

Institutskolloquium

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Institutskolloquium / DEPARTMENTAL SEMINAR

The Politics and Ethics of Visualising Humanitarian Crises

zoom



Wednesday, 28 October 2026 · 16:00 c.t.

Room 124, Institut für Politikwissenschaft



Or join online via Zoom: 930 8975 0663 (Meeting ID), 142311 (Passcode)

In this presentation, Roland Bleiker will outline the broad contours of a collaborative and multi-year project that engages a fundamental puzzle: prevailing images of humanitarian crises are powerful but often also problematic. They can entrench unequal power relations by depicting victims in culturally insensitive, passive and dehumanizing ways. Scholars and humanitarian organisations are aware of these problems, but they also know that stereotypical images of suffering victims generate compassion in viewers and can mobilise political actions as well as donations. The project addresses this dilemma by developing forms of visual storytelling that are respectful and culturally sensitive but still allow viewers to feel a sense of urgency and compassion for people in need. While outlining the overall project, including a journal special issue in preparation, the presentation will illustrate the issues at stake through a specific article on the ethics of using generative artificial intelligence for humanitarian communication.



Prof. Roland Bleiker
(University of Queensland)

Roland Bleiker is Professor of International Relations at the University of Queensland, where he coordinates an interdisciplinary research program on Visual Politics. He works on the politics of visibility and emotions, which he examines across a range of phenomena - from conflict and security to resistance, reconciliation and humanitarianism. Recent books include *Aesthetics and World Politics* (2009/2012) and *Visual Global Politics* (2018). Bleiker is the 2026 Olof Palme Professor at the Swedish Defence University. His main current project, initiated and co-directed with his late wife, Emma Hutchison, explores the politics and ethics of visualizing humanitarian crises.

