

**Cinema-Television CNTV 499**  
**Spring 2020 – 2 Unit Course**  
**War, Justice, and Global Narratives in the 21st Century:**  
**Shaping the World with Cinematic Arts**  
**Mondays 1 to 4:50 pm**  
**SCB 104**

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This course explores how the cinematic arts bring stories of mass crimes to the world and presents the national and international institutions that aspire to protect individuals. It invites students to consider not only how narratives define our interpretation of mass crimes but also shape strategies to face our future. As USC University Professor Viet Thanh Nguyen observed, “Wars are fought twice: the first time in the battlefield, the second time in memory.” Fundamentally the course takes up the question of the place of art in a time of global crisis. The class requires no previous legal or security knowledge or cinematic expertise and aims to promote an intercultural and intergenerational debate.

### **Purpose**

The purpose of this course is three-fold. First, the course will sharpen your understanding of how films, television, and documentaries bring a story of a global crisis to the screen. The course will familiarize you with the language of cinematic storytelling that professionals use to work in the development and production of cinema arts. This will enable you to study feature films, documentaries and television series from the professional’s point of view.

Second, the course aims to familiarize you with notions of massive crimes, international terrorism, justice, security and national and international institutions so you understand the fundamental dynamics of global crisis.

Finally, the course asks you to investigate the interplay between global crisis and the cinematic arts – the ways in which different narratives define conflict. Your final project will be to present one example of how to use art to connect different communities in a global dialogue and propose institutional solutions that seek a remedy to crisis.

### **Themes and Questions To Be Explored**

How to connect institutions with emotions? The relevance of institutional designs in our life is not well perceived. We assume that having a national state that protects our rights is normal, but it is not. There were no national states in the Middle Ages. In the United States at the beginning of the 19<sup>th</sup> Century blacks had no rights and until the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century women had no rights. In Germany the Nazi regime attacked its own citizens, including Jews, Gypsies and anarchists. And in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century aliens living in foreign countries have no rights. Should international institutions complement sovereign nations to protect individuals?

Institutional designs define our rights and the rights of those who have the authority to make decisions to protect or to attack us. Institutional designs are almost invisible and yet they are a matter of life or death. Should a terrorist receive the due process guarantees or should he be killed without any warning? Should a terrorist be treated as a criminal or as an enemy?

Fighting and killing those considered enemies is still an accepted method of resolving international conflicts. In the 21<sup>st</sup> century, we celebrate innovations in technology and

dismiss innovations in global institutions. Artificial Intelligence is used to disrupt elections and to kill people more efficiently in the war on terror. Can it also be connected with films and art and used to build a global community and prevent massive crimes? YouTube, Instagram and Netflix have become the battlefield to define the meaning of the conflicts. How to engage those platforms?

Students will be invited to look for examples of how to present, through cinema or other art forms, the ideas presented by Professor Ocampo in his forthcoming book “War and Justice in the 21st Century” describing his experience as the founding chief prosecutor of the International Criminal Court.

### **Weekly Approach**

The course alternates between a screening and discussion of a specific feature film and a discussion of related concepts of international justice, security and war.

#### **Week 1 - Emotional identification in political cinema.**

*The Battle of Algiers* depicts the struggle for Algerian independence from French colonials, acts of terror, and counter-terrorism. What’s the effect of putting the audience into another’s shoes. How do you accomplish this cinematically? Why?

#### **Week 2 - MARTIN LUTHER KING DAY - NO CLASS**

#### **Week 3 - Relations between informal and formal justice**

The opening of *The Godfather* exposes a conflict between a victim’s expectation for justice, the delivery of justice by the formal system, and the victim’s request for justice to Don Corleone. Is there a parallel with Muslims asking Bin Laden to take revenge against US for what they considered attacks against Muslims?

#### **Week 4 - Transforming enemies into criminals.**

*Judgement at Nuremberg*. Dramatizing international justice – a Hollywood feature film depicts Nazis standing trial. Fundamentals of International Criminal Justice. Fundamental mechanisms of dramatic storytelling.

**Assignment Due: Weekly Writing**

#### **Week 5 – The “War on Terror.” Transforming criminals into enemies.**

*Permission to Engage*, a Dutch documentary based on a footage allegedly leaked by Chelsea Manning and Wikileaks, exposes a US helicopter shooting people including a civilian with his daughter and son in Baghdad in 2007. *Eye In The Sky* is a fiction movie presenting a similar problem: the dilemma of a drone pilot facing a collateral victim. Who are responsible - the soldiers pulling the trigger or the President who decided to launch a military operation?

**Assignment Due: Weekly Writing**

#### **Week 6 – NO CLASS – PRESIDENTS DAY**

#### **Week 7 – *Taxi to The Dark Side***

Investigative documentary – its storytelling techniques and societal function. Exposing United States sponsored torture and killing.

