

## ECONOMIC RIGHTS CONFERENCE PROVIDES MEANINGFUL DIALOG

The weekend of Oct. 27-29, 2005 proved successful for The Human Rights Institute and Thomas J. Dodd Research Center, hosts to an International Conference on Economic Rights. The conference centered on conceptual, measurement and policy issues and gathered many of the most prominent scholars in the field today.

The three day event included presentations on the following papers:

- *“Human Rights as Instruments of Emancipation and Economic Development”* by keynote speaker Kaushik Basu
- *“International Welfare Rights: The US Record at Home and Abroad”* by David Forsythe
- *“The Status of Efforts to Monitor Economic, Social and Cultural Rights”* by Audrey Chapman
- *“Economic Rights and Extraterritorial Obligation”* by Mark Gibney and Sigrun Skogly
- *“Respect for Women’s Economic Rights: A Cross National Analysis, 1981-2004”* by Shawna Sweeney
- *“Progressive Realization of Economic, Social and Cultural Rights Through Human Rights-Based Development”* by Clarence Dias
- *“Quantitative, Qualitative and Equal Opportunity Aspects of the Right to Work”* by Philip Harvey
- *“Measuring Government Respect for Economic Human Rights”* by David Cingranelli and David Richards
- *“Measuring the Progressive Realization of Economic, Social, and Cultural Rights”* by Clair Apodaca
- *“Worker Rights and Economic Policy”* by Peter Dorman
- *“Economic Rights, Human Development Effort*

*and Institutions”* by Mwangi Kimenyi

- *“Achieving Economic Rights in Africa: Ghana and Uganda”* by Rhoda Howard-Hassmann and Susan Dicklitch

- *“Rich Countries Obligations for Development: Goal 8 of the Millennium Development Goals through the Lens of Human Rights”* by Sakiko Fukuda-Parr

- *“Liberalism and Economic Rights”* by Jack Donnelly

- *“A Democratic Defense of Economic Rights and Basic Income”* by Michael Goodhart

- *“Economic Rights in the Knowledge Economy: an Instrumental Justification”* by Albino Barrera

- *“Needs-based Approach to Social and Economic Rights”* by Wiktor Osiatynski.

Philip Harvey, Associate Professor of Law and Economics at Rutgers School of Law–Camden commented, *“The most important function of a conference like this is to provide an opportunity for people working in a common field to meet one another and develop relationships that will extend beyond the end of the conference. This was an extremely valuable conference in this regard and the first one that I have ever attended that was specifically devoted to the topic of economic and social human rights.”* (Continued on page 3)



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**MISSION STATEMENT**

The Human Rights Institute has two core missions: first, to coordinate human rights initiatives at the University of Connecticut and support faculty and students who study human rights; and second to promote a unique approach to international human rights scholarship based upon contextual and multidisciplinary research in the social sciences, humanities and law.



Richard A. Wilson, Director of the Human Rights Institute | compliments of the Human Rights Institute

**LETTER FROM THE DIRECTOR**

This semester, the Human Rights Institute is running a number of funding competitions for both programming and for faculty and graduate research on human rights related themes and I encourage interested parties to look online at [www.humanrights.uconn.edu](http://www.humanrights.uconn.edu) for more details. We are very pleased to be hosting the Visiting Gladstein Professor of Human Rights, Dr. Elizabeth Jelín from University of Buenos Aires, who is teaching a graduate course on the politics of memory in the Sociology department. Meanwhile, Spring is when Human Rights Minors are undertaking their senior internships, many of them at Hartford-based Lawyers Without Borders, but this year we are encouraging more internships at economic and labor rights organizations. Finally, we are planning our agenda for the Fall semester, when we will host a 3-day international conference (co-organized with the Humanities Institute) on “Humanitarian Responses to Narratives of Suffering.” Finally, my sincere thanks and admiration go to the group of UConn students, led by senior Alyssa Allaben, who have dedicated their time and energy to producing this newsletter.

(Continued from page 1)

Another presenter, David Forsythe, Charles J. Mach Professor of Political Science at the University of Nebraska–Lincoln went on to say, *“The conference had a cumulative impact because of the various approaches to the subject.”*

For many of the speakers, the conference led to a process of revision based on criticisms received.

Peter Dorman, Professor of Political Science at Evergreen State College in Olympia, Washington reports, *“I am revising the paper I wrote for the conference. This is a big revision—really a new paper in many respects. I am also continuing a project on the exploitation of children for the International Labour Organization (ILO).”*



Kaushik Basu, conference keynote speaker

The discussion during the conference was dynamic. *“The best discussion that emerged from the conference was one to do with how we relate the justifications of economic rights to the politics and purposes those rights are to serve in the contemporary world,”* said Michael Goodhart, Assistant Professor of Political Science at the University of Pittsburgh. *“Much of this discussion was not conducted explicitly in these terms but rather was an undercurrent of other conversations about particular papers and approaches. Still, understanding that how we justify economic rights has a direct bearing on the work they do in the world, is an important insight that requires*

*further development.”*

Professor Wiktor Osiatynski noted that for him, the conference signaled a significant and necessary push for social and economic rights. *“The conference is proof that economic and social rights are ‘back,’”* he said.

Osiatynski also commented that, while the Western world trend has been and currently still is, more aligned with classic civil and political rights, the gross global inequalities and atrocities committed against human rights will result in a re-evaluation of the system. He said, *“When this happens it will be more important to talk about social and economic needs rather than rights.”*

Osiatynski stated in his paper, *“In this perspective we can, then, distinguish between the needs that should be protected by constitutional rights, the needs that should be protected by statutory rights and the needs that should merely be a subject of public policy.”*

The conference culminates with the publication of an edited volume published by Cambridge University Press. The volume is scheduled for release in the Fall of 2007.

The book will draw directly on papers prepared for the conference and will include an introduction by the UConn conference organizers; Professor Shareen Hertel, Department of Political Science and the Human Rights Institute and Professor Lanse Minkler, Department of Economics, as well as a preface by Philip Alston, John Norton Pomeroy Professor of Law at New York University, a leading authority on economic rights.



