

Revised Sept 5

Fall Semester 2020-21

UGED 2622/ANTH 2530

POLITICAL VIOLENCE AND HUMAN RIGHTS

Tuesday 13.30-15.15
Zoom Link: 986 5731 2404

Professor Sealing Cheng
(sealing@cuhk.edu.hk)
TA: Xin XIE (Ryan)
(1155135524@link.cuhk.edu.hk)

This course examines the pervasiveness of violence from an anthropological and comparative perspective. We consider a wide range of phenomena that can be called violence within diverse historical and cultural contexts. Violence is always political – whether it is manifest in the spectacular practices of torture, terrorism, or genocide, or the invisible structures of inequalities that generate educational, health, and food inequities. The topics covered will be understood in relation to histories of colonialism and nationalism, ideologies about race, gender, and variant forms of social, economic, and political hierarchies.

Are human rights a universal set of ideals or could there be a culturally diverse interpretation of human rights? What is the distinction between human rights and humanitarianism? Are human rights an effective instrument in addressing violence? What are the purposes and problems of the boom of humanitarian initiatives in the new millennium? Finally, what does our assumption of violence and human rights tell us about ourselves and our future? . In both understanding and diagnosing contemporary issues of violence and their remedies, students will learn more about the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) as well as develop a capacity to formulate and evaluate effective interventions. The course will encourage students to relate academic studies to contemporary issues as well as reflect about self and society.

Learning Outcomes:

1. to comprehend the complex meanings of violence within a web of power relations both historically and cross-culturally;
2. to analyze the ways current discourses of violence and human rights are specific to our historical moment;
3. to cultivate historical and cross-cultural sensitivity in understanding diverse human experiences, crucial to the facilitation of dialogues and collaboration in the advancement of transformative justice;
4. to understand critically the role SDGs could play in addressing global inequalities.

Please refrain from using any ELECTRONIC DEVICE including mobile phones, computers, tablets, etc in class. Please step out of the classroom to do so if need be. Thank you.

http://www.npr.org/2016/04/17/474525392/attention-students-put-your-laptops-away?utm_source=facebook.com&utm_medium=social&utm_campaign=npr&utm_term=nprnews&utm_content=20170819

Assessment:

1. Tutorial participation and discussion (20%) Students are expected to contribute to all class discussions by formulating their viewpoints and line of inquiry. Student participation is an important element in this course, thus assigned readings for the week are expected to be read prior to attending class. The class is a safe environment for the exchange of diverse ideas and debates. Respect for differences and intellectual rigor are important pedagogical goals: all opinions will be respected but all opinions must be defended.

You are expected to attend lectures and a minimum number of 7 tutorials to pass the course. Attendance sheets will be used and adequate documentation (doctor's certificate or counselling certificate) will be needed if you miss more than 3 tutorials, or you will gain 0 mark for tutorial participation.

2. Leading tutorial discussion (10%)

Students will be divided into groups and be responsible for leading one tutorial discussion. Leading a tutorial means engaging with the readings, expanding on the topics at hand and formulating original questions to open up a space for dialogue. The point is to stimulate and invite tutorial participants to jointly interrogate particular issues that are of interest to the presenter and the class. Students are advised not to present a summary of the readings and leave it at that. You can bring in more materials, such as newspaper cuttings, pictures, video clips etc. You can use printed as well as online and web documents other than the readings to enrich the discussion. You are welcome but not required to discuss with me how you intend to proceed with the tutorial beforehand, unless you require special equipment for your presentation. Leading a tutorial means that you are in charge, be empowered and be creative.

3. Mid-term Essay (1500 words) (30%)

Response to *The Act of Killing* (40%)

We will upload *The Act of Killing* (Joshua Oppenheimer 2012) on Blackboard, with a set of guided questions as suggestions.

No late submission will be accepted without prior approval and adequate documentation. Penalties will be imposed. This should be no more than 2,000 words in length. **Due on October 17.**

4. Choose only ONE of the following:

- a. **Public Anthropology Project (40%)**

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The goal of the project is to make anthropology relevant in the public sphere. How can anthropologists do more than just participate and observe? How can anthropology publicly engage with contemporary issues to make a difference in the broader world? How do we explain different forms of violence and how they are experienced, represented, and, if possible, redressed?

Violence has been central to the recent controversies and public debates about the Anti-Extradition Movement, the Umbrella Movement, immigrants and refugees, and sexual violence etc in Hong Kong. In the current coronavirus epidemic, there has been extensive discussion about how it is a human-made disaster – with its roots in authoritarianism and the lack of freedom of expression, as well as various factors attributable to structural violence (Farmer 2004).

