

Reproductive Rights as Human Rights: An Interactive Course for Advocates Syllabus

Course Overview

The Center for Reproductive Rights is facilitating an e-learning course to help organizations utilize the human rights frameworks within reproductive rights to strengthen their capacity to advocate for reproductive rights at the national and international levels. The course will provide ample opportunities for participants across the world to share ideas and collaborate on advocacy projects. The course will enable participants to apply a human rights framework to reproductive rights issues and illustrate the connection between international human rights and reproductive rights.

Logistics

There will be two sections of the class that will be held online in English. This section (Section 1) will be held every Tuesday at 12 – 2pm UTC from November 6 – December 18.

Participation and Attendance

Participants should anticipate spending 4 hours per week on course related work; 2 hours for class and 2 hours for reading assignments and projects. Participants who complete all of the coursework, are actively engaged during class, contribute to at least three *optional* post-module discussions (marked on the webpage as “comments”), and complete the final evaluation will receive a certificate of completion at the end of the course.

Final Project

Participants will use the human rights framework and advocacy action template to develop an advocacy strategy on a reproductive health issue that they are currently working on or would like to address in the future. Participants then will create a 5-7 minute presentation describing their plan that they will showcase in small groups during the final class on December 18.

System Requirements

The course will be taught via Zoom, which will be available through the [Unite for Reproductive Rights](#) site. Participants should have internet access and audio and microphone features on their computer.

Learning Objectives for the Course

By the end of the course, participants will be able to...

- Utilize international human rights mechanisms to advocate for sexual and reproductive health and rights at the national and international levels;
- Engage with treaty monitoring bodies to hold States accountable for their legal obligations to reproductive rights as established in the treaties to which they are Party, and;
- Integrate the relevant international human rights into key reproductive rights issues, such as abortion, contraception, comprehensive sexual education, and maternal health.

Pre-Course Work

To be completed before November 6

1. Please skim the [Universal Declaration of Human Rights](#).
2. Write a short paragraph on the course page labeled “Pre-Course Work” in the comment section “Introductions.” In this paragraph, introduce yourself, provide a little information about your background, why you are interested in this course, and describe a current reproductive rights advocacy project that you are working on at your organization.
3. Review the technical guide (available on the “Course Materials” webpage) and familiarize yourself with Zoom.
4. [Watch this video](#) introducing international human rights.

Note: The assignments listed under the modules are due before the next class. For example, the assignments listed under Module 1 are due at or before Module 2.

Module 1: Introduction to International Human Rights

November 6 at 12 – 2pm UTC

Module Outline:

- A. Introductions and Logistics
- B. Human Rights Principles and Laws
- C. United Nations Human Rights Treaties and Reporting Mechanisms
- D. State Obligations

Learning Objectives

- 1. Describe the basic principles of human rights and the different sources of these norms (treaties, individual communications, general comments, etc.);
- 2. Explain the applicability of international and regional human right instruments at the national level and how courts have invoked these normative developments, and;
- 3. Illustrate how to strategically engage with the Treaty Monitoring Bodies to advance reproductive rights.

Assignments (to be completed before the next class on November 13).

Readings:

- 1. United Nations, [The right to sexual and reproductive health indivisible from other human rights](#)
- 2. Simone Cusack and Rebecca Cook, [Stereotyping Women in the Health Sector: Lessons from CEDAW](#)

Coursework:

- 1. Complete the International Human Rights worksheet and submit it to info@uniteforreprorights.org before November 13.
- 2. Answer the discussion question that will be posted on the Module 1 webpage immediately after class.

Module 2: Reproductive Rights as Human Rights

November 13 at 12 – 2pm UTC

Module Outline:

- A. Introduction to Reproductive Rights
- B. Right to Equality and Non-Discrimination
- C. Gender Stereotyping in Laws and Policies
- D. Country-Specific Application
- E. Rights to Life and Health
- F. Role of Gender-Based Violence in Reproductive Rights

Learning Objectives

1. Identify reproductive rights and where they are enshrined within human rights;
2. Describe the rights to life, health, and equality and non-discrimination;
3. Illustrate how violations of reproductive rights reinforce discriminatory stereotypes and perpetuate gender discrimination, and;
4. Recognize and comprehend the impact of gender stereotyping within the country-specific context.