Panel of speakers at the Economic Rights Conference



#### SOCIALLY RESPONSIBLE PRODUCTS PROMOTED THROUGH UCONN'S FAIR TRADE FAIR AND RAFFLE

The Fair Trade Fair and Rugmark raffle were features of the recent Human Rights Conference hosted at UConn, and sponsored by the Human Rights Institute.

The fair was a compilation of local Fair Trade vendors. Through the event, participants hoped to stress the importance of student involvement in fair trade and human rights issues.

Some of the featured vendors included: the Uconn Co-Op, Cafe Muse, Flavours of Life and the Willimantic Food Coop. The fair also received large donations from organizations such as: Green Mountain Roasters, Dean's Beans and Ithaca Fine Chocolates. A number of student groups also contributed to the event.

David Lewis, co-owner of Flavours of Life, an operation based out of New London, was contacted by student organizer, Matthew Brown. Brown scouted local vendors through listings provided by the Fair Trade Federation (FTF).

According to Lewis, his business joined FTF in 2004. Though the federation has existed for half a century, it has not yet gained the recognition that it deserves. *"Fair trade seeks to help by providing a price that is fair to workers,"* said Lewis. The FTF is set up to make sure that producers get a fair price in in-

ternational markets which often includes a living wage and social benefits.

UConn's William Benton Museum of Art was a highlight of the fair. Their Café Muse is the only cafe on campus that retails Fair Trade coffee and tea. In the near future, Café Muse hopes to sell a new line of Fair Trade chocolates as well. Sal Scalora, Director of the Benton, expressed keen interest in the fair trade issue. The Benton is home to many human rights exhibitions, and their participation in fair trade reaffirms their support of diverse human rights issues.

Jeanie Mogayzel, the coordinator of product sales at Café Muse, expressed concerns that students don't always consider the worth of a product beyond its price tag. *"People see the perceived value of an item, but have no idea what it costs in human terms to make it,"* she said.

The Human Rights Conference also presented a Rugmark raffle. The 'Rugmark' branding is a trademark that represents Fair Trade products in the textile industry. According to their website, *"Rugmark recruits carpet producers and importers to make and sell carpets that are free of illegal child labor."* In order to use the Rugmark trademark, companies must agree to adhere to strict guidelines prohibiting child labor and permitting random inspections. The label also ensures *"...That a portion of the carpet profit is contrib-*



Student participating in USAS' map activity (featured background) at the Fair Trade Fair | by Malerie Schwartz



Rugmark rug raffled during the Economic Rights Conference

uted to the rehabilitation and education of former child weavers.”

The donated rug was fashioned by Emma Gardner Designs, LLC of Litchfield, Connecticut. Gardner felt it was important to work with mills that employed regulations. She remarked, “From the beginning, our relationship with Rugmark was a serendipitous one.” Gardner expressed the significance of working through this trademark corporation. She said, “The issue of expressive labor, not exploitive labor is critical.” Gardner also commented on the global Rugmark initiative. “[They are] more than just pointing fingers, rather they are helping people to find a way to better their economy,” she said. “This organization reaches the private sector, and involves everyone getting the word out to consumers.”

The winning raffle ticket belonged to fifth semester UConn student Danielle Selber. She has asked Hillel to hold the rug for her until she graduates. Hillel will be displaying the rug for the next several months in their lounge. Selber comments, “The rug is absolutely more beautiful because it was not made with slave labor! The design itself is simple, but the meaning behind the rug is unique.” This sentiment pointedly expresses an awareness that Fair Trade producers hope to invoke in all consumers.

## ACTIVISM: THEORY AND PRACTICE DISCUSSED IN HUMAN RIGHTS WORKSHOP

Scholars and activists are often thought to reside in two different worlds. In the human rights realm this distinction can lead to problems and inefficiency. An interesting breed of scholars, activist researchers, may hold the key to bridging and enhancing these two worlds in human rights discourse.

A slew of UConn departments including the Human Rights Institute, Office of Multicultural and International Affairs, Women's Studies Institute, Center for Latin American and Caribbean Studies, Department of Sociology and Institute of Puerto Rican and Latino Studies sponsored, "A Workshop on Activist Research for Human Rights," on Oct. 29-30.

This two-day workshop paired activists working in the community with activist researchers in order to encourage a dialog about what kinds of research are needed to support the efforts of activists.

Speakers included Lenore Anderson, esq., Director of Books Not Bars, Adam Francoer, Program Coordinator for Immigration Equality, a national grassroots organization that works to end discrimination in U.S. immigration law against lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and HIV-positive individuals, Dr. Tricia Gabany-Guerrero, Associate Director of the Center for Latin American and Caribbean Studies at UConn, Dr. Dorothy Smith, Professor Emerita from the University of Toronto and Professor Marjorie DeVault, Department of Sociology, Syracuse University.

Anderson shared Books Not Bars' (BNB) history as well as several of their highly successful campaigns. BNB is sponsored by the Ella Baker Center for Human Rights. The Ella Baker Center works to ensure that California's resources are directed away from youth incarceration and toward youth opportunities. **BNB engages in grassroots advocacy campaigns using media advocacy, policy advocacy, organizing and alliance building.**

One of their most effective campaign strategies led to BNB winning the first juvenile justice case in Alameda County.

They opposed the expansion of a juvenile hall and attended Board of Supervisors meetings where they assisted young people from the community to protest in the form of cultural art. This garnered a great deal of media attention. *"The cultural art protest was an integral part of the campaign. Innovation and creativity are key in any advocacy effort,"* Anderson said.

Anderson's activist advice was followed up and complimented by Dr. Smith's scholarly research findings. Smith has developed an approach to activist research called Institutional Ethnography.

**Institutional ethnographers examine how ruling relations are woven into the production of texts used to organize people's activities in various locations such as schools, government agencies or professional offices.** With an understanding of how things are put together, it is possible to identify effective activist interventions.

In addition to Anderson, DeVault, who teaches courses on qualitative and feminist methods, as well as race, class and gender at Syracuse University, also participated in the workshop.

She brought along several of her students in order to give them some exposure to the kinds of research methods that are being explored to support human rights activism. Many of the students were aspiring human rights activists.

"It gave them a chance to see activists and researchers in a different light," DeVault said.

The workshop raised issues that are often overlooked; immigration and sexuality, and the research that is being done on these issues.

