Topics in Transnational History: Human Rights
21:510:462
Spring 2016

Class Location: Engelhard Hall Room 213
Class Meeting Times: Tuesdays and Thursdays, 10:00-11:20
Professor: E. Eittreim
My Office: 313 Conklin Hall
Office Phone: 973-353-3823
Office Hours: before class by appointment or Tuesdays and Thursdays, 1:00-2:00
My Email: eittreim@rutgers.edu

Course Description:

This course analyzes the history of “human rights” and focuses on this transnational movement’s development over the course of the “long” twentieth and into the twenty-first century. Some attention will be paid to the various foundations of the modern human rights movement (including the influence of various religions, social justice movements, and political revolutions across the globe), although the majority of the course will focus on “human rights” as a modern phenomenon. Central themes of the course include universalism versus cultural relativity, the development of human rights discourse and practice, and the lived experiences of people who have helped to define and redefine the meaning of “human rights.” Throughout the course, issues concerning gender, sexuality, class, race, and structural power will be explored to inform both the history of the movement as well as contemporary human rights struggles.

In this class, students will apply analytic reading, writing, speaking, and research skills. They will critically analyze primary and secondary course readings in addition to news and media sources. Students will write social action and research papers about historic as well as contemporary human rights issues in addition to practicing informal and formal public speaking.

Course Requirements:

1) Attendance and regular class participation (in class discussion, activities, and note-taking during lectures).
2) Readings. You are expected to read assigned texts prior to class, take notes on ALL of these assigned readings, and bring your notes and readings to class. Your notes for the readings will be checked (at random) throughout the semester to ensure that you are keeping up with the readings. You will also be asked to select and post a reading (relevant to your research project) with the class.
3) Oral Presentations. You will present multiple oral presentations over the course of the semester.
4) Written Assignments. You will have one short writing assignment (2-3 pages) due on March 1 and a longer research paper (6-8 pages) due on date of scheduled final exam (TBD).
5) Current Events. You will be expected to read a newspaper regularly and find news items relevant to human rights to share with the class (either in class discussion or via Blackboard).
Grading:

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Attendance</td>
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<tr>
<td>Regular Class Participation</td>
<td>10%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Reading Notes</td>
<td>10%</td>
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<td>Current Events</td>
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<td>Oral Presentation(s)</td>
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<td>Short Written Assignment</td>
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<td>Long Written Assignment</td>
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Attendance/Tardiness:

Attendance is required. Class will begin on time. Habitual lateness is not acceptable and will be penalized. Do not take the course if you are unable to get to class on time. There will be no make-up opportunities for missed classes.

Excused vs. Unexcused Absences: The Rutgers-Newark Undergraduate Catalog (http://catalogs.rutgers.edu/generated/nwk-ug_0608/pg23613.html) states: “The recognized grounds for absence are illness requiring medical attention, curricular or extracurricular activities approved by the faculty, personal obligations claimed by the student and recognized as valid, recognized religious holidays, and severe inclement weather causing dangerous traveling conditions.” If you plan to claim a religious holiday as an excused absence, you must inform me of this fact within the first two weeks of class.

Tardiness and Grade Penalties: Any student who is habitually late for class (five or more times over the course of the semester)—even if the student arrived within twenty minutes after the start of class—will receive a full grade reduction (from an “A” to “B,” for example). Lateness of twenty minutes or more counts as a half-absence and puts a student at risk of grade penalties (discussed below).

Attendance and Grade Penalties: Any student who misses four classes will receive a half grade reduction (from “B” to “C+,” for example). Any student who misses six classes will receive a full grade reduction (from “B” to “C,” for example). Any student who misses eight or more sessions through any combination of excused and unexcused absences will not earn credit in this class. Such students should withdraw to avoid getting an F.

Late Writing Assignments:

Writing Assignments: Papers are due at the beginning of class on the dates indicated on the syllabus. For every class day that a paper is not turned in, the paper will lose a half grade reduction (from “B+” to “B,” for example). If turned in late on the due date (after class has begun), the paper will lose a half-grade reduction (from “B+” to “C,” for example).

