What do we mean by 'human rights' and what responsibilities do we have to ensure that they are protected and fulfilled? These questions are particularly important for those of us working in the arts and humanities. For example, how can representations and interpretations of harm and suffering through photography, literature, poetry, theatre and film play a constructive role in the 21st century to protect and advance human rights?

We begin with the South African visual artist William Kentridge whose innovative and multi-media studies of apartheid and authoritarianism have expanded the possibilities for artistic intervention in politics. Kentridge provides us with both a set of fresh ideas and a lens through which to interpret other artistic renderings of human rights and responsibilities.

With Kentridge's work in mind we will look back on the work of the French filmmaker Claude Lanzmann whose classic documentary Shoah retells the story of Polish complicity in the Holocaust, the German novelist W. G. Sebald and the Polish poets Wysława Szymborska and Czesław Miłosz who have written about their searing experiences in World War II, and the French film maker Anne Aghion who has investigated the difficult aftermath of the Rwandan genocide.

We will also be reading essays on the scope and meaning of human rights and responsibilities by philosophers Amartya Sen, Thomas Pogge, Onora O'Neill, James W. Nickel, Peter Singer, and David Miller.

Format:
The seminar is organized around the study and discussion of common readings and other materials (e.g., films, photographs, music, graphic novels, drawings, sculptures, installations). In addition to seminar discussions, there will be occasional in-class group and performance activities to highlight and sharpen questions and ideas raised in the seminar. There will also be six sessions dedicated to creative work.

Learning Objectives:
Each student will learn:
the basic features of the idea of human rights
how artists and writers have addressed the violation and unfulfillment of human rights
to work collaboratively on a creative project on human rights
to communicate the purposes and challenges that artists and writers face who wish to address the violation and unfulfillment of human rights through their work

Books to be purchased (other required readings are on ANGEL):
W.G. Sebald, *Austerlitz*, # 0375756566
Andrew Kuper, ed., *Global Responsibilities: Who Must Deliver on Human Rights?* #0415951275
Roy Gutman, David Rieff and Anthony Dworkin, eds., *Crimes of War 2.0*, #0393328462

Assignments and Grades
- **In-class Comparative Essay (5%).**
  This short in-class essay (~300) requires that you compare your considered reactions to three of the selected essays and accompanying photographs we will be discussing in *Crimes of War 2.0*. The point is to describe your reactions and trace them back to the language and images that elicited them. Then, compare your interpretations of each, explain how you assess their relative strengths and weaknesses, and why.

- **Short Reviews (5%, 10%, and 10%)**
  These short reviews (~750 words) should be critical reflections, not plot summaries. They should highlight the argument or main idea of a subset of the poetry, film, photography, and/or literature we have discussed thus far in the seminar, and offer your assessment of it as an interpretation of human rights.

- **Creative Proposal/Plan (10%) and Project (30%):**
  Beginning early in the semester in Part I of the course students will work with one of our RCAH artists-in-conversation, **Doug DeLind**, on a creative project inspired by the work of William Kentridge. To get a feel for Kentridge's work, you read the screenplay for *Ubu and the Truth Commission* and watch four of his early animated films about the apartheid era in South Africa (*Felix in Exile*, *Mine*, *History of the Main Complaint*, and *Tide Table*). Then, we will also consider scenes available on the Internet from his more recent multi-media collaborations *The Magic Flute*, *Black Box/Chambre Noire*, and *The Nose*.

  Kentridge is respected for the innovative and very simple techniques he uses such as animation and projection using drawings by erasure and cut-paper silhouettes to express complex social and political themes. He is particularly interested in violence and responsibility, and so his work is especially relevant for this
Based on your study of Kentridge's work and your own interests, you will form small groups and write a proposal and design a plan for group creative project that you will develop collaboratively with the help of Doug DeLind.

Six seminar meetings will be used by students in small groups to form and work together on their Creative Project. Tentatively, these meetings are Sept. 29, Oct. 13, Oct. 25, Nov. 3, Nov. 10, and Nov. 24. These small groups also will be meeting outside of class in order to move their project forward and have material to revise with Doug DeLind during these six class periods. The group proposals and plans are due Oct. 15. The completed Creative Projects will be presented during the last week of classes (Dec. 6 and Dec. 8).

