



CID 2301: The Human Experience

Studies about Freedom: Laws, Morality, and Justice

INSTRUCTOR INFORMATION

Instructor: Sherri R. Colby PhD

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Preferred Form of Communication: Email

Communication Response Time: Usually 1 business day; occasionally 2 business days.

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.

We will explore the following themes during this course:

- Laws, Morality, and Justice
- Reforms and Revolutions
- Empires and Citizenships
- Self, Identity, and Memory
- Wars and Conflict

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 CID2301:

- US Declaration of Independence, **document can be found in D2L**
- Preamble to the US Constitution, **document can be found in D2L**
- Henry David Thoreau, “Resistance to Civil Government” (1849), **document can be found in D2L**
- Thomas Paine, *Common Sense*, **document can be found in D2L**
- Elizabeth Cady Stanton, *Eighty Years and More*, **document can be found in D2L**
- Mohandas K Gandhi, *An Autobiography: The Story of My Experiments with Truth*, (Boston: Beacon Press, 1993 edition). — **selections used for this class can be found in D2L**
- Nelson Mandela, *Long Walk to Freedom*, (New York: Back Bay Books, 2013 edition) — **selections used for this class can be found in D2L**
- Martin Luther King, Jr., *The Autobiography of Martin Luther King, Jr.*, edited by Clayborne Carson (New York: Warner Books, 1998). — **selections used for this class can be found in D2L**
- Herman Melville, “Bartleby, The Scrivener: A Story of Wall Street, **document can be found in D2L**.
- George Orwell, *Animal Farm* (New York: Signet Classics, 2004, 75th anniversary edition)

The class also will involve film studies, which will be integrated into our class discussions and activities. You will be required to view one of the following films of your choice. The rental fee should be inexpensive, and other formats of the films might be housed in library archives:

- Ghandi (1982)
- Selma (2014)
- Invictus (2009)
- The Hunger Games (2012)

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.

A Commitment to Academic Freedom

Higher education is predicated on the exchange, vetting, and deliberation of often controversial and unsettled ideas. In this particular class, for example, we explore how historical figures and literary authors addressed freedom, justice, morality, and liberty. We are not here to simply express personal opinions or repeat talking points, but rather to engage a set of ideas and research findings that have a long and complicated history and are therefore subject to ongoing debate. Committed students and scholars can, and do, disagree on the topics we will be discussing.

The syllabus has been designed to bring these controversies and disagreements to the fore. Students are also invited to introduce additional challenges in a serious and open-minded manner.

Such conversations require mutual trust and respect. It is therefore essential that students feel free to express their deeply held views and continually developing perspectives. This means ensuring that all students and faculty feel included and welcomed to engage in discussion. Because hateful or discriminatory speech and behavior degrades the possibility for a free exchange of ideas, it will not be tolerated.

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

The syllabus/schedule are subject to change.

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 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.

Assignments are broken down as follows:

Reading Journals and Film Studies Reflections: Each will you complete a reading journal in preparation for the class discussion. This assignment shall also include a film studies reflection as related to the readings. The film studies will be integrated into the weekly classes. The specific format for this assignment may be found in D2L. This assignment supports SLOs 1-4.

Class Discussions: You will be required to participate in class discussions as a participant and class discussion leader. Specific details about these activities shall be shared in class and found in D2L. This assignment supports SLOs 1-4.

Participation: You are required to attend and participate in live classes. You may miss two classes without penalty. In cases of emergencies, please notify me in writing regarding the emergency and provide documentation to support your case. I will consider accepting excused absences on a case-by-case basis. This assignment supports SLOs 1-4.

You will start with a score of 100 (A), and I shall update this grade if you miss classes during the term. After using your two free days, the participation grade will be as follows:

A - Attending nearly all class periods.

B - Missing 2 classes.

C- Missing 4 classes.

D - Missing 6 classes

F - Missing more than 6 classes

Transformative Project Proposal: You will complete a Transformative Project Proposal, outlining your purposes/ aims, medium format, anticipated evidence, and inquiry focus. The specific format for this assignment may be found in D2L. This assignment supports SLOs 1-4.

Transformative Project First Draft and Peer Review: You will complete a first draft of your project, which shall include a shortened version of your final project. You will also complete a peer review evaluation, which shall occur during class. The specific format for this assignment may be found in D2L. This assignment supports SLOs 1-4.

Transformative Project: The Transformative Project will ask students to take a theme from the course, engage in research about that topic, identify relevant sources, present an argument, and link the outcomes to an issue relevant to their own career or personal trajectory. The Transformative Project aligns with and assesses all Student Learning Outcomes for the course.

The Transformative Project will ask students to create an inquiry project that connects to one of the themes of the course. The project medium may include a poster, video, digital art, graphic novel, script, podcast, museum display, theatrical performance, poem collections (found or generated poetry). The poem must use The Adobe Creative Suite for the final project. For this project, you will engage in an inquiry experience, by collecting relevant resources, exploring concepts/ ideas, presenting an argument/ philosophical perspective, and link the project to your perspective. You will submit a proposal, first draft, the final project, and a brief process paper. This assignment supports SLOs 1-4.