**Assignment Due: Weekly Writing**

**Week 8 – Depicting National and International Political Systems**

*Game of Thrones* presents the power dynamics of a world without legal constraints. *Star Wars* present the dilemma of a law enforcement group, the Jedi, facing a criminal leader that is also the head of the government and supported by Parliament.

**Assignment Due: Weekly Writing**

**Week 9 - Darfur Now**

The ensemble storytelling form - telling multiple stories as a way of depicting a global community. Using documentary technique to dramatize social action and international justice. The opinions of Senator Barack Obama and the Darfur policy of President Barack Obama.

**Assignment Due: Weekly Writing**

**Week 10 - Activism at the National and International level**

Footage of Ferguson and the “black lives matter” activities to contrast the role of the state and federal legal system in the US and the role of international law in other conflicts like Darfur. “Kony 2012” created by USC alumni provides a different example of using YouTube to spread a youth global campaign to stop attacks against youth in Uganda.

**Assignment Due: Weekly Writing**

**Week 11 - Moral perspective in the cinematic arts.**

*The Act of Killing*. Putting the audience in the shoes of perpetrators of who are celebrated, not punished, for war crimes. How do filmmakers navigate between moral perspective and emotional identification?

**Assignment Due: Weekly Writing**

**Week 12 - Cultural influence of the different narratives.**

*Citizen Four*. Edward Snowden could be perceived by some people as a hero and for many others as a traitor. The ICC indictment of then President of Sudan Al Bashir for genocide was characterized by many as an ICC’s African bias. Viet Thanh Nguyen explains that what Americans call “The Vietnam War” the Vietnamese call “The American War.”

**Assignment Due: Weekly Writing**

**Week 13 – Land of Blood and Honey**

Dramatizing international crime from the perspective of both perpetrators and victims.

**Assignment Due: Weekly Writing**

**Week 14 – Learning from Right wing and ISIS campaigns**

Right wing campaigns using video games and ISIS attracting recruits with web videos will be explored.

**Assignment Due: Weekly Writing**

**Week 15 – Final Class – Recap of themes and issues.**

**Assignment Due: Weekly Writing**

**EXAM WEEK**

**Assignment Due: FINAL PROJECT**

**Reading and Viewing**

In order to take part in the weekly discussions you have to have read certain material and, in some cases, screen additional films.

**Required Texts**

David Howard, How to Build A Great Screenplay, St. Martins Press  
 Howard & Mabley, The Tools of Screenwriting, St. Martins Press  
 Luis Moreno Ocampo, Selected chapters of War and Justice in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century,  
 upcoming Oxford University Press.

**Required Films**

*The Battle of Algiers*  
*Judgement at Nuremberg*  
*Taxi To The Dark Side*  
*Darfur Now*  
*The Act of Killing*  
*Land of Blood and Honey.*

**Scenes from:**

*Apocalypse Now*  
*Bodyguard*  
*Citizen Four*  
*Eye In The Sky*  
*Game of Thrones*  
*The Good Wife*

**Reading and Viewing (continued)****Scenes from (continued):**

*Green Zone*  
*Homeland*  
*Jack Ryan*  
*Kony 2012*  
*Law and Order*  
*Permission To Engage*  
*Star Wars*  
*Zero Dark Thirty*

**Selected documentaries about the International Criminal Court:**

*The Court*, Bukera Film, Filmperspektive GBMH, 2013;  
*Carte Blanche*, PS film, 2011;  
*Prosecutor: Law. No Order.*, White Pine Pictures in co-production with the  
 National Film Board of Canada, 2010;  
*The Reckoning: The Battle for the International Criminal Court*, Skylight  
 Pictures, 2009;  
*The Devil Came on Horseback*, Break Thru Films, 2007;  
*Contre Toute Impunite* (Against the Impunity), ARTE, France, 2005.

**Grading**

The written work for the course consists of weekly written responses to the material assigned for that week and to the classroom debate of the prior week, and a final project. The final is a practical application of the central idea of the course – an original cinematic response to a global crisis. This response can take many forms – a proposal for a feature film, series, documentary, game. Or a short film or video.

Grading will be based on classroom participation (15%), your delivery of the weekly written responses (40%), and your performance on the final project (45%).

You cannot participate in the class if you are not in class. You are expected to be on time and attend the entire class and screening. Two absences will result in your grade being lowered one full point, a third absence in another full point. Two late arrivals are treated as one absence.

Phones off. Laptops closed.

The Syllabus is subject to change at the discretion of the instructors.

### **Statement on Academic Conduct and Support Systems**

#### **Academic Conduct:**

Plagiarism – presenting someone else’s ideas as your own, either verbatim or recast in your own words – is a serious academic offense with serious consequences. Please familiarize yourself with the discussion of plagiarism in SCampus in Part B, Section 11, “Behavior Violating University Standards” [policy.usc.edu/scampus-part-b](http://policy.usc.edu/scampus-part-b). Other forms of academic dishonesty are equally unacceptable. See additional information in SCampus and university policies on scientific misconduct, [policy.usc.edu/scientific-misconduct](http://policy.usc.edu/scientific-misconduct).