The project can take a variety of forms, including oral narratives, theater scripts, film, photography, installation, poetry etc.

i. A Pandemic Ethnography

Using material from the course in a substantive and systematic manner, students design and carry out their own project (individually or as a group of no more than 3) to contribute to the current discussions amongst different communities at this particular historical moment. What was your own experience of the pandemic? How do you relate your own struggles with broader social inequalities?

You are encouraged to send me ideas about your project not later than **October 16**. Send me email with Subject PROJECT IDEA [your name(s)] e.g. "PROJECT IDEA Sealing CHENG and Ryan XIE." We will communicate online following that. A written paper describing and analyzing the activities involved should be about 2,000 words in length, no more than 3,000 words. **Due on Dec 14.**

See Reading List on Blackboard for recommended readings, documentaries, and related material.

ii. Documenting Asylum-seekers and refugees in Hong Kong

Individual or a group of students will be matched with one asylum-seeker. Their task is to understand the struggles and aspirations of asylum-seekers in Hong Kong, document them, and to make them accessible to the public. The final submission comes in two parts: 1) a short media piece –audio, video, art piece etc to make these stories available on social media platform and 2) a written piece of analysis (1,000 words). **Due on Dec 14.**

b. Take-home Exam (40%)

Complete a take-home exam. The questions for the take-home exam will be given on the last day of class. **Due on Dec 11.** No late submission will be accepted without prior approval and adequate documentation. Penalties will be imposed.

Plagiarism

Students are required by university policy to submit all papers to VeriGuide (the Chinese University Plagiarism Identification Engine System). Please check the website <http://www.cuhk.edu.hk/policy/academichonesty/> for more information on how to submit papers through VeriGuide.

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Course structure

The course is divided into three parts.

Part I offers a conceptual introduction that will provide students with the tools to analyze issues of violence and human rights in the world today.

Part II considers through empirical studies the agents and structures of violence.

Part III draws on anthropological as well as multidisciplinary works from a global perspective to interrogate the formulation of violence and human rights and humanitarianism as its alleged solution.

* Readings with an * are optional.

Part I: Toward a cross-cultural understanding of violence and human rights

W1 (8 Sept.) Can violence be apolitical? Can human rights be wrong?

Žižek, S. (2008) "The Tyrant's Bloody Robe", in S. Žižek, *Violence*, London, Profile Books: 1-7.

W2 (15 Sept.) The politics of representation – Violence and Rights

Lukes, S. (2004) [1974] *Power: A Radical View*. London: Palgrave Macmillan. (Excerpts)

Kleinman, A. and Kleinman, J. (1996) "The Appeal of Experience; The Dismay of Images: Cultural Appropriations of Suffering in Our Times," *Daedalus*, 125(1): 1-23.

Parkinson, J. and George-Cosh, D. (2015) "Image of Drowned Syrian Boy Echoes Around World", *The Wall Street Journal*, 3 September, available at: <http://www.wsj.com/articles/image-of-syrian-boy-washed-up-on-beach-hits-hard-1441282847>

Optional:

Chor, Laura. 2020. "Hong Kong Mourns the End of Its Way of Life as China Cracks Down on Dissent." *National Geographic*. Sep 1. 2020. <https://www.nationalgeographic.com/history/2020/09/hong-kong-mourns-way-life-china-cracks-down-dissent/>

W3 (22 Sept.) Violence as a spectrum and knowledge production

Said, E. W. (2007) "Introduction", in Said, E. W., *Orientalism: Western Conceptions of the Orient*. London: Penguin Books.

Scheper-Hughes, N. and Bourgois, P. (2003) "Introduction: Making Sense of Violence", in N. Scheper-Hughes and P. Bourgois (eds.), *Violence in War and Peace*, London: Blackwell. pp. 1-31.

* "Edward Said on Orientalism." (Video) Accessible on <https://cuhk.kanopy.com/video/edward-said-orientalism>

*Narayan, U. (1997) "Restoring History and Politics to 'Third-World Traditions': Contrasting the Colonialist Stance and Contemporary Contestations of Sati", in U. Narayan, *Dislocating Cultures: Identities, Traditions, and Third-World Feminism*. London: Routledge. pp. 41-80.

