



CID 2301 (82491): The Human Experience

War and Conflict

Class Location: JOUR 234

Class Time: T TR 11:00am – 12:15pm

COURSE SYLLABUS: Fall 2024

INSTRUCTOR INFORMATION

Instructor: Dr. Cynthia Ross (I go by Dr. Ross or Professor Ross)

Office Location: SS 104

Office Hours: MTWRF 2:00pm - 3:00pm

University Email Address: cynthia.ross@tamuc.edu

Preferred Form of Communication: email

Communication Response Time: I typically respond to email during regular business hours (8:00am – 5:00pm), within one day during the week; emails sent after 5:00pm on Friday may not get a response until Monday morning.

COURSE INFORMATION

Course Description

CID 2301: The Human Experience introduces students to humanities-based inquiry by guiding students through an exploration of important humanistic questions across all elements of the human experience. Through the deep focus on a connecting theme, students will engage in holistic discussions of topics addressing fundamental questions about human life and human interactions, develop the skills of humanistic inquiry (including critical thinking, research, literacy skills, and communication skills), and learn to apply their knowledge to their personal, professional, and academic goals.

This course is the foundational course for the Humanities Certificate program, a grant-funded, TAMU System-wide initiative designed to create an intentional connective pathway through the core curriculum to infuse the humanities and humanities-based inquiry (critical thinking, research, communication, ethics, morality, cultural awareness, empathy, etc.) into student degree pathways and encourage students to see the relationships between larger questions of the human experience and their own lives and goals. The course is based on Transformative Texts and a Transformative Project.

The syllabus/schedule are subject to change.

This class focuses on War and Conflict but not on armies, battlefields, soldiers, or strategies. We will be exploring the ways war and conflict affect the most vulnerable members of societies – women, children, and those who are targets for racial or ethnic oppression. Your readings are all memoirs of those who lived through these 20th century conflicts in places like Poland, Russia, Cambodia, and South Africa but they remain relevant today, cutting across time and space; perhaps telling us something about the human experience. We will explore a variety of themes related to War and Conflict including family, gender, race, ethnicity, prejudice, morality, ethics, justice, identity, memory, and resilience.

Materials – Textbooks, Readings, Supplementary Readings

The readings for this course are partially drawn from a system-wide list of Transformative Texts. **Transformative Texts** are books, films, artwork, music, documents, memoirs, etc. from diverse regions, cultures, ethnicities, ideologies, religions, genders--around the world and through time--that reflect the core ideals, ethics, and moralities of the human experience.

Required Readings for this section of CID 2301:

David Foster Wallace, “This is Water” (No need to order, this is available at <https://fs.blog/david-foster-wallace-this-is-water/>)

Art Spiegelman, *The Complete Maus: A Survivor’s Tale*, Reprint Edition, ISBN: 978-0679406419

Eugenia Semenovna Ginzburg, *Journey into the Whirlwind*, First Edition, ISBN: 978-0156027519

Loung Ung, *First They Killed My Father*, First Harper Perennial trade edition 2006, ISBN: 978-0060856267

Trevor Noah, *Born a Crime: Stories from a South African Childhood*, Reprint Edition, ISBN: 978-0399588198

Course Details

This is an in-person class that uses D2L minimally. We will be using as little technology as possible in class. Always bring the book you are currently reading, a writing instrument, and a notebook to each class. You may also want to bring loose-leaf notebook paper if you prefer to not tear out notebook pages for in-class assignments. Almost all assignments will be completed in class, with the exception of the reading journal and semester project.

We will meet T TR in JOUR 234 from 11:00am – 12:15pm. Class begins promptly at the start time; do not be late.

No smartphones, ear buds, laptops, or other devices without a prior agreement between SDS and the professor (for more on electronics in the classroom see, Course and University Procedures/Policies below). Classes will not be recorded and cannot be attended remotely. If you miss a class, please contact another student for notes.

The syllabus/schedule are subject to change.

Class time will focus on large and small group discussion based on the readings, mini-lectures, and short in-class assignments.