Assignments (to be completed before the next class on November 20).

Reading Assignments:

1. Center for Reproductive Rights, Shadow Letter to the UPR on India
2. Urgent action letter to the Special Rapporteur on health discussing issues in Honduras
3. Review the [Advocacy Action Template](#)
4. Case summaries of [Millicent Awuor](#), [Alyne](#), and *Bungoma*

Coursework:

1. Choose a Special Rapporteur and prepare a one-page urgent action letter to them on a reproductive rights issue of your choosing.
2. Watch the short video [Why Did Mrs. X Die?](#) And come prepared to discuss.
3. *Optional:* Answer the discussion question that will be posted on the Module 2 webpage immediately after class.

Module 3: Advocacy Strategies: Maternal Health

November 20 at 12 – 2pm UTC

Module Outline:

- A. AAAQ Framework
- B. Barriers to Accessing Reproductive Health Services
- C. Social Determinants of Health
- D. Advocacy Action Template and Building an Evidence Base
- E. Introduction to the Final Project

Learning Objectives

- a. Explain the AAAQ framework and its relationship to reproductive rights;
- b. Describe the social determinants of health and how they impact reproductive rights;
- c. Explain the role of advocacy in advancing quality maternal health law and policies at the national level;
- d. Explain how to identify the issues and goals in an advocacy strategy, and;
- e. Illustrate how to build an evidence base.

Assignments (to be completed before the next class on November 27).

Reading Assignments (participants will be divided into groups)

1. **Everyone:** Johanna B. Fine, Katherine Mayall, and Lilian Sepulveda, [The Role of International Human Rights Norms in the Liberalization of Abortion Laws Globally](#), (extract: introduction, development of international human rights norms on abortion, law and policy reform, catalyzing reproductive autonomy for women: importance of future normative developments)
2. **Group A**
 - a. Reproductive Health Matters: [Litigating to ensure access to quality maternal health care for women and girls in Kenya](#)
 - b. World Health Organization, [Unsafe Abortions: Global and Regional estimates of the incidence of unsafe abortions and associated mortality in 2008](#), (pp. 7-9, 14, 31)
3. **Group B**
 - a. World Health Organization, [Safe Abortion Guide](#), pp. 18 – 19 (“Public health and human rights”), 23-25 (“Regulatory and policy context”), 87-98 (“Legal and policy considerations”)
 - b. IPAS, [Making Safe Abortion Accessible: A Practical Guide for Advocates](#), pp. 20-35

Coursework:

1. Work on the advocacy strategy project, the first half of which will be due on December 4.
2. Familiarize yourself with the [abortion map](#) and complete the worksheet. Please email the worksheet by November 27.
3. *Optional:* Answer the discussion question that will be posted on the Module 3 webpage immediately after class.

Module 4: Advocacy Strategies: Abortion/ Post-Abortion Care

November 27 at 12 – 2pm UTC

Module Outline:

- A. Introduction to Abortion and Post-Abortion Care (PAC)
- B. Review of the Rights to Life and Health
- C. Right to Reproductive Autonomy
- D. Role of the Ministry of Health
- E. Advocacy Strategies for Abortion Access
- F. Effective Communication for Advocacy

Learning Objectives

- a. Describe the rights to life, health, and reproductive autonomy and identify where they are situated within international human rights law;
- b. Develop arguments using the rights to life, health, and reproductive autonomy to advocate for abortion and PAC access;
- c. Explain how to identify decision-makers and influencers at different stages of the advocacy process, and;
- d. Describe and identify effective communication strategies to advance advocacy projects.

Assignments (to be completed before the next class on December 4).

