

# 2018 Summer Program

## Institute for the Study of Human Rights

ISHR's Human Rights Summer Program, offered in conjunction with the School of Professional Studies, emphasizes the interaction between human rights theory and practice and provides students with the opportunity to explore human rights both inside and outside the classroom. In addition to the academic coursework, throughout the summer, students are invited to attend discussions, trainings, performances, films, and other events that engage with the human rights community of New York City. Students also have the opportunity to learn from human rights practitioners through in-class guest lectures and optional site visits to human rights organizations.



The summer program is ideal for professionals, graduate students, and advanced undergraduate students wishing to further their knowledge and understanding of human rights. Courses are offered at the graduate level and academic credit is awarded. The summer term is divided into two 6-week sessions. Previous coursework or knowledge of human rights is not required to enroll in the summer courses.

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*"I have learned so much about human rights and it has enhanced my strive to pursue it as a career. The teachers are great and very helpful. They care and want you to succeed. The material and readings provided in class are very rich and interesting. The latter allows us students to dig deep in human rights issues which occur on a daily basis."* - **Tamara El Chammah**, student in the Summer Human Rights Program

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### Human Rights Certification Program

In addition to taking individual courses, students may earn a four-course summer certification of professional achievement. Students in the certification program include those seeking to complement their training in other fields or disciplines, such as law, public health, fundraising, development, etc.; individuals with academic or professional experience in human rights wishing to obtain more specialized knowledge through graduate-level study; and students preparing for further graduate study. To complete the certification, students must complete the following requirements:

- ◆ Introduction to Human Rights
- ◆ International Human Rights Law
- ◆ Two elective human rights courses.

Students who successfully complete the 12 credit points of coursework with a grade of C or higher and obtain a minimum GPA of 3.0 will be awarded a certification of professional achievement. The certification may be completed in a single summer or two consecutive summers.

Students already enrolled in Columbia degree programs are not eligible to apply for the certification, but may still enroll in summer courses.

## ABOUT ISHR

The Institute for the Study of Human Rights (ISHR) was established in 1978 at Columbia University. ISHR is committed to its three core goals of providing excellent human rights education to Columbia students, fostering innovative interdisciplinary academic research, and offering its expertise in capacity building to human rights leaders, organizations, and universities around the world.

ISHR was the first academic center in the world to be founded on an interdisciplinary commitment to the study of human rights.

This remains one of ISHR's most distinctive features. We recognize that on a fundamental level, human rights research must transcend traditional academic boundaries, departments, and disciplines, reaching out to the practitioners' world in the process, to address the ever-increasing complexities of human rights in a globalized world. ISHR's emphases on interdisciplinary, engagement, and globalism draw from and complement the strengths that have long characterized intellectual life at Columbia.

### WHY HUMAN RIGHTS? STUDENT PERSPECTIVES

*I have always been interested in human rights and wanted to have a career in human rights law. I felt that this would be a great program for me to explore human rights further and ensure that it was really the career path I wanted to pursue.*

- **Yolanda Chitohwa**, attorney who joined the program to complement her legal background.

*I've had a long standing interest in the international human rights field, and wanted the education to supplement my work experience in women's rights and social justice philanthropy.*

- **Maryann Jacob**, full time professional and Human Rights Certification recipient.

*I came to the Human Rights Summer Program at Columbia to fill a knowledge gap. I am researching human rights in Sudan. Columbia University was the best place that offered relevant coursework.*

- **Alexander Sieber**, student in the Human Rights Studies M.A. Program and a participant in the Summer Human Rights Program.

## 2018 SUMMER COURSES

**Session D: May 21 – June 29**

### Introduction to Human Rights

This course will provide a wide-ranging survey of conceptual foundations and issues in contemporary human rights. The class will examine the philosophical origins of human rights, contemporary debates, the evolution of human rights, key human rights documents, and the questions of human rights enforcement. This course will examine specific civil, political, economic, social and cultural rights, and various thematic topics in human rights.

### NGOs and the Human Rights Movement: Strategies, Successes & Challenges

The human rights movement is one of the most successful social justice movements of our time, establishing universal principles that govern how states should treat citizens and non-citizens. The movement strengthens, and is strengthened by, a complex web of institutions, laws, and norms that constitute a functioning global system that builds on itself progressively, animated by strong NGOs. The course will highlight the experiences of major human rights NGOs and will address topics including strategy development, institutional representation, research methodologies, partnerships, networks, venues of engagement, campaigning, fundraising and, perhaps most importantly, the fraught and complex debates about adaptation to changing global circumstances.