Student Learning Outcomes

- 1. Critical/Integrative Thinking:** Students will apply insights from the humanities (i.e., examinations of human history, culture, language, ethics, and aesthetics) to problems or questions that intersect with other areas of inquiry, including STEM and professional disciplines. (Core Outcome Alignment: Critical Thinking)
- 2. Communication:** Students will communicate ideas effectively through writing and, where appropriate, through oral communication, visual communication, or creative performance. (Core Outcome Alignment: Communication)
- 3. Ethical Reasoning:** Students will engage with multiple perspectives in exploring the human dimensions of real-world situations and problems. (Core Outcome Alignment: Personal Responsibility; Critical Thinking)
- 4. Cultural Awareness:** Students will demonstrate an appreciation for social and cultural diversity while engaging in critical analysis of various forms of literary, artistic, or cultural expression. (Core Outcome Alignment: Social Responsibility; Critical Thinking)

Student Learning Outcomes will be assessed by the Transformative Project (see discussion below) presented during the Celebration of Student Learning held on the Wednesday of Exam Week, 3-5pm.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

Instructional Methods and Assessment

This course will be centered on classroom discussion of assigned works, using small group and large group discussions, with short low-stakes writing and reflection assignments that scaffold to a final Transformative Project. The Transformative Project showcases student learning and development of humanities skills, including information literacy, critical thinking, and communication. Students will read, discuss, listen, analyze, and develop an understanding of the assigned texts and their connections to their own lived experience, goals, and beliefs; conduct research; and communicate their ideas. In engaging with the core learning objectives of critical thinking, communication, social responsibility, and personal responsibility, students will gain a greater appreciation of the complexities of the world and their place within that complexity, and gain new skills derived from deep textual reading and analysis, critical thinking and engagement, research and information literacy, and the ability to communicate their ideas. These skills provide a key foundation for the college experience and will bolster students' employability after graduation.

To prepare for and develop the Transformative Project, students will engage in short writing, research, and oral presentations that provide a scaffolded foundation for their final project, as set out in the Course Schedule. Through reflective assignments, students will develop a project focus that sets out the large issue drawn from their study of the chosen Transformative Text and the relevance students find to their lives and goals. They will conduct research on different approaches to that large issue to understand in a holistic sense the different perspectives on the large issue, and make arguments about how such different perspectives might shape a society's

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understanding of the issue. Students will prepare a product that articulates the connections between the larger issue they researched and discussed and their own lives, goals, and experiences. The final Transformative Project will be presented using Adobe Creative Campus suite of programs, in a format that makes the most sense to students, to allow them creativity of expression in making the connections between their humanities inquiry and their personal experiences.

Throughout the course, discussions and assignments will be geared to reinforcing the basic premises of university education and to emphasizing students' development of skills central to their college career and beyond—exposing students to new ideas, different perspectives, and the variability of the human experience; developing relationships between and among students, mentors, and faculty; reinforcing persistence and resiliency; encouraging reflection and sense of purpose; and honing reading, writing, and communication skills.

Student success in this course will be supported through the Student Instructor (SI) assigned to the class. The SI provides an intermediary between the student and the instructor—a peer to whom students can turn for assistance and guidance, a role model and mentor for navigating college life, and a resource for students to encourage persistence and success. The SI will support the instructor through course administration, such as taking attendance, being available to students outside of class meetings, and facilitating student-instructor interactions, but will not engage in teaching or assessment.

Assignments

Hello Note Card: On the first day of class, each student will receive a note card. Each person will put their name at the top of the card and five things they want the professor to know about them, turning it in at the end of class. In the past students have shared fun things like their favorite ice cream, their dog's name, or their love of sports, while others have taken the opportunity to note a different name they go by, their pronouns, or if they are nervous about this course.

Reading Journal: You will be responsible for keeping a reading journal that includes at least one page of hand written notes and/or written reflections on each week's assigned reading. This will help you reflect on the readings as we go through the course texts. There will be a weekly journal check for completion during class. At the end of the semester, you will use your reading journal to write a 2-to-3-page reflection on the course readings. This assignment supports SLOs 1-4.

Group In-Class Assignments: You will be assigned into groups during the first week of the course. This will be your group for in-class group discussion and collaborative in-class assignments. These assignments will occur every other week, in rotation with the Individual In-Class Assignments. The group will receive grades for these assignments, but only students who attend will receive credit for the group submissions. This assignment supports SLOs 1-4.

