VISUALIZING HUMANITARIAN CRISES AND INTERVENTIONS

OUTLINE

News media often make it seem like humanitarian emergencies can be attributed to a single cause—as if a natural disaster or a civil conflict, taken in isolation, can account for the entirety of an emergency gripping a country or a region. However, humanitarian crises rarely occur as a result of one single cause. Instead, crises occur at the intersection of political, social, cultural, and ecological processes that unfold over time and erupt once matters reach a boiling point. Sadly, many of the dynamics that precipitate humanitarian crises recur in multiple countries and lead to similar outcomes.

This assignment is an opportunity for you to create a visual representation of the historical trajectories of some of today's most burning humanitarian crises.

PURPOSE OF THIS EXERCISE

This exercise will help us:

- identify and visualize the wide array of social, political, cultural, religious, and ecological processes that precipitate a humanitarian crisis, along with the key agencies that offer relief

- observe how humanitarian crises in different regions share characteristics

- identify several distinct types of humanitarian crises

- produce a shared resource with knowledge about humanitarian crises and relief efforts.

PART 1 – CONSTRUCTING A TIMELINE FOR HUMANITARIAN CRISES

In the first part of this exercise, students will work in groups to construct a visual timeline of humanitarian crises, including their causes, characteristics, and relief efforts.

Research

Each student group will each be assigned a region for research. Research should focus on the following topics:

- The factors leading to the current situation in the assigned region:

  Based on class discussion and your own research, what processes led to the current situation? If this is an armed conflict, who are the belligerents? What have been their motivations and claims throughout the conflict? How did civilian populations come to be affected by this conflict? Etc. If this is a natural disaster, what capacity did the local government have in order to address the damage? If the local government was unable to address it, why? What was the condition of local infrastructure before the disaster? Etc.

- Facts and numbers about the current situation:

How many people have been affected? If displacement occurred, are there estimates of the numbers of refugees and internally displaced persons? If refugees are involved, which countries (if any) absorbed them and what is their situation now? If infrastructure or property damage is involved, are there financial estimates of the damage? Etc.

- What sort of aid has been attempted, which strategies worked, and what challenges emerged:

  Who are the key relief providers on the ground? These may be international organizations such as the UN, international nongovernmental organizations such as the International Committee of the Red Cross, or local authorities and governments. What are the key humanitarian programs that were applied in this region? Were there any successful relief programs in this region? Or have most interventions failed? Overview of the key obstacles for humanitarian relief in this region. Are there any strategies offered by humanitarian organizations or authorities to circumvent them? Moving forward, are there plans underway that may improve the situation?

Sources

Sources can be academic publications on the topic, as well as reports found on the International Committee of the Red Cross and the International Federation of the Red Cross sites (or other major humanitarian NGOs), UNICEF, WFP, UNHCR and UNOCHA sites (along with other UN sites), the World Health Organization, and a site called CRASH, which is run by Doctors without Borders. Additional international NGO's like Oxfam or CARE similarly provide important information and should be consulted.

Wikipedia entries are rarely accurate or objective, and should not be used. Encyclopedia Britannica Online and Encyclopedia.com are much more reliable sources and can be used for general historical information. You may use stories from *major* news outlets (e.g., NY Times, WSJ, Washington Post, CNN, BBC, etc) about specific events, but not to provide analysis.

Timeline

Each group will task each member with posting **10 items** for their region (the exact number will be determined once groups are formed, based on group size).

Timeline items may relate to:

- periods in the history of the region (e.g., "Between 1970 and 1980, an estimated 10,000 locals migrated to neighboring countries due to the increasingly harsh environment conditions…")
- specific events (e.g., "Riots erupted on June 1, 1989, with an estimated 50,000 citizens taking to the streets to protest the alleged corruption of their government…")
- new information about the situation in the region (e.g., "The NGO Doctors Without Borders published a new report estimating the number of people in need of treatment for malaria in the region at 10,0000…"
- relief efforts initiated, achieve success, or face challenges (e.g., "The International Federation of the Red Cross reported successful delivery of aid packages in the region…"

or conversely "Numerous attacks on field hospitals run by the national Red Cross society occurred in this period")

- global responses (e.g., "The United Nations Human Rights Council issued a condemnation of this state, demanding immediate reforms…"

Timeline items should be:

- four to six sentences long
- accompanied by an audiovisual material (a photo, video, podcast, etc.)
- sourced – a proper citation (Chicago style) must be included. If the source is an online document, a link should be provided
- in your own words. The course academic integrity policy applies to this exercise.