### Transitional Justice in the United States: Reckoning with Legacies of Racial Injustice

This seminar will include a theoretical exploration of transitional justice as well as key challenges and possibilities in its application. It will begin with a reflection on what it means to be a practitioner in the area of transitional justice or human rights. Students will learn about the field of transitional justice, including its guiding principles, key approaches, and critiques. This seminar will explore legacies of injustice in the US, with a focus on the legacy of slavery, and seek to apply transitional justice approaches to these legacies. Students will be encouraged to think critically about whether transitional justice approaches can help address legacies of injustice in the US, to what extent those approaches need to be adapted to the specific time and context of the US, and whether different approaches are required altogether.

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*I now consider human rights central to any career trajectory and will strive to use a human rights approach in all my work, whether that be with government, corporate social responsibility or human rights organizations in particular.* - **Jessica Dalton**, student in the Human Rights Studies M.A. Program and a Summer Program participant

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*“The opportunity to participate in the program did not only allow me to supplement my knowledge, but also to broaden my perspective on worldwide issues. Thanks to in-class debates and discussions I could develop my own opinion on various matters by understanding the legal complexity of the topic.” -Zuzanna Buszman, student in the Summer Human Rights Program*

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## 2018 SUMMER COURSES

### **Session Q: July 2 – August 10**

#### **International Human Rights Law**

This course introduces the fundamental concepts and problems of international law. What are the origins of modern human rights law? What is the substance of this law, who is obligated by it, and how is it enforced? The course will cover the major international human rights treaties and mechanisms and consider some of today’s most significant human rights issues and controversies. While the topics are necessarily law-related, the course will assume no prior exposure to legal studies.

#### **Human Rights and Visual Culture**

This course examines the relationship between visual culture and human rights. It considers a wide range of visual media (photography, painting, sculpture), as well as aspects of visuality (surveillance, profiling). We will use case studies ranging in time from the early modern period (practices in which the body was marked to measure criminality, for example), to the present day. Within this framework, we will study how aspects of visual culture have been used to advocate for human rights, as well as how images and visual regimes have been used to suppress human rights. An important part of the course will be to consider the role played by reception in shaping a discourse around human rights, visuality, and images. Subjects to be addressed include: the nature of evidence; documentation and witness; censorship; iconoclasm; surveillance; profiling; advocacy images; signs on the body; visibility and invisibility.

#### **Human Rights and Global Economic Justice**

This seminar will introduce students to structures of global governance for development, trade, labor, finance, the environment, migration, and intellectual property and investigate their relationship with human rights. Students will learn about public, private, and mixed forms of governance, analyze the ethical and strategic perspectives of the various stakeholders and relate them to existing human rights norms. The course will examine the work of multilateral organizations such as the UN and the International Financial Institutions, as well as international corporate and non-governmental initiatives.

### **PROFESSOR PROFILE: VIRGINIE LADISCH**



Virginie Ladisch leads the International Center for Transitional Justice's work on children and youth. She has provided strategic advice and technical support regarding truth seeking, acknowledgement, and reparations in a range of countries including, Canada, Colombia, Cote d'Ivoire, Kenya, Liberia, Myanmar, Nepal, and Tunisia. From the time she joined ICTJ in 2006 until 2009, Virginie worked as part of the Reparations program, and headed the Cyprus and Turkey country programs.

**Question:** What aspect of teaching in the Summer Program do you find most exciting?

**Answer:** *As a full time practitioner, teaching is a great opportunity to step away from the fast pace of daily work and reflect on the key dilemmas in my field. It is a real privilege to be able to share current challenges and engage my students in emerging debates. In teaching the class on Transitional Justice in the United States, I was particularly excited to have a chance to think through ideas for innovative ways to apply transitional justice approaches to legacies of injustice in the United States that are woven into the fabric of our society.*

**PROFESSOR PROFILE:  
JOSEPH CHUMAN**



Dr. Chuman has been the leader of the Ethical Culture Society of Bergen County, NJ since 1974, and since 2008 has served as a part-time leader of the New York Society for Ethical Culture.

As an activist, Dr. Chuman has worked on behalf of human rights, civil liberties and in opposition to the death penalty, as well as many other progressive causes. He founded the Northern New Jersey group of Amnesty International in 1974 and currently serves as president of the Bergen County Sanctuary for Asylum Seekers, founded by the Ethical Culture Society of Bergen County. This coalition of religious and human rights organizations provides services for asylum seekers who are released from federal detention.

