

HIS 210-01: Human Rights in Modern World History

Professor Mark Elliott

Faculty webpage: <https://his.uncg.edu/faculty/elliott.html> (Links to an external site.)

Office

Hours: Wednesdays 10-11 or by appointment

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Teaching Assistants

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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 since the Enlightenment. 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

- 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 online 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 must be able to access Canvas and attend live discussion sections via Zoom. For this, you will require a computer and online access.

Students with Disabilities

Students with recognized disabilities should register promptly 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.](#). 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. Students who have concerns about accessing any of the course material should contact OARS for assistance or let the professor know immediately.

Health and Well-Being Statement

- Health and well-being impact learning and academic success. Throughout your time in the university, you may experience a range of concerns that can cause barriers to your academic success. These might include illnesses, strained relationships, anxiety, high levels of stress, alcohol or drug problems, feeling down, or loss of motivation. Student Health Services and The Counseling Center can help with these or other issues you may experience. You can learn about the free, confidential mental health services available on campus by calling [336-334-5874](tel:336-334-5874), visiting the website at <https://shs.uncg.edu/> ([Links to an external site.](#)) or visiting the Anna M. Gove Student Health Center at 107 Gray Drive. For undergraduate or graduate students in recovery from alcohol and other drug addiction, The Spartan Recovery Program (SRP) offers recovery support services. You can learn more about recovery and recovery support services by visiting <https://shs.uncg.edu/srp> ([Links to an external site.](#)) or reaching out to recovery@uncg.edu

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 that involves taking the work of another person and misrepresenting it as your own. Each student should be familiar with the Academic Integrity Policy, and UNCG's policies regarding [plagiarism \(Links to an external site.\)](#). Refer to this address on the UNCG website for more details and definitions:

[UNCG Academic Integrity Policies](#)

COVID-19 Spartan Shield Video

UNCG Chancellor Frank Gilliam has challenged us to create a Culture of Care at UNCG where we all wear face coverings and social distance, less to protect ourselves but rather more to protect everyone around us. It shows that you care about the well being of everyone around you. We have created this video featuring your student body presidents to better explain how and why this is so important.

Please watch this video before the first day of classes.



<https://youtu.be/Mb58551qxEk> ([Links to an external site.](#))

Assignments:

Weekly Quizzes: Each week there will be cumulative quizzes on the readings, lectures and videos assigned that week. The weekly quiz must be completed by midnight on Thursdays.

Discussion Sections on Friday: Students will attend a discussion from 10:00-10:50 led by their Teaching Assistant. Half of the students each week will be graded based on their participation in these discussions. Students who are being graded must have their camera on and should be prepared to discuss all readings, films, and Powerpoint lectures assigned that week. Please make your contributions to discussion informed, intelligent, and constructive. Your participation grade will be based on quality—not the quantity of contributions you make. It is important for all students to respect each other's opinions, and maintain civility and collegiality when exchanging viewpoints. Antagonistic or rude behavior will lower your participation grade. Each discussion will be worth up to 10 points.

Discussion Posts: Each week students who are not being graded for their participation in discussion section will contribute to a Discussion Board. Students will be graded based on two posts. First, students will respond to a general prompt for your group written by the professor and, secondly, students will respond to a question posed by one of their fellow students. Like the class discussion, you will be graded based on the quality of your comments which should be informed, intelligent and constructive and should reflect familiarity with the course material for the week. Likewise, It is important for all students to respect each other's opinions, and maintain civility and collegiality when exchanging viewpoints. Antagonistic or rude behavior will lower your participation grade. Each discussion will be worth up to 15 points.

Film Choice: Early in the semester, you will be asked to choose one of the films listed on the under the "Pages" link on the left which will become the basis for further research and a paper.

Film Analysis Sources: In order to assess the historical validity and value of a film, it is important to conduct some research. You will be required to collect some sources from the Jackson Library for your film analysis.

Film Analysis Paper: You will write an historical film analysis paper of 1200-1500 words in length. You will choose a feature film to write about which can be accessed through the "Pages" button on the left side of the Canvas homepage. Details about this assignment will be given on Canvas. Late papers will be marked down 10 points for each day they are late.

Grading Breakdown:

- 5 Points: Film Choice
- 45 Points: Film Analysis Annotated Bibliography
- 100 Points: Film Analysis Paper
- 60 Points: Participation in Friday Discussions

90 Points: Discussion Board Posts

200 Points: Unit Tests

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.

Peter Stearns, *Human Rights in World History*

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

Jan. 20 Human Rights and World History

Jan. 22 Discussion Section

Week 2. HUMAN RIGHTS AND INTERNATIONAL POLITICS

Jan. 25 The Foundations of International Human Rights Law

Jan. 27 The Resurgence of Human Rights after 1989

Jan. 29 Discussion Section

Week 3. HUMAN RIGHTS IN OUR TIMES

Feb. 1 "Arab Spring" and Nationalism

Feb. 3. Refugees and the Right to Asylum

Feb. 5. Discussion Section

Week 4. HISTORICAL FOUNDATIONS OF HUMAN RIGHTS

Feb. 8 The Origins of the Human Rights Tradition

Feb. 10 The Enlightenment and other influences

Feb. 12 Discussion Section

Week 5. REVOLUTIONARY RIGHTS

Feb. 15 Revolutionary Ideas

Feb. 17 Political Revolt in America and France

Feb. 19 Discussion Section

Week 6. ABOLITIONISM

Feb. 22 The Slave Trade and the Haitian Revolution

Feb. 24 Emancipation and the Collapse of Racial Slavery

Feb. 26 Discussion Section

Week 7. WOMEN'S RIGHTS

March 1. Women and Abolitionist Movements

March 3. Suffrage Rights and Gendered Identities

March. 5 Discussion Section

Week 8. SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC RIGHTS

March 8 Marxism and Socialism

March 10 Rise of International Communism

March 12 Discussion Section

Week 9. IMPERIALISM

March 15 The Scramble for Africa

March 17 World War I and Empire

March 19 Discussion Section

Week 10. ANTI-IMPERIALISM AND NON-VIOLENT RESISTANCE

March 22 Non-Violence Resistance in South Africa and India

March 24 Decolonization and Human Rights

March 26 Discussion Section

Week 11. GENOCIDE IN THE EARLY 20th CENTURY

March 29 Crimes Against Humanity

March 31 The Holocaust and other atrocities of WW II

April 2 SPRING HOLIDAY

Week. 12 THE NEW WORLD ORDER AFTER WORLD WAR II

April 5 War Crimes Trials and Genocide Conventions

April 7 Partitions and the Rise of the Cold War

April 9 Discussion Section

Week 13. THE INTERNATIONAL CIVIL RIGHTS MOVEMENT

April 12 Mandela and the Fight Against Apartheid

April 14 The Global Civil Rights Movement

April 16 Discussion Section

Week 14. EXPANDING RIGHTS

April 19 The New Feminism and LGBT Rights

April 21 Globalizing Women's Rights

April 23 **Discussion Section**

Week 15. TERRORISM AND GLOBAL POLITICS

April. 26 Israel and the Middle East

April. 28 Resurgence of Nationalism