Individual In-Class Assignments: These assignments will occur every other week, in rotation with the Group In-Class Assignments. These assignments may include short quizzes, creative assignments, and reflections. This assignment supports SLOs 1-4.

Engagement: Regular engagement and keeping up with the material is critical in this course. Engagement includes attending class, being on time, engaging in discussion and activities, and completing assignments by the due date. If students have a problem with engagement due to illness, work, family, or life you need to contact me right away. Flexibility and extensions are possible if I know what is going on. **Absences:** University policy does allow excused absences in certain situations. These include participation in a required/authorized university activity, verified illness (doctor's note or positive dated covid PCR test), death in a student's immediate family, jury duty, court dates, and military service. All of these excuses require proper documentation. Any other absences are **NOT** excused absences.

You must complete the readings prior to class and come prepared for discussion. Have the readings available to refer to and have notes handy. You are encouraged to ask questions and it is helpful to prepare them ahead of time. Unprepared attendance may be treated as an absence. Students are expected to create and sustain an open intellectual classroom environment, which fosters discussion - you should listen to each other's comments and questions with an open mind and respect viewpoints other than your own.

Students must also be open to understanding why people of the past did what they did, and should not dismiss these actors' views because they might be perceived as "wrong."

I evaluate the discussion portion of your Engagement grade on the following criteria:

A = Student is always prepared; makes frequent voluntary contributions to classroom discussion

B = Student is generally prepared; makes occasional voluntary contributions to discussion or participates only when called on

C = Student is usually prepared but rarely voluntarily speaks

D = Student is generally unprepared and does not contribute to discussion

F = Student is unprepared and appears disinterested in contributing to discussion

For a three-credit course, expect to spend nine hours on class work per week outside of regular class attendance to stay on top of the workload. That's about 12 hours a week, total. University classes can be difficult but not impossible with strict time management.

Note: Undergraduate students should not skip classes or be chronically late to class. Students are expected to attend every class session; attendance will be tracked. Each unexcused absence beyond two (2) instances will result in a semester grade reduction; excessive unexcused absences (more than 4) may be cause for a failing grade.

Transformative Project: The Transformative Project will ask students to create a cultural product that connects one of the themes from the course - family, gender, race, ethnicity, prejudice, morality, ethics, justice, identity, memory, and resilience – to their world, as they have come to understand it. This is an individual project. The medium of the project is open (poster, podcast, video, digital art, graphic novel, script, monologue, poem, song, etc) but you must use The Adobe Creative Suite for the final project. In completing the project, you will engage in research on the topic and theme, identify relevant sources, present an argument, and link the outcomes to an issue relevant to your own career or personal trajectory. These projects will be publicly presented at the Learning Showcase. Additional details will be discussed throughout the semester. You will submit a proposal, the final product, and a brief process paper. This assignment supports SLOs 1-4.

Goodbye Notecard: On the last day of instruction, each student will receive a notecard. Each person will put their name at the top of the card and five things they learned in this class that they will take with them in the future, turning it in at the end of class. This could be anything related to the course, college life, technology, pretty much anything.

Bonus: At the end of the semester, if you complete the student evaluation for the class, you can upload a screen shot of the completion screen to D2L for 5 points. Please make sure it is not a screenshot of any responses.

GRADING

Final grades in this course will be based on the following scale:

A = 90%-100%
B = 80%-89%
C = 70%-79%
D = 60%-69%
F = 59% or Below

Weights of the assessments in the calculation of the final letter grade.

Hello Note Card	25 points
Reading Journal	150 points
Group In-Class Assignments	100 points
Individual In-Class Assignments	100 points
Engagement	200 points
Transformative Project	200 points
Goodbye Note Card	25 points
Bonus	5 points

TOTAL 800 points (805 with Bonus)

COURSE OUTLINE / CALENDAR

Week 1: Introduction, Why War and Conflict?