W4 (29 Sept.) Human rights as cultural practice – Health and Human Rights

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Excerpts from Universal Declaration of Human Rights 1948

Sidhva, Shiraz. (2019). "Interview: "Abdullahi Ahmed An-Na'im: On human rights, the secular state and Sharia today"

<https://en.unesco.org/courier/2019-1/abdullahi-ahmed-naim-human-rights-secular-state-and-sharia-today>

Farmer, Paul. 1999. "Pathologies of power: rethinking health and human rights". *Public Health Matters* 89(10):1486-1496.

United Nations Development Project. (2020. "Coronavirus vs Inequality" <https://feature.undp.org/coronavirus-vs-inequality/>

* Farmer, Paul. 2004. "An Anthropology of Structural Violence." *Current Anthropology* 45(3):305-325.

* Goodale, Mark. (2006). Introduction to "Anthropology and Human Rights in a New Key". *American Anthropology* 108(1):1-8.

* Rosenblum, P. (2002) "Teaching Human Rights: Ambivalent Activism, Multiple Discourses, and Lingering Dilemmas," *Harvard Human Rights Journal*, 15: 301-315.

Part II Agents and Structures of Violence

W5 (6 Oct) "The Banality of Evil"?: On Agents and Structures of Violence

Fassin, Didier. 2018. "A Moral Interpretation of Police Deviance." In Karpiak, Kevin G. & William Garriott (eds). *The Anthropology of Police*, pp. 175-188. London: Routledge.

Gitzen, Timothy. 2020. "On Banal Security."

https://www.anthropology-news.org/index.php/2020/06/17/on-banal-security/?utm_source=rss&utm_medium=rss&utm_campaign=on-banal-security

* Arendt, Hannah. 1970. Excerpts from *On Violence*, pp. 44-46. Orlando: Harvest Books.

* Ralph, Laurence. 2018. "The Black Box of Police Torture." In Karpiak, Kevin G. & William Garriott (eds). *The Anthropology of Policing*, pp. 188-208. London: Routledge.

*Tahir, Madiha. 2019. "Violence Work and the Police Order." *Public Culture* 31 (3): 409-418.

Martin, Jeffrey. 2018. "Police Culture: What it is? What it does? And what we should do with it?" In Karpiak, Kevin G. & William Garriott (eds). *The Anthropology of Policing*, pp. 34-53. London: Routledge.

W6 (13 Oct.) National Security

Anderson, Benedict. 1983. "Imagined Communities", in *Nationalism: A Reader*. (Eds). John Hutchinson & Anthony Smith. Oxford: Oxford University Press, pp. 89-96.

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"Becoming the Object of Inquiry in Ceausescu's Romania: An Interview with Katherine Verdery." Europe Now Journal. July 20, 2018. <https://www.europenowjournal.org/2018/10/01/becoming-the-object-of-inquiry-in-ceausescu-romania-an-interview-with-katherine-verdery/>

Juchou, Mirelle. 2019. "How Dreams Change Under Authoritarianism". New Yorker Magazine. Nov 7. <https://www.newyorker.com/books/second-read/how-dreams-change-under-authoritarianism>

W7 (20 Oct) Security, Identity, and Borders: Trump, Brexit, and Hong Kong

Ip, Iam-Chong. (2015) Politics of Belonging: a study of the campaign against mainland visitors in Hong Kong. *Inter-Asia Cultural Studies* 16(3):410-421.

Stein, F. (2016) Anthropology, Brexit and Xenophobia in Europe. <https://politicalandlegalanthro.org/2016/06/28/anthropology-brexit-and-xenophobia-in-europe/>

Hochschild, A. (2016) "I spent 5 years with some of Trump's biggest fans. Here's what they won't tell you." *Mother Jones*, Sep/October, 2016. <http://www.motherjones.com/politics/2016/08/trump-white-blue-collar-supporters>

*Stoller, P. (2016) Revisiting the Anthropology of Trump and the Power of Culture. http://www.huffingtonpost.com/paul-stoller/revisiting-the-anthropology-b_12891694.html

* Garrett, D. (2013) "Visualizing Protest Culture in China's Hong Kong: Recent Tensions over Integration." *Visual Communication* 12(1):55-71. <http://journals.sagepub.com/doi/full/10.1177/1470357212447910>

W8 (27 Oct) The Violence of Exclusion: The case of refugees in Hong Kong

Fassin, Didier. 2011. Truth Ordeal, pp.109-129. In *Humanitarian Reason: A Moral History of the Present*. Berkeley: University of California Press.

Cheng, Sealing. 2019. NGO Humanitarianism in the Eyes of Asylum-seekers in Hong Kong. *Global Perspectives on Humanitarianism*, 51-63. Copenhagen: Danish Institute of International Studies.

