

HIS 208-03: “Human Rights in Modern World History”

Tues-Thurs, 11:00-12:15; Bryan 213

Instructor Information

Professor Mark Elliott
Office: 2125 MHRA
Office Hours: Tues. 2:00-4:00
or by appointment
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Course Description

This course provides a theoretical 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 over “human rights” and its uses 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 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

- Students will examine interconnections between different parts of the globe, and think comparatively about how the concept of “human rights” has impacted the different nations, cultures, and peoples studied.
- 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 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 while developing and presenting an original argument.
- Students will improve their reading, writing, and verbal skills.

Link to Spring 2017 Academic Calendar

<https://reg.uncg.edu/calendars/spring-2017-academic-calendar/>

Course Policies:

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.

Penalty for absence:

A student who is not present to sign the attendance sheet when it circulates at beginning of class will be marked “absent.” Once the sheet has circulated the room, no late students will be allowed to sign it. Arriving late twice will be counted as one absence. Students who leave class early without permission will be marked absent. More than three absences will incur a penalty of -15 points on your *Final Grade* for each subsequent absence. That is, your fourth absence will cause a “B” (425 points) to become a “B-” (410 points) your fifth will make it a “C+” (395 points), and so on. Nine absences will make your B (425 points) an F (290 points) for the semester. There will be no exceptions to the attendance policy. Please use your three “sick days” (un-penalized absences) wisely by saving them for emergencies or severe illness. Students are responsible to complete on time all work assigned or due on days on which they are absent.

Participation:

You are expected take notes during class lectures and be attentive and awake during class. Sleeping in class will cause you to be marked “absent.” Cell phones should be muted, turned off and stored away. No talking, texting, tweeting, e-mailing or internet surfing during class. No laptop computers may be used for note-taking. Your participation grade will be based on the overall *quality* of your contributions in the class discussion—not the quantity of contributions you make. Students who listen to the comments of fellow students and respond to them thoughtfully and respectfully will be considered high quality contributors. Please make your contributions informed, intelligent, and constructive.

Quizzes:

Students are expected to complete the reading assignments on time to participate in class discussion. There will be regular quizzes on the readings and films each week that must be taken on Canvas when you have completed the assigned reading or film. The latest you may take the quiz will be Thursday morning at 10 am (unless otherwise specified) so that you will be prepared for class discussion on Thursdays. The first quiz is posted already, and it is called “Syllabus Quiz.” Please take the quiz before Thursday.

Primary Source Analysis Paper:

There will be one primary source analysis paper of 1200-1500 words in length. This assignment will be completed in three steps. First, you will choose a primary source to write an analysis about from a list provided in class. Second, you will write your term paper based on one of four assigned topics that will be distributed in Friday discussion sections. You will be assigned ONE of the topics. Paper due dates are as follows:

- Step #1: February 1. Upload your Primary Source Choice**
- Step #2: February 22. Upload your Secondary Source Choice.**
- Step #3: March 24. Upload your Primary Source Analysis Paper.**

Details about each of these assignments will be given on Canvas. Late papers will be marked down 10 points for each day they are late.

Film Paper:

There will be four historical films that you will be required to watch this semester. You will be assigned ONE of the films to write a short paper about. Paper due dates are as follows:

- Topic #1 “No Man’s Land”:** February 17
- Topic #2 “Osama”:** April 7
- Topic #3 “Gandhi”:** April 14
- Topic #4 “Mandela”:** April 28

Details about each of these assignments will be given on Canvas. Late papers will be marked down one grade for each day they are late.

Resources for 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/>. 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

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://sa.uncg.edu/handbook/academic-integrity-policy/>

Grading Breakdown:

50 Points:	Participation in class
100 Points:	Quizzes (taken on Canvas)
15 Points	Primary Source Choice Assignment
15 Points	Secondary Source Assignment
70 Points	Primary Source Analysis Paper
100 Points:	Film Review Paper
50 Points:	Midterm
100 Points:	Final Exam
-15 Points	Each absence beyond your third

Final Grade Scale: A+ 485-500; A 465-484; 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.

Ask the Professor:

If you have a question regarding the course material or policies, you must direct them to the professor through the “Ask the Professor” discussion thread found on Canvas. This is to benefit others in the class who might also have the same question and to avoid taking up class time. Everyone in the class will get to read the questions and may feel free to answer themselves. An example of a typical question for this board is: "I cannot find this week's quiz on the canvas page. Did you forget to post it?" I will respond on the discussion board with a reply such as “Sorry, I forgot to turn on the availability button for that one. Try again now.”

Before posting your question, be sure to check the syllabus or the appropriate assignment sheet for the answer. You should check the previous questions 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.

***Required Reading* (available at UNCG's Bookstore):**

Peter Stearns, *Human Rights in World History*

Additional Readings available on Canvas. Please print the weekly readings and bring them to class for reference during class discussion.

Week 1. INTRODUCTION: Contextualizing “Human Rights” in History

Reading: Virginia Declaration of Rights, U.N. Charter (excerpt); Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

Jan. 17 Studying World History

Jan. 19 Defining Human Rights

Week 2. CONTEMPORARY CRISES AND HUMAN RIGHTS

Reading: Stearns, *Human Rights in World History*, Preface, Chapter 1. Excerpts from Vienna Declaration, Dalai Lama, Catherine MacKinnon, Richard Rorty.

