

HIS 210:

Human Rights in Modern World History

Instructor Information:

Professor Mark Elliott

Office: 2125 MHRA

Office Hours: Tues. 2:00-4:00
or by appointment

E-mail: mark.elliott@uncg.edu

Teaching Assistants:

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Parker

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Monday and Wednesday Lectures:

Sections 01-04	10:00-10:50	SOEB 118	Dr. Elliott
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Friday Discussion Sections:

Section 01	10:00-10:50	MHRA 1207	Ms. Parker
Section 02	11:00-11:50	MHRA 1207	Ms. Parker
Section 03	10:00-10:50	Bryan 202	Ms. McClure
Section 04	11:00-11:50	Bryan 132	Ms. McClure

Course Description:

This course provides a conceptual and historical introduction to the concept of human rights, surveying major developments in the advocacy of human rights from 1760 to the present. Focusing on a selection of important events, historical figures, and international issues of global significance, this course explores human rights issues in international law, transnational movements, and global causes. Because of its broad sweep, the variety of topics covered in this course make no claim to be comprehensive. No single course can examine all of the important topics that relate to human rights over two hundred and fifty years.

One of the major themes of this class will be the dialectic between the human capacity for brutality and the desire for world peace and happiness. Human rights initiatives have arisen nearly always in response to atrocities of shocking magnitude. Torture,

slavery, genocide, imperialism and war are the historical counterparts of human rights activists.

Understanding the proliferation of such atrocities will be essential to the understanding of the efforts to forge national constitutions, international treaties and governing bodies to restrain peoples from engaging in genocidal actions, crimes against humanity, and violations of human rights. The concept of “human rights” has not remained static over time; it has been a contested idea that remains at the source of debate and disagreement among its advocates as well as its detractors. Placing the debates and uses of “human rights” in historical context will be the main endeavor of this course.

In addition, this course serves as an introduction to historical thinking and to world history as an approach. Studying world history is about understanding the interconnectedness of ideas and events that cross national borders and thinking comparatively about developments around the globe. Students will be trained to think as historians by analyzing evidence and learning to ask questions that help them to understand the historical context of the evidence. Students will learn to analyze different types of evidence and make arguments based on such evidence. Primary and secondary sources will be studied as sources for historical understanding. It is hoped that the material explored in this course will provide students with a springboard to further study in history in upper level courses.

Course Objectives

- Use a historical approach to analyze and contextualize primary and secondary sources representing divergent perspectives.
- Use evidence to interpret the past coherently, orally and/or in writing.
- Find, interpret, and evaluate information on diverse global cultures.
- Students will think comparatively how the concept of “human rights” has impacted different nations, cultures, and peoples.
- Students will analyze interconnections between different parts of the globe.
- Students will examine the role of human agency in historical change
- Students will learn how to historically contextualize and analyze a range of primary sources representing different points of view.
- Students will use evidence-based reasoning to interpret the past coherently.
- Students will examine the role of human agency in historical change, as well as understand the larger economic, political and social structures that shape human experience.
- Students will improve their reading, writing, and online communication skills.

Accessibility:

It is the University’s goal that learning experiences be as accessible as possible. If you anticipate or experience physical or academic barriers based on disability or pregnancy, please let me know immediately so that we can discuss options. For students with recognized disabilities, please see the resources below.

Students with Disabilities:

Students with recognized disabilities should register with the Office of Accessibility Resources & Services (OARS). OARS is located on the second floor of the Elliott University Center (EUC) in Suite 215 and maintains a webpage at <http://ods.uncg.edu/> ([Links to an external site.](#))[Links to an external site.](#) ([Links to an external site.](#))[Links to an external site.](#). The mission of OARS is to provide, coordinate, and advocate for services which enable undergraduate and graduate students with disabilities to receive equal access to a college education and to all aspects of university life.

Recording class sessions:

It is impermissible to make a video or audio recording of the class without the instructor's permission. The instructor will only provide such permission given evidence of physical limitation of the student's ability to take notes, and provided that the recording will not be used for any purpose other than studying for exams, or shown to anyone other than the student who received permission to make the recording.

Academic Integrity Policy:

All work submitted in your name must be your own original work for this class with proper citation or credit given to all sources. All papers will be turned in through Canvas so that the "Turnitin" function will scan your paper for plagiarism. Plagiarism is a serious offense of academic dishonesty. Each student should be familiar with the Academic Integrity Policy, and the penalties for plagiarism. Refer to this address on the UNCG website for more details: <https://osrr.uncg.edu/academic-integrity/> ([Links to an external site.](#))[Links to an external site.](#)

Attendance:

Attendance is mandatory. Each class, an attendance sheet will be circulated and you must arrive at class in time to sign your name before the sheet is collected by the professor. You are allowed four days for sickness, religious observance, or other personal reasons, over the course of the semester. These "sick days" should cover all illnesses and personal emergencies. Each absence after your fourth missed class will cause a 20-point deduction to your final grade. Two late arrivals to class will be counted as one absence. If you must leave class early, please contact the professor in advance by e-mail in order to be excused.