Ultimately, your Creative Project does not have to be about Kentridge or the specific subjects he addresses. It can be about the topics and issues raised later in the course. However, it should be informed by an understanding of Kentridge's approach to art and human rights. Directions for the Creative Projects and the criteria for evaluation will be distributed during Part I of the seminar.

Final Seminar Paper (30%):
Each student will write a final seminar paper (~2,500). This can be a critical reflection on your creative project or a critical analysis of the work done by one or more of the major creative figures we have studied this semester (i.e., Kentridge, Lanzmann, and Aghion). It should be informed by the philosophical essays on human rights and responsibilities we read during the semester.

The final course grades will be calculated according to the following percentages:

- In-class Comparative Essay  (Wed., Sept 15)  5%
- First Short Review    (Fri., Oct. 1)     5%
- Second Short Review  (Fri., Nov. 5)     10%
- Third Short Review   (Fri., Nov. 26)     10%
- Creative Proposal and Plan (Fri., Oct. 15) 10%
- Creative Project     (Mon. Dec.6 - Wed. Dec.8) 30%
- Final Seminar Paper  (Fri., Dec. 17)  30%

**CALENDAR of ASSIGNMENTS**
Introduction: Representing Human Rights and Crimes of War (Weeks 1-3)

There is very little agreement about the history of the concept of human rights; it is either very long dating back to ancient Greece or very short beginning in the mid-twentieth Century. It is therefore no surprise that, as James W. Nickel argues, human rights come in many forms. The most familiar is the list contained in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (1948) that he summarizes in his Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy article.

These specific rights can be divided into six or more families: security rights that protect people against crimes such as murder, massacre, torture, and rape; due process rights that protect against abuses of the legal system such as imprisonment without trial, secret trials, and excessive punishments; liberty rights that protect freedoms in areas such as belief, expression, association, assembly, and movement; political rights that protect the liberty to participate in politics through actions such as communicating, assembling, protesting, voting, and serving in public office; equality rights that guarantee equal citizenship, equality before the law, and nondiscrimination; and social (or "welfare") rights that require provision of education to all children and protections against severe poverty and starvation.

Many also have argued that in addition to these individual human rights there are group rights that have the same kind of high moral and legal priority, especially, the right against genocide, which is the subject of a separate 1948 United Nations Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide. In this seminar we will be concerned with some of the most serious human rights violations, including the crimes of genocide and apartheid.

Artists and writers have struggled to represent human rights, crimes of war, and other crimes against humanity in such a way that people will be moved to put an end to these forms of suffering. One effort to educate the public, at least in the United States, is a "what the public should know" collection of short essays and vivid images of war crimes. In Crimes of War 2.0 (CoW2) the editors do not shy away from difficult and divisive issues. Nor do they hesitate to show the human consequences of these acts of violence in graphic detail.

In this introductory section of our seminar we will read some of the most relevant entries in this volume and discuss our reactions to the images. Is this an effective way of calling attention to the violation of human rights? Does it help us better understand who or what is responsible? Or, in Barbie Zelizer’s apt phrase, does it paradoxically encourage us to "remember to forget" by morally and politically habituating us to these acts of violence?
Wed., Sept 1 - Wed., Sept 8
Roy Gutman, David Rieff and Anthony Dworkin, eds., *Crimes of War 2.0*, Prefaces, 8-16
International Humanitarian Law, An Overview, 22-26
Aggression, 37-38
Apartheid, 39
Bosnia, 66-74
Child Soldiers and Children as Killers, 95-99
Concentration Camps, 121-25
Congo, Democratic Republic of, 126-31
Courts and Tribunals, 132-34
Crimes Against Humanity, 135-36
Ethnic Cleansing, 175-77
The Camera as Witness, 183-84
Forced Labor, 186-88
Genocide, 191-95
Humanitarian Intervention, 227-30
Incitement to Genocide, 236-38
Internal Displacement, 242-44
Refoulement, 352-53
Rwanda, 360-64
Sexual Violence, 369-77
War Crimes, 420-22

Mon., Sept 13
Paul Slovic, "'If I look at the mass I will never act': Psychic Numbing and Genocide" (ANGEL)
Susan Sontag, *Regarding the Pain of Others*, pp.81-94 (ANGEL)

Wed., Sept 15
Andrew Kuper, ed., *Global Responsibilities: Who Must Deliver on Human Rights?* articles by Pogge, Sen, and O'Neill

**In-class Essay** on three of the war crimes in CoW2 for careful analysis, comparison, and discussion.

Further Reading:
South African artist William Kentridge is deeply concerned with the presence of the past, particularly those violent elements of the past that we may not be adequately prepared for when they re-resurface. One sees this in his early representations of the South African landscape in the 1990s as the country moved from the era of racial apartheid to a fragile post-apartheid democracy. But, according to Kentridge, this is not something that is peculiar to South Africa. The history of political violence is a legacy that other countries and cultures that pride themselves on an Enlightenment tradition of reason and freedom also must struggle with.