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

Reading Journals:	30%
Class discussion lesson plan and leadership:	15%
Participation:	10%
Transformative project proposal and film study:	10%
Transformative project first draft and peer review:	10%
Transformative project:	25%
TOTAL:	100%

A = 90%-100%

B = 80%-89%

C = 70%-79%

D = 60%-69%

F = 59% or Below

COURSE OUTLINE / CALENDAR

Week	Readings	Assignments
Week 1: Introduction		
Week 2: Founding Documents	Declaration of Independence, Preamble to U.S. Constitution	Participate in class discussions.
Week 3: Founding Documents	Paine, Common Sense	Complete reading reflection by Thursday (class start time). Participate in class discussions.
Week 4: Civil Disobedience	Thoreau, “Resistance to Civil Government”	Complete reading reflection by Thursday (class start time). Participate in class discussions.
Week 5: Biographical Study in Freedom (MLK)	Martin Luther King, Jr., <i>The Autobiography of Martin Luther King Jr.</i> , Chs. 5-8	Complete reading reflection by Thursday (class start time). Participate in class discussions.
Week 6: Biographical Study in Freedom (MLK)	Martin Luther King, Jr., <i>The Autobiography of Martin Luther King Jr.</i> , Chs. 18- 19 “Letter from Birmingham Jail”	Complete reading reflection by Thursday (class start time). Participate in class discussions.
Week 7: Biographical Study in Freedom (Elizabeth Cady Stanton)	Eighty Years and More	Complete reading reflection by Thursday (class start time).

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		Participate in class discussions.
Week 9: Biographical Study in Freedom (Mandela)	Mandela, <i>My Long Walk to Freedom</i>	Complete reading reflection by Thursday (class start time). Participate in class discussions.
Week 10: Biographical Study in Freedom (Ghandi)	Ghandi, "My Story"	Complete reading reflection by Thursday (class start time). Participate in class discussions.
Week 11: Biographical Study in Freedom (Ghandi)	Ghandi, "My Story"	Complete reading reflection by Thursday (class start time). Participate in class discussions.
Week 12: Exploring Orwell's Animal Farm	Orwell, <i>Animal Farm</i> , Chs. 1-3	Complete reading reflection by Thursday (class start time). Participate in class discussions. Transformative project proposal due.
Week 13: Exploring Orwell's Animal Farm	Orwell, <i>Animal Farm</i> , Chs. 4-6	Complete reading reflection by Thursday (class start time). Participate in class discussions.
Week 14: Exploring Orwell's Animal Farm	Orwell, <i>Animal Farm</i> , Chs. 7-10	Complete reading reflection by Thursday (class start time).

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		Participate in class discussions.
Week 15: Project Preparation		First draft of transformative project due. Participate in peer review.
Week 16: Celebration of Student Success		Transformative Project due. Join us for the project showcase, Exam Week, Wednesday, 3-5pm, SRSC.

All late work must be completed by May 4, 2026.

TECHNOLOGY REQUIREMENTS

LMS

All course sections offered by East Texas A&M University 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 ETAMU 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

Email is the most efficient way to reach me. I often schedule Zoom conferences with students. Please email me for an appointment.

COURSE AND UNIVERSITY PROCEDURES/POLICIES

Course Specific Procedures/Policies

Assignment Submission Policy: The instructor reserves the right to change course assignments, projects, and examinations throughout the semester. Each assignment/project must be completed and turned in by the due date given. All assignments are due by 11:59 midnight on the date indicated on the calendar. All assignments are submitted electronically on D2L Brightspace. **Late assignments shall be subject to letter grade reductions (usually a 70 or half credit) or non-acceptance at the instructor's discretion.**

In the case of unexpected emergencies, students must provide written documentation regarding their missed assignments. The instructor reserves the right to deny make-up opportunities, especially in cases of negligence. It is expected that all course assignments/projects (inside and outside of class and including examinations) will be completed at mastery level (as designated by the instructor). If (in the professional opinion of the instructor) an assignment/project is not satisfactorily completed, it may be returned to the student, and the student may be required to re-do the work until it is at mastery level. The instructor reserves the right to limit the number of times an assignment/project may be re-submitted and to establish a reasonable time frame for resubmissions. If any course assignment/project is not completed at a mastery level by the final resubmission deadline, the instructor reserves the right to assign the student a grade of "I" or "F" for the assignment and/or course--at the instructor's discretion.

Syllabus Change Policy

The syllabus is a guide. Circumstances and events, such as student progress, may make it necessary for the instructor to modify the syllabus during the semester. Any changes made to the syllabus will be announced in advance.

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>

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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>

ETAMU Attendance

For more information about the attendance policy please visit the [Attendance](#) webpage and [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>

Academic Integrity

Students at East Texas A&M University are expected to maintain high standards of integrity and honesty in all of their scholastic work. For more details and the definition of academic dishonesty see the following procedures:

[Undergraduate Academic Dishonesty 13.99.99.R0.03](#)

[Undergraduate Student Academic Dishonesty Form](#)

<http://www.tamuc.edu/aboutUs/policiesProceduresStandardsStatements/rulesProcedures/documents/13.99.99.R0.03UndergraduateStudentAcademicDishonestyForm.pdf>

<http://www.tamuc.edu/aboutUs/policiesProceduresStandardsStatements/rulesProcedures/13students/undergraduates/13.99.99.R0.03UndergraduateAcademicDishonesty.pdf>

AI use in course

East Texas A&M University 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.

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

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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

East Texas A&M University 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.

Campus Concealed Carry Statement

Texas Senate Bill - 11 (Government Code 411.2031, et al.) authorizes the carrying of a concealed handgun in East Texas A&M University 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 East Texas A&M 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 East Texas A&M campuses. Report violations to the University Police Department at 903-886-5868 or 9-1-1.

East Texas A&M Supports Students' Mental Health

The Counseling Center at East Texas A&M, 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