General Question Board:

If you have a question regarding the course material or policies, you must direct them to the professor through the "General Question Board" discussion thread found on Canvas. This is to benefit others in the class who might also have the same question. Questions asked in the classroom are answered for everyone to hear. By answering in "public," this discussion board will replicate the classroom.

Before posting your question, be sure to check the syllabus or the appropriate assignment sheet for the answer. You should check the previous questions on the General Discussion Board to make sure yours has not already been asked and answered. If you write directly to me, I will re-direct you to this discussion board unless your question is purely of an individual nature (pertaining to a personal situation).

Assignments:

Midterm and Final exams: Each half of the semester will have a cumulative test on the readings, lectures, and videos required during that portion of the semester.

Discussion Posts: Most weeks will include a required discussion about the reading with a select group of students from your section.

Term Paper: Topics will be distributed in class. You will be required to collect some sources from the Jackson Library. Your paper will be an historical analysis of 1200-1500 words in length. Late papers will be marked down 10 points for each day they are late.

Grading Breakdown:

100 Points: Midterm Exam

100 Points: Final Exam

100 Points: Quizzes and Discussion Board Posts

100 Points: Term Paper

25 Points: Term Paper Sources

75 Points: Class Participation in Discussion Sections

Negative Points: -20 Points for each excessive absence.

Extra Credit: +20 for each Extra Credit Opportunity

Final Grade Scale: A 465-500; A- 450-464; B+ 435-449; B 415-434; B- 400-414; C+ 385-399; C 365-384; C- 350-364; D+ 335-349; D 315-334; D- 300-314; F 0-299.

Required Book (available for purchase at UNCG's Bookstore or on-line through the Jackson Library):

Peter Stearns, *Human Rights in World History*

Week 1. INTRODUCTION: Contextualizing "Human Rights" in History

Aug. 15 Human Rights and World History

Aug. 17 **Discussion Section**

Week 2. HUMAN RIGHTS IN OUR TIMES

Aug. 20 The Foundations of International Law

Aug. 22 The Resurgence of Human Rights after 1989

Aug. 24 **Discussion Section**

Week 3. HUMAN RIGHTS IN OUR TIMES

Aug. 27 China, Bosnia, Rwanda, and other Crises

Aug. 29 LGBTQ Rights, Migrants and other Issues

Aug. 31 **Discussion Section**

Week 4. HISTORICAL FOUNDATIONS OF HUMAN RIGHTS

Sept. 3 **LABOR DAY (NO CLASS)**

Sept. 5 The Enlightenment and other influences

Sept. 7 **Discussion Section**

Week 5. REVOLUTIONARY RIGHTS

Sept. 10 Revolutionary Ideas

Sept. 12 Political Revolt in America and France

Sept. 14 **Discussion Section**

Week 6. ABOLITIONISM

Sept. 17 The Slave Trade and the Haitian Revolution

Sept. 19 British and American Emancipation

Sept. 21 **Discussion Section**

Week 7. WOMEN'S RIGHTS

Sept. 24 Women and Abolitionist Movements

Sept. 26 Suffrage Rights and Gendered Identities

Sept. 28 **Discussion Section**

Week 8. INTERNATIONAL PEACE MOVEMENTS

Oct. 1 Peace Societies and International Law

Oct. 3 World War I and the Challenge of World Peace

Oct. 5 **Midterm Exam**

Week 9. IMPERIALISM

Oct. 8 **FALL BREAK (No Class)**

Oct. 10 The Scramble for Africa

Oct. 12 **Discussion Section**

Week 10. ANTI-IMPERIALISM AND NON-VIOLENT RESISTANCE

Oct. 15 Non-Violence Resistance in South Africa and India

Oct. 17 Decolonization and Human Rights

Oct. 19 **Discussion Section**

Week 11. GENOCIDE IN THE EARLY 20th CENTURY

Oct. 22 Crimes Against Humanity

Oct. 24 The Holocaust and other atrocities of WW II

Oct. 26 **Discussion Section**

Week. 12 THE NEW WORLD ORDER AFTER WORLD WAR II

Oct. 29 War Crimes Trials and Genocide Conventions

Oct. 31 The Cold War

Nov. 2 **Discussion Section**

Week 13. THE INTERNATIONAL CIVIL RIGHTS MOVEMENT

Nov. 5 Mandela and the Fight Against Apartheid

Nov. 7 The Global Civil Rights Movement

Nov. 9 **Discussion Section**

Week 14. EXPANDING RIGHTS: WOMEN, GENDER, SEXUALITY

Nov. 12 The New Women's Movement

Nov. 14 LGBT Rights

Nov. 16 **Discussion Section**

Week 15. GENOCIDE IN OUR TIME

Nov. 19 From Cambodia to Myanmar

Nov. 21 **THANKSGIVING BREAK (NO CLASS)**

Nov. 23 **THANKSGIVING BREAK (NO CLASS)**

Week 16. **TERRORISM AND GLOBAL POLITICS**

Nov. 26 Islam and the Middle East

Nov. 28 White nationalism

Week 17 **FINAL EXAM**

Dec. 5 **12:00-3:00 pm**