

Human Rights and the Internationalization of American History

DESCRIPTION:

This is a readings course that examines the new literature on the “internationalization of American history” and applies its methodology to the topic of “human rights” in an international context. This course will trace the rise of humanitarianism in the Euro-American world from the American Revolution to the Second World War. The United States, as a nation, was born during an era of international political revolution, and its influence on political thought and international politics has been global in reach since its beginnings. In the early nineteenth century, British and American abolitionists and other humanitarian thinkers formulated an international antislavery crusade that set a standard for subsequent international “humanitarian” movements. Over the course of the 19th century a humanitarian sensibility exerted increasing influence on a variety of causes, foreign and domestic, in the Euro-American world. The course will explore different manifestations of this sensibility over time. Along the way, students will examine theoretical and historiographical controversies over definitions and historical understandings of such concepts as “human rights,” “nationhood,” “nationalism,” “cosmopolitanism,” and assess the methodologies of “transnational” and “international” history

GOALS AND LEARNING OUTCOMES:

- Reading secondary sources efficiently, with an ability to identify main arguments, critically evaluate methodology, and assess the historiographic contribution of each work.
- Participating in sophisticated academic debates and exchanges while maintaining the requisite civility and respect for one’s colleagues, and treating opposing viewpoints fairly without distortion or oversimplification.
- Delivering informative and useful oral presentations to peers.
- Formal writing in specific genres of the profession, including book reviews, reflective essays, research proposals, and presentations of research findings.
- The identification of an original topic for historical research, and the formulation of a specific plan for investigation and research that includes a preliminary hypothesis or thesis and a list of possible sources.

COURSE POLICIES:

Participation:

Attendance is mandatory. Absence from class may have an adverse impact on your participation grade. You are expected to complete each week's reading before class so that you can participate constructively in a class discussion. Your participation grade will be based on the overall *quality* of your contributions to the class—not the quantity of contributions you make—and the professionalism with which you conduct yourself in scholarly discussion and debate.

Presentations:

Each student will be assigned two presentations over the course of the semester. Presentations will last from 12-15 minutes (speakers will be asked to conclude at 15 minutes). One of these will be a presentation of the main reading for the week. The presenter will be responsible to introduce the author, **concisely** summarize the argument, discuss the scholarly reception of the book, and assesses the historiographical significance of the main reading. The student must also craft 3-5 questions for discussion arising from the reading. The second presentation will be based on one of the books from the supplementary reading list. In this presentation, the student will summarize the book in more detail for the other students in the class who have not read it, and make comparisons and connections between the book and the main reading for the week. See "Presentation Guidelines" on the "Assignments" page of the Blackboard website for a full description of the assignment.

Blackboard Discussion Forum

The Blackboard site for the course will allow for class discussion to continue beyond the normal time/place constraints of the classroom. You are required to make at least ONE substantial comment, and ONE constructive/observational reply to another student's posting each week. A "week," for our purposes, begins and ends at 12:00 midnight on Tuesday. Your forum postings will be read by the entire class, and you will receive a grade for the quality of your postings at the end of the semester.

Your "substantial comment" must address the course material in some way. It may address the upcoming week's reading. It may simply be a comment you wanted to make in class, but did not have the opportunity to make. Otherwise, it may be a reflection on an issue discussed in class, on something you read for this class, or another class, or on your own that relates to the course material in some way. Your response to another student's posting must be a thoughtful and constructive response (such as if you were having a conversation with them). The rules for use of the forum is as follows:

1. Your grade will be based on the substance of your posting which includes the thought and effort you put into it as well as the length. You can post more than twice a week, but make sure that you have at least *one substantial posting each week of at least 200 words*, and one reply.
2. You will receive a zero for the week if you fail to post before 12:00 midnight on Tuesday of each week. Therefore, you have a full week, including the weekend, to read the forum comments and respond to them or create new postings (Note: you do not have to be finished with your reading to make a substantial post. A reflection on any aspect or part of the reading will do fine). I will check the forum each Wed. morning to record who posted an entry for that week (and I will monitor the board all week and post my own comments to help discussion along).
3. Maintain academic civility, use respectful language and avoid rude remarks. Even *more* than in face-to-face debate, caution must be exercised in “virtual” debate to avoid insulting or offending others. Nothing derogatory may be said about any student or faculty member on the forum. Misuse of the forum will result in the removal of the offender from the forum discussion list, and a Failing grade for the assignment.
4. Do not use the forum to communicate private questions to me, or anyone else in the class (such as “When is the paper due?”). Send me a private e-mail for that.

