

Syllabus: PA 5886 -- Fall 2020

MHR Cohort Seminar

Meets remotely every other Tuesday from 2:30 - 4:25 pm

Canvas course [link](#)



Course Description and Objectives

Welcome to the Master of Human Rights Cohort Seminar! This seminar provides a space for you to:

- Build **relationships** with each other, and connect with members of past MHR cohorts;
- Prepare in practical ways for human rights **internships and careers**;
- **Reflect** on your purpose and values as human rights professionals;
- Focus on **racial justice** and apply an **anti-racist lens** to human rights work and studies; and
- **Connect with and learn from human rights advocates**, especially those in the Twin Cities.

The 2020-21 MHR Cohort Seminar is happening at a time and in a place where the importance of human rights could not be clearer. You are at a university grappling with white supremacy and institutional racism, in a city where police brutality and systemic anti-Black racism sparked global uprisings for rights, justice and liberation. You're studying in a country where discrimination remains pervasive and deadly, and where hard-fought legal rights are being rolled back. You're in a world where COVID-19, economic recession and inequality, and climate change are disproportionately harming marginalized communities.

Human rights matter, especially in the face of such crises. The community and space for reflection that we create through the MHR Cohort Seminar will help prepare you to listen, learn, challenge yourself, collaborate, connect, support, and lead as human rights advocates. Together with other courses, the seminar will help you navigate your human rights path, and play a constructive role at this transformational moment and beyond.

This fall, we have the exciting opportunity to enrich the MHR Cohort Seminar with a multi-week workshop facilitated by Voices for Racial Justice. This will be integrated into our regular class time. More info on that is below.

This one-credit seminar is meant to be different from other courses. This is not a course for reading exhaustively or learning the intricacies of international human rights law or complex theories. You won't take tests or write long papers. You'll do that in other courses! In this seminar, the aim is for you to connect and build community with your cohort, to reflect on your human rights purpose and interests, and to provide practical support as you prepare for human rights internships and careers.

Instructor Information

Janet Walsh - Senior Fellow, Humphrey School

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Office: Humphrey School, room 153 (enter through the Room 130 door, and my office is by the stairs)

Personal Zoom meeting room [link](#)

Pronouns: She/her/hers

Student Hours: Tuesday (1:00 - 2:15) and Wednesday (9:45 - 11:00) or by appointment. I also welcome spontaneous calls or visits any time.

About me: I'm a Senior Fellow in Humphrey School of Public Affairs, and in this role I teach, advise, and engage with the MHR program and students in other ways. I'm also a lawyer who has advocated for gender equality and women's human rights around the world through work with nonprofits, the United Nations, and law firms. Prior to joining the U of M last year, I worked for Human Rights Watch for 17 years, as the deputy director of the Women's Rights Division. There, I helped lead the organization's work on issues such as violence against women, sexual and reproductive rights, women's land and property rights, family laws, the rights of women workers, and work-family policies. I grew up in Minnesota, fled this cold state for 20 years, then returned when my parents were struggling with Alzheimers and other health issues. I'm also a mom of two great kids who bake a lot and love soccer, robotics, and their puppy.

Voices for Racial Justice Workshops

This fall, we have a special opportunity: we are integrating a series of workshops facilitated by [Voices for Racial Justice](#) (VRJ) into the cohort seminar, within the usual class time.

The VRJ workshops will be adapted from their “Let Our Ancestors Lead Training Toolkit.” The workshops will include modules on:

- Soil-tending 101
 - Value & Worldview Mapping, Traditions & Lineages of Change
 - Racial Justice
 - Solidarity vs Tokenization, Saviorism, Privilege & Power
- Community Research & Policy
 - Racial Equity Agenda & Racial Equity Impact Assessment
 - Approaches and Grounding in Community-led Policy
- Healing & Cultural Strategy
 - Introduction to Healing and Cultural Strategy
 - Sustainability, Commitments & Accountability

Voices for Racial Justice is a movement organization of leaders, organizers and culture workers who envision a world without racism, honoring the culture, knowledge, power, and healing of Black, Indigenous, and communities of color. VRJ is committed to building power through collective cultural and healing strategies for racial justice across Minnesota using organizing, leadership training, community policy and research.