**Question:** What do you think students take away from being involved in the Summer Program?

**Answer:** *Since many students are not affiliated with Columbia, I believe they come away with an edifying sense that they have spent a summer at one of the world's centers for human rights study. They also enjoy the riches that New York City has to offer. It is also rewarding to me that the course I teach inspires some students to pursue human rights work at Columbia.*

## GUEST SPEAKERS

*Guest speakers helped bring new perspectives and specific expertise to our class discussion. For example, for the class on memorialization, we were fortunate to have Piper Anderson come speak to our class about an emerging memorialization initiative she is working on linked to the closing of Rikers Island. Her presentation about the goals of the Rikers Island Public Memory Project and the process by which they are consulting affected groups to help develop a dynamic and meaningful memorial, was a fascinating complement to our exploration of existing memorials.—Professor Virginie Ladisch*



*Guest speaker Carroll Bogert [R], President of The Marshall Project and former Deputy Executive Director for External Relations at Human Rights Watch, with students in the NGOs and Human Rights Movement course.*

## EXTRACURRICULAR OPPORTUNITIES

### **SITE VISIT TO THE UNITED STATES' MISSION TO THE UN**

Students in the Summer Human Rights Program visited the U.S. Mission to the United Nations for a discussion with Ms Mordica Simpson, Human Rights Advisor at the Mission. Ms.



*ISHR students with Mordica Simpson (center) at the U.S. Mission to the United Nations .*

Simpson discussed priority human rights issue areas and the tools they use to promote and protect human rights globally. Students also had the opportunity to ask questions about the United States' engagement with the United Nations system on human rights.

*“Having the chance to go to the US mission to the UN was a great opportunity to learn about how human rights work at the UN and to understand the role that the government, more specifically the Department of State play in advocating for human rights in the international arena.” - **Julia Schoonover**, student in the Summer Human Rights Program*

## **HUMAN RIGHTS WATCH FILM FESTIVAL**

Students in the Summer Human Rights Program attended documentaries, focusing on various human rights topics, as part of the Human Rights Watch (HRW) annual film festival. The HRW Film Festival combines powerful storytelling with social and political activism, acting as an effective tool for public awareness and change. The film festival selects 40 documentaries per year to screen in 20 different cities. This June’s New York Festival screened films featuring broad themes such as transitional justice, police brutality, climate change and environmental degradation, women’s rights, digital activism, rights of refugees and asylum seekers, domestic violence, rights of persons with disabilities, and LGBTQ+ rights, among others.



*A documentary titled “Home Truth” tells the story of Jessica Lenahan (second from left) and her legal battle to ensure the rights of survivors of domestic violence in the United States.*

*The Human Rights program is different from other studies because it focuses not only on the theory and the scholarly aspect, but also on real-world application. Our class was a mix of students from different professional and academic backgrounds, and we learned as much from each other during class discussions as we did from the readings. We also had frequent guest speakers-- our professor's colleagues and other experts who were able to answer questions about the practical manifestation of human rights in field work. The coursework, while weighty, never felt inapplicably abstract. - **Erin Tolman**, student in the Summer Human Rights Program.*

## **UNIVERSITY OF NEW SOUTH WALES LAW SCHOOL**

Students in the Summer Human Rights Program attended two human rights advocacy panels, hosted by the University of New South Wales Law School. The panels included practitioners working on a range of human rights issues at organizations such as Human Rights Watch, UN Women, CoreLab, the Columbia Center on Sustainable Investment, and the International Center for Transitional Justice.

## **PROFESSOR PROFILE: BELINDA COOPER**



Belinda Cooper is an adjunct professor at Columbia University’s Institute for the Study of Human Rights, New York University’s Center for Global Affairs, and a senior fellow at the World Policy Institute. She is the editor of *War Crimes: The Legacy of Nuremberg*, which explores the interconnections between the Nuremberg tribunal and today’s international criminal tribunals. Cooper teaches and lectures on human rights and international law, with a particular focus on transitional justice, war crimes tribunals, and women’s rights.

**Question:** What do you like most about the Summer Program?

**Answer:** *What I love about the summer program is the incredible variety of students I have in my class. Students come from all over the world, from different universities in the US, and from a really wide range of backgrounds, and they are a mix of grad students, undergrads, and people coming to human rights from other professions. In the summer I also almost always have some people who have studied law in different countries, which enriches our legal discussions. This variety is what makes the summer program particularly enjoyable for me.*

**Institute for the Study of Human Rights**  
475 Riverside Drive, 3rd Floor New York, NY 10115  
P: +1.646.745.8577  
humanrightsed@columbia.edu