



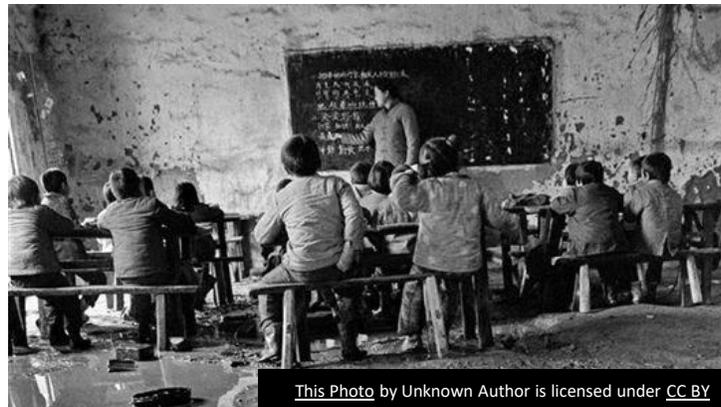
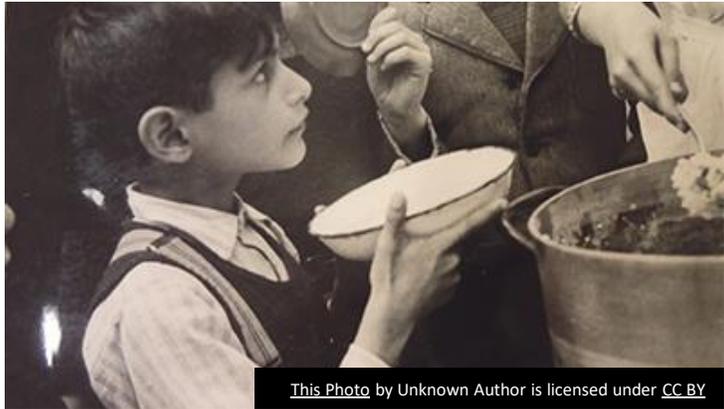
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School of Global Studies
Department of International
Relations

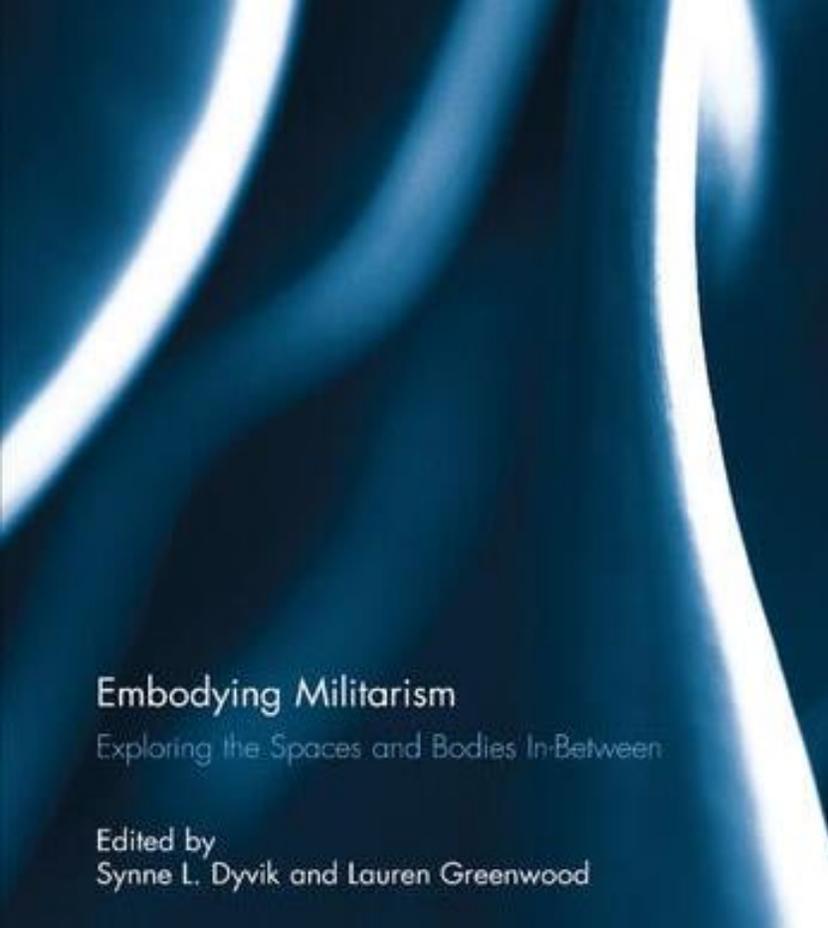
Dr Synne L. Dyvik
2026-2027

Humanitarianism in Theory and Practice

What's this module about?

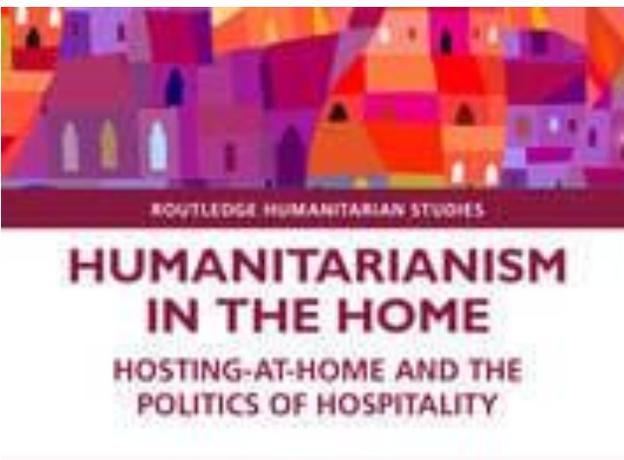


- This module is historically grounded, critically minded and practically oriented.
- Learning outcomes:
 - Develop a systematic and critical understanding of humanitarianism as an ideology and a practice that shapes and structures global politics.
 - Develop a detailed conceptual understanding of the historical, theoretical, political and practical challenges associated with humanitarianism.
 - Apply theoretically grounded knowledge to practical tasks and empirical cases.