We begin with Kentridge's short animated films on the violence of and the responsibilities for apartheid in South Africa. (for example, *History of the Main Complaint*). His technique of charcoal drawing, erasure, and stop-action animation - what he calls "stone age technology" is well-suited for capturing the presence of the past. One can literally see the scars of the past apartheid system that the persons in these films carry with them into the present. They are haunted and weighed down by the past in different ways as victims, perpetrators, collaborators, and bystanders.

After this introduction to Kentridge's basic technique of drawing by erasure, we will read the illustrated script for the play *Ubu and the Truth Commission*, a collaborative project with the writer Jane Taylor and the South African Handspring Puppet Company. In this play the complexity of responsibility, reconciliation, and forgiveness in the wake of the violence of apartheid are powerfully evoked. The presence of the past does not fatalistically determine the future, but it does set the stage for human action in the present.

Finally, we will consider Kentridge's interpretations of other crimes of war beyond the borders of South Africa. In his unusual interpretation of Mozart's 18th century opera *The Magic Flute* and his follow-up to it, *Black Box/Chambre Noire*, Kentridge warns us of the disastrous consequences that may follow from an overconfidence in our ability to manage society from the top down. There is a line, he suggests that runs from the Platonic ideal of the philosopher king to the Terror that
followed the French Revolution just after *The Magic Flute* was first performed in 1791 and then to the genocidal policies of European powers in Africa in the 19th and 20th centuries. Not long after his interpretation of *The Magic Flute* and *Black Box/Chambre Noire*, Kentridge turned his interpretative eye to the Nikolai Gogol short story *The Nose* and the Dmitri Shostakovich opera of the same name. Kentridge's version of this opera does not simply criticize the regular suspects - state bureaucrats. The separation of the main character, a mid-level bureaucrat himself, from his "nose" which then rises to take the position he's lost, is a commentary on our own split personalities. We are neither purely victims nor simply perpetrators of state violations of human rights, but a mixture of both in Kentridge's hands.

**Mon., Sept. 20**
William Kentridge, dir., *History of the Main Complaint*
---, *Mine*
---, *Felix in Exile*
---, *Tide Table*
Jill Bennett, *Empathic Vision: Affect, Trauma, and Contemporary Art*, 70-77, 112-18 (ANGEL)
Carolyn Christov-Bakargiev, "On Defectability as a Resource: William Kentridge's Art of Imperfection, Lack, and Falling Short" (ANGEL)

**Wed., Sept. 22**
William Kentridge and Jane Taylor, *Ubu and the Truth Commission* (ANGEL)
Jane Taylor, "The Shadow of a Doubt: William Kentridge's Bronze Age"
(ANGEL)

**Mon., Sept 27**
Jessica Dubow and Ruth Rosengarten, "History as the Complaint: William Kentridge and the Making of Post-Apartheid South Africa," *Art History*, 27(4), September 2004 (ANGEL)

**Wed., Sept 29**
Discuss Creative Project Groups

**Fri., Oct 1**
*First Short Review* due by midnight via email.

**Mon., Oct. 4**
*The Magic Flute*, dir. Ingmar Bergman
William Kentridge, *Thinking Aloud* (ANGEL)

**Wed., Oct. 6**
William Kentridge, dir., *Magic Flute*
Mon., Oct. 11
Nikolai Gogol, *The Nose*
http://www.bibliomania.com/0/5/140/354/18203/1/frameset.html
William Kentridge, dir., *The Nose*

Wed., Oct. 13
Work in Creative Project groups

Fri., Oct. 15
*Creative Proposal and Plan* due by midnight via email

Further Reading:
Antjie Krog, *Country of My Skull*
Antjie Krog, et al., *There was this goat*

**Part II: The Nazi Holocaust in Poland (Weeks 8-11)**

Claude Lanzmann's six-hour documentary *Shoah* relentlessly probes the subject of collaboration and complicity in crimes of war and crimes against humanity through interviews with individuals caught up in the Nazi Holocaust against the Jews in Poland. The main characters in this film are virtually unforgettable, as is Lanzmann himself as he regularly steps in front of the camera to direct the conversation.

