

Seminar Series Syllabus: AI and Human Rights in Conflict and Transition

Overview:

This seminar series aims to equip participants with the critical knowledge and analytical frameworks needed to engage with the human rights implications of artificial intelligence (AI) in conflict-affected and transitional contexts, particularly in Sub-Saharan Africa. The program combines theoretical foundations with practical case studies, encouraging participants to critically analyse the intersection of technology, power, and justice.

Format:

- 1) Duration: 10 weeks
- 2) Mode: Online
- 3) Facilitators: Two experienced facilitators
- 4) Sessions: 2 hours per week
- 5) Learning materials – provided beforehand for each week

Week 1: Introduction to AI and Human Rights

Learning objectives: Introduce foundational concepts of AI, algorithmic decision-making, and their relevance to human rights.

Learning Outcomes: Participants will grasp basic AI concepts, understand the fundamentals of algorithmic decision-making, and recognise the key human rights frameworks.

Readings/Resources:

Bakeer, Hani, et al. "[AI and Human Rights](#)." (2024).

[AI and Human Rights 101](#) (Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights)

[The practical application of the Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights to the activities of technology companies](#) - Report of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights

[Human Rights Council report on human rights and technical standard-setting processes for new and emerging digital technologies](#) (Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights 2023)

[Rights by design: Embedding human rights principles in AI systems](#) (Digital Cooperation Organisation 2025).

- Activities: Group discussion on participants' prior knowledge/experiences with AI.

Week 2: AI and Censorship

Learning objectives: Examine AI and social media platforms as instruments of censorship and their impact on freedom of expression.

Learning outcomes: Participants will analyse how AI is used for censorship and articulate its implications on freedom of expression.

Readings/Resources:

Matusevych, Tetiana, Margarida Romero, and Oksana Strutynska. "[Citizenship, censorship, and democracy in the age of artificial intelligence](#)." *Creative applications of artificial intelligence in education*. Cham: Springer Nature Switzerland, 2024. 57-71.

Diskin, Evgeni I. "[The use of Artificial Intelligence technologies by internet platforms for the purposes of censorship](#)." *RUDN Journal of Law* 28.3 (2024): 584-603.

Riccio, Piera, et al. "[Algorithmic Censorship of Art: A Proposed Research Agenda](#)." *ICCC*. 2022.

Activities: Breakout groups analyze different social media platforms and related censorship issues.

Week 3: Surveillance and Privacy

Learning objectives: Explore biometric surveillance and its implications for marginalised groups regarding privacy and rights.

Learning outcomes: Participants will evaluate surveillance technologies and their human rights implications, especially for marginalised communities.

Readings/Resources:

Mosa, Msbah J., et al. "[AI and ethics in surveillance: balancing security and privacy in a digital world](#)." (2024).

Singh, Tulika. "[AI-driven surveillance technologies and human rights: Balancing security and privacy](#)." *International conference on smart systems: Innovations in computing*. Singapore: Springer Nature Singapore, 2023.

Saheb, Tahereh. "[Ethically contentious aspects of artificial intelligence surveillance: a social science perspective](#)." *AI and Ethics* 3.2 (2023): 369-379.

Activities: Case study analysis on AI, surveillance and privacy, focusing on a specific country or region and a specific AI tool used for surveillance.

Week 4: Disinformation in Electoral Processes

Learning objectives: Analyze AI's role in spreading disinformation during elections and its impact on democratic integrity.

Learning outcomes: Participants will assess how AI-enabled disinformation campaigns can erode democratic processes and propose potential solutions.

Readings/Resources:

Yu, Chen. "[How Will AI Steal Our Elections?](#)." *Center for Open Science* (2024).

López-López, Paulo Carlos, Daniel Barredo-Ibáñez, and Erika Jaráiz-Gulías. "[Research on digital political communication: Electoral campaigns, disinformation, and artificial intelligence](#)." *Societies* 13.5 (2023): 126.

Díaz, Félix, et al. "[Artificial Intelligence for Detecting Electoral Disinformation on Social Media: Models, Datasets, and Evaluation](#)." *Information* 17.3 (2026): 292.

Activities: Group debate on ethical challenges in electoral tech.

Week 5: The Impact of AI on Vulnerable Groups

Learning objectives: Assess the disproportionate impacts of AI on women, children, and marginalised communities.

Learning outcomes: Participants will identify specific vulnerabilities and develop strategies to mitigate AI's negative impacts on affected groups.