One organization that especially impressed DeVault during the workshop was Anderson's, Books Not Bars, discussed earlier. Anderson's determination and cause was very inspiring to and influential on the workshop participants. DeVault had a positive and hopeful outlook after the workshop's conclusion.

*“It was a chance to get together and talk about ways to learn, and to see what everyone else was doing. It was interesting to hear about all of the activist efforts,”* DeVault said.

Overall, the workshop was a big success. **Both activist researchers and community activists joined forces to develop an effective dialogue on research supporting activist efforts.** As expressed by DeVault and proven by Anderson, future workshops like this can be incredibly beneficial to the human rights world.



From left to right | Dorothy Smith, Lauren Eastwood, Nancy Naples and Mayorie DeVault

## ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

### WEB FAVORITES

The Ella Baker Center for Human Rights  
<http://www.ellabakercenter.org/>

The Mexican Environmental & Cultural Research Institute, Inc.  
<http://www.mexecri.org/>

Immigration Equality  
<http://www.lgirtf.org/>

Rainbow Center  
<http://www.rainbowcenter.uconn.edu/>

Puerto Rican | Latin American Cultural Center  
<http://www.latino.uconn.edu/>

International Center  
<http://www.disp.uconn.edu/>

Women's Center  
<http://www.womenscenter.uconn.edu/>

### BOOK LIST

Dr. Dorothy Smith

—*The Everyday World as Problematic: A Feminist Sociology* (University of Toronto Press, 1987).

—*The Conceptual Practices of Power: A Feminist Sociology of Knowledge* (Northeastern University Press, 1990).

—*Institutional Ethnography: A Sociology for People* (AltaMira Press, 2005).

Marjorie DeVault

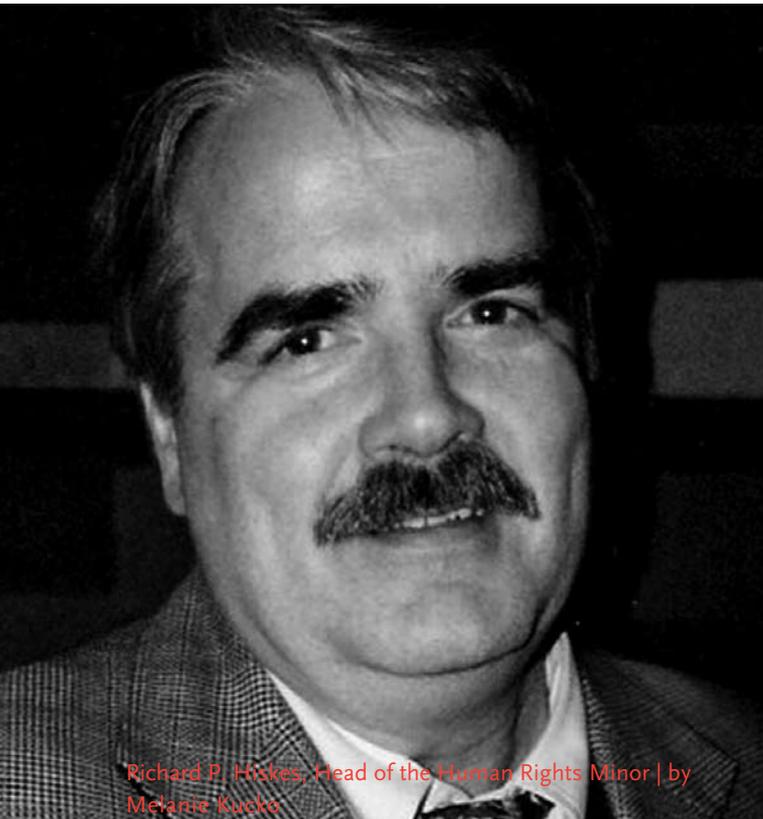
—*Feeding the Family: The Social Organization of Caring as Gendered Work* (University of Chicago Press, 1991).

—*Liberating Methods: Feminism and Social Research* (Temple University Press, 1999).

## A COMMITMENT TO HUMAN RIGHTS | PROFESSOR RICHARD P. HISKES

Richard P. Hiskes is the senior political theorist in the Political Science Department and the newly appointed Head of the Human Rights Minor. He received his MA and PhD in political science from Indiana University. Hiskes specializes in modern and contemporary political thought, democratic theory, environmental ethics and human rights theory.

Hiskes has written/co-written four books, which explore the ideal of community and how it forms a backdrop to issues within democratic theory, science and technology policy and human rights:



Richard P. Hiskes, Head of the Human Rights Minor | by  
Melanie Kucke

*Community Without Coercion: Getting Along in the Minimal State; Science, Technology and Policy Decisions* (co-

written with Anne L. Hiskes); *Direct Democracy and International Politics* (co-written with John T. Rourke and C.E. Zirakzadeh); and *Democracy, Risk and Community: Technological Hazards and the Evolution of Liberalism*.

This year Professor Hiskes celebrates his 28<sup>th</sup> year at UConn. His current research focuses on environmental human rights and justice across generations. Upon returning from a human rights conference in Chicago, Hiskes was able to fully appreciate the quality of UConn's human rights programs. He attributes part of the increased focus on human rights at UConn to the unusually large amount of financial support that is given to the Human Rights Institute. The donations received from the Gladstein family have funded a series of lectures, as well as conferences, to expand the human rights interdepartmental curricula.

However, one essential element the Human Rights Department is lacking, is a home. *"Students need classrooms and lounges to be able to come together to study and to work on projects,"* Hiskes explains. *"The Thomas J. Dodd Research Center is ripe for expansion. There is major fundraising potential, not only for family contributions, but also from major corporations."*

There are also many possibilities for future expansion in the Human Rights Minor. Professor Hiskes notes the possibility of a major, some kind of certificate program and various types of graduate student research. He also suggests an increase in study abroad programs that incorporate human rights opportunities. This past year the study abroad program made progress on this goal with offerings in Capetown, South Africa and Latin America.

He also sees a built-in incentive for graduate students at UConn to do human right work. In the future, he would like to see closer ties between human rights work done by the Undergraduate College, Graduate and Law schools. In general, Hiskes is excited about the bright future and burgeoning opportunities that await the program.

