

*Human Rights in the Atlantic World and Beyond*  
**Call for Papers: The Conference of the Americas and the Great Lakes History Conference**  
**Grand Valley State University**  
October 21-22, 2016  
Grand Rapids, Michigan

The Atlantic World gave life to modern concepts of human rights. From early-modern European states, their colonial empires in the Americas, and their commercial outposts in Africa burst new ideas and revolutionary struggles that transformed the understanding and practice of sovereignty and citizenship during the late 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> centuries. It was in the Atlantic World that the modern nation-state and its constituent legal body of political liberties became not just an innovation but a pattern. The 20<sup>th</sup>-century postcolonial history of areas within the Atlantic World subsequently gave rise to a more expansive definition of human rights, including the proposed inviolability of national self-determination and certain hallmarks of social justice. In the Atlantic World, human rights were first articulated and became emblazoned as aspirations that found currency throughout the globe.

To address this history and its legacy, our keynote speaker will be Héctor Tobar, author of the critically acclaimed, *New York Times* bestseller *Deep Down Dark: The Untold Stories of 33 Men Buried in a Chilean Mine and the Miracle that Set Them Free*. Mr. Tobar's work examines the evolving and interdependent relationship between Latin America and the United States. The son of Guatemalan immigrants, Mr. Tobar writes for the *Los Angeles Times* and holds an MFA in Creative Writing from the University of California, Irvine.

This conference invites panels from any discipline, academic workshops, teaching workshops, papers, community-group roundtables, artistic displays and performances that also consider this history and its present-day legacies. If you are interested in participating, please send an abstract of approximately 200 words and a curriculum vitae by **July 1, 2016** to Dr. Michael Huner: [hunermkh19@gmail.com](mailto:hunermkh19@gmail.com) Please include your address, email, and phone number.

Participants are encouraged to consider a wide range of historical and present day approaches to human rights. What precedents for human rights are found in pre-modern Western and non-Western worlds? How have debates about race and ethnicity, gender and women's rights, decolonization, health care and disability shaped human rights movements across the globe? What are the frontiers of human rights today? How are human rights challenged, affirmed, altered, and/or violated in Michigan (i.e. the Flint water crisis)? We invite responses to these and many more related questions.

Conference headquarters will be at the L.V. Eberhard Center of Grand Valley State University in downtown Grand Rapids. The conference is within easy walking distance of downtown Grand Rapids, museums, and restaurants. Grand Rapids is served by the Gerald R. Ford International Airport.