groups. For instance, media representation of social

movements globally show a pattern that indicate negative representation. Social movements have relied on different forms of alternative media to highlight their concerns.

Readings:

Atton, C (2003) Reshaping Social Movement Media for a New Millennium, *Social Movement Studies*, Vol. 2, No. 1, 2003

Ballard, R, Habib, A, Valodia, I and Zuern, E (2005) 'Globalisation, Marginalisation and Contemporary Movements in South Africa', *African Affairs*, 104/417, 615-634

Case Studies:

- (a) Social movements and the media in South Africa
- (b) Burma VJ – a documentary – 84 mins