

HUAF 5040 - Communications and Media in Humanitarian Affairs

This course examines the history of representation of humanitarian crisis, and considers the impact of media accounts on the potential for humanitarian action. The role of photojournalism, and the images and narratives of broadcast and press reporting will be evaluated in the context of humanitarian goals and necessities. The dynamics between depiction and public perception, image and empathy, and narratives of compassion and inclusion will be articulated within the larger context of global security and human rights. As conflict, suffering and issue of life and death remain significant global realities, this course details the conditions, practices, messages, obligations, ethics, and limits of telling the stories of those in crisis.

Course Texts

Robin Andersen. *A Century of Media, A Century of War*. 2006

Susan Moeller, *Compassion Fatigue: How the Media Sell Disease, Famine, War and Death*. 1991 (portions)

Susan Sontag. *Regarding the Pain of Others*. 2003

Barbie Zelizer and Stuart Allen. *Journalism after September 11*. 2002 (portions)

Other Readings will be on reserve or provided online.

Pre-Course Requirement:

Robin Andersen. *A Century of Media, A Century of War*. 2006

Susan Sontag. *Regarding the Pain of Others*. 2003

"Front Lines and Deadlines: Perspectives on War Reporting," *Media Studies Journal*. Vol.15, No.1, New York: The Freedom Forum

Course Requirements:

Student will write a 5-page reflection essay due on days 3 and 5, based on the topics covered. Essays should be considered background and analysis for the final presentation. (At the end of each day, 45 minutes will be reserved for discussing and planning essays and final presentation.) Referencing a historical example, either for its pitfalls or successes, students will do in-class presentations of a strategic communication plan for a humanitarian crisis, and justify their model using media analysis and theory.

DAY 1

Morning:

From Natural Disasters to War and Genocide:
Historical Cases of Crisis Reporting

Afternoon:

The Role of Photojournalism

Readings:

Robin Andersen. *A Century of Media, A Century of War*

Barbie Zelizer and Stuart Allen. *When Trauma Shapes the News*

DAY 2

Morning:

Why We Watch: The Psycho-cultural Dimensions of Suffering

Afternoon:

Constraints on the News Frame:

Sensationalism, Drama and Economic Influence

HUAF 5040 - Communications and Media in Humanitarian Affairs (page 2)

Readings:

Susan Sontag. *Regarding the Pain of Others*. 2003

Susan Moeller. *Compassion Fatigue: How the Media Sell Disease, Famine, War and Death*. 1991 3 Chapters

DAY 3 (First 5-page essay due)

Morning:

The Narrative Context

Overcoming Blame, Exclusion, Voyeurism and Victimhood

Afternoon:

Inclusion and Community:

Communicating Humanitarian Goals and Participation

Readings:

Barbie Zelizer. *Photography, Journalism and Trauma*

Nicholas Kristof. *Aid: Can It Work?* New York Review of Books October 2006

DAY 4

Morning:

Crisis and Strategic Communication

Interacting with the Press and Media Technology

Afternoon:

Shaping the Story: Imagining,
And Message Design

DAY 5 (Second 5-page essay due)

Morning:

Newsgathering in Crisis:

Concern for the Messenger

Public Empathy and Political Action

Readings:

Howard Tumber. *Reporting Under Fire: The Physical Safety and Emotional Welfare of Journalists*

"Front Lines and Deadlines: Perspectives on War Reporting," *Media Studies Journal*. Vol.15, No.1, New York:
The Freedom Forum

Nicholas Kristof. *What to Do About Darfur*. New York Review of Books July 2009

Afternoon:

Presentations