VRJ was founded in 1993 to strengthen the field of organizing in Minnesota. Today, VRJ focuses on nurturing an ecosystem of restorative racial justice movements. Its work is guided by a “soil tending” approach as a change-making strategy informed by local artist organizer Ricardo Levins Morales. VRJ understands that by tending to the soil, which is our values, narratives, culture, and beliefs, we can build a sustained and life-giving approach to racial justice organizing.

The VRJ staff facilitators for the workshop will be **Gabriella Anaïs Deal-Márquez** and **Fayise Abraham**, and **Brett Grant** will join for one session. They will share bios and contact information in advance of the workshop.

Assessment and Assignments

This course is not taken for a letter grade. It is a Satisfactory/Not Satisfactory (S/N) course. Satisfactory participation means coming to class prepared, participating actively in classroom activities and discussions, and engaging with assignments. We’ll often break into small groups in some classes, and your group designation is in this [document](#).

Assignments will not be graded, but you will want to do them to get ready for your internship and job searches. Most assignments will focus on: (1) internship / career preparation; and (2) monitoring the work of a nongovernmental organization of your choice. We may also have some homework related to workshops facilitated by Voices for Racial Justice.

As you’ll see in the chart below, the internship / career preparation assignments relate to:

- Understanding human rights career options
- Planning, exploring and tracking internship / job openings
- Networking and relationship-building
- Resumes and LinkedIn profiles
- Cover Letters
- Interviews

Further information is in this [assignment guidance document](#) on Canvas. A simple visual of the flow of assignments is at the end of this syllabus.

You should allocate about **two hours per week** to do the assignments and readings for this course. **If this is too much vis-a-vis other demands in a given week, do less for this course. It's ok.** If you're pressed for time, please **prioritize the assignments for the Voices for Racial Justice workshops** and the internship / career preparation exercises. The NGO monitoring assignments are a lesser priority.

Course Materials

There is no required textbook. Sources that you will read or watch are on the Canvas site.

Please know that while I've selected readings and videos that I believe reflect timely and important human rights issues, **this course is meant to be flexible and shouldn't be a source of stress. If you have a week with heavy readings for another course, just skim the readings you're assigned for this seminar.** Your other courses will go *much* deeper into the substance of human rights, so it's appropriate that you spend more time on those classes.

Course Schedule

Class 1: Sept. 8	<p><i>In-class activities</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Introductions, overview of seminar ● Shared agreements for class ● Second-year MHR students are invited to join part of the class ● Mentor program reminders <hr/> <p>Read or view before class:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Universal Declaration of Human Rights ● US Human Rights Network report, "2019-2020 Human Rights Report" (40 pages) ● TED video, "The difference between being 'not racist' and antiracist," Ibram X. Kendi," June 2020 (51 minutes) ● MHR student statement, "MHR Student Statement in Response to the Murder of George Floyd," June 2020 ● Human Rights Careers website, page on "Human Rights Career Paths" (read several of the categories that interest you) and page on "Internships" (browse listings)
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<p>Class 2: Sept. 22</p>	<p><i>In-class activities</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Career Services visit. Steph Eiden of HHH Career Services will share tips on writing resumes and LinkedIn profiles. ● Human rights this week: Full-group discussion and breakout groups. <hr/> <p><i>Read or view before class:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Read a human rights treaty of your choice. ● Minnesota Spokesman-Recorder video, “MSR Town Hall: Police & Protest,” June 2020 (featuring Nekima Levy Armstrong – Racial Justice Network; Jaylani Hussein – CAIR-MN; Andrea Jenkins – Minneapolis City Council; Oluchi Omeoga – Black Visions Collective; Leslie Redmond – NAACP; Mel Reeves – MSR) (73 minutes) ● HHH Career Services, “Virtual Career Resources” (browse) ● HHH Career Services, “Internship Information” (browse) ● HHH Career Services job and internship postings (browse) ● CLA Career Services, “Graduate Career Services” (browse) <hr/> <p>Assignments:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Career prep assignment: Track internship / job postings, and select one for a hypothetical application. ● NGO assignment: Monitor and sign up for the NGO’s communications.
<p>Class 3: Oct. 6</p>	<p><i>In-class activities</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Voices for Racial Justice (VRJ) workshop - session 1 ● Internship / career prep discussion: Networking and relationship-building <hr/> <p><i>Read or view before class:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● UN International Convention on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination (ICERD) ● UN video, Urgent Debate on Racially Inspired Human Rights Violations - UN Human Rights Council, June 2020. Please watch: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Statement of Michelle Bachelet (minutes 12:25 to 21:14) ○ Statement of E. Tendayi Achiume (minutes 27:44 to 36:50) ○ Statement of Philonise Floyd (minutes 37:04 to 41:07) ● HHH Career Services, “Resume writing tips and sample” ● CLA Career Services, “Resume” ● HHH Career Services website, “LinkedIn profile tip sheet” ● CLA Career Services, “LinkedIn”