Our full timeline can be viewed here, for examples.

How to submit timeline events

All timeline events should be submitted on the form on our Canvas site, under "Pages>Course Timeline." **Please prepare all text in advance, on a separate document**, and then copy-paste it into the form.

- Click "add post to timeline"
- You will be asked to log in at that point
- Enter start date for your event
    - For multi-year events / processes, you may enter 1 for "month" and "date".
    - For more specific events, enter a specific date.
    - Enter end dates when relevant (e.g., official end of conflict, of conference, of NGO presence).
    - Time is usually not required, except in cases where specifically relevant (e.g., an attack, a natural disaster, etc.)
- Enter short headline for your slide
    - Headline should be as specific as possible, mentioning locations where possible.
- Enter text – 4-6 sentences
    - Given the limited space, text should be specific and avoid generalities.
    - At the end of your text, type "Source:" and then enter citation with link to the original cite (see below for citation style).
- Enter link to media
    - Any online video or image can work
      (e.g., youtube, vimeo, soundcloud, dailymotion, instagram, twit pic, twitter status, google plus status, or an image).
    - HOWEVER:
        - When posting a YouTube video simply copy the YouTube address from your address bar at the top of your browser screen and past this link

        - When posting any video *not* from YouTube's site, you will need to find the "embed" link. The embed link usually appears between < and > signs, and can normally be found if you find a "share" button for your video.

Copy the entire link (including the < and > marks) and paste it into the form. Example:
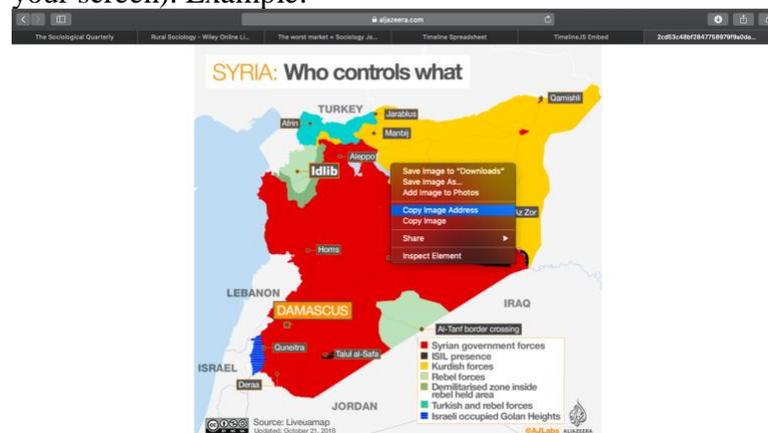
1. Find the "share" button or icon ( ) for the video
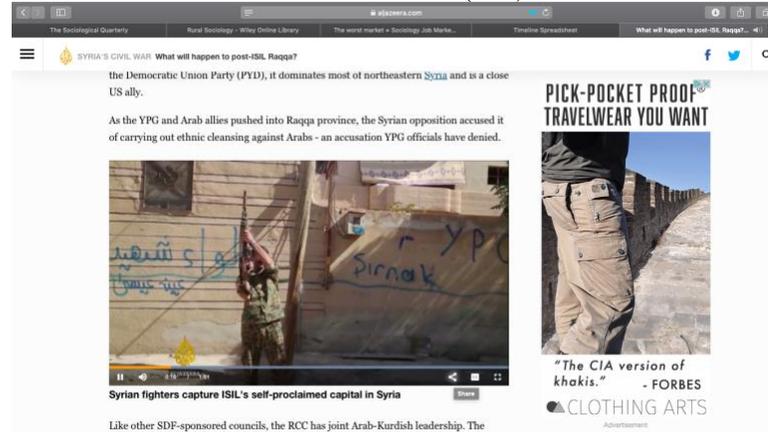
2. Copy the embed link and paste into form
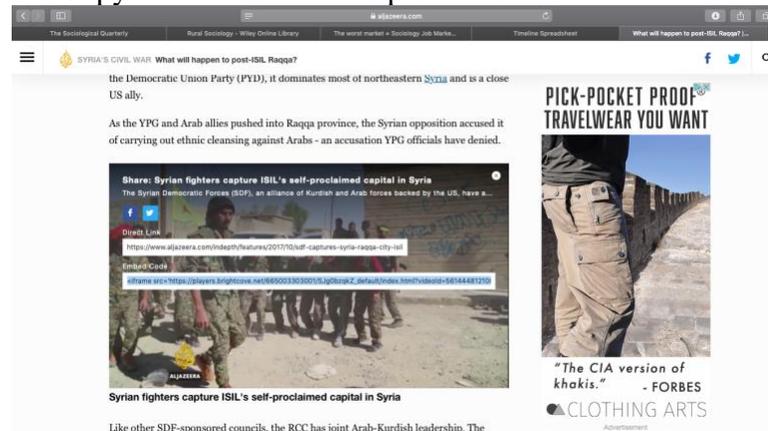
▪ When posting <u>an image</u>, you will need to right-click the image and choose "copy image link" (exact wording may be different between PC and Mac) Paste this link (do not paste the link from your address bar at the top of your screen). Example:

