NEW ONLINE COURSE WINTER 2017 (cross-listed History & Law):  
HUMAN RIGHTS IN THE AGE OF THE UNIVERSAL DECLARATION  
DCC 3111 / HIS 3397B  
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At the time of its conception in 1948, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights carried the promise of a New World Order within which the rights of all peoples, regardless of location, citizenship status, or identity, would trump those of sovereign states. Yet, the Declaration was nonbinding and its advocates spent the first two decades after its creation trying – and largely failing – to make it implementable for the people who most needed its protections. Fearing UN interference in domestic affairs, many states, including the great powers of the age -- the U.S. and the U.S.S.R. -- refused to sign and ratify the rights conventions that would have rendered the Universal Declaration enforceable.

In this course, students will examine the actions and writings of lawyers, human rights activists, the NGOs they formed, and the people they advocated for in the decades after the Universal Declaration (1948-1978). Using specific case studies and primary documents, and with particular emphasis on transnational activism linking the Global North and South, students will probe the strategies that postwar activists employed to make human rights protections matter despite the Cold War era strictures of national sovereignty and non-interference. Students will also consider what lasting effects this period had on human rights movements as a whole.

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