## A COMMITMENT TO HUMAN RIGHTS | SHELLEY BUCHBINDER

Shelley Buchbinder is a senior political science major with a minor in human rights. Her human rights experience began with her involvement in Avaha Dream, Hillel's community service group. She became president of Avaha Dream during her junior year.

It was during the Spitzer Forum on Public Policy, an international conference in Boston, when AIDS in Africa sparked her interest. This subject led her to pursue an internship with the Windham AIDS Program at Windham Regional Community Council, a case management center. She also chose to write her honors thesis on HIV/AIDS and citizen participation in Africa.

*"In the next two years, six million people will die of AIDS-related illness, it is the largest problem hindering the development in the largest part of the world,"* Buchbinder said. *"Looking further away made me appreciate what's around me."*

**She is researching the failure of the Millennium Goals to reduce AIDS in Africa through her honors thesis.** *"Throwing money at the problem has not lowered the rates [of infection],"* she said. She notes that it is the environment and the role of citizens that really needs to change.

Buchbinder attributes her interest in community service and human rights to the environment at UConn. Her work with foreign policy during the 2004 presidential elections made her realize that there needs to be change in the systems of government, *"to help people help themselves."*

*"I have this goal to take a class about every section of the world by the time I graduate,"* Buchbinder said. *"By the time I graduate I will have succeeded, with the 'Policy of South Asia' course that I'm enrolled in for the spring [2006] semester."*

Buchbinder currently holds two internships. As well as working for the Windham AIDS program she is also working at the Human Rights Institute, with



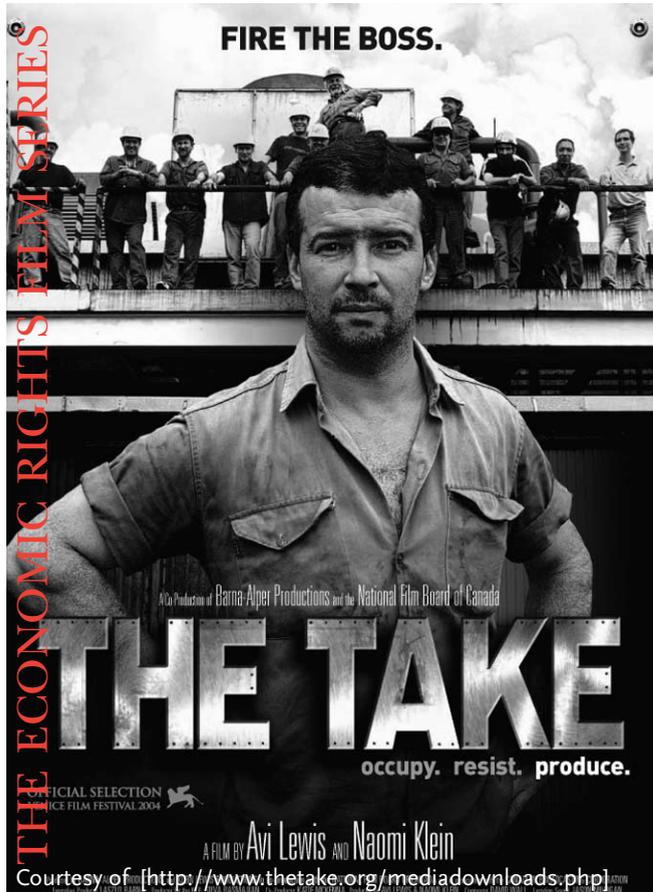
Shelley Buchbinder, 8th semester UConn undergraduate | by  
Melissa Bruen

Dr. Wilson to plan a film series for the Fall 2006 Humanitarian Conference. *"There will be approximately six films with different speakers at each showing,"* Buchbinder said.

Buchbinder is still formulating her post-graduation plans. She wants to go to graduate school for social work and public administration and participate in Teach for America or join the Peace Corps, but is yet to decide which one she wants to do first.

*"Suffering is suffering, no matter where or what the cause,"* she said. *"I am experiencing a pull between domestic and international work. I want to become immersed someplace that makes me uncomfortable, so it will make me learn about a different culture and a different way of living."*

Reflecting upon her college career Buchbinder said, *"I have always felt strongly about inequality, questioning why there are poor people in the world. I think that human rights are the perfect way to express how I feel. I try to inform people that they have power to change through the little decisions they make everyday."*



## “OCCUPY, RESIST, PRODUCE!” | A FILM REVIEW

In Feb. 2006, make sure to keep an eye out for *“The Take,”* a film by Avi Lewis and Naomi Klein starring no one you’ve ever heard of. The reason you won’t know any of the people in the film is because you’ve never heard of their plight.

Lewis opened his film’s screening at UConn with a five minute introduction to help the viewing audience get a better grasp on what they were about to see.

*“This is a film about globalization...it’s about economic rights...this is a film about activism,”* Lewis said.

The film focuses on the story of workers of the Forja Auto Plant and their attempt to take over and

run the plant after its declaration of bankruptcy, directly after Argentina’s massive economic collapse in 2001.

During the collapse, the government closed Argentina’s banks, leaving the people without access to their accounts and money. Argentinians began rioting and over 25 people were killed by police across the country. Over the course of the three weeks, Argentina went through five presidents, its currency lost over two thirds of its value and as a result, more than half of Argentina’s population fell into poverty. At this point, the story of the Forja workers comes into play.

Following the lead of the laid-off workers of Zanon Ceramics and the Brukman factory who took control of their abandoned businesses in 2001, the Forja workers took control of their factory in March 2003.

In order to succeed in legally running the factory however, the workers were required to organize and appeal to the court system in Argentina. Otherwise, the workers risked eviction by the police. The most problematic aspect of the situation was that the banks, courts and the government sided with the factory owners who wanted the factories to either be shut down or returned to their control.

At the same time, a crucial presidential election was taking place. Carlos Menem, the former president whose influence started the economic turmoil in Argentina, was the leading candidate. If he won, the factory workers knew that he’d reinstate the control of the factory to the owners. This would cause the workers’ progress to be in vain.

