

HUMAN RIGHTS NEWS

Updates from the Atlantic Human Rights Centre and the
St. Thomas University Human Rights Department

FALL 2021

UN Special Rapporteur to Deliver Vigod Lecture



"All human rights ultimately depend on a healthy planet, which is needed for the air we breathe, the water we drink and the food we eat. The right to a healthy environment points humanity towards a just, healthy and sustainable future on Earth, in harmony with the rest of nature." - Dr. David Boyd

The annual Dr. Bernie Vigod Memorial Lecture in Human Rights will be given by Dr. David R. Boyd, UN Special Rapporteur on human rights and the environment on Thursday, October 14th at 7:00 p.m. ADT via Zoom.

The lecture will discuss how global recognition of the human right to a healthy and sustainable environment could be a catalyst for the needed changes that scientists are calling for, just as human rights produced transformative changes related to slavery, women's rights, civil rights, the end of apartheid, and Indigenous rights. The time has come to add the right to a healthy environment to the library of fundamental rights enjoyed by everyone.

Dr. Boyd is an Associate Professor of Law, Policy, and Sustainability at the University of British Columbia. He served as the executive director of Ecojustice, argued cases at the Supreme Court of Canada, and worked as a special advisor on sustainability for Canadian Prime Minister Paul Martin. He has advised many governments on environmental, constitutional, and human rights policy and co-chaired Vancouver's effort to become the world's greenest city by 2020.

He is also the author of ten books and over 100 reports and articles on environmental law and policy, human rights, and constitutional law. His books include *The Rights of Nature* (EWC Press, 2017), *The Optimistic Environmentalist* (EWC Press, 2015), and *The Environmental Right Revolution* (UBC Press, 2012).

To register for the event, please visit www.stu.ca/vigod.



Atlantic Human
Rights Centre



STU.ca/humanrights

STU.ca/AHRC

Atlantic Human Rights Centre Welcomes New Board Members

Bronwen Cunningham

As Senior Policy Advisor at the New Brunswick Department of Post-Secondary Education, Training and Labour (PETL), Bronwen Cunningham is the province's focal point responsible for intergovernmental coordination on Canada's international human rights obligations. Bronwen has also been mentoring STU Human Rights Program interns for several years. Bronwen says "Working with the STU interns is a joy and it's a two-way street. The interns are engaged, knowledgeable and creative, bringing new perspectives to the projects they work on with me. They are an important resource and have enhanced PETL's ability to advance human rights-based approaches in the provincial government. "This year, Bronwen has taken on part-time teaching with the Human Rights Department at STU, bringing her practitioner's experience to the International Human Rights course.



Aditya Rao

Aditya Rao is a lawyer specializing in labour, immigration and human rights law. Now serving as the Human Rights Representative for the Canadian Union of Public Employees (CUPE) – Canada's largest union – in the Maritimes Region, he supports workers seeking human rights protections in the workplace and advancing public interest law reform initiatives in the provinces of New Brunswick and Prince Edward Island.

Prior to joining the labour movement, Aditya worked with Amnesty International Canada, supporting strategic human rights litigation.

He was involved in migrant justice organizing for over a decade, and he is a member of the Canadian Association of Refugee Lawyers. Aditya is also a founding member of the New Brunswick Coalition for Tenants Rights and is a producer of *The NB debrief*, broadcast by CHCO-TV, which highlights pressing social justice issues facing New Brunswickers. He says "Atlantic Canada is a playground for speculative investors and large corporations who have been given free rein to gamble over a basic human right – the right to adequate housing. Unaffordable rent increases in an environment without rent control, low vacancy rates, and no right to security of tenure are a recipe for a housing crisis, and provinces are under an obligation in law to act."



National Day for Truth and Reconciliation

A Message from Atlantic Human Rights Centre Acting Director,

Dr. Shannonbrooke Murphy:

“There can be no more important project to human rights advocacy in Canada than the systematic righting of the wrongs associated with colonization and the founding of our country – wrongs that continue to afflict Indigenous peoples, including here in the Atlantic region.”

“This first National Day for Truth and Reconciliation on September 30 is a long time in coming.

“As human rights advocates, on this day we confront the truth of Canada’s foundation, knowing that colonization has for decades been internationally recognized as an unlawful state practice, one associated with actions that are now understood to constitute human rights violations, and also with actions that would today amount to internationally criminal acts.

“In particular, we reflect on the truth about the catastrophic impact that denial of the human right to self-determination can have on Indigenous peoples, as Nations subjected to colonial domination. As such we welcome the recent incorporation of the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples into Canadian law, even if flaws remain in the legislative form.