#### **Support Systems:**

*Student Health Counseling Services - (213) 740-7711 – 24/7 on call*

[engemannshc.usc.edu/counseling](http://engemannshc.usc.edu/counseling)

Free and confidential mental health treatment for students, including short-term psychotherapy, group counseling, stress fitness workshops, and crisis intervention.

*Student Health Leave Coordinator – 213-821-4710*

Located in the USC Support and Advocacy office, the Health Leave Coordinator processes requests for health leaves of absence and advocates for students taking such leaves when needed.

<https://policy.usc.edu/student-health-leave-absence/>

*National Suicide Prevention Lifeline - 1 (800) 273-8255 – 24/7 on call*

[suicidepreventionlifeline.org](http://suicidepreventionlifeline.org)

Free and confidential emotional support to people in suicidal crisis or emotional distress 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.

*Relationship and Sexual Violence Prevention Services (RSVP) - (213) 740-4900 – 24/7 on call*

[engemannshc.usc.edu/rsvp](http://engemannshc.usc.edu/rsvp)

Free and confidential therapy services, workshops, and training for situations related to gender-based harm.

*Office of Equity and Diversity (OED) | Title IX - (213) 740-5086*  
[equity.usc.edu](http://equity.usc.edu), [titleix.usc.edu](http://titleix.usc.edu)

Information about how to get help or help a survivor of harassment or discrimination, rights of protected classes, reporting options, and additional resources for students, faculty, staff, visitors, and applicants. The university prohibits discrimination or harassment based on the following protected characteristics: race, color, national origin, ancestry, religion, sex, gender, gender identity, gender expression, sexual orientation, age, physical disability, medical condition, mental disability, marital status, pregnancy, veteran status, genetic information, and any other characteristic which may be specified in applicable laws and governmental regulations.

*Bias Assessment Response and Support - (213) 740-2421*  
[studentaffairs.usc.edu/bias-assessment-response-support](http://studentaffairs.usc.edu/bias-assessment-response-support)

Avenue to report incidents of bias, hate crimes, and microaggressions for appropriate investigation and response.

*The Office of Disability Services and Programs - (213) 740-0776*  
[dsp.usc.edu](http://dsp.usc.edu)

Support and accommodations for students with disabilities. Services include assistance in providing readers/notetakers/interpreters, special accommodations for test taking needs, assistance with architectural barriers, assistive technology, and support for individual needs.

*USC Support and Advocacy - (213) 821-4710*  
[studentaffairs.usc.edu/ssa](http://studentaffairs.usc.edu/ssa)

Assists students and families in resolving complex personal, financial, and academic issues adversely affecting their success as a student.

*Diversity at USC - (213) 740-2101*  
[diversity.usc.edu](http://diversity.usc.edu)

Information on events, programs and training, the Provost's Diversity and Inclusion Council, Diversity Liaisons for each academic school, chronology, participation, and various resources for students.

*USC Emergency - UPC: (213) 740-4321, HSC: (323) 442-1000 – 24/7 on call*  
[dps.usc.edu](http://dps.usc.edu), [emergency.usc.edu](http://emergency.usc.edu)

Emergency assistance and avenue to report a crime. Latest updates regarding safety, including ways in which instruction will be continued if an officially declared emergency makes travel to campus infeasible.

*USC Department of Public Safety - UPC: (213) 740-6000 – 24/7 on call*  
[dps.usc.edu](http://dps.usc.edu)

Non-emergency assistance or information.

### **Diversity and Inclusion**

Diversity and Inclusion are foundational to the SCA community. We are committed to fostering a welcoming and supportive environment where students of all identities and backgrounds can flourish. The classroom should be a space for open discussion of ideas and self-expression; however, SCA will not tolerate verbal or written abuse, threats, harassment, intimidation or violence against person or property. If students are concerned about these matters in the classroom setting they are encouraged to contact their SCA Diversity and Inclusion Liaison, <http://cinema.usc.edu/about/diversity.cfm>; e-mail [diversity@cinema.usc.edu](mailto:diversity@cinema.usc.edu). You can also report discrimination based on a protected class here <https://equity.usc.edu/harassment-or-discrimination/>

**Disruptive Student Behavior:**

Behavior that persistently or grossly interferes with classroom activities is considered disruptive behavior and may be subject to disciplinary action. Such behavior inhibits other students' ability to learn and an instructor's ability to teach. A student responsible for disruptive behavior may be required to leave class pending discussion and resolution of the problem and may be reported to the Office of Student Judicial Affairs for disciplinary action.

**PLEASE NOTE:**

**FOOD AND DRINKS (OTHER THAN WATER) ARE NOT PERMITTED IN ANY INSTRUCTIONAL SPACES IN THE CINEMATIC ARTS COMPLEX**