The story of the Forja Auto Plant workers may seem a foreign concept in to Americans, but in Argentina, it’s quite a common tale. **To this day, over 15,000 Argentinians work in so-called “occupied businesses,”** which number in the 200s in Buenos Aires and across the country. Schools, health clinics, ship building and even ice cream factories are being run by employees without an employer, in organizations known as co-ops, where they share an equal distribu-

tion of the profits.

“The Take” is an excellent documentary that brings to light many economic problems of the world. While it isn’t easy for most Americans to relate to the plight of these Argentinians, this film takes the viewer to the heart of the turmoil. Lewis and Klein should be praised for a brilliant work that showcases a lesser-known attack on human rights.

#### “STOLEN CHILDHOODS” BARES ALL TRUTHS ABOUT CHILD LABOR | A FILM REVIEW

The film begins with individual stories: a twelve-year old boy picking row after row of beans on a coffee plantation, a young girl lifting heavy rocks at a stone quarry in India, a teenage boy who has been working on fishing docks for nine months but has yet to see any money and a 12-year-old servant girl who dreams of attending school with other children her age.

Throughout the film, these personal accounts evolve into an international tragedy which, unfortunately, is recognized by few people. Child labor continues to plague the world into the millennium. “Stolen Childhoods” is a remarkable film that opens the viewers’ eyes to the horrible truths of child labor and invokes hope for a future without slavery.

“Stolen Childhoods” is the first feature documentary on global child labor. It was released a few months before the United Nations Children’s Fund’s 2004 annual report. The UN report stated that half of all the world’s children live in dangerous and unhealthy conditions. However, out of the eight future goals that the United Nations wished

to address by 2015, “sorely missing ...[was] any goal that specifically speaks to ending child labor,” states Robin Romano, “Stolen Childhoods” Director.

According to Romano, the saddest part about the child labor problem is its pervasiveness despite the simplicity of its solution. In a speech to the University of North Carolina he explains, “The primary solution is what everyone in this room already knows personally...the importance of education.”

The estimated cost of primary education for all 246 million children currently laboring at the bottom of the global economy is \$8 billion, a low figure compared to the amount spent each year by the United States government on failed drug plans and overseas military operations. Despite the minimal amount of effort it would take to reduce child labor across the world, there is currently little governmental support of anti-child labor laws.

The film illustrates this inaction through the Kenyan governmental debt of the 1980s) that induced three generations of child labor on the impoverished country.

The corrupt Kenyan government borrowed millions of dollars from the World Bank (WB) and the International Monetary Fund (IMF) that ended up furthering individual enterprises of fraudulent government officials.

To pay back the debt, the Kenyan government imposed a “cost sharing” plan which forced parents to pay separate fees in order for their children to attend public schools.

The increased taxes also forced those who could not afford to send their children off to school, off to work instead. Work involved long, hot, exhausting hours of coffee bean picking. Compensation included a salary that was largely taxed by the Kenyan government.

Despite the extremes that the Kenyan government was employing to pay back its debt, the UN did not take a stance to stop the inducement of child labor across the country.

In Dec. 2005, after 20 years of extreme pover-

ty and steadily increasing child labor rates, a new president was elected. His abolishment of “*cost sharing*” allowed 1.6 million Kenyan children to return to school from the labor circuit. The new Kenyan president illustrated that the simple promotion of education has an enormous effect on reducing child labor.

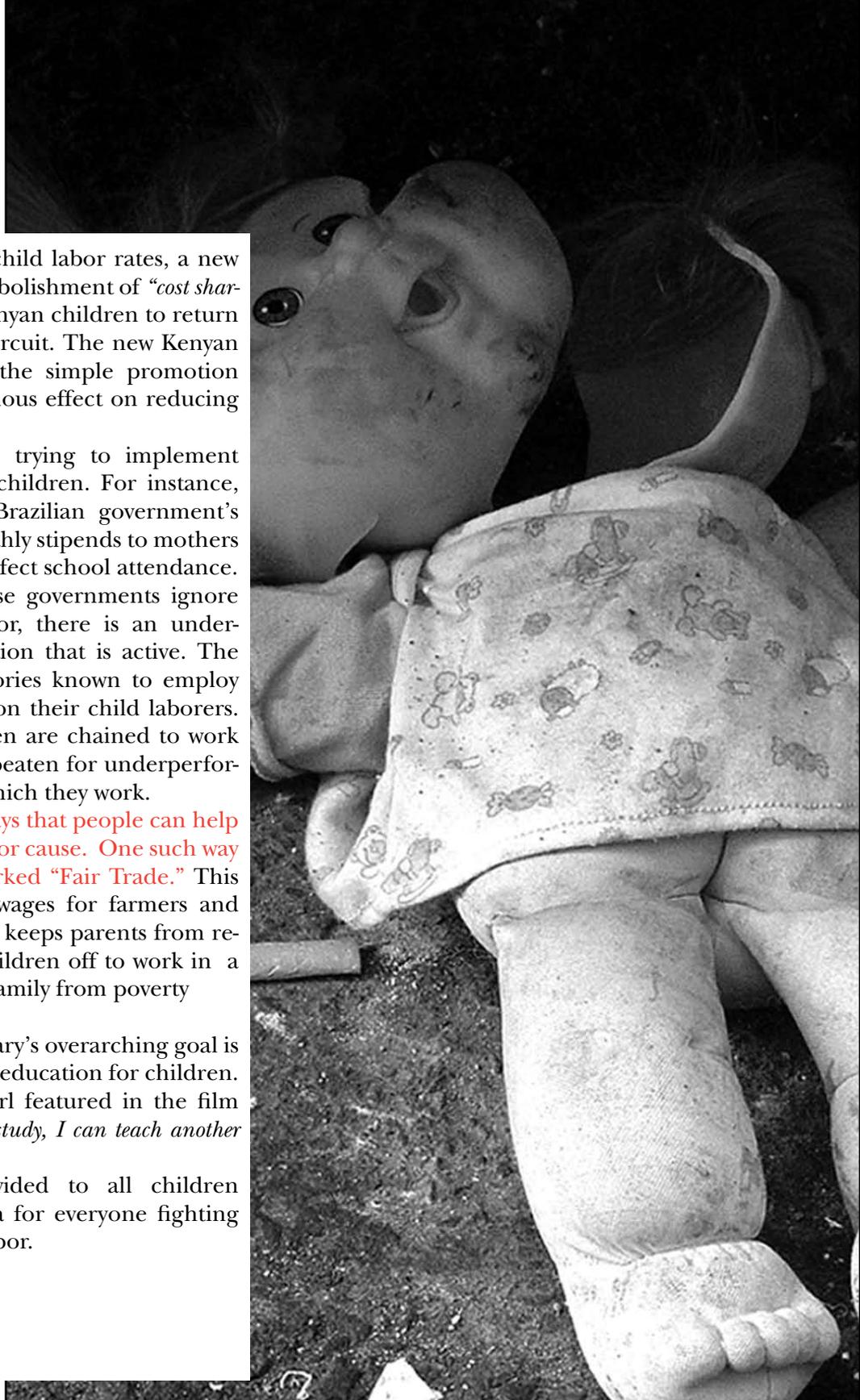
Some governments are trying to implement general education for all children. For instance, the movie applauds the Brazilian government’s program of providing monthly stipends to mothers who have children with perfect school attendance.