Malkki, Liisa. 2008. "Speechless Emissaries: Refugees, Humanitarianism, and Dehistoricization." *Cultural Anthropology*, 11(3):377-404.

*Vecchio, Francesco and Beatson, Cosmo. (2013) 'Resisting government labelling and engaging the community: The 'March For Protection' in Hong Kong', *Oxford Monitor of Forced Migration*, 3(1), 24-29.

* Greenberg, Ela. 2009. " 'The King of the Streets': Hip Hop and the Reclaiming of Masculinity in Jerusalem's Shu'afat refugee Camp." *Middle East Journal of Culture and Communication*. 2 (2):231-250.

W9 (3 Nov) Sexual violence in conflicts

Oosterhoff, P. (2004) "Sexual Torture of Men in Croatia and Other Conflict Situations: An Open Secret", *Reproductive Health Matters*, 12(23): 68-77.

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Yang, H. (1997) "Re-membling the Korean Military Comfort Women", in E. H. Kim and C. Choi (eds.) *Dangerous Women: Gender and Korean Nationalism*. London: Routledge. pp: 118-135.

*Hayden, R. (2000) "Rape and Rape Avoidance in Ethno-National Conflicts: Sexual Violence in Liminalized States", *American Anthropologist*, 102(1): 27-41.

Relevant International Documents: Geneva Convention, Security Council Resolution 1325; Security Council Resolution 1820. (Excerpts)

In-Class Screening: Trailer of *Silence Broken* (1999) by Daisil Kim-Gibson.

Part III Violence and its Remedies: Interrogating Human Rights and Humanitarianism

W10 (10 Nov.) Solving the Problem of "Sex trafficking" and neoliberalism

Cheng, S. and Kim, E. (2014) "The Paradoxes of Neoliberalism: Migrant Korean Sex workers and 'Sex Trafficking'", *Social Politics*, 21(3): 355-381.

IRIN (2013) "Analysis: Sex Workers Bear Brunt of War on Trafficking", *Humanitarian News and Analysis*, available at: <http://www.irinnews.org/report/98689/analysis-sex-workers-bear-brunt-of-war-on-trafficking>.

In-class screening: *Becky's Journey* (2013) by Sine Plambech

Watch Online Video: *Paradoxes of Neoliberalism*, available at: <http://vimeo.com/72002039>

W11 (17 Nov.) The Violence of Humanitarianism

Riina Yrjölä. 2009. The Invisible Violence of Celebrity Humanitarianism: Soft Images and Hard Words in the Making and Unmaking of Africa. *World Political Science Review*. 5(1):1-22.

Choose one of the two following readings:

Clark, Kamari Maxine. 2019. "Biomediation and the #BringBackOurGirls Campaign," *Affective Justice: The International Criminal Court and Pan-Africanist Pushback*. Durham: Duke University Press.

Redfield, Peter. 2006. "A less modest witness: Collective advocacy and motivated truth in a medical humanitarian movement," *American Ethnologist* 33(1): 3-26.

*Ticktin, Miriam. 2006. Where ethics and politics meet: The violence of humanitarianism in France. *American Ethnologist* 33(1):33-49.

W12 (24 Nov.) Creative Resistance

Grillo, Laura. "Introduction", *An Intimate Rebuke: Female Genital Power in Ritual and Politics in West Africa*. Durham: Duke University Press

Lee Seung-Ook, Sook-Jin Kim, Joel Wainwright. 2010. "Mad cow militancy: Neoliberal hegemony and social resistance in South Korea." *Political Geography* 29 (7): 359-369.

*Ai, Weiwei. 2017. "Introduction" in Steve Crawshaw (ed.) *Street Spirit: The Power of Protest and Mischief*. London: Michael O'Mara Books

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W13 (1 Dec.) Presentations of Public Anthropology Project + Review + Take-Home Exam

Recommended Readings:

D'Costa, Bina. 2017. *Children and Violence: Politics of Conflict in South Asia*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Sima Shakhsari, Minoo Moallem. 2019. "Whose Revolution? A Reflection on The Iranian Uprisings", KOH Journal. <https://kohjournal.press/Whose-Revolution>

Bhattachargjee, Anannya. 2006 (1997). "The Public/Private Mirage: Mapping Homes and Undomesticating Violence Work in the South Asian Immigrant Community. In *The Anthropology of the State*, pp. 337-355. Oxford: Blackwell.

Mbembe, Achille. 2006. "The Banality of Power and the Aesthetics of Vulgarly in the postcolony." In *The Anthropology of the State*, pp. 381-400. Oxford: Blackwell.