

POSC 3508

The Politics of Humanitarianism in Africa

Fordham University • Fall 2014
Mondays and Thursdays 11:30am-12:45pm
Keating 204

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PURPOSE AND SCOPE

Africa is home to more humanitarian crises than any other part of the world – resulting in record levels of displacement; humanitarian suffering; and significant impediments for development, democratization, and peace. In spite of these challenges, however, Africa is not a basket case, as many pundits claim. Many nations on the continent have achieved significant levels of economic and political development, as well as social stability. The relationship between African nations experiencing humanitarian crises and the international community of states has evolved considerably since the colonial era, suggesting that a cautious pragmatism should prevail when examining what the future of humanitarianism in Africa holds for its peoples and governments. Indeed, former Western interventionism in the domestic affairs of African states is beginning to give way to non-Western, local, and sub-regional trends that are shaping humanitarian outcomes and action across the continent and creating new relationships among actors that are central to the humanitarian sector.

This course explores contemporary international politics of humanitarianism in Africa, with a focus on sub-Saharan Africa (select North African cases will also be examined) and a range of cases that feature non-Western actors, institutions, and processes. Issues to be analyzed include international, regional, and sub-regional responses to complex humanitarian emergencies and natural disasters in Africa; the politics of forced displacement, famine, and vulnerability; civilian protection and humanitarian access; civil-military interactions and aid worker security; local perceptions of humanitarianism and aid; the relationship between international peacekeeping and humanitarianism; and early engagement and recovery through international peacebuilding on the continent.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

This course will focus on a core group of established cognitive learning objectives that have been adopted by the Jesuit Universities Humanitarian Action Network (JUHAN), a network of institutions whose curricular programs focus on humanitarian affairs. At the conclusion of this course, students should be able to:

- articulate a common understanding of the concept of humanitarian crises
- identify and understand the roles and interactions among key actors in humanitarian response, including local and national actors seeking to (re)assert agency and political will amid a broader landscape that is often dominated by Western stakeholders
- demonstrate understanding of factors the key actors take into account in determining whether to intervene during humanitarian crises – and to analyze and contrast non-traditional with traditional intervention mechanisms
- demonstrate an understanding of the causes, phases, and consequences of humanitarian crises
- understand the multiple beneficiaries of humanitarian action, identify particularly vulnerable groups and articulate ways in which beneficiaries interact with other humanitarian actors
- demonstrate an awareness about how gender expectations make some members of local communities vulnerable/potentially exploitable in humanitarian crises
- describe the utilization of appropriate components of humanitarian action, including strategies and programming that are indigenously authentic and complement local cultural values
- demonstrate an ability and willingness to analyze critically the effectiveness of humanitarian responses, including assessing the role of local expertise and knowledge in crafting durable solutions and facilitating sustainable humanitarian outcomes

ATTENDANCE

Students are expected to prepare for, attend, and participate fully in all class sessions. All requests for excused absences must be made in writing and will be considered in accordance with the guidelines provided by the University. Students are responsible for making all necessary arrangements for missed work to be made-up. Excessive unexcused absences will result in final grade reduction and/or the possibility of receiving a failing course grade.

REQUIRED READINGS

Most of the required readings will be available via the Blackboard course web site, the library's full-text search engines (e.g. Academic Search Complete, JSTOR), or photocopy handout.

The following texts should be ordered through amazon.com or barnesandnoble.com:

- Chris Abani, *Song for Night* (New York: Akashic Books, 2007)
- Dave Eggers, *What is the What* (New York: Vintage Books, 2007)

ASSESSMENTS and GRADING

Participation (20%)

This course will involve both lecture and discussion components. In formulating the syllabus, I have tried to include readings and activities that represent an array of Western and non-Western voices and viewpoints, are well-written, well-argued, and/or timely – and most importantly, that you as someone who is interested in humanitarian politics will enjoy (or at least will pique your interest and generate critical feedback). Students are thus required to come to class fully prepared to discuss assigned readings and are expected to **participate actively** in class sessions.

Research Paper (25%)

Students will write a research paper analyzing a select issue reflecting any of the aspects of the politics of humanitarianism in Africa covered in this course. Papers will not exceed 4,000 words in length. An ideal research paper is one that addresses a central question, develops a strong, compelling answer to that question, and offers analytic insights derived from theoretic frameworks and empirical evidence to substantiate that answer. Final selection of topics will be carried out in consultation with the instructor.

Things of Beauty (10%)

Details to be discussed in class. Each student will submit their entry no later than 9:00pm the night before their assigned day, and write and submit a 250-300-word commentary answering the following questions: how, where, and when was your Thing of Beauty created; will your peers agree that your chosen Thing of Beauty is actually a thing of beauty and why/why not; and what your selected Thing of Beauty evokes.

Exams (Mid-term 20%; Final 25%)

Both a **mid-term and final examination** will be administered in this course. The format will include multiple-choice, short-answer, and reflective/analytical essay components. Details will be discussed in class.

