

HIST 3305 – The History of Human Rights

Tuesdays & Thursdays, 9:30-10:50

GAS 258

3 Credit Hours

Dr. Colin Snider – Department of History
CAS 118
csnider@uttyler.edu [preferred contact]
(903) 565-5758

Office Hours:
Tuesdays & Thursdays, 8:00-9:00
Wednesdays, 11:00-1:00
And By Appointment

An exploration of the history, definitions, application of, and struggle for human rights around the world from ancient times to the present.

Course Objectives

This course explores the history of human rights across cultures from the Ancient World to the present. Incorporating social history, intellectual history, legal history, cultural history, political history, and diplomatic history, it considers how societies and cultures have historically conceptualized what constitute human rights, forms of human rights violations, and the ways people have defended and fought for human rights. In the process, this course will use debates over human rights, the history of human rights violations, and the activities of various individuals and organizations to understand the ways in which individuals and groups shape basic definitions of humanity, rights, justice, and truth in the past and present. Finally, this course will focus on sharpening your critical thinking skills through readings, films, discussions, and written exercises, exposing you to the history and methodologies of regions and fields with which you may not be familiar, as well as allowing you to better learn and understand the broader tools historians and other scholars employ in our work.

Consequently, in this course, you will:

- Recognize various schools of thought on, and definitions of, human rights throughout history
- Identify and analyze the causes, motivations, and effects of modern human rights movements
- Identify and analyze the ways human rights violations occur and the factors and contexts that shape human rights violations
- Compare the ways in which a variety of different individuals and groups shape history in different ways across different geographic and temporal landscapes.
- Apply political history, social history, cultural history, legal history, and transnational history in your analysis of human rights across time
- Analyze a wide variety of primary sources, including government documents, personal journals, fiction, art, music, film, and speeches.

- Interpret history in a variety of ways, both through the written word and oral discussions.

Texts

For the semester, you are expected to purchase and read the books listed below.

Arditti, Rita. *Searching for Life: The Grandmothers of the Plaza de Mayo and the Disappeared Children of Argentina*. University of California Press, 1999.

Hatzfeld, Jean. *Life Laid Bare: The Survivors in Rwanda Speak*. Translated by Linda Coverdale. Other Press, 2007.

Marrus, Michael. *The Nuremberg War Crimes Trial, 1945-1946: A Documentary History*. Second Edition. Boston: Bedford/St. Martin's, 2018.

Sacco, Joe. *Safe Area Gorazde*. Fantagraphics Books, 2001.

Zabus & Hippolyte. *The Shadows*. New York: Dark Horse Books, 2021.

In addition to these books, you will be expected to read selections of primary documents periodically. These items will be available on Canvas, and you will be able to access them online.

Course Requirements

Attendance & Participation – 20%

Learning is a process, and the interactions, stories, and discussions we share in the classroom are one of the more rewarding parts of that process. Therefore, your **attendance and participation are required**. Attendance and participation will make up 20% of your final grade. Discussions of course readings and films will be a regular feature of the course, and you must complete the assigned readings in order to be prepared for discussion. Should it become apparent that you are unprepared for discussion, pop quizzes will become a regular feature of the course; the grades on the quizzes can and will factor into your final grade.

Writing the History of Human Rights – 60%

Analysis of and insights into individual ideas and experiences of human rights are meaningless if they are not connected to broader historical ideas and arguments. Indeed, if analysis of historical materials is the foundation of historical thought, then expressing one's own analysis and understanding of, and arguments about, the past is the keystone of history. To develop your skills in analyzing and presenting original arguments about the past, you have one of two options for your paper assignment:

- **Paper Option 1:** In this option, you will have a chance to write on **three (3) of the five (5)** case studies we will explore this semester (weeks 4-15). For each of these case studies (identified on the Course Schedule below), you will be provided with a set of options on a paper prompt centered on the readings and film(s) for that case study. You will then develop your own analysis and argument built around the case studies, lecture materials, and the broader themes of the class. In this option, each paper will be 1250-1500 words in length, with an introduction, a thesis sentence, a conclusion, and citations throughout.

Citations should be in Chicago/Turabian author-title format (you will be provided with formatting guidelines in the assignments). In this option, each paper will be worth 20% of your grade, for 60% total.

- **Paper Option 2:** In this option, you will write an original research paper of 3750-4500 words on a topic of your choice revolving around human rights in history. This paper will be built on primary sources that you find, read, analyze, and use to compose an original argument. This paper may take one of four forms:
 - 1) A case study of a historical instance of human rights that uses primary research to provide a narrative and analysis of a moment of the history of human rights;
 - 2) A conceptual analysis that uses primary sources to provide a conceptual consideration of definitions, applications, and/or violations of human rights in history, using case studies to articulate how ideas of human rights have operated in the past;
 - 3) A case study of a human rights organization that focuses on an organization – be it international (e.g., the United Nations Human Rights Commission; the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights; the African Court on Human and Peoples' Rights; the European Court of Human Rights; etc.) or a Non-Governmental Organization [NGO] (e.g., Amnesty International, Human Rights Watch, the World Council of Churches, Refugee Council, etc.), exploring the history of that institution, its organizational structure and development, its actions in human rights, its accomplishments and/or limitations, and its role in the history of human rights;
 - 4) A policy piece in which you will use research into contemporary events to construct a policy piece making recommendations on human rights in an area you feel is worthy of attention from a human rights perspective.

Those of you who choose paper option 2 will submit three components. A 250-300 word paper proposal worth 5% of your final grade will be due in week 6; a bibliography with **at least 10 primary and 10 secondary sources** worth 5% of your final grade will be due in week 8; and your final paper will be worth 50% of your final grade and you will submit it in week 15.