Listen and Read Along: David Foster Wallace, "This is Water" (<https://fs.blog/david-foster-wallace-this-is-water/>)

Tuesday – Welcome and Intro; Hello Note Card

Thursday – Discuss reading

Week 2: The Holocaust

Read: *The Complete Maus*, Part 1: My Father Bleeds History through Prisoner of War

Tuesday – Background; Discussion

The syllabus/schedule are subject to change.

Thursday - Discussion, Group Assignment; Reading Journal Check

Week 3: The Holocaust

Read: *The Complete Maus*, The Noose Tightens through Part 2: And Here My Troubles Began

Tuesday – Background; Discussion; Student Success: Campus Resources

Thursday – Discussion; Individual Assignment; Reading Journal Check

Week 4: The Holocaust

Read: *The Complete Maus*, Auschwitz (Time Flies) through Second Honeymoon

Tuesday – Background; Discussion

Thursday – Discussion; Group Assignment; Reading Journal Check

Week 5: Stalinist Russia

Read – *Journey into the Whirlwind*, Chapter 1 – 14

Tuesday – Background; Discussion

Thursday – Discussion; Individual Assignment; Reading Journal Check

Week 6: Stalinist Russia

Read: *Journey into the Whirlwind*, Chapter 15 – 31

Tuesday – Background; Discussion

Thursday – Discussion; Group Assignment; Reading Journal Check

Week 7: Stalinist Russia

Read - *Journey into the Whirlwind*, Chapter 32 – 46

Tuesday – Background; Discussion

Thursday – Discussion; Individual Assignment; Reading Journal Check

Week 8: Stalinist Russia

Read - *Journey into the Whirlwind*, Chapter 47 – Epilogue

Tuesday – Background; Discussion

Thursday – Discussion; Group Assignment; Reading Journal Check

Week 9: Cambodian Genocide

Read: *First They Killed My Father*, Author's Note – Labor Camps

Tuesday – Background; Discussion

Thursday – Discussion; Individual Assignment; Reading Journal Check; Identify Transformative Project Medium

Week 10: Cambodian Genocide

Read: *First They Killed My Father*, New Year's – The Youn Invasion

Tuesday – Background; Discussion

Thursday – Discussion; Group Assignment; Reading Journal Check

Week 11: Cambodian Genocide

Read: *First They Killed My Father*, The First Foster Family - Epilogue

Tuesday – Background; Discussion

Thursday – Discussion; Individual Assignment; Reading Journal Check

Week 12: South African Apartheid

Read: *Born a Crime*, Part 1, Chapter 1 – 8

Tuesday – Background; Discussion

Thursday – Discussion; Group Assignment; Reading Journal Check

Week 13: South African Apartheid

Read: *Born a Crime*, Part II, Chapter 9 – 14

Tuesday – Background; Discussion; Reading Journal Check

Thursday – Transformative Project Work Day

Week 14: South African Apartheid

Read: *Born a Crime*, Part III, Chapter 15 – 18

Tuesday – Discussion; Individual Assignment

Thursday – Thanksgiving Break

Week 15: Reflection and Wrap Up

Tuesday – Discussion; Group Assignment

Thursday – Discussion; Goodbye Note Card

Finals Week: Presentation of Transformative Project at the Learning Showcase

3:00pm – 5:00pm, Wednesday, December 11, Rayburn Student Center

Due: Transformative Project

Due: Process Paper

TECHNOLOGY REQUIREMENTS

LMS

All course sections offered by Texas A&M University-Commerce have a corresponding course shell in the myLeo Online Learning Management System (LMS). Below are technical requirements

LMS Requirements:

<https://community.brightspace.com/s/article/Brightspace-Platform-Requirements>

LMS Browser Support:

https://documentation.brightspace.com/EN/brightspace/requirements/all/browser_support.htm

Zoom Video Conferencing Tool

https://inside.tamuc.edu/campuslife/CampusServices/CITESupportCenter/Zoom_Account.aspx?source=universalmenu

ACCESS AND NAVIGATION

You will need your campus-wide ID (CWID) and password to log into the course. If you do not know your CWID or have forgotten your password, contact the Center for IT Excellence (CITE) at 903.468.6000 or helpdesk@tamuc.edu.

