



Center for International Human Rights (CIHR) **Activities for Academic Year 2014-2015**

The Center for International Human Rights (CIHR) at John Jay College of Criminal Justice, CUNY, was established with a mandate to study the main challenges to the promotion and protection of internationally recognized human rights norms; analyze and assess the interactions between human rights violations and international crimes; investigate genocide historically and in the contemporary world; and devise educational programs aimed at increasing public awareness of these norms.

The CIHR focuses on a critical examination of long-standing and emerging issues on the human rights agenda, as well as on equipping our students with the necessary background and experience to pursue their interests in human rights scholarship and advocacy. The Center regularly conducts research workshops, seminars (including panel discussions and lectures) and develops outreach programs. The workshops focus on cutting edge issues and bring together experts in the field to present and discuss their work and usually result in publications as books, or special issues in scholarly journals. In addition, CIHR is consistently looking for innovative outreach/awareness activities to actively involve the college community, as well as the broader public, on important human rights issues.

Below is a list of our activities for the 2014-2015 academic year:

Seminars, Panel Discussions and Lectures

- Fall 2014 – Spring 2015: CIHR holds an annual Human Rights Seminar Series in co-sponsorship with the CUNY Ph.D./ M.A. Program in Political Science.
 - For this year, we continued with the theme *Mental Health and Human Rights*.
 - While the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (ICESCR) stipulates the “right of everyone to the enjoyment of the highest attainable standard of physical and mental health,” such issues have yet to receive adequate treatment within the human rights discourse. Mental health, which is an indispensable component of well-being, remains a distant goal for many people throughout the world. Despite advances in treatment and increased research on mental health, the quest for the “highest attainable standard” faces considerable challenges. Among these challenges, stigmatization was and remains a major concern. The discriminatory treatment of people with mental illness severely restricts their access to health care, as well as to the underlying determinants of health, and undermines their ability to reach their full potential as productive members of society. Our seminar series addressed some of the main issues involved in the effort to advance a less discriminatory, more inclusive social order where the aspirations of people with mental health concerns can be fully realized.
 - The following events were part of our Human Rights Seminar Series:
- Thursday, October 23, 2014 – Successful Approaches to Everyday Trauma for Young Adults
 - Co-sponsored by CIHR, National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI) on Campus at John Jay, the Minor in Human Rights, and the CUNY PhD/MA Program in Political Science at the Graduate Center.
 - Moderator: Dana Daugherty, Outreach and Program Coordinator, NAMI-NYC Metro.

Panelists:

- Luis Lopez, MS, HSBCP – Implementation Specialist with the Assertive Community Treatment (ACT) Institute, the Focus on Integrated Treatment (FIT) Initiative at the Center for Practice Innovation (CPI) at Columbia Psychiatry and the Division of Mental Health Services and Policy Research, New York State Psychiatric Institute.
- Roxanne Power – Trained in Trauma Sensitive Yoga from Justice Resource Institute. She has a private practice and teaches Yoga to staff members and their clients at a not-for-profit counseling agency in Downtown Brooklyn.
- Hernan Carvente – Senior at the CUNY John Jay College of Criminal Justice, where he is the President of the Youth Justice Club (YJC). He is also a member of the New York State Juvenile Justice Advisory Group (NYS JJAG) and the Citizens Policy and Complaint Review Council (CPCRC). He is also the Northeast Regional Representative for the Coalition for Juvenile Justice’s (CJJ) National Youth Committee.
- Kalycia Trishana Watson, MuPP – Published papers on health disparities, HIV and mental health. She holds a master’s degree in Urban Planning and Policy (MUPP) from the University of Illinois at Chicago; her thesis was “Do Immigrants, Lower Income, and Minority Patients Have Access to Affordable and Quality Health Care?”

- Thursday, November 13, 2014 – Myths and Realities Surrounding Mental Illness: Educating Through Their Own Voice

- Co-sponsored by CIHR, NAMI on Campus at John Jay, the Minor in Human Rights and the CUNY PhD/MA Program in Political Science at the Graduate Center.
 - Moderator: Kehinde Oladele – Research Assistant, CIHR and Vice President, NAMI on Campus at John Jay.

Panelists:

- Colleen Baker – current graduate student at Columbia University’s School of Social Work and an avid eating disorder awareness advocate. Colleen works with the National Eating Disorders Association and Project HEAL, two eating disorder prevention and treatment non-profits, as a recovery speaker, volunteer and committee member.
- Emily Hughes – grew up in Salt Lake City and has lived in NYC since 2005. She has a bachelor’s degree in behavioral science and a master’s degree in public administration. She is also a certified peer support specialist.

