

The Role of Civil Society: Grassroots Movements and NGOs

SDIS 3320 (4 Credits / 60 class hours)

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

PLEASE NOTE: This syllabus is representative of a typical term. 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.*

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Course Objectives

- Examine the role of country-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, compiled on eReserves through SIT, will be available before the launch 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 Country)

In each country, 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 country, students will be split into different groups at random. There is one case study in each country program, besides the launch in NYC.

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 Country)

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 country. Each group should discuss the format of their written piece with Local Faculty before submitting the assignment.

Final Reflection Paper

(10 Points)

This assignment invites you to reflect on the examples of human rights advocacy, activism and resistance you have observed in Nepal, Jordan and Chile and project forward to consider how you'll apply the lessons learned from the semester in the future. How did your experiences learning alongside activists and practitioners of human rights shape your thoughts about how you envision your role in human rights movements moving forward? What does effective resistance look like to you? Elaborate and describe the site, actions or activities, and strategies that will inform the path that lies ahead for you. Be sure to draw from key readings covered throughout the semester to connect your reflections to the questions we've been pursuing throughout the semester. Additionally, your paper should include reflections on your positionality and how it relates to the role you envision for yourself in human rights movements in the future. See full assignment description at the end of the syllabus.

Assignment Percentages of Course Grade

Case Study – Teach In	60%
- Case Study – Teach In Nepal = 20%	
- Case Study – Teach In Jordan = 20%	
- Case Study – Teach In Chile = 20%	
Case Study – Written Assignment	30%
- Case Study – Written Assignment Nepal = 10%	
- Case Study – Written Assignment Jordan = 10%	
- Case Study – Written Assignment Chile = 10%	
Final Reflection Paper	10%

Course Organization and Required Reading

I. New York City, USA

Session 1: 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)

II. Nepal

Session 2: Human Rights and the Role of Civil Society in Nepal

Kaviraj, S., & Khilnani, S. (2001). *Civil society: history and possibilities*. Cambridge University Press. pp. 1-7, and pp. 287-323

Shrestha, C. H., & Adhikari, R. (2010). Antipolitics and Counterpolitics in Nepal's Civil Society: The Case of Nepal's Citizens' Movement. *Voluntas: international journal of voluntary and nonprofit organizations*, 21(3), 293-316.

Session 3: Ethnic and Indigenous Marginalization and Social Exclusion in Nepal

Lawoti, M., & Hangen, S. (2013). *Nationalism and ethnic conflict in Nepal: Identities and mobilization after 1990* (Vol. 58). Routledge. pp. 5-32

Lawoti, M. 'Ethnic Politics and the Building of an Inclusive State' in ed. Von Einsiedel, S., Malone, D. M., & Pradhan, S. (2012). *Nepal in transition: from people's war to fragile peace*. Cambridge University Press. pp. 129-149

Session 4: Gender and Social Inclusion in Nepal

Bhattachan, K. (2001) Sociological Perspectives on Gender Issues in Changing Nepalese Society. pp. 86-105 http://www.fesnepal.org/publications/Gender_Democracy.pdf

Constitution special (Still unequal) by Sapana Pradhan Mala
<http://kathmandupost.ekantipur.com/news/2015-09-20/constitution-special-still-unequal.html>

III. Jordan

Session 5: Women's Rights in Jordan: History and Context

Al-Atiyat, I. (2003). Ch. 2 *The Women's Movement in Jordan* (Doctoral dissertation, Freie Universität Berlin). pp. 55-90

Available at:

http://www.diss.fuberlin.de/diss/servlets/MCRFileNodeServlet/FUDISS_derivate_000000001001/04_Chapter2.pdf;hosts=

Session 6: Islamic Feminism(s)

Wadud-Muhsin, Amina (1992) *Qur'an and Women*. Penerbit Fajar Bakti, 1992

Abu-Lughod, L. (2002). Do Muslim women really need saving? Anthropological reflections on cultural relativism and its others. *American anthropologist*, 104(3), 783-790.

Session 7: Law and Practice: Legal Impediments to Women's Empowerment, and Role of Civil Society Organizations

Al-Sharari, S. & Al Khatib, S. "The Legal Framework and Women Status in the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan", Published by Canadian Center of Science and Education

Human Rights Watch Report, Guests of the Governor Administrative Detention Undermines Rule of Law in Jordan, 2009 (pages 7-29) Available at:

<https://www.hrw.org/sites/default/files/reports/jordan0509webwcover.pdf>

IV. Chile

Session 8: The struggle for civil and political rights in Chile: "Democracy in the country and in the house".

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 America" *Research Review*, 38:1-40.

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

Additional Reading Suggestions:

Jane Jaquette's collection *The Women's Movement in Latin America*

Meredith Turshen's *Engendering Relations of State to Society in the Aftermath*

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Session 9: Conflicts over women's bodies in the body politic of Chile.

Eggers, M. (2016) Chapter 3, "Structural Violence" in *Embodying Inequality: The Criminalization of Women for Abortion in Chile*, Doctoral Dissertation, Social Work, UConn. pp. 75-107

Additional Readings:

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

Session 10: The politics of difference and women's economic autonomy during the transitional governments of Chile

Richards, P. (2006). "The Politics of Difference and Women's Rights: Lessons from Pobladoras and Mapuche Women in Chile" in *Social Politics* 13:1, 1-29.

Tinsman, H. (2000) "Reviving Feminist Materialism: Gender and Neoliberalism in Pinochet's Chile" in *Chicago Journals*, 26:1, 145-188.

Additional Reading Suggestions:

Richards, P. (2004). *Pobladoras, Indigenas and the State: Conflicts over Women's rights in Chile*. Rutgers University Press: New Brunswick.

Schild, V. (1998). New Subjects of Rights? Women's Movements and the Construction of Citizenship in the 'New Democracies' in Alvarez, Dagnino and Escobar, 1998, *Cultures of Politics/Politics of Cultures: Revisioning Latin American Social Movements*. Westview: Boulder

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.

Please refer to the SIT Study Abroad Student Handbook for policies on academic integrity, ethics, warning and probation, diversity and disability, sexual harassment, and the academic appeals process.

HRCS: The Role of Civil Society
Assignment Description: Case Study – Teach In

60 points total, 20 points per country assignment

In each country, 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 country, students will be split into different groups at random. There is one case study in each country program, besides the launch in NYC.

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.

TEACH IN – Assessment Rubric

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

HRCS: The Role of Civil Society

Assignment Description: Case Study – Written Assignment

30 points total, 10 points per country 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 country. 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 country.

HRCS: The Role of Civil Society
Assignment Description: Final Reflection Paper

10 points total

This assignment invites you to reflect on the examples of human rights advocacy, activism and resistance you have observed in Nepal, Jordan and Chile and project forward to consider how you'll apply the lessons learned from the semester in the future. How did your experiences learning alongside activists and practitioners of human rights shape your thoughts about how you envision your role in human rights movements moving forward? What does effective engagement in social change look like to you? Elaborate and describe the site(s), actions, and strategies that will inform the path that lies ahead for you. Be sure to draw from key readings covered throughout the semester to connect your reflections to the questions we've been pursuing throughout the semester. Additionally, your paper should include reflections on your positionality and how it relates to the role you envision for yourself in human rights movements in the future.

Papers should be approximately 500 words.

Assessment criteria include:

- Depth of critical thinking and analysis evident in your reflections
- Clear connections to human rights concepts and texts we have studied throughout the semester
- Drawing from key moments or experiences throughout the semester that inform your perspective
- Demonstrated awareness of self and positionality
- Clear and effective writing style