

## **Statement by Professor Fernando Chang-Muy on the Use of Film in Teaching Refugee Law**

I feel the more we, as teachers, can make the class interesting by using films, web pages on the Internet, and music, the more we engage the students, and the more they appreciate the subject. I also break students up into small discussion groups, bring in guest lecturers, and take them on a field trip to interview asylum seekers (mainly from Africa these days) in York County, Pennsylvania. While analyzing cases using the standard format of discussing the issues, facts, holding, and reasoning has merits, one of my primary goals is to turn on students to refugee and immigration law. I use videos to highlight issues; it is a good way to bring the law alive in addition to the traditional classroom discussions of case law.

The film I use most is "Well-Founded Fear" (directed by Shari Robertson & Michael Camerini) (Epidavros Project 2000). The feature length documentary, which explores the asylum immigration process, has two shorter spin-off films which are suitable for law school courses. I show segments from "Well-Founded Fear Discussion Modules: Tales from Real Life" in almost every class. Each segment deals with an asylum seeker telling her/his story. I then stop the tape and ask the class whether, based on what they saw, this person is a refugee or not, and we have a discussion. Then I show the rest of the vignette where the decision is revealed, and we find out if the person was allowed to remain or not in the country.

Attached you will find my syllabus. The videos are highlighted. In addition to "Well Founded Fear," I use the following films:

- (1) "To Be a Refugee" (UNCHR 1999)
- (2) "Journey of Hope" (directed by Xavier Koller) (Miramax Films 1990) (a feature film about the immigration of a Kurdish family from Turkey to Switzerland that won the 1991 Academy Award for Best Foreign Language Film)
- (3) "A Great Wonder: Lost Children of Sudan" (directed by Kim Shelton) (Two Shoes Productions 2004)
- (4) "The Universal Declaration of Human Rights" (Human Rights Foundation of New Zealand 1988)
- (5) "Fire Eyes: Female Circumcision" (directed by Soraya Mire) (Filmmakers Library 1994)
- (6) "Abandoned: The Betrayal of America's Immigrants" (directed by David Belle & Nicholas Wrathall) (Crowing Rooster Arts 2000)