Written Work:

There will be three significant papers over the course of the semester. The first will be a reflection on a conceptual or “theoretical” issue. The second will be a dual book review comparing one of the main readings for the class with one of the books from the supplementary reading list. The third will be a research prospectus that defines an issue for research and offers a preliminary thesis or hypothesis for investigation. Detailed assignment sheets describing the expectations, length, and due dates for each assignment will be given out in class. Late papers will be penalized 1/3 of a grade for each day the paper is late. All written assignments must be completed and turned in to the professor in order to pass the class.

Final Grade:

Your final grade will be based on the following formula:

- 40% Class participation (including presentations).
- 15% Blackboard Discussion

- 15% Theory Response Paper.
- 15% Dual Book Review Paper.
- 15% Research Prospectus

Required Books:

1. Anderson, Benedict, *Imagined Communities New Edition*
2. Hunt, Lynn, *Inventing Human Rights*
3. Armitage, David, *The Declaration of Independence: A Global History*
4. Anthony Kwame Appiah, *Cosmopolitanism: Ethics in a World of Strangers*
5. Rugeger, Edward B., *The Problem of Emancipation: The Caribbean Roots of the American Civil War*
6. Bass, Kevin. *Freedom's Battle: The Origins of Humanitarian Intervention*
7. Bender, Thomas, *A Nation Among Nations: America's Place in World History*
8. Sneider, Allison. *Suffragists in an Imperial Age*
9. Jacobson, Matthew Frye, *Barbarian Virtues: The United States Encounters Foreign Peoples at Home and Abroad, 1876-1917*
10. Hochschild, Adam. *King Leopold's Ghost: A Story of Greed, Terror, and Heroism in Colonial Africa*
11. Dawley, *Changing the World: American Progressives in War and Revolution*
12. Borgwardt, Elizabeth. *A New Deal for the World: America's Vision for Human Rights*

CLASS SCHEDULE

Week 1. THE INTERNATIONALIZATION MOVEMENT

Aug. 26. Reading: David Thelan, “The Nation and Beyond: Transnational Perspectives on United States History”; Ian Tyrell, “American Exceptionalism in the Age of International History”; Thomas Bender, “Historians, the Nation, and the Plentitude of Narratives.”

Week 2. WHAT IS A NATION?

Sept. 2 Reading: Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Spread of Nationalism*; Robert Weibe, “Framing American History: Democracy, Nationalism, and Socialism”; David Armitage, “Three Concepts of Atlantic History.”

Week 3. WHAT ARE HUMAN RIGHTS?

Sept. 9 Reading: Lynn Hunt, *Inventing Human Rights* Lauren, “History and Human Rights: People and Forces in Paradoxical Interaction.”

Supplementary Reading:

Foucault, Michel. *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison*
Morsink, Johannes, *Inherent Human Rights: Philosophical Roots
of the Universal Declaration*

Week 4.

THE IDEA OF AMERICA

Sept. 16

Reading: David Armitage, *The Declaration of Independence: A
Global History*; David Thelan “Making History and Making the United
States”; David Hollinger, “The Historian’s Use of the United States and
Vice Versa.”

Supplementary Reading:

Bailyn, Bernard. *Atlantic History: Concept and Contours*
Linebaugh, Peter, and Marcus Rediker, *The Many-Headed Hydra:
The Hidden History of the Revolutionary Atlantic*
Schama, Simon. *Rough Crossings: Britain, the Slaves and the
American Revolution*

Week 5.

ABOLITIONISM AND HUMANITARIANISM

Sept. 23

Reading: Thomas Haskell, “Capitalism and the Origins of the
Humanitarian Sensibility” Parts 1 and 2; John Ashworth,
“The Relation Between Capitalism and Humanitarianism,” Christopher
L. Brown, “Grenville Sharp and the Obligations of Empire.”

Supplementary Reading:

Bender, Thomas, ed. *The Antislavery Debate*
Brown, Christopher. *Moral Capital: Foundations of British
Abolitionism.*
Davis, David Brion. *Inhuman Bondage: The Rise and Fall of
Slavery in the New World*
Davis, David Brion. *Slavery as a Problem in Western Culture*
Jackson, Maurice. *Let This Voice Be Heard: Anthony Benezet,
Father of Atlantic Abolitionism*

Week 6.

MULTICULTURALISM AND COSMOPOLITANISM

Sept. 30

Reading: Kwame Anthony Appiah, *Cosmopolitanism*
Matthew Abraham, “Human Rights, Anyone? Conceptions of
Intellectual Labor after Noam Chomsky.”