Reading Notes: You are expected to take notes on ALL of the readings for the course. These notes will be checked several times at random over the course of the semester.

Technology and Class Environment:

Use of technology for personal use (texting, social media, etc.) during classtime is prohibited. Breaking this code of conduct will result in penalties, including dismissal from class and grade reductions (pertaining to class participation, attendance).

Members of the class are expected to create a “safe” learning space by speaking, listening, and engaging with one another in a respectful manner. It is important to both be present—
demonstrate that you are engaged in the class—and to consider others’ opinions and ideas regardless of whether they complement or challenge your own. Many of the topics are sensitive (i.e. torture, genocide) and it is important both to respect your own limits as a scholar as well as those of others.

Disabilities:

Students with disabilities, including learning disabilities, requiring assistance and/or accommodation should speak with Disability Services in a timely manner to set up appropriate accommodations.

Policy on Academic Integrity (Cheating and Plagiarism):

Rutgers University treats cheating and plagiarism as serious offenses. Cheating is both a moral and ethical offense. It violates your own integrity and the ethics of group commitment: when you cut corners and cheat, you undermine those students who took the time to work on the assignment honestly. The standard minimum penalties for students who cheat or plagiarize include failure of the course, disciplinary probation, and a formal warning that further cheating will be grounds for expulsion from the University.

All students are required to sign the Rutgers Honor Code Pledge. To receive credit, every assignment must have your signature under the following phrase: “On my honor, I have neither given nor received any unauthorized assistance on this examination/assignment.”

Course Readings:

The following book is required for the course. It is available at New Jersey Books, 167 University Avenue (corner of University and Bleeker) and at the Rutgers University Book Store. It is also on two-hour reserve at Dana Library.

Required Book


Other Required Readings

The rest of the required readings can be accessed via Blackboard (blackboard.newark.rutgers.edu) and are indicated in the syllabus below as “BB.”

*In addition to the textbook (Ishay) and Blackboard readings listed on the syllabus, each student will be expected to choose and share one reading with the class (related to your research project). These student-selected (and professor approved) readings are also REQUIRED readings. These readings will be added to the syllabus on a weekly basis beginning in February.
SYLLABUS

Tuesday January 19: Introduction

Thursday January 21: Visions


Tuesday January 26: Origins


Thursday January 28: "West" versus "Non-West"?


Tuesday February 2: The Enlightenment


Thursday February 4: Inventions


Tuesday February 9: Consequences


Thursday February 11: Rights for Whom?


Tuesday February 16: Women’s Rights


Thursday February 18: Socialism


Tuesday February 23: War, Revolution, Peace


Thursday February 25: Age of Genocide


Tuesday March 1: Naming Genocide

Paper 1 due at the beginning of class.


Thursday March 3: War and Self-Determination


Tuesday March 8: Stolen Generations


Thursday March 10: International New Deal


SPRING RECESS NO CLASS
Tuesday March 22: Creating a Modern Declaration


Thursday March 24: The UDHR


BB: The Universal Declaration of Human Rights

Tuesday March 29: The Cold War and Beyond


Thursday March 31: Realizing Human Rights


Tuesday April 5: Human Rights Beginnings?


Thursday April 7: Decolonization

Reading*: BB: Meredith Terretta, “We Had Been Fooled into Thinking that the UN Watches over the Entire World”: Human Rights, UN Trust Territories and Africa’s Decolonization,” Human Rights Quarterly 34, no. 2 (May 2012): 329-360.

Tuesday April 12: NGOs; Torture


Thursday April 14: Statelessness

Reading*: BB: UNHCR, “Special Report: Ending Statelessness Within 10 Years,” and “I am Here, I Belong: The Urgent Need to End Childhood Statelessness”

Tuesday April 19: New Cultural Relativisms and Rights of Sexuality


Thursday April 21: Universal Human Rights?


Tuesday April 26 – Violence Against Women


Thursday April 28 (Last Day of Class) – Globalization


Paper 2 is due on the day of the schedule final exam (TBD).