STUDENTS with DISABILITIES

Under the Americans with Disabilities Act and Section 504 of the Vocational Rehabilitation Act of 1973, all students, with or without disabilities, are entitled to equal access to the programs and activities of Fordham University. If you believe that you have a disability that may interfere with your ability to participate in the activities, coursework, or assessment of the object of this course, you may be entitled to accommodations. Please schedule a meeting to speak with someone at the Office of Disability Services (Rose Hill - O'Hare Hall, Lower Level, x0655 or at Lincoln Center – Room 207, x6282).

COURSE SCHEDULE

4 September (R) Course Introduction/Overview

I. Humanitarian governance and principles of action

8 - 11 September (M-R) *Red Cross Code of Conduct*, International Review of the Red Cross, No. 310 (29-02-1996)
Sphere Handbook and Humanitarian Charter, and Minimum Standards in Humanitarian Response, 2011 edition, pp. 3-24
Michael Walzer, "On Humanitarianism," *Foreign Affairs* Vol. 90(4) Jul/Aug 2011: 69-80 (access using Academic Search Complete)

15-18 September (M-R) Antonio Donini, "The far side: the meta functions of humanitarianism in a globalised world," *Disasters* Vol. 34(S2) 2010: S220-S237
Ben Ramalingam and Michael Barnett, *The Humanitarian's Dilemma: collective action or inaction in international relief?*, ODI Background Note (London: Overseas Development Institute, August 2010)
Peter Salama, Paul Spiegel, Leisel Talley, Ronald Waldman, "Lessons learned from complex emergencies over past decade," *The Lancet* Vol. 364 (13 November 2004): 1801-1813

II. Humanitarianism in the African context

22 September (M) Charles T. Call, "The Fallacy of the 'Failed State'," *Third World Quarterly* Vol. 29(8) (2008): 1491-1507
Bruce Gilley, "End of the African Renaissance," *The Washington Quarterly* Vol. 33(4) 2010: 87-101
Paul D. Williams, "Aid," chapter 11 in *War and Conflict in Africa* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2011), pp. 205-224

25 September (R) Mark Bradbury, "Normalising the Crisis in Africa," *Disasters* Vol. 22(4) 1998: 328-338
Sabelo J. Ndlovu-Gatsheni and Victor Ojakorotu, "Surveillance Over a Zone of Conflict: Africom and the Politics of Securitisation in Africa," *Journal of Pan African Studies* Vol. 3(6) 2010: 94-110
Eliza Griswold, "Can General Linder's Special Operations Forces Stop the Next Terrorist Threat?", *New York Times Magazine* 13 June 2014

III. Humanitarian access and civilian protection

29 September (M) Hugo Slim, "Why protect civilians? Innocence, immunity, and enmity in war," *International Affairs* Vol. 79(3) 2003: 481-501
Andrew Bonwick, "Who Really Protects Civilians?," *Development in Practice* Vol. 16 (3-4) 2006: 270-277
Alastair Ager, Neil Boothby, and Megan Bremer, "Using the 'protective environment' framework to analyse children's protection needs in Darfur," *Disasters* Vol. 33(4) 2009: 548-573

2 October (R) Melissa Labonte and Anne C. Edgerton, "Towards a Typology of Humanitarian Access Denial," *Third World Quarterly* Vol. 34(1) 2013: 39-57
Johan Pottier, "Roadblock Ethnography: Negotiating Humanitarian Access in Ituri, Eastern DR Congo, 1999-2004," *Africa* vol. 76(2) 2006: 151-179
Jonathan Loeb, *Talking to the other side: Humanitarian engagement with armed non-state actors in Darfur, 2003-2012*, HPG Working Paper (London: Overseas Development Institute), pages tbd

- 6 October (M)** Lucinda Woodward and Peter Galvin, "Halfway to Nowhere: Liberian Former Child Soldiers in a Ghanaian Refugee Camp," *Annals of the Association of American Geographers* Vol. 99(5) 2009: 1003-1011
Jason K. Stearns, "This is How You Fight," chapter 10 in *Dancing in the Glory of Monsters: The Collapse of the Congo and the Great War of Africa* (New York: Perseus Books, 2012), pp. 143-152
- 9 October (R)** Chris Abani, *Song for Night* (New York: Akashic Books, 2007), all
- 13 October (M)** **No Class – Columbus Day Holiday**
- 16 October (R)** **Guest Lecturer – Kurt Mills, University of Glasgow**
Mid-term Examination distributed