- Thursday, March 19, 2015 – Mass Incarceration & Its Mental Health Implications

- Co-sponsored by CIHR, the CUNY PhD/MA Program in Political Science at the Graduate Center, the BA Major in International Criminal Justice, the MA of Arts in International Crime & Justice, the Human Rights Minor, the United Nations Student Association and NAMI on Campus at John Jay.
 - Chair: Professor George Andreopoulos – Director of CIHR.

Panelists:

- Chelsea Davis – The Vera Institute of Justice Reform for Healthy Communities Initiative.
- Ayesha Delany Brumsey – Public Defense for Persons with Mental Health Disorders; Justice and Health Advocate, the Vera Institute of Justice.
- Lindsay Ferguson – Licensed Master Social Worker, The Bronx Defenders.
- Jenny Semmel – The Bronx Defenders.

Other Public Events

- Thursday, December 11, 2014 – Human Rights Defenders at Risk: Issues and Challenges
 - Co-sponsored by CIHR, the CUNY PhD/MA Program in Political Science at the Graduate Center, the BA Major in International Criminal Justice, the MA of Arts in International Crime & Justice, the Human Rights Minor and the United Nations Student Association.
 - This event was held in commemoration of the sixty-sixth anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR).
 - Chair: Professor George Andreopoulos – Director of CIHR.
- Panelists:
 - Brian Dooley – Director, Human Rights Defenders Program, Human Rights First.
 - André-Michel Essoungou – Public Information Officer, UN Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) in New York.
 - Delphine Halgand – Director of the Washington DC Office, Reporters without Borders.
 - Joel Simon – Executive Director, Committee to Protect Journalists.

- Thursday, March 05, 2015 – *International Women’s Day Event Celebration – Sexual Assault on College Campuses*
 - International Women’s Day (IWD) is celebrated to recognize the fact that securing peace and social progress and the full enjoyment of human rights and fundamental freedoms require the active participation, equality, and development of women. The designated theme was “Sexual Assault on College Campuses.”
 - Participants were asked to address key focal issues that included defining the issue and context, explaining the protection/reporting processes, as well as assessing current policies and identifying relevant resources and support. Some of the questions discussed were: What is sexual assault? What are the relevant statistics? What are some current college policies regarding sexual assault? Can these policies be improved? What are some proactive policies that the college community (students, faculty, staff, and administrators) can follow? How can students engage in activism to prevent sexual assault?
 - Co-sponsored by CIHR, the CUNY PhD/MA Program in Political Science at the Graduate Center, the BA Major in International Criminal Justice, the MA of Arts in International Crime & Justice, the Human Rights Minor, the United Nations Student Association and NAMI on Campus at John Jay.
 - Chair: Professor George Andreopoulos – Director of CIHR.
- Panelists:
 - Jennifer Gaffney – Deputy Chief, Sex Crimes Unit, New York County District Attorney’s Office.
 - Jessica Greenfield – Women's Center Counselor, Gender-Based Violence Prevention and Response Advocate, Women’s Center at John Jay College.
 - Jan Lisa Huttner – Director of College/University Relations for the Empire State Virtual Branch of the American Association of University Women (AAUW).

- April 16, 2015 – *Speak Truth to Power: Ms. Kerry Kennedy, President, Robert F. Kennedy Human Rights*
 - This lecture was co-sponsored by the Office of the President and CIHR with a follow-up reception in the Justice Quad.
 - Ms. Kennedy has worked on a range of issues, including children’s rights, child labor, disappearances, indigenous land rights, judicial independence, freedom of expression, ethnic violence, impunity, and the environment. She has concentrated specifically on women’s rights, exposing injustices and educating audiences about women’s issues, particularly honor killings, sexual slavery, domestic violence, workplace discrimination, sexual assault, abuse of prisoners, and more. She is the author of *Speak Truth to Power: Human Rights Defenders Who Are Changing Our World*, which features interviews with human rights activists including Marian Wright Edelman, the Dalai Lama, and Archbishop Desmond Tutu, and *Being Catholic Now*.

