

## **The Role of Civil Society: Grassroots Movements and NGOs**

SDIS 3320 (4 Credits)

### **International Honors Program (IHP): Human Rights: Movements, Power, and Resistance**

*This syllabus is representative of a typical semester. Because courses develop and change over time to take advantage of unique learning opportunities, actual course content varies from semester to semester.*

#### **Course Description**

The latter half of the twentieth-century gave rise to a large and diverse sector of civil society organizations working at multiple scales, utilizing a variety of approaches to achieve human rights based change. Though the aims, intentions, and impact of these organizations is contested, the constellation of actors working towards human rights under the umbrella of civil society has become a defining feature of contemporary human rights practice. This course is designed to provide students with an understanding of the diverse configurations of these civil society organizations: NGOs, legal advocacy organizations, grassroots community-based organizations, social movement networks etc., as well as familiarity with the differing strategies of change they employ.

In order to add focus and depth, the course is tied together under the cross cutting theme of struggles for women's rights and gender justice. This course is taught by Local Faculty, each of whom are directly involved in struggles for gender equity through their work with civil society organizations. Course Faculty draw from their experiences as advocates, grassroots organizers, and lawyers utilizing different strategies of resistance to effect change. By experiencing first-hand a broad spectrum of civil society organizations within the sphere of women's rights, students will be challenged to come to their own conclusions of how to bridge the gap between human rights rhetoric and reality.

*This is a practicum course composed of classroom-based sessions with Local Faculty as well as field-based activities such as workshops, site visits, and guest lectures in each program site.*

#### **Learning Outcomes**

Upon completion of the course, students will be able to:

- Examine the role of location-specific NGOs and grassroots organizations working on gender as agents of advocacy and change in national and international contexts.
- Develop a broad perspective on varied practices of civil society and the differing forms, strategies, tactics, and outcomes they utilize to achieve change.
- Analyze local experiences of patriarchy and gender-based oppression framing struggles for gender justice, as well as the social and political climates that facilitate or impede the work of civil society organizations in different contexts.

- Gain in depth exposure to the lived experiences of activists engaged in women's rights struggles to understand the stakes involved in this sphere of work.
- Cultivate skills relevant to organizing and advocacy work through field-based assignment, including: group facilitation, public presentation, and group collaboration.

### **Course Methodology**

Designed as a practicum, the course will combine classroom-based sessions with Local Faculty and an array of field-based activities designed to broaden the group's exposure to civil society practices. Field activities include guest lectures and panels with scholars and practitioners of gender justice, and site visits to women's organizations working in both urban and rural settings. In each country visited, field activities culminate in a final case study assignment. For this assignment, students divide into small groups and examine a different contemporary women's rights issue or case being addressed by local organizations. Following the site visit, students work collaboratively on a participatory presentation or 'teach-in' to share their analysis and experience with the rest of the group.

### **Course Requirements**

Required readings, will be available at the beginning of the program. Supplementary readings and sources, listed at the end the syllabus, are provided for further reference and to better understand the course content. Students are expected to complete the required readings before each class unit and to use them in fulfilling assignments. Students should explore local resources, such as newspapers and television, and take the initiative in seeking out other material.

### **Assignments**

#### *Case Study -- Teach-In*

*(20 Points per Site)*

In each site, Local Faculty have designed a set of case studies where students split into small groups and focus on different gender justice initiatives. The case study entails undertaking an in-depth look at a particular topic over a few days, and will culminate in a 30 minute group teach-in. Case studies may involve a small group visit to women's organizations, conversations with NGO workers, rigorous study of a contemporary legal case, and/or a multiple-day excursion to a rural village.

During the case study, student groups will collaborate to gather information, develop a conceptual analysis of the topic at hand, and then convey what they learned to their peers through a group facilitated teach-in. Each group will have 30 minutes total for their Teach-in, and is encouraged to be creative with the design and format of their session. Case Studies begin with a briefing by the Local Faculty where students are given background information on case study options and are split into research groups. In each site, students will be split into different groups at random. There is one case study in each program site.

