

The Role of Civil Society: Grassroots Movements and NGOs SDIS 3320 (4 credits)

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

This syllabus is representative of a typical 3-country program. Note that program locations may change due to Covid-19 precautions. 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.*

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 assignments, 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 start 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.

Each case study counts equally as (20%) of your overall grade in the course. Case study Teach-ins 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.

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	40%
- Case Study – Written Assignment Nepal = 13%	
- Case Study – Written Assignment Jordan = 13%	
- Case Study – Written Assignment Chile = 13%	

Course Organization and Required Reading

1. Introductory Materials and US Comparatives

Session 1: By Any Means, By All Means: Building ‘Freedom Dreams’ in (and alongside) the Black Radical Tradition

Kelley, R. (2002) Preface & “‘When History Sleeps’: A Beginning,” in *Freedom Dreams: The Black Radical Imagination* (Boston: Beacon Press, 2002), vii-12.

Whitfield, E. (2018) “What must we do to be free? On the building of Liberated Zones.” *Prabuddha: Journal of Social Equality*, [S.l.], 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=eyJ2ZW5jb2RlX3RhZyI6InNkIn0%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 (arranged & performed by Guy & Candie Carawan)

Additional Recommended Readings are listed at the end of the syllabus

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

Basnet, C. (2012). Three Faces of Civil Society Activism in Nepal. *New Angle: Nepal Journal of Social Science and Public Policy*, 2(1), 13-22.

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: The Movement for Dalit Rights in Nepal

Aahuti (2005) ‘Hindu Feudalism, State Restructuring, and Dalit’ in *Representation of Dalits in State Restructure in Nepal*. Samata Foundation, Kathmandu.

Aahuti (2015) ‘Bullied Every Time’ in *The Record*, Kathmandu Nepal. Available at: <https://www.recordnepal.com/perspective/opinions/bullied-every-time/>

Session 4: Gender and Social Inclusion in Nepal

World Bank. 2006. *Unequal citizens: gender, caste and ethnic exclusion in Nepal (Vol. 2). Chapter 1*. Washington, DC: World Bank. Available at: <http://documents.worldbank.org/curated/en/201971468061735968/pdf/379660Nepal0GSEA0Summary0Report01PUBLIC1.pdf>

Nowack, S. (2015). ‘Gender Discrimination in Nepal and How Statelessness Hampers Identity Formation’. *Institute on Statelessness and Inclusion*.

Tamang, S. (2000). Legalizing state patriarchy in Nepal. *Studies in Nepali History and Society*, 5(1), 127-156.

III. Jordan

Session 5: Civil Society & 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 role of the familial narrative in the modern nation-state of Chile

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.

Suggested Readings:

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

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

Session 9: The familial narrative in the body politic of Chile: race, sexuality and the colonial legacy.

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

Suggested 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: Learning to survive: indigenous women’s adaptation to climate change, food security and the struggle against state violence.

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. *Suggested*

Readings:

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

Note: Where decimal points are used in grading, below 0.5 will be rounded down, while 0.5 and above will be rounded up. For example, 93.4 will be an A-, while 93.5 will be an A.

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, Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA), 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.

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.

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	<p>Is the presentation creative in its format?</p> <p>Is the audience engaged?</p> <p>Do the creative elements support the analysis and communicate key ideas?</p>
Depth of content	<p>Did the session convey a depth of understanding about the topic covered?</p> <p>Did the group draw from multiple sources or perspectives?</p> <p>Did the presentation do justice to the complexity of the case?</p>
Critical Analysis	<p>Is the presentation connected to program readings or theory with a developed analysis about the topic studied?</p> <p>Did the group demonstrate ingenuity and critical thinking in their understanding of the case?</p> <p>The purpose of the assignment is not to assess or criticize the work of an organization.</p>
Participatory / Discussion	<p>Did the group use a participatory format to engage the audience?</p> <p>Did the participatory element of the presentation develop or deepen the content of the session?</p> <p>Did all group members play a role in the presentation?</p>
Communication Skills	<p>Is the presentation well-organized in its structure?</p> <p>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?</p> <p>Were written or visual elements of the presentation clear and well-presented?</p> <p>Were presenters responsive and strategic in their facilitation of activities or discussions?</p>

HRCS: The Role of Civil Society

Assignment Description: Case Study – Written Assignment

40 points total, 13 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.

Additional Recommended Readings from Local Faculty for US Comparatives

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"