In some countries whose governments ignore the problem of child labor, there is an underground South Asian coalition that is active. The coalition raids carpet factories known to employ harsh working conditions on their child laborers. For example, many children are chained to work stations for hours and/or beaten for underperformance by the owners for which they work.

**The movie offers easy ways that people can help to further the anti-child labor cause. One such way is by buying products marked “Fair Trade.”** This branding guarantees fair wages for farmers and field workers, a system that keeps parents from resorting to sending their children off to work in a feeble attempt to save the family from poverty and starvation.

However, the documentary’s overarching goal is the promotion of universal education for children. As a 12-year-old servant girl featured in the film poignantly observed, “*If I study, I can teach another child someday.*”

Global education provided to all children should serve as the dogma for everyone fighting the vicious cycle of child labor.



## ARTIST, ANTHROPOLOGIST | ADAM NADEL

The William Benton Museum's Human Rights Gallery kicked off the year with an exhibition from award-winning photographer Adam Nadel; "If My Eyes Could Speak," Aug. 30-Oct. 16. **Nadel's portraits document the effects of war on civilians and focus specifically on the Srebrenica massacre of 1995 in Bosnia, the 1994 genocide in Rwanda, the current ethnic cleansing in Darfur Sudan, and the attack on New York City in 2001.** The portraits are coupled with the sitter's personal account, written by critically acclaimed writer/director Susan Sontag.

Nadel considers the image and caption to be inseparable, one becomes less without the other. *"This exhibition is very much about how I want things to be seen. My philosophy is that a little goes a long way. The images very much follow a minimalist style and the captions are very brief. Together they portray just the amount of information I want to give. I want to give people just a taste and then have them look for more on their own,"* he explains.

On Oct. 5, Nadel sat down with museum Director Sal Scalora for a question and answer session open to the University of Connecticut community. During the session, Nadel touched on his background in both anthropology and journalism. He graduated from the University of Chicago with a degree in anthropology and directly after college worked as a photo-journalist for various publications before getting hired by the Associated Press. However, he ended up leaving the world of journalism because of its constrictive nature.

After shifting directions and entering the art world, Nadel found his niche. He fashions himself a photographer with anthropological aims. *"One of the things I'm doing now is documenting humanity,"* Nadel comments.

Nadel is most interested in pushing the boundaries of art and journalism and their definitions through his work. In a sense, his exhibit can be considered journalism in reverse, with the photographs serving

the central role that articles traditionally hold.

During the Q&A session with Nadel, several images that he captured while in Iraq were displayed. He took an assignment with the New York Times in order to have a safe and affordable means of traveling the country while pursuing his true agenda; furthering his artistic endeavors. The Iraq photographs follow the same style as those featured in the Benton exhibit. The images and text from "If My Eyes Could Speak" as well as the Iraq pieces were originally conceived as both gallery shows and as a book.

Nadel will be focusing on the publishing aspect of the project once he is satisfied with his body of work and has finished touring with various gallery shows.



Adam Nadel | Aman Bohiger, Internally Displaced Person, Darfur  
(Color Photograph) | Courtesy of the William Benton Museum

## HISTORY RECORDED THROUGH SOUTH AFRICAN MEMORY CLOTHS

This Fall, the East Gallery of the Benton Art Museum was host to a unique, colorful and emotionally-charged display of works created by women of South Africa. The exhibition included over 150 framed “memory cloths,” scenes embroidered and beaded onto pieces of fabric. Along with each embroidery was a photograph of the artist and her personal story about the image she chose to depict, both in her native language and in English.

The memory cloths document the lives of African women during apartheid and after its abolishment in 1994. The Betty Rymer gallery at the School of the Art Institute of Chicago organized the first U.S. opening of the exhibition in the Spring of 2004.

With the UNESCO Chair and Institute of Comparative Human Rights at the University of Connecticut as co-sponsors, the Benton Museum of Art had the honor of being the second U.S. venue to display this poignant compilation.



Featured “Amazwi Abesifazane | Voices of Women” memory cloths | Courtesy of the William Benton Museum of Art

“The Amazwi Abesifazane | Voices of Women project,” an endeavor of the Create Africa South (CAS) organization, has produced over 2,000 memory cloths, and plans to have an archive of 5,000 cloths by 2010.

CAS is a non-governmental organization created in 2000 with the purpose of exploring the relationship between personal creative expression and the broader picture of society. “Ubuntu,” a philosophical African value-system which professes that “**a person is a person through other people,**” frames the essence of the organization.



Ahmed Kathrada, former anti-apartheid political prisoner

Andries Botha, founder of CAS and professional sculptor, along with Janine Zagel CAS, Executive Officer and Khoboso Nthunya, memory cloth artist were guests at UConn for several days, during which they spoke at the Benton, the UNESCO Chair 6<sup>th</sup> annual Human Rights Conference and several local high schools.

The unique “Voices of Women” project has many purposes, one being to give embattled black South African women an opportunity to creatively tell



their stories, which might otherwise go unheard. In his speeches, Botha emphasized the importance of recognizing women as an integral part of society. Across all cultures, women hold the essential role of nurturers and secure homes for their families, which is especially important in struggling nations where, in doing so, women create vital places of refuge and of hope.

