

FSP 114-05/06
110 Forcina Hall
MR 10.00-11.20
MR 12.30-1.50
Office Hours: M: 3.30-5.00 and W: 9.00-10.30

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FSP 114: Narratives of Human Rights

Course Description: The term “human rights” gained currency in the Holocaust’s wake. This class addresses the way writers, philosophers, and historians have taken up the term since the United Nations Universal Declaration of Human Rights in 1948. To capture what it means to proclaim a universal human right, we will study a range of works from different regions and conflicts. Because the places our readings come from and the conditions they describe are so various, we will ask what one needs to know of political and historical context. We will inquire, does context matter when it comes to determining whether rights have been violated? Are literary characters in these works human, and are they all human in the same way? How does a universal declaration shape the way we see the world’s populations? If it makes them equivalent, does that bar us from recognizing their differences? From Holocaust memoirs and Chilean dramas to South African science fiction films and Iranian graphic novels, we will be analyzing how various writers use geography, history, and form to narrate human rights abuses.

Learning Outcomes:

- ✓ To foster intellectual curiosity in the students;
- ✓ To introduce students to college-level assignments and college-level expectations in terms of writing, reading, research, and oral presentations;
- ✓ To improve the students’ ability to think critically about their world, their culture, and their own beliefs;
- ✓ To foster a student culture of intellectual engagement outside the classroom,
- ✓ To encourage students to take greater responsibility for their own learning;
- ✓ To introduce students to the concept of a well-rounded education based on a breadth of knowledge that goes beyond their immediate professional or academic field; and
- ✓ To accomplish the appropriate Liberal Learning domain goals and any appropriate interdisciplinary concentration goals for the course.

Required Texts:

Boris Boubacar Diop, *Murambi: The Book of Bones*
J.M. Coetzee, *Waiting for the Barbarians*
Ariel Dorfman, *Death and the Maiden*
Primo Levi, *Survival in Auschwitz*
Michael Ondaatje, *Anil’s Ghost*
Marjane Satrapi, *The Complete Persepolis*
Jacobo Timerman, *Prisoner Without a Name, Cell Without a Number*
Secondary Readings Available on Canvas

Grade Breakdown:

Participation: 15%

Presentation/lead class discussion: 20%

Essay One: 15%

Essay Two: 15%

Essay Three: 15%

Essay Four: 20%

Expectations for the Course:

- ✓ Class participation and attendance are important for this course. Chronically missing the course will result in an F for your participation grade, and may result in failing the course. You should also be on time. Habitual tardiness will also affect your participation grade.
- ✓ Cell phones, iPods, Bluetooth devices are not required for this course. I should not see any of these during class. If I see you using your cell phone, I will ask you to leave. This includes texting, and if you use a laptop, it should only be for taking notes, not for using the Internet.
- ✓ All late work will be marked down a third of a letter grade for every day it is late (a B- becomes a C+, etc). This includes weekends – papers due Friday but turned in Monday will be considered 3 days late, Tuesday 4 days late, etc. **Papers turned in more than a week late will receive a zero.**
- ✓ All papers are due to Canvas, *in .doc/.docx format*, before our class starts on the due date. Papers should be typed using MLA formatting, 12-point Times New Roman font and one-inch margins.

Links to Select TCNJ Policies:

Academic Integrity Policy: <http://policies.tcnj.edu/policies/digest.php?docId=7642>

The College of New Jersey is a community of scholars and learners who respect and believe in academic integrity. This integrity is violated when someone engages in any of the dishonest behavior described below.

Academic dishonesty is any attempt by the student to gain academic advantage through dishonest means, to submit, as his/her own, work which has not been done by him/her or to give improper aid to another student in the completion of an assignment. Such dishonesty would include, but is not limited to: submitting as his/her own a project, paper, report, test, or speech copied from, partially copied, or paraphrased from the work of another (whether the source is printed, under copyright, or in manuscript form). Credit must be given for words quoted or paraphrased. The rules apply to any academic dishonesty, whether the work is graded or ungraded, group or individual, written or oral.

