

Topics in 19th Century U.S. History:

HUMAN RIGHTS AT HOME AND ABROAD

History 723
M 3:30-6:20
MHRA 3207
Spring 2014

Dr. Mark Elliott
Office: MHRA 2125
Office Hours:
T 2:00-4:00

DESCRIPTION:

This is a readings course that examines the emerging historical literature on “humanitarianism” and “human rights” and explores their emergence as cultural and political forces in both an American and an international context during the long 19th century. The United States, as a nation, was born during an age of international revolution in which radicals asserted universal rights and liberties “for all mankind.” At the same time, a “humanitarian” sensibility that sought to lessen human suffering in the world began to emerge in Euro-American institutions and social thought. This course will trace the development and influence of both secular and religious concepts of “humanity” and “human rights” from the Revolutionary Era through the First World War. Prior to the Civil War, the debates about universal human rights were connected primarily to the movement to abolish slavery in the British Empire and the United States, and to a lesser extent to the rights of American Indians and women’s rights. After the abolition of slavery, organizations and individuals devoted to “humane” causes and adopting a proto-“human rights” agenda began to proliferate across a broad spectrum of reform movements and peace societies. For many reformers, American nationalism became infused with a vision of the nation as a vehicle for promoting democracy, peace, and human rights throughout the globe. The course will examine both the proponents and the critics of this brand of American nationalism from the Civil War through the 1920s, and conclude by assessing the legacies of this vision in our own time.

Each class meeting is organized around the discussion of either one book and one short reading, or several articles/book chapters, as the main reading for the week. Each of the readings been carefully chosen to represent the latest scholarship on a topic related to human rights, humanitarianism, and American nationalism. Sometimes, students will ready primary sources as well. For each main reading, students must be able to identify its thesis, to critically evaluate its logic and methodology, and to assess its historiographic importance. Students will share book reviews and summaries with each other and work collectively to broaden their base of knowledge. Students should strive not only to grasp the major debates accurately, but also to figure out where they stand personally within these debates.

GOALS AND LEARNING OUTCOMES:

- Reading secondary sources efficiently, identifying main arguments, and critically evaluating methodologies
- Reading primary sources analytically, being able to tease out and interpret the meanings both stated and implied while understanding them in their historical context.

--Participating in sophisticated academic debates and exchanges while maintaining the requisite civility and respect for one's colleagues.

--Delivering informative and useful oral presentations to peers.

--Formal writing in specific genres of the profession, including book reviews, reflective essays, and presentations of research findings.

COURSE POLICIES:

Participation:

Attendance is mandatory. Excessive absences from class will have an adverse impact on your 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 three presentations over the course of the semester. Presentations will last from 12-15 minutes (speakers will be asked to conclude at 15 minutes). Two of these will be presentations 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 its historiographical significance. 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.

Written Work:

There will be two significant papers over the course of the semester. The first paper will be a 6-8 page detailed review of two or more books assessing their contributions to the larger historiographic issues to which they speak. At least one book must be one of the main readings of the week on the syllabus, and the other(s) must come from the supplementary reading lists. The second paper will be a short, 8-10 page research paper on a topic of interest to the student. Suggested topics will be provided by the professor.

Detailed assignment sheets describing the expectations, length, and due dates for the writings assignment will be given out in class and posted on blackboard. Late papers will be penalized for each day the paper is late. All written assignments must be completed and turned in through Blackboard in order to pass the class.

Grading Breakdown:

150 Points: Participation in class discussion (You can earn up to 10 points per class. We meet 14 times. Everyone starts with 10 points. No constructive contributions to

discussion = 0 points. Minimal participation = 5-6 points. Strong participation = 7-8 points. Outstanding participation = 9-10 points).

150 Points: Class Presentations. Graduate students will do 3 presentations worth 50 points each.

100 Points: First Paper

100 Points: Second Paper

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** 299 or less.

REQUIRED READING (available at UNCG's Bookstore):

Readings:

The books listed below are available for purchase at the bookstore. Other readings and films can be accessed through the class blackboard site under the "Course Documents" heading.

