

• LOOKING AT 21ST C. GLOBAL ISSUES IN HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVE

Syllabus

082: 118 or 506:118

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Purpose – Welcome! We start from the present and move to the past, thereby enriching our understanding of the present and the future. We do so with our eyes, literally “seeing” the world in the present and then in its past by viewing and analyzing visual media and physical objects from today and then from yesterday. We take as our starting point the primary role of the visual in both our daily lives and in the way we remember the past. The rise in digital technology and social media has meant that much of the information we receive is transmitted visually. Traces of the daily lives of people in the past are preserved through visual artifacts; world events that we read or hear about are remembered through pictures; photographs often serve as memories of our own lived experiences. Through a focus on the visual this course demonstrates that images provide unique access to experiences of those distant to us in time and place. At the same time, it shows that how we see is a factor of who we are and, in turn, that images often determine how events are experienced and remembered.

Course Goals – The first three goals stated below have been approved by the NB-SAS Core Curriculum Committee and Faculty as meeting Core Areas 21C and HST/SCL. Goal 4 has not yet been approved as meeting Core Area AH.

1. Analyze a contemporary global issue from a multidisciplinary perspective.
2. Understand the bases and development of human and societal endeavors across time and place.
3. Employ historical reasoning to understand human endeavors.
4. Analyze arts and/or literatures in themselves and in relation to specific histories, values, languages, cultures, and technologies.

We look for mastery of these goals to be reflected in your weekly discussions, mid-term research project, and final take-home essay exam.

Outcomes: Upon successful completion of this course, you should be able to:

1. Demonstrate a sophisticated understanding in identifying, comparing, and contrasting the perspectives of history and art history as disciplines concerned with pressing contemporary global issues related to human bodies, communities, and contacts (particularly emphasized in weekly discussions).
2. Analyze in depth the bases and development of several human and societal endeavors across time and place (particularly emphasized in the final exam).

3. Use historical reasoning and research methods to present a detailed and thorough analysis of an important human endeavor across time and place (particularly emphasized in the mid-term project).
4. Provide a sophisticated analysis of works of art and a critical assessment of the relationship between them and their specific histories, values, and cultures (particularly emphasized in the final exam).

Environment: The course is entirely online but either Prof. Bell or Prof. Weigert will be available to meet with you in person on the New Brunswick campus.

Lecture: Each week we select a 21st century issue of global importance. We examine in depth some aspect of its current visual representation and explore selected parallel historical realities in other geographic settings, also developed primarily from visual evidence. We then gather one or more experts whom we interview using a digital camera. The results are several interview segments, running to a total of approximately 80 minutes, the same overall time as for a face-to-face lecture class. These video segments are uploaded for individual student viewing at your convenience on Sakai by Tuesday at 12:01 a.m. each week. They remain available for the rest of the semester but should be viewed before discussion begins on the following Friday at 12:01 a.m.

Readings and Viewings: Also at the beginning of each “week” at 12:01 a.m. Tuesday, required and suggested readings and viewings are posted on Sakai, again remaining available for the rest of the semester; they also should be completed before the weekly discussion begins. In short, you have all day Tuesday, Wednesday, and Thursday to watch the videos and do the readings.

Discussion: Beginning on Friday at 12:01 a.m. each week, you sign on to Sakai and use the Discussion Tool. The discussion remains open until 11:59 p.m. the following Monday, when the topic for the following week opens (see Lecture above). Your contributions to the discussion are graded each week on a scale of 0 to 10. For maximum scores, please sign in at least three times during the four days (Friday through Monday) when the discussion is open, posting intelligent interventions that respond in a meaningful way to what your fellow students are posting. This is an asynchronous discussion format and you need to think about how to communicate effectively and interactively in such an online environment. Repeating what already has been said counts for little. Also not good is three quick sign-ins and postings that talk to yourself. Instead, aim for an opening post on Friday, a responsive entry over the weekend that reflects and deepens what others already have contributed, and a final entry on Monday that moves you forward to an intellectual place beyond where you started on Friday. The key is to go deeply into the week’s materials while you learn from the observations of your fellow students. (You may bring additional materials to the discussion but there is no expectation that you will do so and if you do, you need to tie the added material to what has been assigned for the week.)

The discussions will begin each week with a broadly comparative prompt posted as a starting point. The prompt will reflect one or more of the core curriculum goals stated above. The most effective discussions then will “take off” in dynamic, non-repetitive directions. Discussion entries should be concise and highly focused, building upon prior entries by fellow students as these unfold. We expect more than brief tweets. Aim for postings written in proper English, backed by specific evidence, and respectful of other viewpoints.

The best 10 of 12 individual weekly discussion grades will count for 30% of total course grade. Grades are on a ten-point scale where a 10 is fabulous, with 9, 8, and 7 at the A, B, and C level respectively. We will be looking in at the various discussion groups, which consist of about ten students each, but guidance and grading will be done by Teaching

Assistants selected from among advanced graduate students in Art History and History. They will also be responsible for grading the two written requirements listed below.

Written requirements:

(1) Mid-term Research Project. During Week 7 of the course, instead of the usual format, students will complete individual research projects that grow directly out of ONE of the 21st century issues considered in the first six weeks of the course. The project must then specify and analyze carefully two or more visual representations beyond those presented in class, explaining how these visual representations expand, deepen, and enrich the material presented and discussed that week. The expected result, submitted online through the Assignment Tool, will be a paper of approximately 2000 words, plus at least two visuals.