Note: Personal computer and internet connection problems do not excuse the requirement to complete all course work in a timely and satisfactory manner. Each student needs to have a backup method to deal with these inevitable problems. These methods might include the availability of a backup PC at home or work, the temporary use of a computer at a friend's home, the local library, office service companies, Starbucks, a TAMUC campus open computer lab, etc.

COMMUNICATION AND SUPPORT

If you have any questions or are having difficulties with the course material, please contact your Instructor.

Technical Support

If you are having technical difficulty with any part of Brightspace, please contact Brightspace Technical Support at 1-877-325-7778. Other support options can be found here: <https://community.brightspace.com/support/s/contactsupport>

Interaction with Instructor Statement

Students are encouraged to email the professor with questions, concerns, or comments. Students must provide a valid return email address for replies. Unless otherwise announced, students can expect replies between 8:00am and 5:00pm during the week. Response times are not guaranteed over the weekend.

When sending an email always do the following:

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- 1) Use a subject line. This tells me what the topic is and prevents your message from ending up in my junk mail.
- 2) Include your class and section (or class time). I need to know exactly which of my courses you are in. This course is CID 2301.02E.
- 3) Use clear, formal English in your emails. Before sending ask yourself, “Would I send this email to my boss?” If not, revise it for professionalism.
- 3) End the email with your first and last name, that is “sign” your message. I need to know who you are. If you go by a name that is different than the roster, please let me know.

COURSE AND UNIVERSITY PROCEDURES/POLICIES

All writing assignments will be handwritten, and mostly in class except for the reading journal.

Smartphones

No smartphones in class. They must be silenced and put away.

Ear Buds / Headphones

No ear buds or headphones in class.

Laptops / Computers

On most class days, no laptops are allowed in class unless the student has a prior authorization from SDS. There will be a few class days when laptops will be allowed for work on the semester project, but these dates will be announced in advance by the professor.

Ereaders, such as Kindle and Fire tablets, are allowed. Tablets with a notebook feature are allowed for note taking only. No non-course related apps.

Late Assignments

Any work submitted past the due date may receive a late penalty without prior written approval by the instructor. If you need an extension, email me before the due date.

Extra Credit

There is one opportunity for extra credit in this course. Students are encouraged to talk to the instructor early and often if they are having problems in the course.

Academic Honesty

In all courses, I expect that all work that you do and turn in is your own. It is the policy of the University, the History Department, and myself that no form of plagiarism, cheating, collusion, or any other form of academic dishonesty will be tolerated. Plagiarism is defined as deliberately

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taking the words or ideas of someone else and passing them off as your own. Cheating is obtaining unauthorized assistance on any assignment. Collusion is the selling of academic products with the intention that they be submitted to satisfy an academic requirement. Students are expected to uphold and support the highest academic standards at all times.

It is fine to use other people's words and ideas as long as they receive credit in citations. If you are unsure about the precise definition of plagiarism and/or think you may have committed this form of academic dishonesty, see the instructor or visit the Online Writing Lab before you turn in the assignment.

If a student commits academic dishonesty on any part of an assignment, the assignment will receive a zero with no possibility for make-up. Additionally, any incidents of academic dishonesty may be reported to the Office of the Provost by the Professor according to university policy 13.99.99.R0.03 Undergraduate Academic Dishonesty.

AI Use in the Course

Texas A&M University-Commerce acknowledges that there may be legitimate uses of Artificial Intelligence, ChatBots, or other software that has the capacity to generate text, or suggest replacements for text beyond individual words, as determined by the instructor of the course. Any use of such software must be documented. Any undocumented use of such software constitutes an instance of academic dishonesty (plagiarism). Individual instructors may disallow entirely the use of such software for individual assignments or for the entire course. Students should be aware of such requirements and follow their instructor's guidelines. If no instructions are provided the student should assume that the use of such software is disallowed. In any case, students are fully responsible for the content of any assignment they submit, regardless of whether they used an AI, in any way. This specifically includes cases in which the AI plagiarized another text or misrepresented sources.

No AI use is allowed in this course. Students should not use any text generated by AI in any graded assignments. Use of AI to write any part of an assignment and present it as the student's work is prohibited. This applies to this course only (CID 2301.12E).