Jan. 24 The Resurgence of Human Rights after 1989

Jan. 26 China, Bosnia, Rwanda, and other Crises

Week 3. ORIGINS OF MODERN HUMAN RIGHTS

Reading: Stearns, *Human Rights in World History*, Chapter 3. Declaration of the Rights of Man and other declarations. Excerpts from Locke, Rosseau, Maurice Cranston.

Jan. 31 Precursors of modern Human Rights

Feb. 2 “Civilization” and the Enlightenment

Primary Source Selection Due: Upload to Canvas, Wednesday Feb. 1, 1 pm.

Week 4. THE AGE OF REVOLUTION

Reading: Excerpts from *The Declaration of Independence: A Global History*. Excerpts from Thomas Paine, Mary Wollstonecraft, Jeremy Bentham, Edmund Burke.

Feb. 7 Political Revolt in America, France and Haiti
Feb. 9 Counter-revolutions and Nationalism.

Human Rights Film Series: Feb. 9, 6:30 “No Man’s Land” (SOEB 120)

Week 5. ABOLITIONISM AND WOMEN’S RIGHTS

Reading: Excerpt from Davis, *Inhuman Bondage*; Walker’s Appeal; “Declaration of Sentiments and Resolutions”; Sklar, “Human Rights Discourse in Women’s Rights.”

Feb. 14 Abolitionism and Emancipation
Feb. 16 Women’s Rights Movement

Film Paper #1 Due: Upload to Canvas, Friday February 17, 1 pm.

Week 6. NATIONALISM AND IMPERIALISM

Reading: Stearns, *Human Rights in World History*, 86-113.
Moyn, “Giuseppe Mazzini.”

Film: “The British Empire: Doing Good”
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=z5tM_X3Grhk

Feb. 21 Nationalism: Liberal and Conservative
Feb. 23 Liberal Empires and Spreading “Civilization.”

Secondary Source Selection Due: Upload to Canvas Wednesday, February 22

Week 7. PACIFISM AND ANTIWAR MOVEMENTS

Reading: David Crowe, “Birth of the Modern Laws of War.”

Film: The Red Cross: “Story of an Idea”
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0mvMurf1MIA>

Feb. 28 Peace Societies and International Law
Mar. 2 World War I and the Challenge of World Peace

Mar. 3 EXTRA CREDIT EVENT: “Liberal Arts Advantage.” Attend this university-wide professional development day oriented for students in the Humanities, from 9-2 pm, featuring hands-on career prep workshops, a keynote speaker, spoken word poetry from the HNAC poet laureate, and a free alumni networking lunch.

Week 8. MIDTERM

Mar. 7 Exam Review
Mar. 9 Midterm Exam

SPRING BREAK: MARCH 11-18

Week 9. RACE, RELIGION AND GENOCIDE

Film: “Black Genocide”
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xYlvFmeCdQ0>
“Armenian Genocide”
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5ev0JYgGEXc&oref=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.youtube.com%2Fwatch%3Fv%3D5ev0JYgGEXc&has_verified=1

Mar. 21 America, Australia, Africa, Armenia
Mar. 23 German and Japanese Atrocities

Primary Source Analysis Paper Due: Upload to Canvas, Friday March 24, 1 pm

Week 10. MARXISM AND COMMUNISM

Reading: Excerpts from Proudhon, Marx, Kautsky; “Human Rights in China.”

Mar. 28 The Birth and Growth of Socialism, 1840-1919.
Mar. 30 The Communist States in the 20th century

Human Rights Film Series: March 30, 6:30 “Osama” (SOEB 120)

Week 11. DE-COLONIZATION AND INDEPENDENCE MOVEMENTS

Reading: Thoreau, "Civil Disobedience"; Gandhi, *From All Men Are Brothers*

Film: *Gandhi* (1982)

April 4 The Use of Non-Violence Resistance in South Africa and India

April 6 The Principles of Decolonization

Film Paper #2 Due: Upload to Canvas, Friday April 7, 1 pm.

Week 12 UNITED NATIONS AND THE NEW WORLD ORDER

Reading: Stearns, *Human Rights in World History*, 113-128. The Atlantic Charter, Borwardt, "FDR's Four Freedoms." Eleanor Roosevelt, "The Promise of Human Rights." Ho Chi Minh Declaration

April 11 World War II and Crimes Against Humanity

April 13 The United Nations Early Years

Film Paper #3 Due: Upload to Canvas, Friday April 14 1 pm.

Week 13. THE INTERNATIONAL CIVIL RIGHTS MOVEMENT

Reading: Stearns, *Human Rights in World History*, 128-160. Excerpts from Nelson Mandela, Martin Luther King.

Film: "Amnesty! When they are all free."
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Bn04cBOYz7g>

April 18 The Cold War and Human Rights

April 20 Apartheid in South Africa

Human Rights Film Series: April 20, 6:30, "Mandela: Long Walk to Freedom."

Week 14. CONTEMPORARY ISSUES II

Reading: Stearns, *Human Rights in World History*, 161-191.
Hoffman, "Human Rights and Terrorism"; Nussbaum: "Lesbian
and Gay Rights."

April 25 Terrorism and International Politics
April 27 LBGT Rights, Black Lives Matter

Film Paper #4 Due: Upload to Canvas, Friday April 28, 1 pm.

Week 15. No Class

May 2 University follows Friday Schedule

Week 17 FINAL EXAM

May 4 12:00-3:00 pm