IV. Forced displacement

- 20 October (M)** IDMC/NRC, *Global Overview 2014: people internally displaced by conflict and violence* (Geneva: IDMC/NRC, April 2012), 18-37
Gil Loescher and James Milner, "The Long Road Home: Protracted Refugee Situations in Africa," *Survival* Vol. 47(2) Summer 2005: 153-174
Jason K. Stearns, "Aiding and Abetting," chapter 2 in *Dancing in the Glory of Monsters: The collapse of the Congo and the Great War of Africa* (New York: Perseus Books, 2012), pp. 33-44
- 23 October (R)** Devanna De La Puente, "Women's leadership in camps for internally displaced people in Darfur, western Sudan," *Community Development Journal* Vol. 46(3) 2011: 365-377
Elizabeth Ferris and Rebecca Winthrop, *Education and Displacement: Assessing Conditions for Refugees and Internally Displaced Persons affected by Conflict* (Rome: UNESCO/EFA-GMR, 2010), pages tba
Jason K. Stearns, "A Thousand Miles Through the Jungle," chapter 9 in *Dancing in the Glory of Monsters: The collapse of the Congo and the Great War of Africa* (New York: Perseus Books, 2012), pp. 127-141
- 27-30 October (M-R)** Dave Eggers, *What is the What* (New York: Vintage Books, 2007), all

V. Civil-military interactions and security

- 3 Nov (M)** Erin A. Weir, *The Last Line of Defense: How Peacekeepers Can Better Protect Civilians* Human Rights Watch Report (February 2010)
Abby Stoddard, Adele Harmer, and Morgan Hughes, *Aid Worker Security Report 2012: Host states and their impact on security for humanitarian operations* (New York: Humanitarian Outcomes, 2012)
- 6 November (R)** Larissa Fast, et. al., *South Sudan Country Report: Key Findings from Field Research on Acceptance in South Sudan* (Collaborative Learning Approach to NGO Security Management Project, 2011)
Benoît Leduc and Michaël Neuman, "Somalia: Everything is Open to Negotiation," chapter 3 (pp. 85-104) in Claire Magone, Michaël Neuman, and Fabrice Weissman, eds., *Humanitarian Negotiations Revealed: The MSF Experience* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2011)

- 10 November (M)** Jeremy Sarkin, "The Responsibility to Protect and Humanitarian Intervention in Africa," *Global Responsibility to Protect* Vol. 2 (2010): 371-387
 Thomas G. Weiss, et. al., "The Responsibility to Protect: Challenges & Opportunities in Light of the Libyan Intervention," Creative Commons Report, November 2011 (selections tba)

VI. The politics of famine and food security

- 13 November (R)** Jeeyon Janet Kim and Debarati Guha Sapiir, "Famines in Africa: is early warning early enough?," *Global Health Action* Vol. 5 (2012): 1-3
 Steve Collins, "Addressing the way we address severe malnutrition during famine," *The Lancet* Vol. 358 (2001): 498-501
- 17 November (M)** Laura Hammond and Daniel Maxwell, "The Ethiopia Crisis of 1999-2000: Lessons Learned, Questions Unanswered," *Disasters* Vol. 26(3) 2002: 262-279
 Andrew Hall, et. al., "The Practical Challenges of Evaluating a Blanket Emergency Feeding Programme in Northern Kenya," *PLoS ONE* Vol. 6(10): e26854
- 20 November (R)** Samantha Power, "How to Kill a Country," *The Atlantic Monthly* (December 2003): 86-100
 Rhoda Howard-Hassmann, "Mugabe's Zimbabwe, 2000-2009: Massive Human Rights Violations and the Failure to Protect," *Human Rights Quarterly* Vol. 32(4) 2010: 898-920
 Robert Rotberg, "Mugabe Über Alles," *Foreign Affairs* Vol. 89(4) 2010: 10-18 (access using Academic Search Complete)
- 24-27 November (M-R)** No Class – Thanksgiving Holiday

VII. Public health and humanitarian politics

- 1 December (M)** Princeton Lyman and Stephen B. Wittels, "No Good Deed Goes Unpunished," *Foreign Affairs* Vol. 89(4) (Jul/Aug 2010): 74-84 (access using Academic Search Complete)
 Hannah Gilbert and Alex Cunliffe, "Non-governmental organizations and the management of HIV and AIDS in refugee camps: A comparison of Marratane Camp in Mozambique and Kakuma Camp in Kenya," *Journal of Contemporary African Studies* Vol. 29(1) 2011: 63-81
 "Ebola in West Africa: Death and the Disbelievers," *Economist* 2 August 2014
 "Uncontained," *Economist* 5 August 2014
 "Ebola: Fever Rising," *Economist* 16 August 2014
 "Ebola: Unseating the First Horseman," *Economist* 16 August 2014

VIII. Climate change and humanitarian politics

- 4 December (R)** Clionadh Raleigh, "Political Marginalization, Climate Change, and Conflict in African Sahel States," *International Studies Review* Vol. 12 (2010): 69-86
 P.J. Blackwell, "East Africa's Pastoralist Emergency: is climate change the straw that breaks the camel's back?," *Third World Quarterly* Vol. 31(8) 2010: 1321-1338
- 8 December (M)** Course Wrap-up and Review