Mothers create a place where children “*learn the language of their own soul and set up the basis and quality of their citizenship,*” said Botha. “*We agree that in order for us to respect women as equal partners... they must be heard.*”

The memory cloths that have been collected thus far have provided a wealth of information about the individual experiences of a group of citizens. These bits of history have been archived and officially recognized as part of the history of South Africa. Because of the terrible atrocities that have occurred in South Africa’s recent past, apartheid and governmental oppression of blacks, unanimity was a nationwide goal as part of an effort to establish a true democracy.

Thus the Truth and Reconciliation Commission, a legislative agency with the purpose of facilitating

the abstract social need for political reconciliation, was created. In the spirit of this national objective for healing “Amazwi Abesifazane” was envisioned. When the oppressed are given a chance to confront their oppression, the clearing for forgiveness is created. South Africa wants to forgive but never forget because, as Botha said, “*Erasure of our memory is tantamount to denying our humanity.*”

The women who created the cloths are not professional artists. The pieces are simple and mostly two-dimensional with small bits of colorful cloth, string and beads. What makes these memory cloths works of art is that they embody human experience and the intrinsic strength of women as survivors. In making these memory cloths, women were reconfiguring lost identities, confronting the past and embracing their struggles. “*Validating personal experience as integral to the cultural record... proposes these memory fragments as works of art,*” says Botha.

Recording history through art has allowed the womens’ stories to become something tangible, visual, and truly beautiful. This has generated the attention that the project truly deserves.

To learn more about Amazwi Abesifazane and Create Africa South, visit [www.cas.org.za](http://www.cas.org.za).



Visitors examine south african memory cloths on display at the William Benton Museum of Art | by Malerie Schwartz

## BENETTON | FRIEND OR FOE? AN EXHIBITION REVIEW

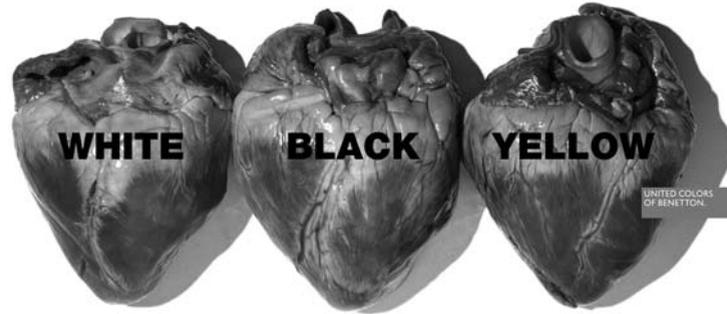
“Hurricanes are happening, Bird Flu is coming—but WEAR. –Kenneth Cole,” reads a large billboard over the Henry Hudson Parkway in New York City. This is not the first time a multi-million dollar company has taken the liberty to advertise their products through the pain of other, less fortunate people.

This Fall, a step into the William Benton Museum of Art’s Human Rights Gallery would probably be one filled with shock. The images displayed were advertisements used by Benetton, an Italian clothing company, to market their products. Most of the advertisements did not show the product, instead, they employed controversial imagery to get the consumers’ attention.



In 1982, Oliviero Toscani was hired to head Benetton’s advertising department, and began with images of young, vibrant teenagers wearing various pieces of Benetton apparel. Over the course of a few years, Toscani’s advertising strategies changed drastically.

*“Benetton believes that it is important for companies to take a stance in the real world instead of using their advertising budget to perpetuate the myth that they can make consumers happy through the mere purchase of their product,”* commented Toscani in an interview with Global CEO magazine.



The Benton Museum displayed the many phases of Benetton advertising. These included: *“All the Colors in the World”* (which features a group of teenagers from various ethnic groups dressed in Benetton,) *“All colors are equal, just as all men are equal”* (which focuses on countries with long standing political rivalries such as Iran and Iraq, Israel and Palestine—aiming to create a feeling of world peace and harmony,) *“Contrasts in Black & White”* (designed to promote racial equality,) *“AIDS Crisis”* (which marks its shift into a more photojournalistic spectrum.)

With this turn towards unconventional advertising came turmoil. The tipping point occurred after an advertisement featuring a black woman breast-feeding a white infant was released. As with other advertisements, only the words “United Colors of Benetton” was printed in the corner. Throughout the US and UK, this image reminded people of slavery, particularly of the black woman breast-feeding the white “master’s” child. But Benetton maintained that such photos were mere symbols of a worldwide brotherhood. This did not hurt the company’s profits, nor was it the last eyebrow-raising advertisement.

Toscani continued forward with what he called “reality advertising.” Such advertisements included a Jesus-like AIDS victim with his family at his bedside, a boat overflowing with Albanians, two Indians trapped in a Calcuttan flood, various parts of the human body tattooed with “HIV Positive,” an African guerilla holding a Kalashnikov and a human femur and a weeping family before the bloody corpse

of a Mafioso. Many of these images have been met with opposition from governments, media and the general public throughout the world.

Toscani's goal to *"have images that will make people think and discuss,"* is achieved through this advertising. This was proven at the panel discussion held at UConn a few days after the exhibition opening. The debate first focused on the Benetton controversy, but soon morphed into other topics such as sweatshop labor and corporate America.

The exhibit is an eye-opener to those whose vision has been fuzzed by false promises of perfection. Benetton has at its disposal a large advertising budget—they could have spent it on images of people looking happy wearing their clothes, but instead, it was spent on depictions of the human condition.

Benetton chose a difficult and risky path. Why should we continue to pollute our minds and eyes with the fake notion of a happy, safe, peaceful, perfect world, when in fact this is far from the truth? As to the issue of putting their label in the corner of the images—well, we should all understand that in this dog-eat-dog world, some form of advertisement is necessary to sustain business.

People who cannot see the good that can potentially come from these advertisements, and who feel offended, may just be the people who do not want to acknowledge how petty their complaints truly are or admit the comforts that their lives afford them.



All images in this article are courtesy of <http://www.benton.uconn.edu/>.

## TARA'S CROSSING A DRAMATIC ARTS REVIEW

"Tara's Crossing," a play by Jeffrey Solomon, made its Connecticut debut at the UConn Nafe Katter Theater on Oct. 28. One of the first plays to address issues of gay, lesbian or transgender refugees seeking political asylum in the United States, "Tara's Crossing" was warmly received.

