# CCJN 5305(1): Topics in Critical Studies Human Rights & the Journalist Spring 2011 Dr. Camille Kraeplin

Lecture: 2-3:20 Tuesday & Thursday, Room 278 Umphrey Lee

Office hours: Room 209 Umphrey Lee, 10 a.m.-noon, Monday & Wednesday, or by

appointment

Contact info: Office phone, 214-768-3431; Kraeplin@smu.edu; cell phone, 469-955-2511

#### **Communicating with your professor:**

The best way to reach me is via e-mail. You can also stop by during office hours. If my office hours are not convenient for you, we can set up an alternate time.

#### **Required materials:**

This is a Journalism Critical Studies course. It also fulfills a requirement for the Human Rights minor. Critical Studies courses are designed to introduce students to a body of conceptual, philosophical, historical and/or critical knowledge and information related to the study of journalism, and, in this case, human rights, to complement the skills-focused training they receive in many other journalism classes. The goal of this course is to examine the relationship between human rights and the media – how journalists cover human rights issues, which human rights stories receive coverage and why, what structural forces within the media industries influence media coverage of human rights and what, if anything, can be done to improve this coverage? The first two books we will read for the course introduce you to human rights stories that have received media attention. A third book raises ethical questions about the way the media cover human rights-related stories. Other readings will be available in a packet at Lone Star Shipping Company (6611 Hillcrest Ave.; 214-987-2282) under <a href="Kraeplin/Human">Kraeplin/Human</a> Rights & the Journalist. Ask for Brad.

The three books for the class (all available at the SMU bookstore) include:

\*\*Hate Crime: The Story of a Dragging in Jasper, Texas (New York: First Anchor Books, New York: 2003), by Joyce King

\*\* Half the Sky: Turning Oppression into Opportunity for Women Worldwide (Vintage Books, New York: 2009), by Nicholas D. Kristof & Sheryl WuDunn

\*\*Regarding the Pain of Others (Picador, New York: 2003), by Susan Sontag

#### **Course Description:**

Journalists traditionally have played a unique role in the exposure and coverage of human rights abuses, both at home and abroad. In 2008, 41 journalists were killed worldwide, according to the Committee to Protect Journalists. By 2009, that number was up to 72. In 2010, the number of journalists who died doing their jobs dropped back down to 44.

Last year was a dangerous time for journalists in Mexico, where three died, including a crime reporter for the newspaper *Expreso Matamaros*. Carlos Alberto Guajardo Romero was killed by crossfire while covering a confrontation between military forces and drug traffickers in the border city. In Ciudad Juarez, a photographer, Luis Carlos Santiago, and intern, Carlos Sanchez Colunga, for *El Diario* were shot in a parking lot. They were driving a car that belonged to a lawyer and human rights activist who officials believe may have been the intended target. Santiago died at the scene, while Sanchez was severely injured. Shortly after Santiago's death, the paper published an unusual, widely covered editorial. Addressing the cartels directly, it said *El Diario* would willingly compromise its news coverage in order to preserve its reporters' lives. The most dangerous places for reporters in 2010, however, were Pakistan, where eight died, and Iraq, where the death toll was five. Some of these cases, of course, were combat-related. At least one high-profile case, however, was not: Riad al-Saray, a well-known anchor for Iraq's Al-Iraqiya television, hosted religious programs promoting reconciliation between Shiites and Sunnis on the state-owned network. He was killed when unidentified gunmen opened fire on his car in western Baghdad.

Other journalists were killed in countries that present themselves as democracies with free media and functioning legal systems, nations such as India, Russia, the Philippines and, of course, Mexico. Clearly, reporters and photographers who live and work in countries where freedom of speech is marginalized face unique challenges, from struggling to obtain information in the face of oppressive regimes to weighing the very real threats they encounter as they go about their jobs against the dangers to others of abandoning their work.

