

Course Description Form

Course number and section: ENGL 346 – 101

Course Topic: Human Rights, Literature, and Culture

Credits: 3

Term: 2

Instructor: David Jefferess

Course Description

This course is informed by a postcolonial/critical race approach, critically examining representations of suffering and injustice, primarily in the Global South. The course provides a critical perspective on universal human rights, specifically in terms of how human rights have paradoxically seemed to reinforce hierarchical distinctions among humans. A core theme of our analysis will be to seek to understand the way modes of human rights witnessing construct relationships. While we will discuss mainstream and popular modes of human rights witnessing (e.g. survivor narratives, documentary film, mainstream journalism, NGO donation appeals), the major literary and film texts and theoretical writings primarily provide critical analysis of and alternatives to these dominant modes of representation. The approach to the course emphasizes self-reflection and collaboration, and seeks to understand how the theories and concepts we study are relevant to our own lives. Note: Course texts include representations of violence and abuse.

Tentative Reading List:

Sahar Khalifeh, *The End of Spring* (Novel - Palestine)

Mercedes Eng, *Knuckle Sandwich* (Long poem – “Canada”)

Christopher Nizza and Dar Kell (Dirs.), *Dear Mandela* (Documentary – South Africa)

Additional stories, poems, critical and theoretical readings available online via Canvas

Other: This course is cross-listed with ENGL 384 with a total enrollment cap of 40 students.