



Jerry Shestack: Rule of Law
Model United Nations



Introductory Handbook

Rule of Law Conference

March 1, 2014

The importance of social media in the rule of law

The idea that everyone, individuals as well as the state itself, are equally protected, guided and punishable under the law, is at the heart of the meaning of the rule of law¹. The rule of law is essential in providing a solid and predictable framework for all policies, programs and daily human activity within countries. With the rule of law, citizens can live with their fundamental rights intact, small businesses can grow, individuals can feel safe, the government is collaborative and justice is enforceable.² A major premise of the rule of law is that within one jurisdiction there shall be only one enforcing entity, most often the judiciary.



Today, the concepts of the Rule of Law are understood globally, not in the least because of the work of the United Nations and such NGO's as the World Justice Project; yet their application is still far from holding in many places around the world. Vigilante justice is still normative in several countries and still gets a positive glow in



1 <http://www.un.org/en/ruleoflaw/>

2 <http://worldjusticeproject.org/what-rule-law>

Hollywood action thrillers; corrupt judges and police officers in Mexico have allowed the drug cartels to operate above the law; and conflicting laws like “stand your ground” make a mockery of our sense of justice. Moreover, in the world of banking, the lack of laws and oversight has led to outrages about plain “lawful” thievery. These perceived injustices have led to several new social movements reflecting current events. A few such movements charged by this momentum include: KONY 2012, the Arab Spring, and Occupy Wall Street.

At the intersection of all these justice related movements, we can see the use of one recurring modern tool, the significant use of social media. What is it that spread KONY 2012 from a small, relatively unknown organization to a movement that captured international consciousness? How did Occupy Wall Street transition from a street-side performance to a worldwide



demonstration? How did Malala become a household name and a beacon for every girl child, everywhere? Even when journalists are barred, how is news from Syria being spread beyond its borders to the rest of the world? These questions highlight the nexus between social media, the need for justice, and the rule of law.

This key relationship will be the focus of our second, 2014, Jerome Shestack Model United Nations Conference on the Rule of Law.

How will participants tackle this topic?

Volunteering lawyers of the United Nations Association of Greater Philadelphia have mentored students of the University of Pennsylvania and Drexel University on the Rule of



Law and the World Justice Project. This team of students will guide high school students through various lesson plans (up to 8 contact hours are available for interested students) and engage them in educational activities to help build a stronger understanding of key concepts. This may take the form anything from a lesson per week in a world history class to a few weekly afternoon sessions with a school sponsored club. Last year, we successfully utilized several formats, working with individual schools and tailoring lesson plans to their specific needs and circumstances.

At the culmination of these lessons, students will all attend the MUNRoL as delegates of NGOs. The conference will be hosted at the University of Pennsylvania and is scheduled for Saturday March 1. We have set the maximum capacity at 120 participants.

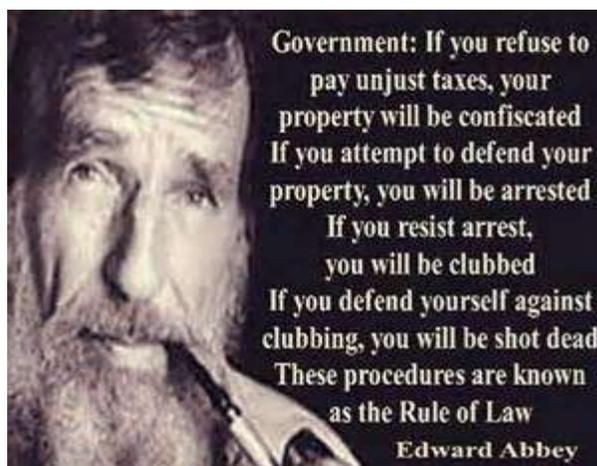
What will the lessons look like?

Our conference this year emphasizes the importance of social media. Therefore, the lessons will center on some of the most relevant facets of social media today.

Throughout the lessons, we will incorporate classroom discussions with visual media and informal presentations. In our very first class, we begin by showing a few songs and pieces of artwork that discuss issues of justice and the rule of law.

By the end of the lessons, we hope students will be able to:

1. Grasp the basic functions of a legal system from an international perspective with the ability to answer the following critical questions:
 - a. Why is a legal system necessary?
 - b. How does the American system compare to other systems around the world?
2. Develop a heightened sense of moral duty by:
 - a. Thinking critically about the concept of the rule of law
 - b. Generalizing larger abstract problems to every day occurrences in the world around them—e.g. from the context of the global community, to Philadelphia, to



their own neighborhoods.

3. Learn the structure of a Model United Nations Conference, in addition to:
 - a. Acquiring practice in presentations and debate
 - b. Synthesizing information from different sources to argue points in a debate
4. Think critically and reflect on the role of social media in both social movements and everyday life by considering:
 - a. What benefits and drawbacks are there to using social media?
 - b. What are the best practices of social media use in engaging social change?

Why is the Conference named after Jerome Shestack?



Jerome Shestack (February 11, 1923-August 18, 2011) was a lawyer from Philadelphia known for his fervent passion for Human Rights issues around the world. He was president of the American Bar Association and established its Center for Human Rights. Not only limited to law, his interests took him to the United Nations as the American Ambassador to the UN

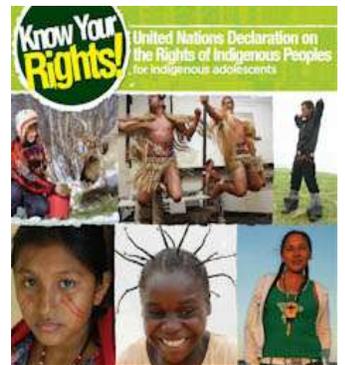
Commission on Human Rights. We have named this conference in honor of his incredible legacy.



Protesting lawyer in Pakistan



Rule of law does not assure protection of LGBT



Nor of women or children



Only rights described in law can be protected by Rule of Law

Conference Day: Overview of the Schedule (running from 8.30AM to 2.30PM)

Registration Opening/Closing Ceremonies:

- Greetings from the dais and announcements
- Keynote speech and call to order.

Plenary Sessions:

- Review of the rules of the conference and decorum will take place during the first plenary session.
- Discussion will take place in the large conference room. Delegates will set the agenda and kick off the debate.

Breakout Sessions:

- Students will be divided into smaller groups for debates within different rooms. This will serve as an opportunity for all delegates to speak their opinion.

Lunch:

- Lunch will be provided and students will have about an hour of free time for open discussion.

**HIGH-LEVEL MEETING ON THE RULE OF LAW,
24 SEPTEMBER 2012**



UN Photo/Marco Castro 2007

The High-level Meeting of the 67th Session of the General Assembly on the Rule of Law at the National and International Levels will take place at the United Nations Headquarters in New York on 24 September 2012. This is a unique occasion for all Member States, non-governmental organisations and civil society represented at the highest level, to discuss and agree a forward looking agenda on strengthening the rule of law.

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VOLUNTARY PLEDGING BY MEMBER STATES

We expect the conference to be very interactive and we hope that the students will carry the discussions forward by organizing themselves for positive social action. The most important outcome of the conference will be the creation of a new attitude, the development of global citizens who call Philadelphia home and who are comfortable with working anywhere, being competent with multi-cultural dialogue and programs. We are excited to get you engaged.

For more information or to sign up, contact Daniel Bu, danielb12@gmail.com
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