Each case study counts equally as (20%) of your overall grade in the course. Case study Teach-in's are graded by Local Faculty based on a shared rubric. In addition, students provide peer feedback for each case study group. See full assignment description at the end of the syllabus.

#### *Case Study – Written Assignment*

*(10 Points per Site)*

In addition to the group Teach-in, each case study group is expected to develop a short written piece (approximately two to three pages double spaced) that is submitted to Local Faculty. The piece should

be written for a public audience, using a format used by civil society practitioners, such as an Op-Ed, Policy Brief, Advocacy Materials, Legal Brief etc. However, the exact format of the written assignment can vary by group and by location. Each group should discuss the format of their written piece with Local Faculty before submitting the assignment.

### *Assignment Percentages of Course Grade*

Case Study – Teach In 60%

- Case Study – Teach In ATL/TN = 20%
- Case Study – Teach In NYC = 20%
- Case Study – Teach In Chile = 20%

Case Study – Written Assignment 40%

- Case Study – Written Assignment ATL/TN = 13%
- Case Study – Written Assignment NYC = 13%
- Case Study – Written Assignment Chile = 13%

### **Evaluation and Grading Criteria**

The faculty will grade you on the basis of points and will return written assignments with comments. The range of points will indicate how your work compares with the rest of the class. At the end of the term, your cumulative point score will be calculated to determine your final letter grade for the course. Point grades for individual assignments are not directly correlated to final letter grades, which will reflect your work on assignments in all countries.

It is useful for faculty and students to view final grades in this way. An “A” represents truly outstanding work, exemplifying rigorous analysis, superior insights, and precise presentation. A “B” signifies highly competent work that completes the assignment very well, with considerable thought, reasonable analytical results and an effective presentation. A “C” represents acceptable, work, satisfying the basic requirements, but lacking distinction, original analytical insights or organization. A “D” grade indicates poorly or partially completed work, reflecting a lack of initiative, inconsistent analytical conclusions and/or a disorganized presentation. Pluses and minuses for the four letter grades indicate better or poorer work. There is no “A+” grade.

### Grading Scale

94-100%	A	Excellent
90-93%	A-	
87-89%	B+	
84-86%	B	Above Average
80-83%	B-	
77-79%	C+	
74-76%	C	Average
70-73%	C-	
67-69%	D+	
64-66%	D	Below Average
below 64	F	Fail

### **Expectations and Policies**

- Show up prepared. Be on time, have your readings completed and points in mind for discussion or clarification. Complying with these elements raises the level of class discussion for everyone.

- Have assignments completed on schedule, printed, and done accordingly to the specified requirements. This will help ensure that your assignments are returned in a timely manner.
- Ask questions in class. Engage the lecturer. These are often very busy professionals who are doing us an honor by coming to speak....
- Comply with academic integrity policies (no plagiarism or cheating, nothing unethical).
- Respect differences of opinion (classmates', lecturers, local constituents engaged with on the visits). You are not expected to agree with everything you hear, but you are expected to listen across difference and consider other perspectives with respect.

Course faculty must approve requests for extensions on assignment deadlines in advance of the deadlines written in the syllabus. Late submissions that are not approved by faculty in advance of the deadline will be penalized by one point deducted per day late. Extensions are granted at the discretion of your course faculty, according to the timelines that they deem suitable.

## **SIT Policies and Resources**

Please refer to the [SIT Study Abroad Handbook](#) and the [Policies](#) section of the SIT website for all academic and student affairs policies. Students are accountable for complying with all published policies. Of particular relevance to this course are the policies regarding: academic integrity, research and ethics in field study and internships, late assignments, academic status, academic appeals, diversity and disability, sexual harassment and misconduct, and the student code of conduct.

Please refer to the SIT Study Abroad Handbook and SIT website for information on important resources and services provided through our central administration in Vermont, such as [Library resources and research support](#), [Disability Services](#), [Counseling Services](#), [Title IX information](#), and [Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion](#) resources.