“Of course, we also reflect on the legacy of systematic denial of the entire suite of human rights to Indigenous communities and Indigenous individuals. They have been denied their equal right to an adequate standard of living including their rights to food and water, to housing, and to health. A continuing propensity for over-incarceration and impunity for unnecessary use of force by police demonstrates that Indigenous individuals still do not experience equality before the law. Indigenous women and girls have been denied their equal rights to security and bodily integrity. Indigenous children have been denied their equal rights to the care and company of their parents, to enjoy and practice their culture and to know and use their language, indeed their equal right to life. We must not only

reflect on the truth of the full catalogue of past and continuing human rights violations by the Canadian state and by its provincial and territorial counterparts, but reconcile ourselves to the essential tasks of decolonization and re-Indigenization.

“Each of us has our own role to play in changing these conditions, ending violations, making things right and healing our country in the process. For some of us this role may involve exercising leadership to ensure implementation of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission’s 94 Calls to Action or the National Inquiry into the Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls’ 231 Calls for Justice. For others, it may simply involve educating ourselves and helping others understand. For all of us, the year ahead should include learning to call local places by their right and proper Indigenous names, and learning our first words of local Indigenous languages, as a show of respect.

“Finally, as we approach the 40th anniversary of the Canadian Constitution and Charter of Rights and Freedoms, we who are non-Indigenous must reconcile ourselves to the idea that righting these particular wrongs may require constitutional renewal, to place all nations of Canada on a more equal footing, to build a future that fulfills the promise of equality and respect for the human rights of all.

– Woliwon/Wela’lin.”

Orange Shirt Day Events

St. Thomas University Events

September 29: Information Book and Orange Shirt Day Craft Activity at 11:00 a.m. in Sir James Dunn Hall.

September 29: Reflection Ceremony at 2:00 p.m. in the Lower Courtyard.

September 29: Panel Discussion on Orange Shirt Day and Residential Schools at 3:00 p.m. in the Kinsella Auditorium.

For more information, please visit the St. Thomas University website at [All Events: Orange Shirt Day Events at STU - St Thomas University](#).

University of New Brunswick Events

September 30: Commemorative Ceremony at 10:00 a.m. at the Richard J. Currie Centre. Event live stream will be available. For more information please visit the University of New Brunswick website at [UNB invites community to attend event honouring National Day for Truth and Reconciliation-FR](#).

Other Events

September 30: City of Fredericton Wolastoqey Flag raising ceremony at City Hall. For more information, please visit their website at [City Confirms the National Day for Truth and Reconciliation a Municipal Holiday | City of Fredericton](#).

September 30: Truth and Reconciliation Day at Saint John City Hall. The event will take place at 11:30 a.m. (ADT). For more information please visit the event page at [1st Inaugural National Truth & Reconciliation Day - Saint John \(facebook.com\)](#).

September 30: Town of Sussex Ceremony for the National Day for Truth and Reconciliation. The event will take place at 11:30 a.m. (ADT). For more information please visit the event page at [Town of Sussex Ceremony for the National Day for Truth and Reconciliation \(facebook.com\)](#).

Virtual Events

September 27– October 1: Virtual Truth and Reconciliation Week hosted by the National Centre for Truth and Reconciliation. For more information, please visit the event page at [Truth and Reconciliation Week Tickets | Eventbrite](#).

September 30: Amnesty International hosts “Suffer the Little Children”: Tamara Starblanket on genocide, Indigenous Nations and the Canadian State. The event will take place online via Zoom at 8:00 p.m. (ADT), [Webinar Registration - Zoom](#).

STU Moot Court Program: New Focus on Canadian and International Law

The Moot Court team at STU is undergoing some exciting changes for this upcoming season.

As of 2021-2022, STU Moot will now focus primarily on competing against law schools at international competitions. The team will build on its success winning the Nelson Mandela World Human Rights Moot in Geneva (2017) and finishing fifth at the Manfred Lachs Space Moot in D.C. (2020). Now, STU is adding the International Criminal Court Moot that takes place at The Hague, the Nuremberg Moot that takes place in Germany, the Price Media Law Moot in London, and the Stetson Environmental Law Moot in Tampa.

STU Moot Court Coach Professor Amanda DiPaolo said “we are very excited to give more STUdents a chance to compete against law students. STU will still compete against Canadian undergraduate students with a focus on Canadian law for the Osgoode Cup and the McGill invitational.”

Last season, Alaina Mejia and Matt Oram capped off a storied three-year moot partnership with a second-place finish at the Osgoode Cup. It was STU’s second consecutive year placing second after winning our first trip to the national undergraduate Canadian moot championship in 2019. STU Moot also wrapped up its final American undergraduate moot court competition season with multiple speaker awards, a second-place finish at the Fitchburg regional, two written brief awards, and three bids to the national championship.