Note for papers: Failure to cite your sources wherever you use them – whether as a direct quotation or as a synthesis of a detailed passage – will result in **an automatic F for the assignment.** Remember: you **must always cite your sources.**

Final Exam – 20%

Given the focus on a singular topic – human rights – this course will have one final exam that will be cumulative and will allow you to combine recall and analysis as they identify, analyze, compare and contrast, and contextualize broader historical processes and narratives in the history of medicine and disease. You will be kept apprised of the materials covered in the exam and the exam format as the dates approach.

Grades

Grades follow the standard grading system (A, 90-100; B, 80-89; C, 70-79; D, 60-69; F, 0-59) both on the individual assignments and on the final grade and break down as follows:

Attendance & Participation	20%
Paper assignment (1 paper at 30% or 3 of 5 at 10% each)	60%
<u>Final Exam</u>	<u>20%</u>
TOTAL	100%

Attendance Policy

You must make every effort to be in class regularly. As outlined above, attendance in the class is mandatory. In cases of emergency (i.e., serious illness, family emergencies, etc.), an absence may be excused and an assignment possibly made up. You must consult with the professor as soon as possible in order to provide advance warning of absences where possible. You must also provide documentation in order for an absence to be excused, and it remains the professor's prerogative to determine what is or is not an excusable absence or whether an assignment can be made up. **Please note:** Students who are more than 5 minutes late to class will be considered absent for the day.

Makeup Policy

You must put forth every effort to submit their assignments on time. Each day an assignment is late, it will result in a reduction of one letter-grade (10%) from the assignment. Assignments more than one week late will not be accepted, and the student will receive an **automatic zero** for the assignment.

Academic Integrity

In line with university policies and procedures, **any and all cases of plagiarism or collusion will result in an automatic 0 (zero) for the assignment.** Plagiarism includes, but is not limited to, the appropriation, buying, receiving as a gift, or obtaining by any means another's work and the submission of it as one's own academic work offered for credit. Collusion includes, but is not limited to, the unauthorized collaboration with another person in preparing academic assignments offered for credit or collaboration with another person to commit a violation of any section of the rules on scholastic dishonesty. Disciplinary proceedings may be initiated against any student who engages in scholastic dishonesty including, but not limited to, cheating, plagiarism, collusion, the submission for credit of any work or materials that are attributable in whole or in part to another person, taking an examination for another person, any act designed to give unfair advantage to a student or the attempt to commit such acts. For the full description of policies and procedures on scholastic dishonesty at UT Tyler, see <https://www.uttyler.edu/mopp/documents/8-student-conduct-discipline-final.pdf>.

Course Policies on Artificial Intelligence

While AI has utility in some types of work, for the purposes of the types of analytical work we will be engaging in and the need for you to process and develop your own ideas and writing skills, **AI is not permitted in this course at all**. I expect all work you submit for this course to be your own. The purpose of these assignments is to provide your own original analysis while engaging with the process of producing knowledge through your own analysis. Doing your own work, without human or artificial intelligence assistance, is best for your efforts in engaging with the human past and in developing skills that machines cannot replicate. For this course, **the use of ChatGPT or any other generative artificial intelligence (AI) tools – INCLUDING GRAMMARLY – for any stages of the work process, including brainstorming, is expressly prohibited**. Deviations from these guidelines will be considered a violation of UT Tyler's Honor Code and academic honesty values and will result in an automatic 0 (zero) for the assignment with no chance for resubmission and with referral to Student Affairs for academic dishonesty.

Course Schedule

PART I – DEFINING HUMAN RIGHTS ACROSS HISTORY

Week 1: Defining Human Rights

Readings: Primary Sources in Human Rights [Available on Canvas]

Week 2: Philosophizing Human Rights

Readings: Primary Sources in Human Rights [Available on Canvas]

Week 3: Defending Human Rights

Readings: Primary Sources in Human Rights [Available on Canvas]

PART II – CASE STUDIES IN HUMAN RIGHTS

CASE STUDY 1 – Codifying Human Rights [Europe]

Week 4

Readings: The Nuremberg War Crimes Trials

Week 5

Readings: The Nuremberg War Crimes Trials [continued]

Paper Option 1.1 due by 8:00 AM on Saturday, February 14

CASE STUDY 2 – Individual Action and Human Rights [Latin America]

Week 6

Readings: Searching for Life

Paper Option 2 Proposal due by 8:00AM on Saturday, February 21

Week 7

Readings: Searching for Life [continued]

CASE STUDY 3 – Atrocity and Everyday Life in Post-Cold War Human Rights [Africa]

Week 8

Readings: Searching for Life [continued]

Paper Option 1.2 due by 8:00 AM on Saturday, March 7

Paper Option 2 Bibliography (at least 10 primary and 10 secondary sources) due by 8:00AM on Saturday, March 7

Week 9 – Spring Break [No Class]

Week 10

Readings: Life Laid Bare

Week 11

Readings: Life Laid Bare [continued]

Paper Option 1.3 due by 8:00 AM on Saturday, March 28

CASE STUDY 4 – Nation and Everyday Human Rights in the Late-20th Century

Week 12

Readings: Safe Area Gorazde

Week 13

Readings: Safe Area Gorazde [continued]

Paper Option 1.4 due by 8:00 AM on Saturday, April 11

CASE STUDY 5 – Human Rights into the 21st Century

Week 14

Readings: The Shadows

Week 15: What Have We Learned, and Where Do We Go?

Readings: The Shadows [continued]

Paper Option 1.5 due by 8:00AM on Saturday, April 25

Paper Option 2 due by 8:00AM on Saturday, April 25

Finals Week

In-Class Final Exam, Thursday, April 30, 9:30-11:30AM