## **Course Organization and Required Reading**

*\*Please be aware that topics and site visits may vary to take advantage of any emerging events, to accommodate changes in our lecturers' availability, and to respect any changes that would affect student safety. Students will be notified if this occurs*

### **I. Atlanta & Tennessee**

#### **Session 1: Ecosystems of civil society**

Edwards, M. (2009). 'Introduction – What's the Big Idea' and 'Civil Society as Associational Life' in *Civil Society*, Polity. pp. 1-42

Kennedy, D. (2002) The International Human Rights Movement: Part of the Problem? *Harvard Human Rights Journal* Vol. 15 pp.101-125

#### **Session 2: By any means, by all means: building 'Freedom Dreams' in (and alongside) the black radical tradition**

Whitfield, E. (2018) "What must we do to be free? On the building of Liberated Zones." Prabuddha: Journal of Social Equality, [S.I.], v. 2, n. 1, p. 45-58, nov. 2018. ISSN 2576-2079. Available at: <http://prabuddha.us/index.php/pjse/article/view/23>

Boggs, G.L. (2010). "The Power Within Us to Create the World Anew: A Discussion with Grace Lee Boggs," interview by Stevie Peace in *Uses of a Whirlwind: Movement, Movements, and Contemporary Radical Currents in the United States*, edited by Team Colors Collective, pp/. 347-362.

Please familiarize yourself with the "Platform" of the Vision 4 Black Lives: <https://policy.m4bl.org/platform/>, AND please familiarize yourself with at least ONE of the "Demands"

Please familiarize yourself with the Southern Movement Assembly's "Southern Movement Blueprint": <http://southtosouth.org/blueprint-purpose/>

Watch: Woodard Henderson, A.L. (2018), Keynote Address for Mountain State Racial Justice Summit, November 30, 2018, [https://scontent-atl3-1.xx.fbcdn.net/v/t42.9040-29/10000000\\_705210459879269\\_721512213185036288\\_n.mp4?\\_nc\\_cat=107&efg=eyJ2ZW5jb2RlX3RhZyl6lnNkln0%3D&\\_nc\\_ht=scontent-atl3-1.xx&oh=30b4b79c90205ef1d2e08a32470bb4b3&oe=5C3C043B](https://scontent-atl3-1.xx.fbcdn.net/v/t42.9040-29/10000000_705210459879269_721512213185036288_n.mp4?_nc_cat=107&efg=eyJ2ZW5jb2RlX3RhZyl6lnNkln0%3D&_nc_ht=scontent-atl3-1.xx&oh=30b4b79c90205ef1d2e08a32470bb4b3&oe=5C3C043B), Begins at 12:30

Watch: "Ain't You Got a Right" [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=L\\_qJR3YVyy4](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=L_qJR3YVyy4) (arranged & performed by Guy & Candie Carawan)

### **Session 3: Popular education & the Highlander Center**

Clark, S. P., & Brown, C. (1986). *Ready from within: Septima Clark & the civil rights movement, a first person narrative*. Wild Trees Press, pp 41-54

Adams, F. (1975). *Unearthing seeds of fire: The idea of Highlander*, pp. 142-157

Horton, M., & Freire, P. (1990). *We make the road by walking: Conversations on education and social change*. Temple University Press, pp. 97-128

## **II. NYC**

### **Session 4: Strategies of social change: service, advocacy, and organizing**

Minieri, J., Getsos & Klein K. (2007). Ch. 1 'Taking it On: Starting to Build Power' in *Tools for radical democracy: How to organize for power in your community*. (Vol. 19). John Wiley & Sons. Pp. 3-18

Sen, R. (2003). 'Introduction: Community Organizing Yesterday and Today' *Stir it up: Lessons in community organizing and advocacy* (Vol. 16). John Wiley & Sons.

Community Organizing Handouts from Community Voices Heard (CVH)

### **Session 5. Human rights, gender & civil society**

Mohanty, C. 2003. "Under Western Eyes" revisited: Feminist solidarity through anti-capitalist struggle. *Feminism Without Borders: Decolonizing Theory, Practicing Solidarity*. Duke University Press, pp. 221-251.