	<hr/> <p>Assignments:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Career prep assignment: Update your resume and LinkedIn profile. Submit for peer feedback. <i>Optional:</i> Join the LinkedIn Humphrey School Alumni & Students group. ● NGO assignment: Monitor and read about the NGO's work.
<p>Class 4: Oct. 20</p>	<p><i>In-class activities</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● VRJ workshop - session 2 ● Human rights this week: Full-group discussion and breakout groups. <hr/> <p><i>Read before class:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● OpenGlobalRights series, "COVID-19: What human rights can offer during the pandemic, and what the pandemic means for human rights" (read <i>one article</i> from series) ● United Nations careers website (browse) ● Browse the National Council of Nonprofits website (including job postings) ● Browse the MN Council of Nonprofits website (including job postings) <hr/> <p>Assignments:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Career prep assignment: Further update resume and LinkedIn profile. Submit for HHH Career Services feedback. ● NGO assignment: Learn about the NGO staff / request an informational interview.
<p>Class 5: Nov. 3</p>	<p><i>In-class activities</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Internship / career prep discussion: Open discussion about how preparations are going. ● Spring semester planning: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Amelia Shindelar visit re spring semester course registration and other advice. ○ Brainstorm about topics, guest speakers, and site visits for spring semester. <hr/> <p><i>Read before class:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● UN report, "Summary of Guidelines for States on the effective implementation of the Right to Participate in Public Affairs," 2018 ● EthicalJobs.com website, "Want a career in human rights? Here are seven tips to get you started" ● UMN Career Services website, "Informational Interviews" <hr/> <p>Assignment:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Career prep assignment: Speak with your mentor about internship and job searches.
<p>Class 6: Nov. 17</p>	<p><i>In-class activities</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● VRJ workshop - session 3

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Internship / career prep discussion: Cover letters and preparing for interviews <hr/> <p>Read or view before class:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Urgent Action Fund for Women's Human Rights video, "Turning Towards Healing Justice," 2019 (6:30 minutes) ● SSIR article, "Connecting Individual and Societal Change," March 2020 ● Human Rights Resilience Project website, "Tools and Programs for Resilience" (browse) ● HHH Career Services, "Cover letter tips and sample" ● CLA Career Services, "Cover Letters" <hr/> <p>Assignments:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Career prep assignment: Write a cover letter. Submit for peer feedback. ● NGO assignment: Informational interview with NGO staff, and thank-you note. (Option to plan this for next week, or even January, if you're pressed for time.)
<p>Class 7: Dec. 1</p>	<p>In-class activities</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Course feedback: End of course survey (Student Rating of Teaching) ● Guest speaker: Joe Lisi, Deputy Director, Global Human Resources at Human Rights Watch <hr/> <p>Read or view before class:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP) ● Open Global Rights oped, "Unprecedented ruling for Indigenous peoples by Inter-American Court of Human Rights," July 2020 (2 pages) ● Video, "Dr Karen Diver: Indigenous autonomy is the way forward," 2019 (10:46 minutes) ● HHH Career Services, "STAR Method of preparing for interviews" ● CLA Career Services, "Interviews" <hr/> <p>Assignments:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Career prep assignment: Prepare for a mock job / internship interview.
<p>Class 8: Dec. 15</p>	<p>In-class activities</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Mock internship / job interviews ● Reflection and close-out of the semester <hr/> <p>Read or view before class:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● OpenGlobalRights series, "Climate Change and Human Rights" (read <i>one article</i> from series) ● Harvard Business School Online, "9 Tips for Mastering Your Next Virtual Interview"

