

A unique 1-credit course offered during the first 3 weeks of Spring semester January 2019

FROM JAILBIRD TO JUSTICE: Reflections on Law, Oppression and Emancipation

TAUGHT BY OUR GUEST PROFESSOR:
Human rights activist and former Judge
on the Constitutional Court of South Africa,
Judge Albert “Albie” Sachs



COURSE CONTENT: Judge Albie Sachs will offer a series of lectures that invite students to engage in an active dialogue. Based on his legal and personal experiences, Sachs’ lectures reflect on law as both an instrument of oppression and law as an instrument of emancipation.

OUTLINE OF LECTURES, TIME AND PLACE:

CLASS 1: My Journey: Law, Love, Life and Lyrics
Wednesday, Jan 9th, 12:00–1:30 pm (1 hour + questions)
Law College Board Room

CLASS 2 & 3: Mandela’s Journey: From Law-Breaker to Law-Maker
Friday, Jan 11th, 12:30–3:45 pm (90 mins/15 break/90 mins)
Law College Board Room

CLASS 4: Same Sex Marriage in the Constitutional Court of South Africa and the U.S. Supreme Court
Thursday, Jan 17th, 12:00–1:30 pm
African Studies Lecture “Eye on Africa,” International Center Room 303

CLASS 5 & 6: The Judge Who Cried: Sitting in Judgment on Social and Economic Rights, Gender Rights, Workers’ Rights and the Rights of the Child in Terms of the South African Constitution
Friday, Jan 18th, 12:30 – 3:45 pm (90 mins/15 break/90 mins)
Law College Board Room

CLASS 7 & 8: Judicial Control of the President: From Mandela to Zuma
Friday, Jan 25th, 12:30–3:45 pm (90 mins/15 break/90 mins)
Law College Board Room

HOW TO ENROLL:

In Judge Albie Sachs’ Course *From Jailbird to Justice: Reflections on Law, Oppression and Emancipation*

MSU Graduate Students & MSU Honor Students go online and search for
LWG 849C: Special Topics in Comp Law, section 001, section ID 97MZXR, 1 credit, pass/no grade
[MSU Honor Students may be asked to get an ‘over-ride’ from the Graduate School]

MSU Law Students go online and search for
LAW 549C: Special Topics in Comp Law, section 001, section ID 97MZXN, 1 credit, pass/fail

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ABOUT GUEST PROFESSOR JUDGE ALBIE SACHS:

On turning six, during World War II, Albie Sachs received a card from his father expressing the wish that he would grow up to be a soldier in the fight for liberation. And so he did. In May of 2018, Judge Sachs was awarded an honorary degree of Doctor of Law from MSU College of Law. In between, he has had a remarkable life and career.

His career in human rights activism started in 1952 at the age of seventeen, when as a second year law student at the University of Cape Town, he took part in the Defiance of Unjust Laws Campaign. Three years later he attended the Congress of the People at Kliptown where the Freedom Charter was adopted. He started his law practice as an advocate at the Cape Bar at age 21. The bulk of his work involved defending people charged under racist statutes and repressive security laws. Many faced the death sentence. He himself was raided by the security police, subjected to banning orders restricting his movement and eventually placed in solitary confinement without trial for two prolonged spells of detention.

In 1966 he went into exile. After spending eleven years studying and teaching law in England he worked for eleven years in Mozambique as law professor and legal researcher. In 1988 he was blown up by a bomb placed in his car in Maputo by South African security agents, losing an arm and the sight of an eye.

During the 1980s while in exile, he worked closely with the ANC's Oliver Tambo to help draft the organization's Code of Conduct as well as its related statutes. After recovering from the bomb blast he devoted himself full-time to preparations for a new democratic Constitution for South Africa. In 1990 he returned home and, as a member of the Constitutional Committee and the National Executive of the ANC, took an active part in the negotiations which led to South Africa becoming a constitutional democracy. After

the first democratic election in 1994, he was appointed by President of South Africa – Nelson Mandela – to serve on the newly established Constitutional Court from which he retired in October 2009. As one of 11 green-robed judges, Justice Sachs has been at the center of some of the Courts landmark rulings.

Many of his best-known judgments cross a variety of areas of law: fighting against discrimination, providing HIV-positive pregnant women with drugs to reduce the risk of transmission to their newborn babies, setting labor laws in place, helping to overthrow South Africa's statute defining marriage as between one man and one woman, all with the common theme of the promotion of an individual's right to equality and dignity.

He has been heavily engaged in the fields of art and architecture, playing an active role in the development of the Constitutional Court building and its art collection on the site of the Old Fort Prison in Johannesburg. In addition to his work on the Court, he has traveled to many countries sharing South African experience in healing divided societies. He is currently engaged in writing a series of four books on the writing of the South African Constitution and Bill of Rights with his co-author, noted South African historian, Dr. Andre Odendaal.

To learn more about Justice Sachs, listen to the podcast with Peter Alegi for Africa Past and Present at <http://afripod.aodl.org/2018/05/afripod-117/>. The conversation took place in East Lansing last Spring.

ENROLL TODAY!

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