- April 22, 2015 – *Good Governance, Human Rights and Development: Post 2015 Development Agenda and Indigenous People (ACUNS-TECONY SEMINAR SERIES IN NEW YORK)*

- This panel discussion was organized by the Taipei Economic and Cultural Office in NY at their office location and co-sponsored by CIHR, the Permanent Mission of Palau to the United Nations and the Academic Council on the United Nations System.
 - Welcoming Remarks: H.E. Ambassador Wen-Liang Chang, Director-General of Taipei Economic and Cultural Office in NY.
 - Introduction: Alistair Edgar, Executive Director, ACUNS.
 - Keynote Speech I: H.E. Pei-Lu Chen Zhang, Deputy Minister of Council of Indigenous Peoples, R.O.C. (Taiwan).
 - Keynote Speech II: Robert Leslie Malezer, Co-Chair, National Congress of Australia's First Peoples, Australia.
 - Moderator: Alistair Edgar, Executive Director, ACUNS.
 - Q&A Discussants: 1. H.E. Ambassador Caleb Otto, Permanent Representative of Palau to the United Nations; 2. Terry Mitchell, Associate Professor, Department of Psychology, Wilfrid Laurier University, Canada; 3. Joy Chung Feng Lin, Member of the Committee for Gender Equality, Executive Yuan, Taiwan; 4. Aijo Wu, Member of LIMA Taiwan Indigenous Youth Working Group.

 - June 10, 2015 – *United Nations at 70 Brainstorming Luncheon Meeting*
 - This meeting was organized to discuss the theme and organization for the event (to be held in the fall of 2015) and identify the relevant focal issues and questions. The luncheon was organized by the CIHR and supported by the United Nations Student Association.
- Participants:
- George Andreopoulos, Director, Center for International Human Rights & Professor of Political Science and Criminal Justice, City University of New York.
 - Bettina M. Carbonell, Associate Professor, Department of English, City University of New York.
 - André-Michel Essoungou, Public Information Officer, The Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR).
 - Edward Flynn, Senior Human Rights Officer, United Nations Counter-Terrorism Committee.
 - Caitlin Fung, Research Assistant, Center for International Human Rights.
 - Lodoe Gyatso, Research Assistant, Center for International Human Rights.
 - Aferdita Hakaj, Associate Director, Center for International Human Rights.
 - Ali Haxhijaj, Research Assistant, Center for International Human Rights.
 - Marina Kumskova, Research Assistant, Center for International Human Rights.
 - Gerry Markowitz, Distinguished Professor of History, City University of New York.
 - Raymond N. Ruggiero, Assistant Professor, Department of Anthropology, City University of New York.

Curricular Developments

- Fall 2014 Semester – *Minor in Human Rights Studies*
 - October 9, 2014 – Human Rights Minor Kick-Start Event
 - Guest speaker: Ms. Kate Mort, Director, Field Human Resources at Médecins Sans Frontières/Doctors Without Borders, gave a talk on ‘Working in the Field: The MSF Experience.’
 - The Kick-Start Event of the academic year serves to introduce students in the minor to the work of major human rights/humanitarian organizations.

Publications

This year, the CIHR produced two reports:

- *Rights for All? Report on Sexual Orientation, Religious Traditions and the Challenge of Inclusion*, February 2015. Center for International Human Rights, John Jay College of Criminal Justice, CUNY.
- *US Foreign Policy Options to Tackle Migration in the Mediterranean Sea*, July 2015. The Center for International Human Rights (CIHR), John Jay College of Criminal Justice, CUNY and The Center for Security Studies (KEMEA), Greek Ministry of Public Order and Citizen Protection.

Upcoming Event & Projects for 2015-2016

CIHR has a very active agenda for 2015-2016. In particular, we plan to produce a book on *Migration and Security* (in collaboration with the Center for Security Studies of the Greek Ministry of Public Order and Citizen Protection) and a Report on *Mental Health on College Campuses*. We also plan on conducting a research workshop on the *Rule of Law in UN Peace Operations* and expect to produce a monograph based on the presentations and deliberations resulting from the workshop. Moreover, we will organize events on *Migration and Human Rights* which will constitute our main theme for the academic year, as well as public events on the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (December 2015), and on International Women's Day (March 2016). In addition, the Center welcomes the establishment of a new club called 'Student Without Borders' at John Jay College and looks forward to working with it, as well as continuing the collaboration with the United Nations Student Association. Last, but not least, we intend to build on the momentum generated by our collaborative undertakings both within, as well as outside the College, in particular with other human rights research centers, UN agencies and non-governmental organizations.

In closing, we would like to acknowledge the following individuals who were part of the CIHR team and whose contribution made all of the above possible: Katherine Azcona, Richard Balkissoon, Estefania Chavez, Caitlin Fung, Chavel Guzman, Brenda Gonzalez, Marina Kumskova, Kortney Mazzante, Daniel Minervini, Kehinde Oladele, Nikolaos Petropoulos, and Tricia Ramcharit.

Please email Daniel Golebiewski (dgolebiewski@jjay.cuny.edu) to be added to our list serve and to be kept posted of developments with periodic updates. Please also feel free to check our new website at: <http://johnjayresearch.org/cihr>.