

# THE SOCIAL PRACTICE OF HUMAN RIGHTS

## going against the grain

DAYTON, OHIO  
OCTOBER 1-4, 2019  
#SPHR2019

### call for papers

2019 marks 30 years since the end of the Cold War and the beginning of an era pregnant with promise and potential for human rights, democracy, and global governance. While the world has seen substantial progress, we are facing the potential of a profoundly dystopian future instead of the utopia of our dreams.

Global capitalism drives widening and deepening inequalities. Its dependence on natural resource extraction and exploitation is hastening ecological collapse. Authoritarianism and populism have risen from the rubble of liberalism's inability to deliver on its pledges. Technology, once promoted as a panacea for transnational boundary breaking and democratization, further empowers the powerful to reshape politics and upend notions of privacy, social life, information, employment and even biology.

The forces originally designed to lift up the marginalized, level the playing field, confine power, and ensure accountability have been weaponized and turned against society. Critics have questioned the relevance of the human rights field in countering these trends; they have alleged that the movement suffers from neocolonialist tendencies and unfettered reliance on existing economic and political systems. These dynamics have caused a sense of crisis within the human rights community, prompting extensive self-examination and efforts to affirm its legitimacy and counter high-profile critiques.

Now is the time for creativity and innovation to confront these systemic challenges with an ambition commensurate to their scale and scope. How can and should the human rights movement shape itself in the future to understand and address such complex risks and structural transformations? What kind of strategic directions – from reform-oriented to radical – should be analyzed and considered? Which approaches, tools, and spaces are emerging as critical? What novel ones should be cultivated? What are the risks in doing so?

In this spirit, the Human Rights Center at the University of Dayton will convene the 2019 Social Practice of Human Rights (SPHR) conference to address high-risk threats that present themselves with unprecedented urgency. It will be our task to reinvigorate collaborative efforts with hope and vigor, building sustainable movements and disruptive methods even when it means, to quote Pope Francis, "going against the grain."

Featured speakers at the conference will include **Anand Giridharadas**, author of the *New York Times* best-seller *Winners Take All: The Elite Charade of Changing the World*; for a full list visit [go.udayton.edu/hrc](http://go.udayton.edu/hrc).

#### SUBMISSIONS ARE WELCOME ON TOPICS THAT ADDRESS THEMES AND THEIR INTERSECTIONS INCLUDING:

- **Eco-economic transformation:** emphasis on intersectional inequality, redistributive models, corporate accountability, and environmental sustainability and climate justice.
- **Technological transformation:** the implications and promise of artificial intelligence (AI), autonomous systems, technology-based innovation, and the role of digital freedom.
- **Social and political transformation:** the power of social movements; civic and feminist mobilization; the role of theater, art and cultural expressions of human rights; and the inclusion, protection and resourcing of social movements, activists and advocates.

We especially encourage workshops, roundtables and panels that place scholars and practitioners in constructive dialogue with one another.

#### ABOUT SPHR

Hosted by the Human Rights Center at the University of Dayton, the Social Practice of Human Rights Conference serves as a platform to:

- Bridge the divide between scholars and practitioners, providing for meaningful exchange across disciplines and building robust networks around the conference into the future.
- Enable critical reflection and strategic thinking on social justice and human rights research on and for advocacy and education.
- Explore and cultivate potential collaborations and initiatives that can be supported by the Human Rights Center and partners.

The events will take place October 1-4, 2019, at the University of Dayton in Dayton, Ohio.

Each day includes a plenary, a keynote address, a mix of research sessions and a forward-thinking workshop led by JustLabs and OpenGlobalRights.

SPHR 2019 is presented in partnership with OpenGlobalRights and JustLabs.

#### TO SUBMIT A PROPOSAL:

Please submit a proposal by April 15, 2019, through [go.udayton.edu/hrc](http://go.udayton.edu/hrc).

Proposals/paper submissions must contain:

- A title.
- An abstract of 300 or fewer words.
- A short biographical statement (no more than 200 words) for each author, including name, title and institution/organization affiliation.

Submitters will be notified of the status of their proposals by May 20, 2019.

All presenters must submit their SPHR19 paper (e.g. academic paper, report, manuscript, concept note) in its entirety to the Human Rights Center via email to [hrc@udayton.edu](mailto:hrc@udayton.edu) by September 1, 2019

Limited travel support is available to practitioners and presenters from the Global South, as well as graduate students, junior scholars and contingent faculty with financial need.

#### PLEASE DISTRIBUTE WIDELY.

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