Congratulations STU Mooters!

If you are interested in joining the STU Moot Court, Program please contact Dr. Amanda DiPaolo at dipaolo@stu.ca



Pictured: Alaina Mejia and Matt Oram after their second-place finish at the Osgoode Cup.



Human Rights Internship Program: Supporting the Human Rights and Dignity of Seniors During the COVID Crisis

The COVID-19 pandemic has indisputably revealed and exacerbated many human rights violations around the world. Here at home, it has exposed issues associated with the living conditions of older adults in care facilities across Canada.

During the 2020-2021 academic year Human Rights Intern Nicole Leary completed a placement at Nashwaak Villa Inc., a long-term care home in Stanley, New Brunswick. In that placement she worked with the organization to put the human rights and dignity of their residents front and centre.

Nicole says:

“My goal was to focus on advocacy work that amplified resident voices in their own care and on a larger political scale. The main projects we took on included establishing a meal planning committee with residents and our dietitian, increasing active resident representation at staff-resident meetings, and drafting a letter on behalf of the residents to be sent to the Villa Board and local politicians, to raise awareness of their experiences dur-

ing the pandemic and its impact on their right to an adequate standard of living.

“I had previously completed a service-oriented internship at the Villa that ultimately enhanced my advocacy work. If not for the



bonds I formed with residents during that time, I would not have fully understood their concerns or known how best to support them. The knowledge I gained from these relationships permitted me to focus on centering resident voices during my internship, allowing them to define the problems they were facing rather than speaking for them.

These people are the experts on their own lives.

“One of the most rewarding moments of my placement was when we read the first full draft of the letter to the residents. It expressed their reasonable demands for a better life, and for recognition of their equal personhood. It was during this time that many residents’ attitudes shifted from apathy to empowerment. After this, we saw increased project engagement and a newfound eagerness from residents to participate.

“While I now work as a community support worker with Nicholas’ Hope Family Services, part of my heart will forever remain at Nashwaak Villa. To maintain my connection with this organization, I continue to volunteer. Moreover, I was invited to become a member of the Nashwaak Villa Foundation Board over the coming months. Through these opportunities I hope to continue supporting the human rights of older adults in long-term care.”

Dr. Ripley Returns to the St. Thomas University Human Rights Program

*“Human Rights students **ENCOURAGE** me
to stay **BRAVE**”*

After a short hiatus, Dr. AJ Ripley has returned to STU to teach part-time in the Human Rights Department, where his 2021-2022 courses include Activism and Social Justice and Human Rights and Social Media.

Dr. Ripley tells us that "I like teaching Human Rights students because they possess a fierce hope that the world can do better...be better. And they have the fortitude to face all that stands in the way of this hope. Human Rights students encourage me to stay brave."

When not teaching at STU, Dr. Ripley is the Acting Director of the Women's Equality Branch (Government of New Brunswick). You can find his creative work published with *VICE* and the *New York Times*. His most recent scholarly work can be found in *GLQ* (2021) and *TransNarratives: Scholarly and Creative Works on Transgender Experience*.

Welcome back Dr. Ripley!



Human Rights Program 2021 Graduate Award Winner

Congratulations to STU Human Rights Program 2021 graduate Emilia Gutierrez on winning the Craig J Carleton QC Essay Prize in Human Rights for her Honours Thesis entitled “The Atrocities of Spanish Colonization”, and on being awarded the University Medal for Academic Excellence in Arts.

Following graduation, Emilia was hired as a Registry Officer with the New Brunswick Human Rights Commission. In this role she supports the Commission’s Registrar and Director in tasks including drafting recommendations for case investigators, and contacting complainants and respondents for additional information, as well as presentation development, report drafting, infographic development, and research. She is also developing a social media education project to disseminate and make human rights-related content and information more accessible to the public.

We are proud of the contribution Emilia continues to make to the promotion of fellow New Brunswickers’ human rights, and we wish her all the best in her human rights career.

Get Involved! Submit News of Your Human Rights Activism

Are you involved in human rights activism?

Would you like to share how you actively promote human rights in Fredericton, New Brunswick, Wolastoqiyik/ Mi’kmaq/ Peskotomuhkati Territories, or the wider Atlantic region?

The Atlantic Human Rights Centre would love to hear from you!

