HUMAN RIGHTS AND NEW TECHNOLOGIES

University of Connecticut, Fall 2014
Professor Molly Land
HRTS [xxx]
[date, time, place]

Contact Information

Email: molly.land@law.uconn.edu
Telephone: 860-570-5257
Office Hours: XXXX

Course Description

This course will examine the role that new technologies (social media, mobile phones, Internet applications and platforms) are playing in the fulfillment, protection, and enforcement of international human rights. New technologies provide a vehicle for the enjoyment of certain rights, conduits for the exchange of information needed for the fulfillment of rights, and platforms for collecting information and engaging in advocacy around state accountability. Focusing on a series of case studies, the course will consider both the opportunities and risks presented by new technologies for human rights protection and enforcement. Although there are considerable benefits that can be realized through the deployment of new technologies toward human rights aims, there are also risks, not only privacy and security risks but also risks in the form of hate speech and discrimination online. Finally, the course will highlight some of the technical and legal innovations employed in the case studies selected to minimize the risks and maximize the opportunities provided by new technologies.

Course Goals

At the conclusion of the course, students should be able to:

- discuss some of the ways in which new technologies can enable the fulfillment, protection, and enforcement of international human rights;
- identify the features of new technologies that create both human rights risks and opportunities; and
- discuss some of the techniques being employed to minimize human rights risks (security, privacy, discrimination, etc.) and maximize human rights opportunities (service delivery, information gathering, etc.).

Required Course Materials

- HUMAN RIGHTS IN EDUCATION, SCIENCE AND CULTURE: LEGAL DEVELOPMENTS AND CHALLENGES (Yvonne Donders & Vladimir Volodin eds., 2007) (Donders)
- LAURENCE R. HELFER & GRAEME W. AUSTIN, HUMAN RIGHTS AND INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY: MAPPING THE GLOBAL INTERFACE (2011) (Helfer)
- additional documents posted on Blackboard ("BB")
- primary documents, available through any the following sources:

- University of Minnesota's Human Rights Library, http://www1.umn.edu/humanrts/
- a document supplement of your choice (e.g., 25+ Human Rights Documents available for download at http://tinyurl.com/kolcz58)

Course Requirements

- final exam
- class participation

Final Exam: [tbd]

Class Participation: In terms of participation in class discussion, I am looking for sustained and high-quality contributions over the course of the semester. I will largely rely on volunteers, although to facilitate participation from all, I reserve the right to call on students without notice. If you feel unprepared for a particular class, I would appreciate it if you would send me an e-mail or leave me a note to that effect before class begins.

Readings

You are responsible for all of the material on the syllabus, whether or not it is discussed in class, unless I instruct you otherwise. Reading assignments are subject to change and I may, from time to time, add material that is not on the syllabus. You should read all of the material that falls within the assigned pages, including any notes and questions. You should also read the relevant provisions of the primary documents referenced in the reading.

I. INTRODUCTION

Introduction
Helfer, Chapter 1.1
Chapters 10-12 in Minkler

Framing and Tools
Donders, Chapter 3
[readings on technologies, Clay Shirky?]

II. RIGHTS

Right to Science
Donders, Chapter 7

Right to Culture
Donders, Chapter 6

Authors' Rights
Helfer, Chapter 3

Freedom of Expression
World Bank Report
Helfer, Chapter 4
Land, Toward an International Law of the Internet

Right to Food
Helfer, Chapter 6

Right to Health
Helfer, Chapter 2

Right to Education
Donders, Chapter 5
Helfer, Chapter 5

III. CASE STUDIES

Mapping
participatory mapping
crisis mapping

Crowdsourcing
Kenyan elections

Social Media
Egypt networking

Mobile
Medic Mobile

IV. CONCLUSION

Wrap-Up