Americans with Disabilities Act Policy: <http://affirm.pages.tcnj.edu/key-documents/>

The College of New Jersey is committed to ensuring equal opportunity and access to all members of the campus community in accordance with Section 503/504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 and the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (ADA). The College prohibits discrimination against any student, employee, or applicant on the basis of physical or mental disability, or perceived disability. The College will provide reasonable and appropriate accommodations to enable employees and students to

participate in the life of the campus community. Individuals with disabilities are responsible for reporting and supplying documentation verifying their disability. Requests for accommodations must be initiated through the Office of Differing Abilities Services, Eickhoff Hall 159, 609.771.2571.

Attendance Policy: <http://policies.tcnj.edu/policies/digest.php?docId=8162>

Final Exam Policy: <http://recreg.pages.tcnj.edu/269-2/>

Tutoring center: <http://www.tcnj.edu/~tutoring/>, located in Roscoe West Suite 101, X3325. The tutoring center provides help for students with their writing. Times vary each semester but are posted in the department.

Readings: While it is ideal if you have the entire text read before we start discussing it, I understand that is not always possible. You are required, however, to read the assigned pages for each class period. My approach towards this class is to “show you the mountain.” This class is designed with a rubric of breadth, not always depth. We will see the mountain in class, and we will often reach base camp. It is in your papers that you will approach the summit. To explain the metaphor, we cannot possibly cover every aspect of a text in discussion, but you will focus on a specific argument in your writing and develop it more.

Papers: The largest portion of your grade this quarter will come from the formal papers you will write (you will get a more detailed handout for each paper in class). We will be doing draft workshops for the first three papers in class; it is then up to you to find a network of peers to help you workshop your papers outside of class for the final essay (the on-campus tutoring center is a great resource for such assistance). To receive full credit for the peer workshop, you must be present and have a full draft of your paper (a page doesn't count as a full draft, and neither does an outline). If you do not participate in the workshops, your paper grade will be penalized by half a letter grade.

Group Presentations: You will be required to do one 20-minute group presentation during the quarter. Each group will be responsible for providing historical background for the nation(s) and conflicts that the assigned text will be addressing. In this presentation, you are expected to use multi-media of some sort – while PowerPoint is appropriate, there are other mediums, such as Prezi, Jing, and Zoho that may allow you to be more innovative. You will get a handout with more details about the presentation in class. I will pass around a sign-up sheet today.

Final: More information about the final exam will be provided later in the semester. It will be cumulative.

Contacting Me: I will hold office hours twice a week throughout the semester, and am available for appointments if you cannot make my office hours. I'm also available over email for brief questions. More substantial concerns, such as essay topics and discussions of missed lectures should happen during my office hours. I will not grade drafts of essays before they are due or respond to them through e-mail, but I will happily provide feedback to drafts if they are presented to me in office hours with specific questions and concerns. If you email me after 5.00 pm, you may not hear back until the next day, and I check email less frequently on the weekends. *Please give me 24 hours to respond to your emails.*

Grading Standards:

“A” work is consistently superior. It commands attention on its own right, taking the assigned topic as an occasion for thoughtful and extended development of an original idea. It shows a clear familiarity with the ideas and works for the course and uses them to present an individual insight or viewpoint with enough fullness and cogency to command readers’ respect, if not their assent. “A” work is generally free of grammatical errors, and uses language clearly and with sophistication.

“B” work is good, meeting all the assignment’s expectations with competence. It states a substantive thesis and develops it with evidence from the text(s). While it may not have the subtlety or sophistication of “A” work, it provides a thoroughly developed response to the question, demonstrating a command of the material and a well-thought-out argument. The structure and development of the “B” essay should also be competent, demonstrating the writer’s ability to focus, select supporting details and organize them effectively, and write concisely and clearly.

“C” work is adequate. It states a thesis that can be supported with evidence; however, it may not use evidence as flexibly or state as adequate a thesis as work receiving higher grades. Often “C” work has only negative virtues—that is, it is not seriously flawed but has no striking insights either. Generally, “C” work demonstrates mastery of the material or of an argument, but usually not both; often it lacks stylistic sophistication, thorough development, and/or sufficient use of supportive evidence.