More specific information on the mid-term project, and opportunities for individual consultation, will be available as the semester progresses. This project counts for 30% of your overall course grade.

(2) A take-home final exam will cover the themes and specific times/places/episodes/visual representations developed during the course. The exam will be in essay format and will include visual analysis. The final exam counts for 40% of your total grade.

Grades

Grades on individual assignments are multiplied by the percentages shown in Sakai Gradebook (3% for each of best ten discussions; 30% for mid-term research paper; 40% for final exam) and then converted by Sakai Gradebook (a merciless but accurate recorder of grades) to RU grades as follows: 90-100=A; 85-89=B+; 80-84=B; 70-79=C+; 60-69=C, 0-59=F. There is no "curve", so you are encouraged to do as well as you possibly can. We have A's for all who earn them. The "soft C" and absence of a D grade are intentional. There will be no exceptions to the grading standard written here.

Self-Reporting of Absences

"Absence" is a bit difficult to define for an online course environment but, in accordance with University policy, if you expect to miss a week's work entirely, please use the University absence reporting website <https://sims.rutgers.edu/ssra> to indicate the date and reason for your absence. An email is automatically sent to us. Such reporting does NOT excuse you from the best 10 of 12 rule for Discussion grades.

Special Needs: Any student with a disability who needs accommodations should contact one of us as soon as possible. Same holds for other challenges (athletics, personal situations, military call-ups, etc.)

Plagiarism and Academic Integrity: Please see the video at:

<http://library.camden.rutgers.edu/EducationalModule/Plagiarism/whatisplagiarism.html>
We use "Turn it In" and other detection methods to find duplicate papers or work cut and pasted from the Internet. There is no reason and no excuse for failure to do your own work and to do it honestly. We follow a "zero tolerance" policy.

ONLINE and ONTIME: Some online courses offer substantial flexibility about when assignments must be completed but "Looking at 21st c. Global Issues in Historical Perspective" does NOT. There are fixed time limits for discussion, a heavy penalty for lateness on the mid-term project, and a fixed time for turning in your final exam. The blocks of three days for viewing course material and four days for engaging in discussion are meant to allow time for religious observances, working schedules, and life's many

obligations. For obvious reasons, the online discussions cannot be postponed or extended to suit individual situations and the penalties for late written work are justified to keep all students on a level playing field. If for whatever reason this format does not suit your needs, you should not take this course.

HARDWARE NEEDS: MAC or PC both work well but absolutely you need a fast processor and high-speed Internet access, sufficient to view 30-minute and longer video clips on full screen without lengthy delays or dropped connections.

SUMMARY OF WEEKLY WORK FLOW:

Tuesday at 12:01 a.m. - Week opens on SAKAI with videos, readings, and other materials posted.

The following Friday at 12:01 a.m. through Monday at 11:59 - online discussion forums take place.

Newark and Camden students need to sign on to Sakai, which is the only platform we use for this course.

Planned weekly topics are as follows:

Sept. 5-12 Unit 1 - New Technologies: Interpreting Reality, Individual and Social Identity

Sept 12-19 Unit 2 – National Identity: Ellis Island, Latina Artists, & How Did You Get Here?

Sept 19-26 Unit 3 – Body Image: Promoting Illness and Health of Individual and Social Bodies

Sept 26-Oct 3 Unit 4 - Family Roles/Reproduction: Rhetoric and Image

Oct 3 -10 Unit 5 – Incarceration, Technologies of Space, Social Control and Identity

Oct 10-17 Unit 6 - Plagues and Scourges: Black Death and HIV-AIDS

Oct 17-24 Mid-term research paper

Oct 24-31 Unit 7 - Portraits of Power in Tudor Stuart England and Contemporary America

Oct 31-Nov. 7 Unit 8 – Commemoration, Memorials, Monuments, and Museums

Nov 7-14 Unit 9 – Leisure, Play and Civic Identity: Quinming Scroll and Brazil Carnival

Nov 14-21 Unit 10 – Natural Disaster and Human Response: Pompeii and New Orleans

Nov 21-Dec 5 Unit 11 – Global Textiles – Travel, Commerce, Exchange - Silk Road & Nike. NOTE: This is Thanksgiving week, so we are allowing extra time for course work. This is also a good time to start reviewing and catching up on the first 11 weeks of the course, in preparation for the take-home final exam.

Dec 5-12 Unit 12 – Warfare – Bayeux Tapestry, ISIS, and Abu Ghraib

Dec. 12 at 12:01 a.m. - Take Home Final Exam is available

Dec. 19 at 12:01 a.m. - Take Home Final Exam is due on Sakai Assignment Tool

- The editorial below was written by the distinguished philosopher Justin E. H. Smith, who teaches at the University of Paris 7 - Denis Diderot. It is highly partisan in tone, which we ask you to set aside totally. Instead, you may read the article for its reflections on the relationship of history to the present, which is a major theme throughout our course as each week we reflect upon a pair of present and past global challenges.
- [21c. No, He's Not Hitler. And Yet ... - The New York Times.pdf](#)