Simultaneously, western journalists who travel to tell stories of atrocities abroad today deal with a myriad of complex issues that can interfere with their work. For instance, many U.S. news organizations, in an attempt to trim budgets, have cut funds for reporters traveling abroad, shortening their stay in any conflict or disaster zone and making in-depth, analytical coverage all but impossible. Instead, "parachute (or tourism) journalism," where correspondents move in and out of a hotspot, as quickly – and cheaply – as possible, has become the norm. Cable news channels, with their 24-hour news holes and battle for ratings, saturate viewers with the brutal images correspondents send back. Research shows that instead of increasing public awareness of a crisis, endless images of the afflicted often have the opposite effect, creating "compassion fatigue" among U.S. viewers who become immune to the very horrors they are observing. In this course, we will examine each of these critical issues, from a legal, ethical, critical/conceptual and professional perspective.

Of course, we need not look any further than our own backyard, as one book we will read this semester shows, to find examples of human rights abuses that deserve, and often receive, media attention. Why is it, however, that we Americans sometimes devote more airtime to atrocities halfway around the world than to those in our own backyard? In addition, how do American standards as to what constitutes a human right compare with the standards of other "first world" nations? And to what extent do human rights become part of the dialog when news media address our own domestic issues?

We will begin the course by explicating the term "human rights," based on definitions provided in The Universal Declaration of Human Rights. We will then move on to an analysis of the

United States' position on various human rights issues and compare the U.S. stance on these issues with those of other countries. We will examine the press and political systems in select countries where journalists are most at risk. We will conduct lengthy analyses of several compelling human rights issues affecting the world today, and address how both U.S. and international media cover these issues, as well as the obstacles journalists face reporting these stories. We will examine the important role images play in conveying the harsh truth of any human rights story. And finally, we will discuss how new media are changing not only the way journalists who cover human rights stories do their jobs, but the public's role in the newsgathering process. As mentioned above, the material for the course incorporates a combination of both books and book chapters/articles from academic and professional sources. We will watch several excellent films/documentaries; guest speakers with expertise related to course material will also visit from time to time.

Discussion and student presentations that REQUIRE your participation in the learning process will be integral to this class. If you all read the material and speak up during class, our time together will be much more interesting and informative. Occasional unannounced quizzes over the reading material will be my means of ensuring you complete those assignments when they are due. The class Capstone Project, a group reporting project/analysis of a specific human rights issue, will be the focus of the second half of the semester. It will be your major graded assignment. You will also complete a number of "response papers" to readings and/or films in blog or online class discussion formats.

#### **Desired Course Outcomes**

During this course, the students (you!) will:

- learn what constitutes human rights according to international guidelines.
- identify key human rights-related issues/stories in the news.
- determine where key actors, including the United States, stand on human rights issues of local, national and international scope, as well as how governments balance human rights with other significant needs and goals.
- develop an understanding of what motivates journalists to follow stories, including human rights stories, that place them in jeopardy.
- analyze the role balance and fairness play in covering human rights-related stories, and how journalists in the field sometimes disagree over the line between reporting and advocacy.
- examine the valuable role images of human suffering play in putting human rights issues on the news agenda, as well as the potential ethical dilemmas these images present.
- identify key factors that either enhance contemporary human rights coverage or present obstacles to thorough, consistent coverage.
- determine how new media as well as structural changes in the media industry, including new economic realities, have altered the way human rights stories are reported.

- develop a better understanding of why some human rights issues end up on the media "agenda" and others do not.
- critique U.S. media coverage of and attention to domestic human rights issues.
- report on/analyze important aspects of a significant domestic human rights issue.
- work with others constructively, in a way that enhances both creativity and productivity.
- effectively present your work to others.

#### **Course Requirements:**

To succeed in this course, you must meet the requirements listed below. Each of these tasks will be addressed further in class handouts and discussion.