Synne Dyvik, Associate Professor of International Relations

- Areas of expertise: gender, conflict, militarism, humanitarianism and development
- Co-Director of Sussex Centre for Global Insecurities (CGI) and academic personal tutor for UGs.
- I am the regular host of [the Global Takes on Trump](#) podcast series (check it out!)
- S.Dyvik@sussex.ac.uk
- Office hours Tuesdays 10-11 (online) and Thursdays 10-11 (C324)



Themes



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- Weeks 1-3: Historical and conceptual foundation
 - Week 1: History
 - Week 2: Faith
 - Week 3: Concept
- Weeks 4-7: The people of humanitarianism
 - Week 4: Embodiment
 - Week 5: Space
 - Week 7: Safeguarding
- Weeks 8-11: Thematics of humanitarianism
 - Week 8: Militarisation
 - Week 9: Domestication
 - Week 10: Future?

Preparation for seminars



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- Each week has three readings, all accessible through Canvas
- Each week you can add or swap one of the readings for a podcast
- Each week has questions you should consider while doing the reading and we'll discuss these in class
- Please ensure you come to the seminar having done your readings/listens

Assessments

Professional Dialogues (20%)

- Oral exam in week 7
- Aim: To show how you reflect on the module, the question, and how you respond to your peers
- Evidence engagement with reading, podcasts, seminar work and your classmates

Essay (80%)

- Due in AB2 (May 2025)
- Essay questions on Canvas
- Aim: To answer the essay question according to essay standards and critical engagement.
- Evidence essay argument with readings and podcasts

Supporting you in your assessments and giving you feedback



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- We'll dedicate time to essay planning and writing in three ways in this module
- Week 5: Allocate time in seminar to prepare for the first assignment
- Week 7: Oral exam during seminar slot
- Week 10: Allocate time in seminar to work through feedback and essay preparation workshop
- Week 11: No seminar, but bookable, compulsory essay writing surgeries

Indicative reading list

- Ahmad, A. and J. Smith (eds). 2018. *Humanitarian Action and Ethics* London, Zed Books.
- Barnett, M.N. & Stein, J.G., 2012. *Sacred aid : faith and humanitarianism*.
- Barnett, M. 2011. *Empire of Humanity*, Ithaca: Cornell University Press.
- Baughan, E., 2013. 'Every Citizen of Empire Implored to Save the Children!' Empire, internationalism and the Save the Children Fund in inter-war Britain. *Historical research : the bulletin of the Institute of Historical Research*, 86(231), pp.116–137.
- De Waal, A. 2018. *Mass Starvation: The history and future of famine*. Cambridge, Polity Press.
- Duffield, M. 2018. *Post-humanitarianism. Governing precarity in the digital world*. Cambridge, Polity.
- Cole, Alyson. 2016. All of us are vulnerable, but some are more vulnerable than others: The political ambiguity of vulnerability studies. *Critical Horizons* 17 (2): 260–77.
- Fechter, A., & Schwittay, A. 2020. *Citizen aid and everyday humanitarianism : Development futures?* Routledge
- Gill, Michael, Schlund-Vials, Cathy J, Sherry, Dr Mark, & Sherry, Dr. Mark. 2014. *Disability, Human Rights and the Limits of Humanitarianism* (1st ed., Interdisciplinary disability studies). Farnham: Taylor & Francis.
- Kachingwe, Nancy. 2018. *Confronting sexual violence and abuse in the aid industrial complex*. London: Gender and Development Network.
- Kapoor, I. 2012. *Celebrity Humanitarianism: The Ideology of Global Charity*. Routledge.
- Keen, D. 2008. *Complex Emergencies*. Cambridge, Polity Press.
- Kennedy, D., 2008. *The dark sides of virtue*, Princeton: Princeton University Press.
- Krause, M., 2014. *The Good Project*, Chicago: University of Chicago Press
- Lydon, J., 2020. *Photography, Humanitarianism, Empire*, London: Taylor and Francis.
- Lynch, Cecelia & Schwarz, Tanya B, 2016. Humanitarianism's Proselytism Problem. *International studies quarterly*, 60(4), pp.636–646.
- Marriage, Z. 2006. *Not Breaking the Rules, Not Playing the Game*. International Assistance to Countries at War. London, Hurst &co.
- Rutazibwa, O. 2019. *On Babies and Bathwater*. In: *Decolonization and Feminisms in Global Teaching and Learning*. Routledge.
- Read, R., 2018. *Embodying Difference: Reading Gender in Women's Memoirs of Humanitarianism*. *Journal of intervention and statebuilding*, 12(3), pp.300–318.
- Rubenstein, Jennifer. 2015. *Between samaritans and states: The political ethics of humanitarian INGOs*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Watenpaugh, K. 2015. *Bread from Stones : The Middle East and the Making of Modern Humanitarianism*. University of California Press.

Also, check out the following resources

- [The New Humanitarian Magazine](#)
- [Rethinking Humanitarianism Podcast](#)
- [Devex](#)
- [Blogs: Aid Reimagined and From Poverty To Power](#)
- [Podcast: Rethinking Humanitarianism](#)
- [Films – For Sama, The Cave, Hotel Rwanda](#)
- [Novels – Emergency Sex \(classic...\), Chasing Chaos, The End of Poverty](#)





Good luck
picking your
modules –
hope to
meet some
of you soon!