

HIS 210: Human Rights in Modern World History

Classroom MHRA 1215 Monday and Wednesday 10:00-10:50

MHRA 3204 Friday 10:00-10:50 (section 01)

MHRA 1215 Friday 11:00-11:50 (Section 02 and Honors)

Professor Mark Elliott

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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.

MAC Global Engagement (C9) Competency

Courses in this competency provide students with knowledge and critical understanding of similarities and differences across world cultures over time and emphasize the development of global perspectives and skills to engage cross-culturally.

Upon successful completion of this global engagement and intercultural learning through the humanities and fine arts OR through the social & behavioral sciences course, students will:

1. Describe dynamic elements of different cultures. These elements may include (but are not limited to) aesthetic systems, communication systems, economics, physical environments, ethics, gender norms, geography, history, politics, religious principles, or social beliefs, norms and practices.
2. Explain how similarities, differences, and connections among different groups of people or environmental systems affect one another over time and place.

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 all 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. **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, 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:

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. . [SLO: GHP 1,2; GL 1]

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. . [SLO: GHP 1,2; GL 1]

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. [SLO: GHP 1,2; GL 1]

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. [SLO: GHP 1,2; GL 2]

Quizzes and Discussion Posts: Most weeks will include either a quiz or a required Canvas discussion about the reading with a select group of students from your section.
[SLO: GHP 1,2; GL 2]

Grading Breakdown:

100 Points: Class Participation in Discussion Sections

100 Points: Quizzes and Discussion Board Posts

100 Points: Term Paper

10 Points: Term Paper Topic

65 Points: Term Paper Sources

50 Points: Midterm Exam

75 Points: Final Exam

Negative Points: -20 Points for each absence over 4.

Extra Credit: +20 for each Extra Credit Assignment

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.

Optional textbook available on-line:

Peter Stearns, *Human Rights in World History*

<https://www-taylorfrancis-com.libproxy.uncg.edu/books/9780203119952> (Links to an external site.)

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

Jan. 10 Human Rights and World History

Jan. 12 The Foundations of International Human Rights Law

Jan. 14 Discussion Section

Week 2. HUMAN RIGHTS AND INTERNATIONAL POLITICS

Jan 17 Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. holiday (No Class)

Jan. 19 The Resurgence of Human Rights after 1989

Jan. 21 Discussion Section

Week 3. HUMAN RIGHTS IN OUR TIMES

Jan. 24 China, Russia and the new Cold Wars

Jan. 26 Refugees and the Right to Asylum

Jan. 28 **Discussion Section**

Week 4. HISTORICAL FOUNDATIONS OF HUMAN RIGHTS

Jan. 31 The Origins of the Human Rights Tradition

Feb. 2 The Enlightenment and other influences

Feb. 4 **Discussion Section**

Week 5. REVOLUTIONARY RIGHTS

Feb. 7 Revolutionary Ideas

Feb. 9 Political Revolt in America and France

Feb. 11 **Discussion Section**

Week 6. ABOLITIONISM

Feb. 14 The Slave Trade and the Haitian Revolution

Feb. 16 Emancipation and the Collapse of Racial Slavery

Feb. 18 **Discussion Section**

Week 7. WOMEN'S RIGHTS

Feb. 21 Women and Abolitionist Movements

Feb. 23 Suffrage Rights and Gendered Identities

Feb. 25 **Discussion Section**

Week 8. SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC RIGHTS

Feb. 28 Marxism and Socialism

March 2 Rise of International Communism

March 4 **Midterm Exam**

SPRING BREAK

Week 9. IMPERIALISM

March 14 The Scramble for Africa

March 16 World War I and Empire

March 18 **Discussion Section**

Week 10. ANTI-IMPERIALISM AND NON-VIOLENT RESISTANCE

March 21 Non-Violence Resistance in South Africa and India

March 23 Decolonization and Human Rights

March 25 **Discussion Section**

Week 11. GENOCIDE IN THE EARLY 20th CENTURY

March 28 Crimes Against Humanity

March 30 The Holocaust and other atrocities of WW II

April 1 Discussion Section

Week. 12 THE NEW WORLD ORDER AFTER WORLD WAR II

April 4 **War Crimes Trials and Genocide Conventions**

April 6 Partitions and the Rise of the Cold War

April 8 **Discussion Section**

Week 13. THE INTERNATIONAL CIVIL RIGHTS MOVEMENT

April 11 Mandela and the Fight Against Apartheid

April 13 The Global Civil Rights Movement

April 15 **SPRING HOLIDAY**

Week 14. EXPANDING RIGHTS AND REACTION

April 18 The New Feminism and LGBT Rights

April 20 Geopolitics of Human Rights

April 22 **Discussion Section**

Week 15. TERRORISM AND GLOBAL POLITICS

April 25 Islam and the Middle East

April 27 Resurgence of Nationalism and Racism

FINAL EXAM

May 2. **Final Exam 12:00-2:00**