Reading Assignments:

1. Open Society Foundation, [Against Her Will](#)
2. Center for Reproductive Rights, Shadow letter to [CAT on Contraception](#) (Section 4, pp. 12-13).
3. FIGO, [Guidelines on Forced Sterilization](#) (pp. 122- 126)
4. Case Summary for [A.S. v. Hungary](#)
5. Skim the case studies and questions available on the Module 5 webpage in the document titled “Case Studies.”

Coursework:

1. Watch [Sanctioned Cruelty: Reproductive Rights Violations as Torture](#) and complete answer the questions on the worksheet available on the Module 4 webpage.
2. Complete a first draft of your advocacy action plan and turn it in on December 4.
3. *Optional:* Answer the discussion question that will be posted on the Module 4 webpage immediately after class.

Module 5: Advocacy Strategies: Contraception and Forced Sterilization

December 4 at 12 – 2pm UTC

Module Outline:

- A. Right to Access Reproductive Health Services
- B. The Right to be Free from Torture and Cruel, Inhumane, and Degrading Treatment
- C. Informed Consent and Forced Sterilization
- D. Advocacy Strategies for Contraception Access and Prevention of Forced Sterilization

Turn in the first draft of the advocacy action plan

Learning Objectives

- a. Describe the right access to reproductive health services, especially as it relates to contraception;
- b. Explain TCIDT and its relationship to reproductive rights;
- c. Describe the role of informed consent within forced sterilization, and;
- d. Identify and assess potential opponents to specific advocacy goals.

Assignments (to be completed before the next class on December 11).

Reading Assignments (participants will be divided into groups):

- 1. **Group A**
 - a. Center for Reproductive Rights, [Capacity and Consent](#), Sections 3 and 5 are optional)
 - b. United Nations, [CRC General Comment No. 15](#), pp. 3-7, 16-18
- 2. **Group B**
 - a. Primer on Adolescent Rights
 - b. Center for Reproductive Rights, [Forced Out: Mandator Pregnancy Testing and the Expulsion of Pregnant Students in Tanzanian Schools](#), pp.11-13 (Executive Summary), pp. 26-35 (Section 1)

Coursework:

- 1. **Turn in the first draft of the advocacy action plan project**
- 2. *Optional:* Answer the discussion question that will be posted on the Module 5 webpage immediately after class.

Module 6: Advocacy Strategies: Adolescent Reproductive Rights and CSE
December 11 at 12 – 2pm UTC

Module Outline:

- A. Right to Equality and Non-discrimination for Adolescents
- B. Gender Stereotyping, and Mandatory Pregnancy Testing
- C. Meaningful Youth Engagement
- D. Advocacy Strategies for Adolescent Reproductive Rights and CSE
- E. Conducting a Risk Analysis and Identifying Partnerships

Learning Objectives

- a. Illustrate the ways in which the rights to life, health, and equality and non-discrimination are realized in adolescent reproductive rights and CSE;
- b. Explain gender stereotyping and its relationship to adolescent reproductive rights and CSE;
- c. Identify potential partnerships to advance advocacy strategies, and;
- d. Describe how to conduct a risk analysis to strengthen advocacy strategies.

Assignments (to be completed before the final class on December 18).

Reading Assignments:

- 1. No reading assignments

Coursework:

- 1. Complete the advocacy strategy project using the advocacy action template.
- 2. Prepare a 5-7 minute presentation about your advocacy project.
- 3. *Optional:* Answer the discussion question that will be posted on the Module 6 webpage immediately after class.

Module 7: Conclusion

December 18 at 12 – 2pm UTC

Module Outline:

- A. Advocacy Action Presentations
- B. Review
- C. Next Steps
- D. Final Evaluation

Learning Objectives

- a. Develop a plan to utilize specific advocacy strategies taught in the course to the participant's work within their organization, and;
- b. Create, apply, and present an advocacy plan using the advocacy action template.

Please complete the final course evaluation available under Course Materials by December 23.