Supplementary Reading:

Brennan, Timothy, *At Home in the World: Cosmopolitanism Now*

Week 7. THE CIVIL WAR IN AN INTERNATIONAL PERSPECTIVE

Oct. 7 Reading: Rugemer, Edward Bartlett. *The Problem of Emancipation: The Caribbean Roots of the American Civil War*

Due (Friday): 1st Paper

Supplementary Reading:

Katz, Philip. *From Appomattox to Martemartre: Americans and the Paris Commune*

Sklar Katherine Kish and Stewart, James Brewer, eds. *Women's Rights and Transatlantic Antislavery in the Era of Emancipation*

Week 8. CONSTRUCTING A NEW NATIONAL NARRATIVE

Oct. 14 Reading: Bender, Thomas. *A Nation Among Nations*
Carl Guarneri, "Internationalizing the United States History Survey Course."

Supplementary Reading:

Tyrell, Ian. *Transnational Nation: United States History in Global Perspective since 1789*

Carl Guarneri, *America in the World: United States History in Global Context*

Week 9. INTERNATIONAL HUMAN RIGHTS

Oct. 21 Reading: Bass, Kevin. *Freedom's Battle: The Origins of Humanitarian Intervention*; Edward Ayers, "Exporting Reconstruction"

Supplementary Reading:

Boot, Max. *The Savage Wars of Peace: Small Wars and the Rise of American Power.*

Week 10. WOMEN'S RIGHTS AND INTERNATIONALISM

Oct. 28 Reading: Sneider, Allison. *Suffragists in an Imperial Age*

the Rozario, "Delicious Horrors: Mass Culture, the Red Cross, and Appeal of Modern American Humanitarianism."

Supplementary Reading:

Louise Newman, *White Women's Rights: The Racial Origin of Feminism in the United States* (1999).

Kristin L. Hoganson. *Consumers' Imperium: The Global Production of American Domesticity, 1865-1920* (2007).

Week 11.

RISE OF THE AMERICAN EMPIRE

Nov. 4

Reading: Matthew Frye Jacobson, *Barbarian Virtues: The United States Encounters Foreign Peoples at Home and Abroad, 1876-1917*

Kramer, Paul, "Race-Making and Colonial Violence in the U. S. Empire: The Philippine-American War as Race War" and "Empires, Exceptions and Anglo-Saxons: Race and Rule Between the British and U. S. Empires, 1880-1910."

Supplementary Reading:

Paul Kramer, *The Blood of Government: Race, Empire, the United States and the Philippines* (2006).

Amy Kaplan, *The Anarchy of Empire and the Making of U.S. Culture* (2002).

Eric T. Love, *Race Over Empire*

Week 12.

AFRICA AND INTERNATIONAL POLITICS

Nov. 11

Reading: Hochschild, Adam. *King Leopold's Ghost: A Story of Greed, Terror, and Heroism in Colonial Africa*

Due (Friday): 2nd Paper

Supplementary Reading:

Clegg, Claude A. *The Price of Liberty: African Americans and the Making of Liberia.*

John Whitson Cell. *The Highest Stage of White Supremacy: The Origins of Segregation in South Africa and the American South* (1982).

Week 13.

INTERNATIONAL PROGRESSIVISM

Nov. 18

Reading: Dawley, Alan. *Changing the World: American Progressives in War and Revolution*

Rogers, Daniel T. "An Age of Social Politics."

Supplementary Reading:

Rodgers, Daniel. *Atlantic Crossings: Social Politics in a Progressive Age*.
Paul Gilroy, *The Black Atlantic. Modernity and Double Consciousness*

Week 14. THANKSGIVING BREAK

Nov. 25 CLASS CANCELLED

Week 15 . U.S. DEMOCRACY GOES GLOBAL

Dec. 2 Reading: Borgwardt, Elizabeth. *A New Deal for the World*
Jackson, “Bread of Freedom: MLK and Human Rights.”

Supplementary Reading:

Anderson, Carol. *Eyes off the Prize: The United Nations and the African American Struggle for Human Rights, 1944-1955*
Glendon, Mary Ann. *A World Made New: Eleanor Roosevelt and the Universal Declaration of Human Rights*.
Jackson, Thomas. *From Civil Rights to Human Rights: Martin Luther King, Jr. and the Struggle for Economic Rights*

Week 16. FINAL PAPER DUE

Dec. 11 Submit your final writing assignment no later than 12:00 noon.