Required Readings:

*Free access to e-book is (or may become) available through Jackson Library, or you may have to access through Project Muse.

Lynn Hunt, *Inventing Human Rights: A History* (2007)

Stephanson, Anders. *Manifest Destiny: American Expansionism and the Empire of Right*

*Abruzzo, Margaret. *Polemical Pain: Slavery, Cruelty, and the Rise of Humanitarianism*

*Blum, Edward. *Reforging the White Republic: Race, Religion, and American Nationalism*

Irwin, Julia, *Making the World Safe: The American Red Cross and a Nation's Humanitarian Awakening*

*McDaniel, Caleb, *The Problem of Democracy in an Age of Slavery*

*Cullinane, Michael Patrick. *Liberty and American Anti-imperialism, 1898-1909*

Tyrell, Ian. *Reforming the World: The Creation of America's Moral Empire*

Jackson, Helen Hunt. *Ramona*

Manela, Erez. *The Wilsonian Moment: Self-Determination and the International Origins of Anti-Colonial Nationalism.*

Additional readings can be found on Blackboard under "Course Documents."

Week 1. INTRODUCTION

- Jan. 15 Main Reading:**
1. Introduction from Barnett, *Empire of Humanity*
 2. Cmiel, Kenneth "The Recent History of Human Rights."

Week 2. FINDING HUMAN RIGHTS IN HISTORY

- Jan. 22 Main Reading:**
1. Lynn Hunt, *Inventing Human Rights: A History* (2007)

PRESENTATION_____

2. Pendas, Devin. "Toward a New Politics? On the Recent Historiography of Human Rights."

Supplementary Reading:

Samuel Moyn, *The Last Utopia: Human Rights in History* (2010).

PRESENTATION_____

Week 3.

AMERICAN NATIONALISM AND EXPANSIONISM

Jan. 29

- Main Reading:**
1. Stephanson, Anders. *Manifest Destiny: American Expansionism and the Empire of Right*

PRESENTATION_____

2. "American Exceptionalism." Backstory radio show.

Supplementary Reading:

Frederick Merk. *Manifest Destiny and Mission in American History: A Reinterpretation*

Guyatt, Nicholas. *Providence and the Invention of the United States, 1607-1876.*

Tuveson, Ernest Lee. *Redeemer Nation: The Idea of America's Millennial Role*

PRESENTATION_____

Week 4.

ANTI-SLAVERY AND HUMANITARIANISM

Feb. 5

- Main Reading:**
1. Abruzzo, Margaret. *Polemical Pain: Slavery, Cruelty, and the Rise of Humanitarianism*

PRESENTATION_____

2. Haskell, Thomas "Capitalism and the Origins of Humanitarian Sensibility, Part I"

Supplementary Reading:

Bender, Thomas ed. *The Antislavery Debate:*

Blackburn, Robin. *The American Crucible: Slavery, Emancipation, and Human Rights*

PRESENTATION_____

Week 5. ABOLITIONISM AND INTERNATIONALISM

Feb. 12 Main Reading: 1. McDaniel, Caleb, *The Problem of Democracy in an Age of Slavery*

PRESENTATION_____

2. Walker, David “An Appeal to the Colored Citizens of the World.” Intro, Articles I and IV.

Supplementary Reading:

Redicker, Marcus. *The Amistad Rebellion: An Atlantic Odyssey of Slavery and Freedom*

PRESENTATION_____

Week 6. EMANCIPATION AT HOME AND ABROAD

Feb. 19 Main Reading: 1. Guyatt, Nicholas, “America’s Conservatory: Race, Reconstruction, and the Santo Domingo Debate.”

