

**Florida State University
International Human Rights & Film
FIL 3932-0001
HCB 0316**

Fall 2018

FIL 3932

Instructors:

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Course Objective: to explore issues concerning international human rights using film as the key medium. Students will learn basic cinematography concepts and techniques as well as the history and terminology of the human rights movement. Course lectures and weekly film viewings will examine how film directors have explored human rights themes through commercial Hollywood films, independent films, and documentary films. Students will be responsible for a class journal, for a major research or creative project, and for a final exam covering course lectures.

August 27: Introduction to the Course

September 3: No Class (Labor Day)

September 10: 15 to Life: Kenneth's Story (documentary about a 15 year old child in Florida sentenced to life in prison for an armed robbery and the efforts of FSU Law Professor Paolo Annino to secure a new trial for him).

September 17: 40 Years Seeking Justice (documentary film produced by Dr. Richard and Professor Coonan examining the decades-long efforts by Joyce Horman to learn the truth of her husband's disappearance and death during the 1973 coup in Chile)

September 24: Documented (documentary by Pulitzer Prize winning journalist Jose Antonio Varga chronicling his own life journey as one who was brought to the United States as a small child and who remained here in undocumented status).

October 1: Waltz with Bashir (Israeli filmmaker Ari Folman examines the consequences of the First Lebanon War in an animated documentary)

October 8: Beyond the Gates (re-telling of the events of Rwanda's 1994 genocide and the moral dilemmas that it created for those who experienced it)

- Journals due for the 1st time**
- October 15:** **Very Young Girls** (documentary examining the sex trafficking of U.S. minors and the challenges the young women face in recovering and reclaiming their lives)
- October 22:** **War Dance** (documentary following a music competition and its impact upon children living in a refugee camp in the northern Uganda conflict zone)
- October 29:** **Zero Dark Thirty** (Director Kathryn Bigelow’s narrative of the worldwide manhunt for Osama bin Laden and questions raised by the use of torture by the United States in its War Against Terror)
- November 5:** **Food Chains** (documentary film examining the groundbreaking work by the Coalition of Immokalee Workers to secure justice and better working conditions for Florida’s migrant workers)
- Journals Due for the 2nd time**
1 page Proposal for Major Project Due
- November 12:** **Rabbit Proof Fence** (true story of aboriginal children in Australia who were part of the “Lost Generation” – children taken by the Australian government in an attempt to rob them of their aboriginal culture and heritage)
- November 19:** **No Class (Thanksgiving week)** – work on your final papers/projects!
- November 26:** **Invictus** (Clint Eastwood film examining how Nelson Mandela and the world of sports contributed to South Africa moving beyond its violent legacy of 50 years of apartheid and human rights abuses)
- December 3:** **Snow Falling on Cedars** (film based on the David Guterson novel telling the story of the forced relocation of Japanese Americans into internment camps during the Second World War)
Major Projects Due
- December 10:** **Final Exam**
Journals Due for the 3rd time

Film Etiquette

Screening time is considered “sacred time” in this class—not recreation. It is expected that students will be present throughout the film, including the credits. **It goes without saying that no cell phone conversations, internet surfing, text messaging, etc, are to be engaged in during class or the showing of the films.** Great emphasis is also placed on the class

discussions after the film. A full 20% of the student's final grade is an assessment of their class participation, especially in these discussions.

Class Policies & Grading

Class will meet on Monday evenings from 5:00 PM to 8:15 PM. Students unable to commit completely to this timeframe should not enroll in the class. Weekly attendance is mandatory and roll will be taken. Every student is allowed one unexcused absence over the course of the semester. **More than one unexcused absence will result in the student failing the class.** **Tardiness will also cause a student's class grade to be lowered significantly.** Please turn off all cell phones before entering classroom.

The first class will consist of background lectures introducing the students to the basics of both filmmaking and international human rights law & theory. On evenings that films are screened, the screening will be preceded by a 15 minute lecture on a filmmaking technique particular to that film and a 15 minute lecture on the human rights context of the film. A brief 15-20 minute discussion will follow each film screening. **Early departures from class are not permitted, and result in significant reductions to the student's final class participation grade.**

Journals

Each student will keep a journal in which she or he will respond to reflection questions assigned in class. Journal entries are to be typed (double-spaced, with standard margins and 12 point font letters). You can also paint, draw, or use images from newspapers, magazine articles, or photographs as part of the journal. Journal entries are to be submitted in a three-ring punched binder with your name on the front of the binder. Each journal entry should have the name of the film at the top of the entry. Journal entries will be turned in three times during the semester for review.

The journals are the means through which students are expected to reflect upon and interact with the ideas and techniques inherent to each film. There are no "right or wrong" answers to the reflection questions assigned in class. Students rather will be assessed for the manner in which they respond to the reflection questions and demonstrate that they are grappling with the issues posed by the filmmakers.

Journal entries are graded as follows:

- ++ Very Good
- + / Good
- // Adequate
- / - Not Adequate
- Failing

Major Project

Each student will be responsible for selecting and completing one of the following projects:

- 1) **Screenplay:** The student may write a screenplay (10-15 pages) for a single scene involving one of the characters from one of the films viewed during the course. Such a screenplay could be either a prequel or sequel to the film shown in class, and should further develop the character's experience or awareness of human rights in that character's particular setting (i.e., what life experiences might have led to a character behaving as he or she did in the film? Or what life experiences might occur after the point where the film finishes?)
- 2) **Research Paper:** The student may write a 10-15 page research paper on one of the movies from class and/or the human rights situation which inspired it. This option will allow students who have an interest in a particular film or human rights situation to analyze it in greater depth.
- 3) **Comparative Paper:** The student may write a 10-15 page comparative paper on themes introduced as part of the course (i.e., an analysis of different approaches utilized by film directors in treating human rights issues...character development in human rights films as regards human rights issues... the use of sound, lighting, or camera angles in human rights films... political or cultural biases that are discernible in human rights films... etc.).
- 4) **Independent Project :** The student may propose an independent project particular to his or her own interest and background. This must be proposed and approved in advance, and the student must describe the film component of the project, its human rights component, and criteria for evaluation.

Proposals for the major projects are due at the beginning of class on the week of **November 3**. The projects are due at the beginning of the **December 1** class period.

Final Exam

A Final Exam for the course will be administered. It will be based on the course lectures given throughout the semester.

Course Grades

Each student's final grade will be weighted as follows:

Class Participation	20%
Journals:	20%
Major Project	30%
Final Exam	30%

Academic Honor Code

The Academic Honor System of the Florida State University is based on the premise that each student has the responsibility 1) to uphold the highest standards of academic integrity in the student's own work, 2) to refuse tolerate violations of academic integrity in the University community, and 3) to foster a high sense of integrity and social responsibility on the part of the University community.

Americans with Disabilities Act

Students with disabilities needing academic accommodations should register with and provide documentation to the Student Disability Center (SDRC). A letter should be submitted to the instructors from SDRC indicating you need academic accommodations. This must be done within the first week of class.

Modification of this Syllabus

This instructors reserve the right to amend or modify this syllabus at any time by giving written notice of the change at a scheduled class.