Merry, S. 2006. Transnational Human Rights and Local Activism: Mapping the Middle. *American Anthropologist*, 108(1), pp. 38-51.

## **Session 6: Transnationalism, and international movement building**

Achcar, G. (2012). 'Morbidity symptoms: What did Gramsci mean and how does it apply to our time?' *International Socialist Review*, 108, 30-37

Amin, S. (2018). 'Audacious Movements Have to Start: Interview with Samir Amin' *Frontlines: India's National Magazine*. May 25<sup>th</sup> 2018

Davis, A. Y. (2016). 'Transnational Solidarities: Resisting Racism, Genocide, and Settler Colonialism' ch. 10 in *Freedom is a constant struggle: Ferguson, Palestine, and the foundations of a movement*. Haymarket Books. pp.129-145

### *IV. Chile*

## **Session 7: Political autonomy— the role of the familial in the political culture of Chile**

Allende, I. (1985). *The House of Spirits*. Random House: New York. (Chapters 1 & 2).

### Suggested Reading:

Franceschet, S. (2003). "State Feminism" and Women's Movements: The Impact of Chile's Servicio Nacional de la Mujer" on *Women's Activism in Latin American Research Review*, 38:1-40.

Thomas, G. (2011). Introduction to *Contesting Legitimacy in Chile: Familial Ideas, Citizenship and Political Struggles 1970-1990*. Pennsylvania State University Press

## **Session 8: Body autonomy—the body politic of Chile: race, sexuality and the colonial legacy**

Vivaldi, L. (2018). Autonomy, Vulnerability and Resistance: Brief History of the Feminist Fight for Abortion in Marshall, P. *Citizenship and Disadvantaged groups in Chile*. Lexington Books: Lanham.

### Suggested Reading:

Pieper Mooney, J. (2009). *The Politics of Motherhood: Maternity and Women's Rights in Twentieth Century Chile*, University of Pittsburgh Press.

Eggers, M. (2016). Doctoral Dissertation, Social Work, U Conn. *Embodying inequality: the criminalization of women for abortion in Chile*. Third Chapter, "Structural Violence", pp. 75-107.

## **Session 9: Economic autonomy— colonial stereotypes & citizenship: the labor of care among black, rural and indigenous women in Chile**

Richards, P. (2013). Race and the Chilean Miracle. Neoliberalism, Democracy, and Indigenous Rights. Chapter 1: Race and the Chilean Miracle.

### Suggested Reading:

Rivera Cusicanqui, S. (2012). *Ch'ixinakax utxiwa: A Reflection on the Practices and Discourses of Decolonization*. Duke University Press

Lugones, M. (2008). The coloniality of gender in *Worlds & Knowledges Otherwise*, (1), 1-16

### **Session 10: On love & resistance**

Sandoval, C. (2000). Chapter 6: Love as a hermeneutics of social change, a decolonizing movida; in *Methodology of the Oppressed*. University of Minnesota Press. pp. 139-157.

hooks, b. (2000). *All about love: New visions*. Introduction, xv-xxiv & Living by a Love Ethic, 87-101 & Chapter 12, Healing Redemptive Love, 209-221.

## **HRCS: The Role of Civil Society**

### **Assignment Description: Case Study Presentation**

*60 points total, 20 points per country assignment*

In each location, Local Faculty have designed a set of case studies where students split into small groups and focus on different gender justice initiatives. The case study entails undertaking an in-depth look at a particular topic over a few days, and will culminate in a 30 minute group teach-in. Case studies may involve a small group visit to women's organizations, conversations with NGO workers, rigorous study of a contemporary legal case, and/or a multiple-day excursion to a rural village.

During the case study, student groups will collaborate to gather information, develop a conceptual analysis of the topic at hand, and then convey what they learned to their peers through a group facilitated presentation or teach-in. Each group will have 30 minutes total for their Presentation, and is encouraged to be creative with the design and format of their session. Case Studies begin with a briefing by the Local Faculty where students are given background information on case study options and are split into research groups. In each site, students will be split into different groups at random. There is one case study in each local program.