We begin with a close reading of *Shoah* and some of the secondary literature that has been written about Lanzmann's work. Does he push his informants too hard? Does he set stage some of the interviews in a tendentious way? What do we finally learn about the responsibilities of those who were forced to collaborate and those who seemingly had some choice? How should responsibility be understood and allocated, and by whom?

A very different representation of responsibility in this World War II context can be found in the fiction of W.G. Sebald. Through a distinctive juxtaposition of photographs and narrative, Sebald asks how Germans who did not believe in the Nazi ideology (although they may have served under the Third Reich) have come to terms with the violence that was done in their name? In addition, should they and other Germans today remain silent about the violence done to German civilians during the war by Allied forces?

Mon., Oct. 18
Claude Lanzmann, dir., *Shoah*
Thomas E. Wartenberg, "Beyond Mere Illustration: How Can Films Be Philosophy" (ANGEL)
Wed., Oct. 20
Claude Lanzmann, dir., Shoah

Mon., Oct. 25
Work in Creative Project groups

Wed., Oct. 27
W.G. Sebald, Austerlitz

Mon., Nov. 1
W.G. Sebald, Austerlitz

Wed., Nov. 3
Work in Creative Project groups

Fri., Nov. 5
Second Short Review due by midnight via email

Mon., Nov. 8
Wysława Szymborska, selected poems (ANGEL)
Czesław Miłosz, "A Poor Christian Looks at the Ghetto" (ANGEL)

Wed., Nov. 10
Work in Creative Project groups

Further Reading:
Murray Smith and Thomas E. Wartenberg, eds., Thinking Through Cinema: Film as Philosophy
Thomas E. Wartenberg, Thinking on Screen: Film as Philosophy

Part III: Genocide in Rwanda (Weeks 12-13)

The genocide in Rwanda in 1994 has been the object of intense scrutiny as well as legal prosecution. One response within Rwanda itself has been the creation of community forums or gacaca courts to create a pathway for reconciliation among survivors and former genocidaires. Unlike the South African Truth and Reconciliation Commission and the war crimes tribunals created after World War II, these gacaca courts
have been designed to reach a large number of Rwandans. The French filmmaker Annie Aghion has made a series of documentaries exploring this process of reconciliation, and in the final film, My Neighbor, My Killer, we hear Rwandans themselves discuss their own views about responsibility and forgiveness.

Mon., Nov. 15
Anne Aghion, dir., Notebooks of Memory
Anne Aghion, "Living Together Again in Rwanda," Considering Forgiveness, eds. Aleksandra Wagner with Carin Kuoni (ANGEL)
Peter Uvin, "The Introduction of a Modernized Gacaca for Judging Suspects of Participation in the Genocide and the Massacres of 1994 in Rwanda" (ANGEL)

Wed., Nov. 17
Anne Aghion, dir., My Neighbor, My Killer

Mon., Nov. 22
Anne Aghion, dir., My Neighbor, My Killer
James Dawes, That the World May Know: Bearing Witness to Atrocity, pp. 164-233, 271-83 (ANGEL)

Wed., Nov. 24
Work in Creative Project groups

Friday, Nov. 26
Third Short Review due by midnight via email

Further Reading:
Alison Des Forges, Leave None to Tell the Story
Gérard Prunier, Africa's World War
Helena Cobban, Amnesty after Atrocity

Part IV: Conclusion (Weeks 14-16)

Mon., Nov. 29
Andrew Kuper, ed., Global Responsibilities: Who Must Deliver on Human Rights?, articles by Miller, Barry
Wed., Dec. 1

Mon., Dec. 6
Creative Projects presented in class

Wed., Dec. 8
Creative Projects presented in class

Wed. Dec. 15, 3-5 PM (scheduled time for final examination)
Review and discussion of Final Seminar Paper

Fri., Dec. 17
Final Seminar Paper due by midnight via email