- Participate in this course in a meaningful way by attending classes, completing homework and reading assignments on time (that means BEFORE the class period for which they are assigned), and taking part in class discussion in a civil, responsible way (showing respect for others' views, including those you do not agree with). This also means no cell phones, computers unless the computer is being used for class purposes or other electronic devices should be out on the table or in your hand (or lap yes, I will see it there) during class: 10 percent of course grade.
- Complete a team presentation over course material during the semester. Students may choose or be assigned teammates (groups of two or three), and each team may sign up for a date to present. Each team's job will be to find outside material from popular media, academic journals, books, TV, websites, etc. that complements the day's reading, analyze that material, and discuss how it relates to class. Presentations should be 10 to 15 minutes long and should include a 1-page handout that summarizes your findings. Bring enough handouts to distribute to classmates and me. If you must reschedule a presentation for some reason, I MUST KNOW A WEEK AHEAD OF TIME. You will receive an "F" for any missed presentation that is not excused: 10 percent of course grade.
- Quizzes over reading material: About once a week or so, I will start class with a pop quiz over the day's reading assignment. Most of these will be fairly short no more than four or five questions. And they will be general enough that if you have read the material with any level of attention and focus, you should be able to answer them correctly. In other words, no curve balls. 20 percent of course grade.
- "Response papers" At least four times during the semester, you will be asked to write a short paper (2 to 3 pages, 12-point font, double-spaced) responding to a question that has come up in course readings, a film, etc. The goal of this assignment is to help you think critically about core issues, as well as to express your own views on the subject. Any views expressed, however, should be backed up with facts, and the source of those facts should be cited not formally with footnotes, etc., but informally, as in: "Joyce King, author of *Hate Crime: The Story of a Dragging in Jasper, Texas*, says that . . . You may use any class or appropriate outside materials as sources: 15 percent of course grade.
- Complete Capstone Project: As noted above, we will work as a group during the last half of the semester to gather background information as well as complete original

reporting on an important human rights issue that has been on the news agenda. The class will divide up into "work groups," assigned to complete different tasks. Our final goal will be to produce an in-depth analysis with a strong news hook that we will be able to post on the Journalism Division's website, The Daily Mustang, at the end of the semester. For this project, each individual will be graded both on the overall project as well as his or her work group's input. Every work group will be asked to complete a report listing tasks completed by each member of the group, including time spent on different tasks. The report will be completed by the group leader, who will either be appointed by me or by his/her other group members. More on the topic of our Capstone project, etc., to come – a detailed rubric will be handed out a few weeks into the semester. A version of the Capstone for the Daily Mustang will be due toward the end of the semester (see course schedule); the completed project with proper documentation and group reports will be due the day of your final exam. **45 percent of course grade.** 

- A note on attendance: SMU has a mandatory attendance policy that requires instructors to keep track of who comes to class and who does not. Roll will be taken every day. Any student who misses the first day of class may be dropped. In addition, you may be dropped from the course or receive an "F" for excessive unexcused absences. (In a Tuesday/Thursday class, I consider three or more unexcused absences excessive.) Absences due to illness or emergencies will be excused. However, this determination is up to your instructor; providing documentation will work to your advantage. You should notify your instructor of absences in advance whenever possible, or within 24 hours after the fact. Even with an excused absence, all class work must be made up promptly. IT IS YOUR RESPONSIBILITY TO COME TO ME TO DISCUSS YOUR MAKEUP WORK, NOT THE OTHER WAY AROUND.
- Please note the SMU Health Center's policy on providing forms for excused absences. The policy is found a <a href="http://smu.edu/healthcenter/policy/absenceclass.asp">http://smu.edu/healthcenter/policy/absenceclass.asp</a>. There is a PDF file that you can download and submit for an excused absence. This form must be filled out fully for your instructor to consider your absence(s) as excused. You are also expected to arrive in class on time.
- You are also expected to arrive in class on time. If you are late, it is up to you to make sure your instructor noted your arrival and counted you present.

#### **Grading Criteria:**

Grades in this course will be assigned following the numerical guidelines below, which are set forth in the SMU student manual:

A 93-100, A- 90-92, B+ 87-89, B 83-86, B- 80-82, C+ 77-79, C 73-76, C- 70-72, D+ 67-69, D 63-66, D- 60-62, F 0-59.