Each case study counts equally as (20%) of your overall grade in the course. Case study Presentations are graded by Local Faculty based on a shared rubric. In addition, students provide peer feedback for each case study group.

### **TEACH IN – Assessment Rubric**

<b>CRITERIA</b>	<b>COMMENTS</b>
Creativity / Creative Pedagogy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Is the presentation creative in its format?</li><li>- Is the audience engaged?</li><li>- Do the creative elements support the analysis and communicate key ideas?</li></ul>
Depth of content	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Did the session convey a depth of understanding about the topic covered?</li><li>- Did the group draw from multiple sources or perspectives?</li><li>- Did the presentation do justice to the complexity of the case?</li></ul>
Critical Analysis	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Is the presentation connected to program readings or theory with a developed analysis about the topic studied?</li><li>- Did the group demonstrate ingenuity and critical-thinking in their understanding of the case?</li><li>- The purpose of the assignment is not to assess or criticize the work of an organization.</li></ul>
Participatory / Discussion	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Did the group use a participatory format to engage the audience?</li><li>- Did the participatory element of the presentation develop or deepen the content of the session?</li><li>- Did all group members play a role in the presentation?</li></ul>

Communication skills	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Is the presentation well-organized in its structure?</li> <li>- Were the presenters clear and comprehensible in their verbal communication of the material? Was the groups body language appropriate for the style of the session?</li> <li>- Were written or visual elements of the presentation clear and well-presented?</li> <li>- Were presenters responsive and strategic in their facilitation of activities or dicussions?</li> </ul>
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## **HRCS: The Role of Civil Society**

### **Assignment Description: Case Study – Written Assignment**

*40 points total, 13 points per site assignment*

In addition to the group Teach-in, each case study group is expected to develop a short written piece (approximately two to three pages double spaced) that is submitted to Local Faculty. The piece should be written for a public audience, using a format used by civil society practitioners, such as an Op-Ed, Policy Brief, Advocacy Materials, Legal Brief etc. However, the exact format of the written assignment can vary by group and by location. Each group should discuss the format of their written piece with Local Faculty before submitting the assignment.

#### **Due Date:**

Submit a printed copy of your written assignment to Local Faculty on the date of your group's Teach-in.

Assessment criteria determined by Local Faculty, see descriptions provided by Faculty upon arrival in each location.

## Recommended Readings

Kelley, Robin D.G. Hammer & Hoe: Alabama Communists During the Great Depression, Chapter 1 & Epilogue (pp 13-33 & 220-231)

Carawan, Guy & Candie. Ain't You Got a Right to the Tree of Life? The People of John's Island, South Carolina—Their Faces, Their Words, and Their Songs, Chapter 6, "Ain't You Got a Right to the Tree of Life? Progress on Johns Island," pp 138-172

Anne Braden: Southern Patriot <https://www.appalshop.org/media/anne-braden-southern-patriot/>

Angela Davis on Revolution/Violence: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=26CVcA2678k>

Sonnie, Amy & James Tracy. Hillbilly Nationalists, Urban Race Rebels, and Black Power: Community Organizing in Radical Times. Foreword, Introduction & Epilogue (xi-xx, 1-11, 169-173) AND "The roots of the Black Panther Party," Donna Murch interviewed by Sherry Wolf, Issue #100: Interviews <https://isreview.org/issue/100/roots-black-panther-party> [to be read together]

Shirley, Neal and Saralee Stafford. Dixie Be Damned: 300 Years of Insurrection in the South, "We Asked for Life! On the 1975 Revolt at the North Carolina Correctional Center for Women" pp 218-251

Hisdale, Mary Ann, Helen M. Lewis & S. Maxine Waller. It Comes from the People: Community Development & Local Theology. Chapters 2-4.

Srinivasan, Ramesh. Whose Global Village? Rethinking How Technology Shapes Our World, Chapter 5 "Taking Back Our Media"