Writing Lab

The [TAMU-Commerce Online Writing Lab](#) is a valuable service free to any student. They can help you get started on a paper, help with drafts, and answer specific questions about citation style, grammar, and spelling. While they will not write the paper for you, they are there to give feedback and guidance.

Statement on Student Grievances

Students who have questions or concerns about the Instructor's course policies or the conduct either of the Instructor or a classmate should first consult with the Instructor. In the event of a lack of resolution or satisfaction on the matter, the student may bring their concerns to the head of the History Department, Sharon Kowalsky (Sharon.Kowalsky@tamuc.edu). If this does not result in a satisfactory conclusion to the matter, students may bring the issue to the attention of the Associate Dean of Students per procedures outlined on pp. 15-19 of the Student Guide Book.

Syllabus Change Policy

The syllabus is a guide. Circumstances and events may make it necessary for the professor to modify the syllabus during the semester. Any changes made to the syllabus will be announced as soon as possible.

University Specific Procedures

Student Conduct

All students enrolled at the University shall follow the tenets of common decency and acceptable behavior conducive to a positive learning environment. The Code of Student Conduct is described in detail in the [Student Guidebook](#).

<http://www.tamuc.edu/Admissions/oneStopShop/undergraduateAdmissions/studentGuidebook.aspx>

Students should also consult the Rules of Netiquette for more information regarding how to interact with students in an online forum: <https://www.britannica.com/topic/netiquette>

TAMUC Attendance

For more information about the attendance policy please visit the [Attendance Procedure 13.99.99.R0.01](#).

<http://www.tamuc.edu/admissions/registrar/generalInformation/attendance.aspx>

<http://www.tamuc.edu/aboutUs/policiesProceduresStandardsStatements/rulesProcedures/13students/academic/13.99.99.R0.01.pdf>

Students with Disabilities-- ADA Statement

The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) is a federal anti-discrimination statute that provides comprehensive civil rights protection for persons with disabilities. Among other things, this legislation requires that all students with disabilities be guaranteed a learning environment that provides for reasonable accommodation of their disabilities. If you have a disability requiring an accommodation, please contact:

Office of Student Disability Resources and Services

Texas A&M University-Commerce

Velma K. Waters Library Rm 162

Phone (903) 886-5150 or (903) 886-5835

Email: studentdisabilityservices@tamuc.edu

Website: [Office of Student Disability Resources and Services](#)

<http://www.tamuc.edu/campusLife/campusServices/studentDisabilityResourcesAndServices/>

Nondiscrimination Notice

Texas A&M University-Commerce will comply in the classroom, and in online courses, with all federal and state laws prohibiting discrimination and related retaliation on the basis of race, color, religion, sex, national origin, disability, age, genetic information or veteran status. Further, an environment free from discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation, gender identity, or gender expression will be maintained.

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Campus Concealed Carry Statement

Texas Senate Bill - 11 (Government Code 411.2031, et al.) authorizes the carrying of a concealed handgun in Texas A&M University-Commerce buildings only by persons who have been issued and are in possession of a Texas License to Carry a Handgun. Qualified law enforcement officers or those who are otherwise authorized to carry a concealed handgun in the State of Texas are also permitted to do so. Pursuant to Penal Code (PC) 46.035 and A&M-Commerce Rule 34.06.02.R1, license holders may not carry a concealed handgun in restricted locations.

For a list of locations, please refer to the [Carrying Concealed Handguns On Campus](#) document and/or consult your event organizer.

Web url:

<http://www.tamuc.edu/aboutUs/policiesProceduresStandardsStatements/rulesProcedures/34SafetyOfEmployeesAndStudents/34.06.02.R1.pdf>

Pursuant to PC 46.035, the open carrying of handguns is prohibited on all A&M-Commerce campuses. Report violations to the University Police Department at 903-886-5868 or 9-1-1.

A&M-Commerce Supports Students' Mental Health

The Counseling Center at A&M-Commerce, located in the Halladay Building, Room 203, offers counseling services, educational programming, and connection to community resources for students. Students have 24/7 access to the Counseling Center's crisis assessment services by calling 903-886-5145. For more information regarding Counseling Center events and confidential services, please visit www.tamuc.edu/counsel