# REMEMBER YOU RECEIVE NO JOURNALISM MAJOR/MINOR CREDIT FOR A COURSE GRADE BELOW C-.

#### **Grading Policies for Written Assignments:**

This is a Critical Studies course in journalism. The primary purpose of every written assignment should be to demonstrate your knowledge and understanding of the concepts conveyed in class.

Of course, as most of you know, there is a connection between good writing and clear thinking. Therefore, I will deduct points on written assignments if your presentation is not clear and effective. Likewise, I will also deduct points if your grammar is poor or if you misspell words, especially proper nouns.

All written assignments should abide by the Journalism Division's general guidelines for written work. First, all written assignments will be graded based on content: Is there a clear thesis statement, or explanation of the issue/problem you will address? Does the paper provide sufficient background about the issue? If you are taking a position on an issue, which you should do in the analytical paper for your Capstone Project as well as your blog assignments and Team Presentations, is that position clearly stated? Is the argument you are forwarding well reasoned and supported (through statistics, interview material, outside sources, etc.)? Do you address any possible objections or problems with your position, and how well do you respond to/counter these objections? Written assignments will also be graded for mechanics (grammar, punctuation, flow, use of transitions, general organization, etc.).

**How to earn an "F" on a written project:** Miss a deadline. Misquote or misrepresent someone. Rewrite or submit a paper that was produced for any other venue (class, media outlet, etc.).

#### Plagiarism and Fabrication:

Plagiarism is stealing someone's words or ideas and passing them off as your own. Fabrication is making stuff up. We will deal with plagiarism and fabrication in the harshest manner possible, including referral to the Honors Council.

#### **SMU Honor Code:**

It is your responsibility to read and understand the SMU Honor Code. Please note that the code calls upon students who are aware of academic dishonesty to report such matters to the instructor. Violations will be dealt with in the prescribed manner.

#### **Excused absences for extracurricular activities:**

Students participating in an officially sanctioned, scheduled university extracurricular activity will be given the opportunity to make up class assignments. It is the responsibility of the student to make arrangements with the instructor prior to any missed assignment.

#### **Religious accommodations:**

Religiously observant students who will be absent on holidays must notify the teacher in writing at the beginning of the semester.

#### **Disability accommodations:**

If you need academic accommodations for a disability, you must contact Disability Accommodations & Success Strategies, 214-768-1470/www.smu.edu/alec/dass.asp, to verify the disability and establish eligibility for accommodations. You should also notify your instructor in time to make any necessary arrangements. A verification letter is required.

## Course Schedule

(Note: This schedule may change during the semester. I will notify you of any changes, such as additional guest speakers, both in class and via Blackboard. All readings marked as "Reading Packet," or "RP," are in the packet you picked up from Lone Star Shipping.)

<u>Date</u>	<u>Topic</u>	Reading/Homework/Speakers/Films
Week 1 1/18	Introduction to class	**Bring completed bios & course contracts **Film: "Dying to Tell the Story"
1/20	Defining "human rights"	**1) "Universal Declaration of Human Rights"  **2) "Uncovering Rights in the U.S.A.: Gauging the Gap Between the Bill of Rights & Human Rights" (both from reading packet RP)
Week 2 1/25	Defining "human rights"	**1) "Walking the Line Between the War on Terror & the Defense of Human Rights" **2) "America's War on Journalists (both from RP) **Team presentation: Press systems around the world **Response paper #1 due
1/27	Human rights stories	**Half the Sky, Ch. 1-3 **Team presentation: Human trafficking at home & abroad
Week 3 2/1	Human rights stories	**Half the Sky, Ch. 4-6
2/3	Human rights stories	**Half the Sky, Ch. 7-9 **Film: "Born into Brothels"