Readings/Resources:

Rodrigues, Rowena. "[Legal and human rights issues of AI: Gaps, challenges and vulnerabilities](#)." *Journal of Responsible Technology* 4 (2020).

Raso, Filippo A., et al. "[Artificial intelligence & human rights: Opportunities & risks](#)." *Berkman Klein Center Research Publication* 2018-6 (2018).

Activities: Participant presentations on specific affected groups.

Week 6: AI in Armed Conflict

Learning objectives: Examine AI's applications in armed conflict, including issues of accountability and international humanitarian law (IHL).

Learning outcomes: Participants will evaluate the ethical and legal challenges posed by AI in conflict zones and the implications for accountability.

Readings/Resources:

Kraska, James. "[Command accountability for AI weapon systems in the law of armed conflict](#)." *International Law Studies* 97.1 (2021): 22.

Siregar, Naek, et al. "[The use of artificial intelligence in armed conflict under international law](#)." *Hasanuddin Law Review* 10.2 (2025): 189-205.

Lewis, Dustin. "[International legal regulation of the employment of artificial-intelligence-related technologies in armed conflict](#)." (2020).

Activities: Case study of a conflict using AI technologies.

Week 7: Transitional Justice and AI

Learning objectives: Explore how AI can support transitional justice processes, including truth-seeking and evidentiary practices.

Learning outcomes: Participants will design potential AI solutions that can aid in documenting human rights violations in transitional contexts.

Readings/Resources:

Teo, Sue Anne. "[Artificial Intelligence and Transitional Justice: Framing the Connections.](#)" (2025).

Pham, Phuong N., and Jay D. Aronson. "[Technology and transitional justice.](#)" *International Journal of Transitional Justice* 13.1 (2019): 1-6.

Smart, Sebastian. "[Corporate power, conflict and transitional justice: Addressing business human rights abuses in the digital era.](#)" *Business and Human Rights Journal* 10.2-3 (2025): 318-334.

Activities: Workshop on designing a hypothetical AI-assisted transitional justice mechanism.

Week 8: AI Governance at the Regional and Global Levels

Learning objectives: Introduce participants to current governance frameworks for AI, including the AU AI Continental Strategy.

Learning outcomes: Participants will develop a critical understanding of AI governance frameworks and assess their effectiveness.

Readings/Resources:

Roberts, Huw, et al. "[Global AI governance: barriers and pathways forward](#)." *International Affairs* 100.3 (2024): 1275-1286.

Cole, Mark D. "[International AI Regulation and Governance on a Global Scale: An Overview of International, Regional and National Instruments](#)." *Journal of AI Law and Regulation* 1.1 (2024).

Activities: Group analysis of different governance models.

Week 9: Critical AI Studies

Learning objectives: Use critical AI studies to analyse the encoding of power asymmetries in algorithmic systems.

Outcomes: Participants will critically assess biases in AI systems and articulate the social implications of these biases.

Readings/Resources:

Raley, Rita, and Jennifer Rhee. "[Critical AI: A field in formation](#)." *American Literature* 95.2 (2023): 185-204.

Lindgren, Simon. "[Introducing critical studies of artificial intelligence](#)." *Handbook of critical studies of artificial intelligence*. Edward Elgar Publishing, 2023. 1-19.

Verdegem, Pieter. "[Critical AI studies meets critical political economy](#)." *Handbook of critical studies of artificial intelligence*. Edward Elgar Publishing, 2023. 302-311.

Activities: Critical essay writing on chosen case studies.

Week 10: Building a Rights-Literate Public

Learning objectives: Discuss strategies to empower participants to engage in AI governance debates at various levels.

Learning outcomes: Participants will formulate actionable strategies for community engagement and advocacy in AI-related governance discussions.

Readings/Resources:

Tirtiroglu, Dogan, and Aysegul Ozbakir Acimert. "[Ideology, science and the New Urban Design: toward a rights-literate praxis.](#)" *Journal of Urban Design* 30.6 (2025): 760-767.

Omotoso, Sam. "[Closing the Digital Divide: Strategies for Building Human Rights Literacy Through Mobile Technology in the Global South.](#)"

Expert Comment: Is it time to reconsider our human rights in the age of AI? (Oxford 2025).

Activities: Final presentations and discussions on meaningful involvement in AI policy.

Assessment [learning] Methods:

- 1) Participation in discussions and activities.
- 2) Short reflections or essays on selected topics.
- 3) Final group project/presentation on a specific case study or proposed AI governance framework.