Non-state actors play an increasingly visible role in global governance and maintain increasingly complex transnational relations across state boundaries. This seminar will introduce students to the analysis of non-state activism (primarily focused on non-governmental organizations, NGOs) and its role in shaping global institutions and domestic political and social change. The first part of the seminar discusses basic definitions and distinctions (e.g., transnationalism, not-for-profit sector, advocacy/service, North-South issues) and survey the theoretical literature on transnational non-state activism. The second part of the seminar focuses on substantive questions capturing the organization of transnational non-state actors and activism, including governance, effectiveness/impact, networking/collaboration, and accountability. The third main part of the seminar reviews the role of non-state actors across major sectors of transnational activism: humanitarian aid, global health, environmental protection, development, and human rights.

Questions addressed in this seminar include:

- What accounts for the emergence and evolution of transnational actors, their goals, and strategies/tactics?
- What explains the growing prominence of non-state actors in global affairs?
- How should NGOs be evaluated?
- What the opportunities and challenges of transnational collaboration (in networks or partnerships)?
- How and why do experiences of non-governmental activism vary across regions and issue areas?
- How do transnational NGOs deal with demands from their multiple stakeholders?
- How legitimate are transnational interventions orchestrated by non-state actors?
- What are the limits of transnational activism?

Requirements

The requirements for successful completion of this class are:

1. regular reading of the required materials before class, regular attendance, and active participation in class discussions (10 per cent),
2. written review (800-1,000 words, 12pt, double spaced) plus lead-in for class discussion based on the assigned reading (10 per cent),
3. web-based research assignment, summarized in written form (800-1,000 words; 10 per cent)
4. research paper (5,000-6,000 words, 12pt, double spaced) applying a theoretical argument to empirical issues discussed in the course (50 per cent),
5. presentation of your final paper in one of two final class sessions (10 per cent),
6. peer review of introduction as well as final draft of student paper (10 per cent).
Schedule

Part I: What is transnational activism?

Week One (September 3): Course/participant introductions
1. Willetts, ‘What is a Non-Governmental Organization?’
2. Martens, ‘Mission Impossible’
3. Kerlin/Thanasombat, ’The International Charitable Nonprofit Subsector’
4. Mitchell/Schmitz, 'Bracing for Impact'

Week Two (September 10): What are transnational NGOs?
1. Johnson/Prakash, 'NGO research program’
2. Gray/Bebbington/Collison, ‘NGOs, civil society and accountability’
3. Boli, John and George M. Thomas (1999) 'INGOs and World Culture’
4. Kennedy, ‘The Dark Sides of Virtue’

Week Three (September 17): Transnationalism and non-state actors (due: paragraph on your final paper; topic and rationale)
1. Keohane/Nye, ‘Transnational Relations and World Politics’
2. Risse-Kappen, ‘Bringing Transnational Relations Back In’
3. Risse, ‘Transnational Actors and World Politics’
4. Orenstein/Schmitz, ‘Transnationalism’

Part II: What are the effects of transnational activism?

Week Four (September 24): Campaigns and global governance
1. Price, 'Reversing the Gun Sights’
2. Le Billon, 'Fatal Transactions’
3. Snyder/Vinjamuri, 'Trials and Errors' 
4. Joachim, ‘Framing Issues and Seizing Opportunities’
5. Halliday, ‘The Romance of Non-State Actors’

Week Five (October 1): Human rights/domestic change (due: outline final paper)
2. Risse/Sikkink, ‘The Socialization of Human Rights Norms’
3. Schmitz, 'Transnational Human Rights Networks’
4. Koslinski/Reis, 'Transnational and Domestic Relations’

Week Six (October 8): Multinational corporations
1. Nollert, Transnational Corporate Ties’
2. Kentor, ‘Transnational Corporate Networks’
3. Roach, ‘Primer on MNCs’

Week Seven (October 15): Violent non-state actors
1. Sandler et al., Transnational Terrorism’
2. Pape, ‘Suicide Terrorism’
Week Eight (October 22): Humanitarian aid (*due: intro to final paper*)
1. de Torrente, 'Humanitarian Action Under Attack’
2. O'Brien, 'Politicized Humanitarianism’
3. Cooley/Ron, ‘NGO Scramble’
4. Walker, ‘Cracking the Code’

Part III: How is transnational activism organized?

Week Nine (October 29): Issue emergence (*presentations and peer review*)
1. Carpenter, 'Setting the Advocacy Agenda’
3. Ron/Ramos/Rodgers, 'Transnational Information Politics’
4. Ron/Ramos/Rodgers, 'What shapes the West’s human rights focus?’

Week Ten (November 5): Global health
1. Morris, et al. ‘Effective international action’
2. Social Impact Advisors, ‘Diarrheal Disease Advocacy’
3. Ogden/Walt/Lush, ‘The politics of 'branding’
4. Grimm, ‘Staggering Toward a Global Strategy’

Week Eleven (November 12): Development/rights-based approaches
1. Nelson/Dorsey, 'New Rights Advocacy’
2. Gneiting/Bruno/Schmitz, 'Setting Higher Goals’
3. Harris-Curtis, 'Rights-Based Approaches’
4. Offenheiser/Holcombe, 'Challenges and Opportunities’/Clark, ‘Commentary’

Week Twelve (November 19): Legitimacy/accountability (*due: 10 pages*)
2. Ebrahim, ‘Accountability in Praxis’
3. O’Dwyer et al, ‘Amnesty Ireland’
4. Hopgood, ‘Keepers of the Flame’
5. Forbes, 'Measuring the Unmeasurable’
6. Niehaus, 'Rating the Charity Raters'
7. Wing/Hager, ‘Getting What We Pay For’
8. Hager/Flack, 'The Pros and Cons of Financial Efficiency Standards’
9. CARE USA, 'Measuring Program Impact’
10. CARE USA, ‘What is a Program Approach?”
11. Edwards, 'Philantrocapitalism. Old Myths, New Realities?’ and ‘After the Goldrush’

Week Thirteen (November 26): Thanksgiving (class cancelled)

Week Fourteen (December 3): Presentations of final papers

Week Fifteen (December 10): Presentations/wrap-up/evaluation

Due date for final paper: December 18, 2009 (5pm)