Week 4 2/8	Human rights stories	**Hate Crime, Ch. 1-2 (Part 1)  **Team presentation: Hate crimes – key news stories
2/10	Human rights stories	**Hate Crime, Ch. 3-5 (Part 2)  **Team presentation: Hate crimes & legislation  **Response paper #2 due
Week 5 2/15	Human rights stories	**Hate Crime, Ch. 6-Conclusion (Part 3)
2/17		**Speaker: Journalist Joyce King, author of <i>Hate Crime</i>
Week 6 2/22	Covering "Others"	**1) "Stereotypes in the Media" (RP)  **Film: "Lost Boys of Sudan"
2/24	Covering "Others"	**1) "Voodoo, Zombies and Mermaids: U.S. Newspaper Coverage of Haiti" (RP) **2) "Too Graphic" (RP)  **Team presentation: Stereotypes in media coverage  **Response paper #3 due
Week 7		
3/1	War, Trauma & The Role of Images	**Regarding the Pain of Others, Ch. 1-6 **Film: "Fixer: The Taking of Ajmal Naqshbandi"
3/3	War, Trauma & The Role of Images	**1) Regarding the Pain of Others, Ch. 7-9 **2) "'Regarding the Pain of Others': Media, Bias & the Coverage of International Disasters (RP) **Team presentation: Images of war & disaster

Week 8 3/8	War, Trauma & the Role of Images	**Speaker: Dallas Morning News photographer Lara Solt **Response paper #4 due
3/10	Structural Issues	**1) "Covering the World" (RP)  **2) "Nonprofit's newsgathering pays off" (RP)  **3) "The Man Who Spilled the Secrets" (RP)
Week 9		
SPRING BREAK!!		
Week 10 3/22	Structural Issues	**1) "Citizen Propagandists" (RP)  **2)"U.S. Steps Gingerly into Tumult in Iran" (RP)  **3) "CNN iReport's Iran Filings Fly" (RP)  **4) "Tweeting Under Fire" (RP)  **Team presentation: Citizen journalism
3/24	Capstone Project	Introduction
Week 11 3/29 &3/31	Capstone Project	
Week 12 4/4 & 4/6	Capstone Project	
Week 13 4/12 & 4/14	Capstone Project	
Week 14 4/19 & 4/21	Capstone Project	**Capstone editorial copy due on 4/21
Week 15 4/26 & 4/28	Capstone Project work gro	oup presentations

## **Student Profile – Human Rights & the Journalist/Spring 2011**

Full Name:
Prefer to be called: Student Number:
Best phone number to reach you:
Email address:
Hometown:
Major:
2 <sup>nd</sup> Major/Minor:
Rank (First Year/senior/graduate student, etc):
Do you have any prior journalism experience? Yes No
What kind of experience?
Extracurricular activities at SMU:
What is your career goal?
What do you hope to get out of this class?
Please tell me anything I should know about you that might affect your performance in class (i.elarning disability, health, work, etc.)

#### **Human Rights & the Journalist**

#### **Course Contract: An Agreement of Expectations**

#### YOU (the student)

- Agree to treat other students and their ideas with the respect and intellectual curiosity you yourself would like to receive and to help make this classroom a safe place to exchange and explore ideas.
- Agree to attend every class, check email and Blackboard regularly, and complete all assignments as outlined in the syllabus and supplementary notes.
- Agree not to plagiarize, collaborate where it is forbidden or otherwise steal the work of others and understand that not late work will be permitted.
- Acknowledge that previous academic preparation (for example, writing ability) will affect your performance in this course.
- Agree to be responsible for understanding the grading rules and deadlines outlined in the syllabus, as well as additional assignment criteria detailed in supplementary materials, and acknowledge that your perception of effort, by itself, is not enough to justify a distinguished grade.

#### I (your instructor)

- Agee to treat you and your ideas with the same respect we expect ourselves and promise not to discriminate against you on the basis of your identity or views.
- Agree to treat you as an individual.
- Agree to prepare carefully for every class and manage all business in a professional manner.
- Agree to respond quickly to your e-mails, questions or assignments.
- Promise to pursue the maximum punishment for plagiarism, cheating and other violations of academic integrity.
- Agree to make myself available for advising, promise confidentiality concerning

,	appropriate.
By cont	inuing in this class, you agree to these standards and conditions:
Signed:	

Print name:	