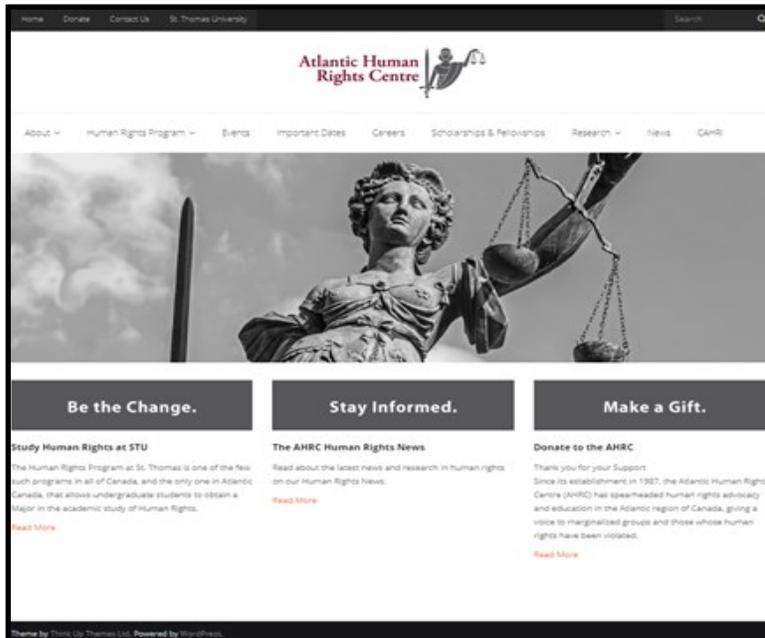
Submit news of your human rights activism to be shared in the upcoming Winter Newsletter.

All submissions may be emailed to ahrcentre@stu.ca.

Semester 2 Course Offerings

Time	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
8:30 AM					
9:00 AM			9:00 – 10:20		9:00 – 10:20 Dr. S. Murphy Intro to Human Rights
9:30 AM			Dr. S. Murphy		
10:00 AM			Intro to Human Rights		
				9:00– 10:20 Dr. R. Wilkie Non–Western Perspectives	
10:30 AM					
11:00 AM					
11:30 AM	11:30– 12:20 Dr. S. Murphy Human Rights Internship	11:30-12:50 Dr. K. Baker Research Methods	11:30– 12:20 Dr. S. Murphy Human Rights Internship	11:30-12:50 Dr. K. Baker Research Methods	11:30– 12:20 Dr. S. Murphy Human Rights Internship
12:00 PM					
12:30 PM					
1:00 PM		1:00– 2:20		1:00– 2:20	
1:30 PM		Dr. S. Murphy		Dr. S. Murphy	
2:00 PM		Human Rights Theory		Human Rights Theory	
2:30 PM	2:30 – 3:50		2:30– 3:50 Dr. A. DiPaolo		
4:00 PM	Dr. A. DiPaolo Intro to Human Rights 4:00– 5:20 Dr. A DiPaolo Capstone Seminar		Intro to Human Rights 4:00-5:20 Dr. A DiPaolo Capstone Seminar		
		5:30 – 6:50 Professor M. Comeau		5:30– 6:50 Professor. M. Comeau	
5:30 PM	5:30 – 6:50 Professor M. Comeau	Intro to Human Rights		Intro to Human Rights	
6:00 PM	Discrimination and the Law	5:30 – 6:50 Dr. AJ. Ripley	5:30 – 6:50 Professor M. Comeau	5:30-6:50 Dr. AJ. Ripley	
6:30 PM		Human Rights and Media	Discrimination and	Human Rights and Media	

Atlantic Human Rights Centre Website



Please visit our website <https://wp.stu.ca/ahrc/>. On the website you can view opportunities related to human rights locally, nationally, and internationally. You will also be able to find events, conferences, scholarships and current news related to the human rights program at STU.

DR. BERNIE VIGOD MEMORIAL LECTURE IN HUMAN RIGHTS

THE TRANSFORMATIVE POTENTIAL OF THE RIGHT TO A *Healthy Environment*

DR. DAVID BOYD

UN Special Rapporteur on Human Rights and the Environment

OCT. 14

7 PM (ADT) ; 6 PM (EDT) ;
5 PM (CDT) ; 4 PM (MDT) ;
3 PM (PDT)

Via Zoom

"All **HUMAN RIGHTS** ultimately depend on a **HEALTHY PLANET**, which is needed for the air we breathe, the water we drink and the food we eat. The right to a **HEALTHY ENVIRONMENT** points humanity towards a just, **HEALTHY** and **SUSTAINABLE FUTURE** on earth, in **HARMONY** with nature."

**REGISTER
STU.CA/VIGOD**



Do you have a listing you want to share? Contact us!

Brianna Bourgeois

Administrative Assistant

ahrcentre@stu.ca

Dr. Shannonbrooke Murphy

Acting Director,

Atlantic Human Rights Centre

St. Thomas University,

Fredericton, NB E3B 5G3