2. Kenny, Gale. “Reconstructing a Different South: The American Missionary Association and Jamaica, 1834-1865.”

3. Selection from Preston, *Sword of the Spirit, Shield of Faith: Religion in American War and Diplomacy*

Supplementary Reading:

Kenny, Gale L. *Contentious Liberties: American Abolitionists in Post-emancipation Jamaica, 1834-1866*

PRESENTATION_____

Week 7. RECONSTRUCTION AND NATIONALISM

Feb. 26 Main Reading: Blum, Edward. *Reforging the White Republic: Race, Religion, and American Nationalism*

PRESENTATION_____

Ayers, Ed. “Exporting Reconstruction” from *What Caused the Civil War?*

Supplementary Reading:

Love, Eric T. *Race Over Empire: Racism and U.S. Imperialism*

Preston, Andrew. *Sword of the Spirit, Shield of Faith: Religion in American War and Diplomacy*

PRESENTATION_____

Week 8. INDIAN RIGHTS AND NATIONALISM

Mar. 5 Main Reading: Jackson, Helen Hunt. *Ramona* (Broadview Press edition, edited by Siobhan Senier)

PRESENTATION_____

Supplementary Reading:

Adams, David Wallace. *Education for Extinction: American Indians and the Boarding School Experience, 1875-1928.*

Genetin-Pilawa, *Crooked Paths to Allotment: The Fight over Federal Indian Policy after the Civil War*

PRESENTATION_____

***Mar. 7 (Friday) PAPERS DUE no later than 5:30 pm on Blackboard.**

SPRING BREAK MARCH 10-15

Week 9. RISE OF THE AMERICAN EMPIRE

March 19 Main Reading: 1. Tyrell, Ian. *Reforming the World*

PRESENTATION_____

2. Selection from Josiah Strong, *Our Country: Its Possible Future and Present Crisis*

3. Forum on *Reforming the World* from *Le Monde*

Supplementary Reading:

Curti, Merle. *American Philanthropy Abroad: A History.*

Amy Kaplan, *The Anarchy of Empire: Imperialism and the Making of U.S. Culture*

PRESENTATION_____

Week 10. THE ANTI-IMPERIALISTS

March 26 Main Reading: 1. Michael Patrick Cullinane, *Liberty and American Anti-Imperialism, 1898-1909*

PRESENTATION_____

2. Mark Twain, "To the Person Sitting in the Darkness" (1902)

Supplementary Reading:

Hoganson, Kristen. *Fighting for American Manhood: How Gender Politics Provoked the Spanish-American and Philippine-American Wars*

Pérez, Louis. *The War of 1898: The United States and Cuba in History and Historiography*

PRESENTATION_____

Week 11. AMERICAN HUMANITARIANISM ABROAD

April 2 Main Reading: 1. Irwin, *Making the World Safe: The American Red Cross and a Nation's Humanitarian Awakening*

PRESENTATION_____

2. Rozario, Kevin. "Delicious Horrors": Mass Culture, The Red Cross, and the Appeal of Modern American Humanitarianism," *American Quarterly* 55 (September 2003): 417-455.

Supplementary Reading:

*Jones, Marian. *The American Red Cross from Clara Barton to the New Deal* (2013)

PRESENTATION_____

Week 12. GENOCIDE AND AMERICAN NATIONALISM

April 9 Main Reading: 1. Chapters from Winter Jay, ed. *America and the Armenian Genocide of 1915*

PRESENTATION (2 students)_____

Supplementary Reading:

Balakain, Peter, *The Burning Tigris: The Armenian Genocide and America's Response*

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

PRESENTATION_____

Week 13. PEACE ADVOCACY AND INTERNATIONALISM

April 16 Main Reading: Plastas, Melinda. "A Different Burden: Race and the Social Thought of Emily Greene Balch"

Snider, "Patriots and Pacifists: The Rhetorical Debate about Peace, Patriotism and Internationalism, 1914-1930."

Selections from *Women at the Hague* (1915)

Supplementary Reading:

Gwynn, Kristen. *Emily Green Balch: The Long Road to Internationalism*, 2010.

PRESENTATION_____

Week 14. WILSON AND THE WORLD

April 23 Main Reading: Manela, Erez. *The Wilsonian Moment*

PRESENTATION_____

Article reading TBA

Supplementary Reading:

Elizabeth Borgwardt, *A New Deal for the World: America's Vision for Human Rights* (2005).

PRESENTATION_____

***April 30 (Wednesday) PAPERS DUE no later than 9:30 pm on Blackboard.**