Assignment

- **Career prep assignment:** Schedule an individual meeting with HHH Career Services in January or February about internship searches / career preparation. [HHH appointment link](#).

Land Acknowledgment

The University of Minnesota Twin Cities is built within the traditional, ancestral, and contemporary lands of Indigenous peoples. It resides on Dakota land ceded in the Treaties of 1837 and 1851. It is important to acknowledge the peoples on whose land we live, learn, and work as we seek to improve and strengthen our relations with tribal nations. We also acknowledge that words are not enough. We must ensure that our institution provides support, resources, and programs that increase access to all aspects of higher education for American Indian students, staff, faculty, and community members.

To learn more, visit:

- [American Indian Movement](#) and the [MN History Center](#)
- [Native Governance Center](#)
- [Treaties Matter](#)
- [Land-Grab Universities](#)
 - [New York Times: Native Americans Paid for America's Land Grant Universities](#)
- [Forced Marches and Imprisonment at Fort Snelling](#)
- [Film: Dakota 38](#) -- about the largest mass execution in the US, which took place in Mankato
- [Native American Community Development Institute](#) and the [American Indian Cultural Corridor](#)
- [Minneapolis American Indian Center](#)
- [Birchbark Books & Native Arts](#)

Set Your Canvas Notification Preferences

This course depends upon your ability to receive communications from your instructor and/or about the class. It's important that you set up your Canvas "notification preferences" to choose how and when you'd like to receive messages via text, email, or both. Find easy-to-follow [instructions](#) at "How do I set my Canvas notification preferences as a student?"

We strongly recommend that you opt to receive notification of Announcements, Conversation Messages, and Added to Conversation so that you don't risk missing important class communication. For assistance, please contact me or help@umn.edu.

University and School policies

For links to University of Minnesota and Humphrey School policies, please click the "U of M Policies" link on our course Canvas site, or see <https://z.umn.edu/PolicyStatements>. Policies include information on

student conduct, scholastic dishonesty, sexual harassment, equal opportunity, disability accommodations, and more.

Mental Health and Stress Management

As a student you may experience a range of issues that can cause barriers to learning, such as strained relationships, anxiety, substance use problems, feeling down, difficulty concentrating or lack of motivation. You may also experience stress from reading about and engaging with human rights topics in a variety of courses, and this may take a cumulative toll. These mental health concerns or stressful events may lead to diminished academic performance and may reduce your ability to participate in daily activities.

University services are available to assist you. You can learn more about the broad range of confidential mental health services available on campus via the [Student Mental Health](#) website. You can seek support, information, or services from [Boynton Health](#), the [Let's Talk](#) consultation services, the Humphrey Student Services advisors, and those explained under "Mental Health and Stress Management" at this [link](#).

Flow of Assignments

Career Prep Assignments

Explore job databases

Track postings

Update resume and LinkedIn

Further update resume and LinkedIn

Speak with your mentor

Write cover letter

Prepare for mock job interview

NGO monitoring assignments

Select and NGO to monitor

Monitor NGO communications

Monitor NGO

Request info interview

None

Info interview / thank you

Info interview / thank you

VRJ Assignments

VRJ homework

VRJ homework

VRJ homework