COURSE DETAIL

HUMANITARIAN COMMUNICATION

Country
Italy

Host Institution
University of Bologna

Program(s)
University of Bologna

UCEAP Course Level
Upper Division

UCEAP Subject Area(s)
Sociology International Studies Communication

UCEAP Course Number
169

UCEAP Course Suffix
B

UCEAP Official Title
HUMANITARIAN COMMUNICATION

UCEAP Transcript Title
HUMANITARIAN COMM

UCEAP Quarter Units
6.00

UCEAP Semester Units

4.00

Course Description

This is a graduate level course that is part of the Laurea Magistrale program. The course is intended for advanced level students only. Enrollment is by consent of the instructor. This course analyzes the way the western media covers the developing world and the humanitarian emergencies. Specifically the course explores the emerging and historical humanitarian narratives, with particular reference to the way in which the activities of NGOs are reported; how we understand and explain faraway disasters; how the media representations of suffering and violence has changed in the post-cold war period and in the digital era; the relationship between media, aid, corporate communication, and branding; and the relationship between power, media, and migration. This course encourages students to think sociologically about a range of issues and “social problems” related to the different ways in which media is used to report on humanitarian situations, and what impact this has. It also serves as an introduction to some important themes and issues within humanitarianism and migration. Areas under study include: the construction of “social problems,” media, ethics, human rights, disaster relief, war, famine, refugee camps, social movements, and NGOs. A special focus is dedicated to the mediated performances that contribute to create the spectacle of the humanitarian border, which is physically and symbolically enacted by the different actors involved in contemporary management of migration. Moving from the assumption that our awareness of nearly all humanitarian issues is defined by the media, this course looks at the literature associated with humanitarian organizations and the NGO narratives, tracing the imagined and real encounters between solidarity, participation, and citizenship in the context of larger social processes of mediation and globalization. Examining humanitarian communication through various forms of aesthetic activism - documentary, photojournalism, benefit concerts, celebrities, and live blogging, the course explores how the circulation of humanitarian images and narratives impact the peoples it aims to serve, and what can be learned about global inequality from the stories associated with it. The course also focuses on how several news media framed Covid-19 as an invisible enemy, using metaphor of war to

describe the current situation. The definition of the emergency as a war conducts inevitably to the identification of an enemy. The hyper-visibility of the war against this invisible enemy leads to a generalized fear of ‘the others’ and to the identification of this invisibility in visible bodies. Finally, the course reflects on long-term implications of the pandemic on mobility justice and what Mbembe (2020) has defined the “right to breath.” There are two versions of this course; this course, UCEAP Course Number 169B and Bologna course number 75073, is associated with the LM in Sociology and Social Work and LM in Local and Global Development degree programmes. The other version, UCEAP Course Number 169A and Bologna course number 81782, is associated with the LM in Language, Society and Communication degree programme.

Language(s) of Instruction
English

Host Institution Course Number
75073

Host Institution Course Title
HUMANITARIAN COMMUNICATION

Host Institution Course Details
https://www.unibo.it/en/teaching/course-unit-catalogue/course-unit/2022/391352

Host Institution Campus
BOLOGNA

Host Institution Faculty

Host Institution Degree
LM in SOCIOLOGY AND SOCIAL WORK; LM in LOCAL AND GLOBAL DEVELOPMENT

Host Institution Department
Sociology and Business Law; Political and Social Sciences

Course Last Reviewed
2022-2023

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