“D” work falls short in one or more of the following categories: thesis, development with evidence, style, structure. It is clearly inadequate, failing to answer the question fully or to express a substantial thesis. Usually “D” work also demonstrates serious errors in grammar or usage; persistent minor errors alone will not usually elicit a “D” except in combination with other problems.

“F” denotes clear failure to understand either the assignment or the conventions of written work. This grade usually indicates that the student cannot competently perform the tasks required in the course: either analysis, argument, or both.

Reading Schedule

Thursday, Aug. 29 th	Course Introduction: The Universal Declaration of Human Rights
Monday, Sept. 2 nd	NO CLASS – LABOR DAY
Tuesday, Sept. 3 rd	Read: Narrative and Aesthetic Dimensions of Human Rights (all three essays available on Canvas)
Thursday, Sept. 5 th	Read: “Genocide” (on Canvas) Read: Levi’s <i>Survival in Auschwitz</i> (p.1-51) (through “This Side of Good and Evil”)
Monday, Sept. 9 th	Read: Finish Levi’s <i>Survival in Auschwitz</i>

Thursday, Sept. 12 th	Draft Workshop for Essay #1
Monday, Sept. 16 th	Group 1: Augusto Pinochet and Chile's Military Regime Read: Dorfman's <i>Death and the Maiden Act I</i>
Thursday, Sept. 19 th	Read: "Torture" (on Canvas) Read: Dorfman's <i>Death and the Maiden Act II</i> Essay #1 Due
Monday, Sept. 23 rd	Group 2: Argentinian "Dirty War" Read: Timmerman's <i>Prisoner Without a Name...</i>
Thursday, Sept. 26 th	Read: "Are There Times When We Accept Torture" and "Are We Really so Fearful" (on Canvas) Read: Timmerman's <i>Prisoner Without a Name...</i>
Monday, Sept. 30 th	Read: Timmerman's <i>Prisoner Without a Name...</i>
Thursday, Oct. 3 rd	Group 3: Islamic Revolution in Iran Read: Satrapi's <i>The Complete Persepolis</i> (1-153)
Monday, Oct. 7 th	Read: Finish Satrapi's <i>The Complete Persepolis</i>
Thursday, Oct. 10 th	Wrap up Satrapi's <i>The Complete Persepolis</i> Draft Workshop for Essay #2
Monday, Oct. 14 th	Group 4: South African Apartheid Read: "Allegory" and "Manichaeism" (on Canvas) Read: Coetzee's <i>Waiting for the Barbarians</i> (p.1-64 – through part II)
Thursday, Oct. 17 th	Read: Coetzee's <i>Waiting for the Barbarians</i> (p. 65-138 – through part IV) Essay #2 Due
Monday, Oct. 21 st	Read: Finish Coetzee's <i>Waiting for the Barbarians</i>
Thursday, Oct. 24 th	Read: Poems from Guantanamo: The Detainees Speak (on Canvas) Read: Butler's "Guantanamo Limbo (on Canvas)
Monday, Oct. 28 th	NO CLASS – FALL BREAK
Thursday, Oct. 31 st	Group 5: Rwanda Genocide Read: Diop's <i>Murambi: The Book of Bones</i> (p. ix-79)

Monday, Nov. 4th Library Day – Meet in Instruction Classroom on Lower Level of Library

Thursday, Nov. 7th Read: Finish Diop's *Murambi: The Book of Bones*

Monday, Nov. 11th Wrap up Diop's *Murambi: The Book of Bones*
Draft Workshop for Essay #3

Thursday, Nov. 14th *District 9*
Essay #3 Due

Monday, Nov. 18th *District 9*

Thursday, Nov. 21st **Group 6: Civil War in Sri Lanka**
Read: Ondaatje's *Anil's Ghost* (up to p. 73)

Monday, Nov. 25th Read: Ondaatje's *Anil's Ghost* (74-157)

Thursday, Nov. 28th **NO CLASS – THANKSGIVING BREAK**

Monday, Dec. 2nd Read: Ondaatje's *Anil's Ghost* (161-end)

Thursday, Dec. 5th Finish up Ondaatje's *Anil's Ghost*
Course Wrap Up

Essay #4 Due at Final Exam.