Solomon, who appears in the play as Tara's lawyer (Aundre Chin) was inspired to write this moving work after interviewing several asylum seekers from around the world. The play is based on the true story of Vimal, a transgender individual from Guyana who was seeking asylum in the late 1990's. Interviews with several other refugees also provided inspiration. Solomon was attracted to the issue because he felt that, *"Asylum affects America's soul."* He wanted to create a performance that would educate and inform people of the lesser known struggles and challenges faced by gay and transgender individuals in today's world.

This play focuses on the sacrifices individuals make in order to achieve their "American dream." While the performance was simple in its costumes and scenery, its message was full of depth. It artfully portrayed the life of Tara, born Terrance, and the horrors this individual faced as a young adult in Guyana.

The performance begins with Tara expressing her feeling of being 'God's mistake,' a girl born into a boy's body. The story progresses from her childhood to adulthood, a transition riddled with parental oppression. Tara's father goes as far as beating her into submission in an effort to make her a "proper man in the world."

One of the most striking moments of the two-hour performance occurred within a soliloquy where Tara lets the audience in on her view of life.

*"If you don't express yourself you feel like you're dying; if you do express yourself you feel like you might be killed,"*

Aundre Chin recites, bringing Tara to life for the audience.

Tara's situation greatly impacts and alters the lives of everyone she comes in contact with during her journey. Actress Judith Bright (Emily Joy Weiner) who went seeking Tara's story to transform it into her "role of a lifetime," is just one of the characters that is greatly changed.

Weiner is shocked and appalled by the persecution Tara faces in her homeland. At one particularly violent exchange, she screams about no longer wanting to be "Tara." Immigration Officer Ray Donaldson's (Ian Eaton) attitudes greatly change through his interaction with Tara, also.

When Tara is first brought to New Jersey for holding, Donaldson doubts her and her ideas of being a girl in a boy's body. After more than 11 months, Donaldson begins to accept Tara for who she is, understanding her plight and sympathizing with her situation. By the end of the play, he has made a complete metamorphosis in his beliefs, starting from discrimination and ending with rooting for asylum, which is granted to Tara at the conclusion of the play.

One of the deepest and most memorable moments of the event came after the performance in a short Q&A session hosted by the cast. An unknown man who had undergone the transgender process commented on the play and praised the cast for their knowledgeable and sensitive portrayals of a difficult issues. *"You guys truly touched the real life struggles that we go through daily,"* he said.

Not only did "Tara's Crossing" do a fantastic and respectful job depicting gay and transgender asylum issues, but it also managed to educate the audience and left a noticeable impact on its viewers.

## COMMENTS FROM THE FEATURED ARTIST (ARTWORK ON BACK COVER)

DIANA NORMA SZOKOLYAI IS CURRENTLY A UNIVERSITY OF CONNECTICUT MASTERS STUDENT IN FRENCH LITERATURE. SHE IS STUDYING AT THE SORBONNE NOUVELLE WHILE CONDUCTING RESEARCH AND WILL SERVE AS THE FRENCH RESIDENT ASSISTANT FOR UCONN'S STUDY ABROAD PROGRAM NEXT YEAR.

### NORMA'S INSIGHT ON THE ARTWORK...

*"This photo was taken as I was waiting for my tram at a square in Budapest. I was on my way to visit my paternal grandmother with my maternal grandmother. I turned around and saw this elderly lady walking slowly, alone, carrying a bag she may have had difficulty with. I snapped this picture of her, seeing it as artistically beautiful, because of its symbolism.*

*For me, this photograph depicts the cold, cement walls that we have seen go up in our metropolis, defaced with violence and graffiti. It emphasizes the isolation human beings often find themselves in. In this rough and harsh landscape, what is offered to the vulnerable, to the fragile? Here, we don't see any welcoming glow from the stark, black windows, which seem rather like black holes. The hard cement only reveals another hard layer of bricks underneath.*

*We are reminded of the modern world by the corner of a sleek car on the bottom left. This does not offer any warmth or escape for this lady's somber solitude either. Instead, it is just a fleeting detail, becoming nothing more than another piece of hard substance-steel next to the cement and brick landscape. In her hand, we see a white sack, and without knowing its contents, we see 'ESCO.'*

*One's imagination could finish this word to read perhaps, 'UNESCO.' But maybe that's just my bias because I'm a UNESCO Student Ambassador for Human Rights."*

### NORMA'S GOALS...

*"The most important thing regarding my career is to continuously educate myself so that I can live a fulfilled life, meaningful in accordance with my own values. This goal*

*does not leave me with a certain 'destination' to reach or a specific 'position' to attain in society. Rather, I like to always be in the place that allows me to give the most of my being. The great musician and instrumental anti-apartheid activist Hugh Masakela once wrote to me, 'Live, love, learn, teach.' This is what I intend to do with my life, no more, no less.*

*Perhaps if I have any hopes, it is to always be surrounded by a stimulating environment that I can learn from, be it academic or simply compilations of meaningful interpersonal encounters."*

## HUMAN RIGHTS MINOR | REQUIREMENTS

The Human Rights Minor is an interdepartmental, interdisciplinary plan of study requiring fifteen credits of course work at the 200-level. Students take six credits from Core Courses in the minor; six credits from Electives; and three credits of Internship. More than six credits may not be taken in one department.

Internships must be with a human rights-related agency, organization, or group. Internship sites can be tailored to fit individual students' interests and goals. The internship enables students to enrich and assess what they have learned in the classroom through practical experience. The final grade for credits earned through an internship will be based on completion of a portfolio in which students synthesize their professional experiences with knowledge gained in the course work they have taken to fulfill the requirements for the Human Rights Minor. The portfolio may consist of an analytical paper or papers, a media production (e.g., photography or video) or some combination of these.

### FURTHER INFORMATION

*Please visit <http://www.humanrights.uconn.edu/> or contact Professor Richard Hiskes, Director of the Minor in Human Rights at 860-486-2536 or by email at [richard.hiskes@uconn.edu](mailto:richard.hiskes@uconn.edu).*