- o Links to images need to be direct (right click on the image and click "copy image address").

- • Media credit
    - o Who created the media? ("International Committee of the Red Cross", "UNOCHA", etc.)
- • Media caption
    - o Short description ("Infographic describing current humanitarian needs in Haiti.")
- • Media thumbnail (optional)
    - o In case you want the thumbnail you would like the event to display on the timeline.
- • Select your group and enter your name.
- • Click "Submit".

Citation style

We will follow the Chicago Style Manual. This quick guide contains all the information you need (use the "reference list" form). In particular, please note the following:

To cite an article from a news site:

Stolberg, Sheryl Gay, and Robert Pear. 2010. "Wary Centrists Posing Challenge in Health Care Vote." *New York Times*, February 27. Accessed February 28, 2010. http://www.nytimes.com/2010/02/28/us/politics/28health.html.

(Accessed=date you last viewed the page online.)

To cite a document from a website:

Include the date the page was published or last modified, if available online. If not, state the date you accessed the site.

Google. 2009. "Google Privacy Policy." Last modified March 11. http://www.google.com/intl/en/privacypolicy.html.

McFonald's Corporation. 2008. "McDonald's Happy Meal Toy Safety Facts." Accessed July 19. http://www.mcdonalds.com/corp/about/factsheets.html.

The style guide offers instructions for other types of sources.

Presentation

Along with its region assignment, each group will receive a presentation date. Presentations should be 15-20 minutes long, and should walk us through your timeline. All group members should participate in the presentation.

PART 2 – DESIGNING AN INFOGRAPHIC

Once all groups have presented their timelines, each group will work together to create an infographic summarizing a theme, typology, or trajectory you observed across the various cases the groups covered. Your infographic may focus, for example, on the causes for certain types of crises, the ways different types of humanitarian projects unfold, the types of challenges for humanitarian aid. You will have access to the timelines created by all groups, and will be able to draw on them in order to create your infographic. You are also welcome to draw on additional sources.

The topic and design will be entirely up to the group, although you are strongly encouraged to consult with your TF or myself. All infographics should:

- be based on anywhere between three and all region timelines covered in class
- focus on *processes* rather than current conditions
    - In other words, infographics should not only present facts about the present. It should represent the processes that caused the current crisis and the interventions that were attempted after the crisis erupted
- represent a group effort – all group members must contribute.

Hackathon

We have partnered with the Bok Center's Learning Lab Studio, which will provide a session focusing on visualization skills (a "hackathon"). Student groups will have time to brainstorm and work on their infographics while receiving guidance and feedback from course staff and the Learning Lab team.

Groups will be asked to sign up to one out of two available sessions (April 16 or April 18, 5:00-8:00pm, at the Bok Center, 50 Church St.).

Submission

Upload your infographics by April 29, 2019 to the assignment page on Canvas. I will present the infographics in class on our last meeting.

ADDITIONAL INSTRUCTIONS

Neutrality – it is important to represent the facts fully, and to let those facts speak for themselves. Good descriptions will avoid judgmental meta-commentary and over-generalization (e.g., "Side A is guilty of the most inhumane war crimes against side B."), and instead be specific and convey the facts in neutral tones (e.g., "the International Criminal Court has indicted the president of side A with war crimes against side B").

Visually disturbing materials – please be judicious about the type of visual materials you use (e.g., videos, photos) – if the item might be unusually disturbing to watch, please confer with your TF or myself in advance. We may ask you to use a different item or to describe it rather than show it.

GRADING

Item	% of course grade	Criteria	Individual / group grade
Timeline items	15	Clear and accurate presentation; robust description; relevant audiovisual material used; reliable sources; proper citation	Individual
Presentation	10	Comprehensiveness of timeline (covering causes, current conditions, and aid efforts); clarity of presentation	Group
Infographic	15	Clarity of presentation; integration of multiple cases covered in class	Group