



HUM 2301.09E: The Human Experience

Theme: Human Rights and Responsibilities

COURSE SYLLABUS: FALL 2026

INSTRUCTOR INFORMATION

Instructor: Scott Walker

Office Location: Ferguson 145

Office Hours: Mon./Wed./Fri. 11-12, or by appointment

Office Phone: None

University Email Address: scott.walker@etamu.edu

Preferred Form of Communication: email

Communication Response Time: within 24 hours (48 hours on weekends or holidays)

COURSE INFORMATION

Course Description

HUM 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 Human Experience 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.

Theme of the course: The theme for our course is Human Rights and Responsibilities. We will focus on the writings and experiences of people that may enhance our understanding of what human rights means in our world today. The course is to connect you with a broad movement of human rights practitioners and thinkers that has developed over the centuries but has only achieved prominence in the last eighty years or so.

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.

Mission Statement for the Human Experience Program

- Students will explore their own agency and recognize how they are responsible for their success in their college experience, careers, and lives.
- At the same time, they will contextualize, reflect on, and share their experiences and perspectives in their communities.
- In doing so, they will examine differing perspectives, which will lead to two interconnected ideas: seeing different perspectives develops empathy and Individual student voices and creativity add to larger cultural understandings of the world and the human experience.
- We will examine how “texts” transform not just individual lives but also the ways that groups of people perceive and understand the world.

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.

Readings for this section of HUM2301:

I. HOW CAN WE REFLECT ON THE HUMAN EXPERIENCE?

Week 1: Thinking about learning/success

Pedagogy of the Oppressed by Paulo Freire

<https://praxisucc.ie/3299/>

<https://www.developmenteducationreview.com/issue/issue-30/pedagogy-oppressed>

All I Ever Needed to Know I Learned in Kindergarten by Robert Fulghum

<https://www.penguinrandomhouse.ca/books/56955/all-i-really-need-to-know-i-learned-in-kindergarten-by-robert-fulghum/9780345466396/excerpt4>

Week 2: Perspective

- *Ways of Seeing* by John Berger (video)
- “The Danger of a Single Story” by Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie
- “This is Water” by David Foster Wallace

II. FAMILIARITY WITH BASIC HUMAN RIGHTS CONCEPTS

Week 3: What Are Human Rights?

UN Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights, "What Are Human Rights?"

United Nations. "The Universal Declaration of Human Rights."

Week 4: The Political Debate: Are My Rights More Important Than Your Rights?

Readings TBA

III. HUMAN RIGHTS TOPICS 1: RIGHTS OF THE PERSON

Week 5: Torture and Inhumane Treatment

Readings TBA

Week 6: Mass Killings and Atrocities

Readings TBA

IV. HUMAN RIGHTS TOPICS 2: THREATS TO GROUPS

Week 7: Indigenous Rights

Readings TBA

Week 8: Refugees and Migrants

Readings TBA

Week 9: Gender, Sexuality, and Rights

Readings TBA

Week 10: Racial Justice and Discrimination

Readings TBA

V. HUMAN RIGHTS TOPICS 3: MODERN CHALLENGES

Week 11: Environmental Justice

Readings TBA

Week 12: Economic Justice

Readings TBA

Week 13: Technology and Digital Rights

Readings TBA

VI. CONCLUSION AND REFLECTIONS

Week 14. How Can I Take Action? Grassroots Mobilization and Movements

Readings TBA

Week 15. Wrap-Up: What Are My Responsibilities to Other Humans?

Readings TBA

Student Learning Outcomes

The focus of this class is to build student skills in critical analysis and communication by developing students' ability to think critically, empathetically, and holistically about big issues and to develop, hone, and communicate their ideas about those big issues. The common student learning outcomes for this course are:

- 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, presented during the Learning Showcase held on the Wednesday of Exam Week, 3-5pm. Students will present their projects during one hour of that time and are required to attend as assigned.

This course also fulfills the Phase I requirements of the University QEP through the completion a Competencies Pre-Reflection, a Competencies Post-Reflection, and the Focus2 Career Assessment.

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 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 at the Learning Showcase using the 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, Student Responsibilities, Expectations, and Tips for Success

Reflection Papers: At three points during the semester, students will reflect on the course as a whole as informed through course content. These reflections reflect SLO's 1-4.

Human Rights Quiz: Early in the semester, students must pass a quiz that surveys their basic understanding of the modern human rights movement and related issues. Because it is essential to the topic of the course, no student will progress through the class without passing this component of the class.

Human Rights News Critique: During the semester, students will be required to submit a series of critique offering their own perspectives on current human rights issues in the media. Critiques will not be graded on how well the student understands the issue at hand. Rather, they will be graded on the personal reflection and effort put into analyzing the

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 should engage students in the use of Adobe Creative Cloud.

Class Participation: Students will be asked to make personal contributions to the class through several different modes of participation. Contributions may include participating in online or in-class discussions, taking part in online quizzes and surveys,

GRADING

Grade Breakdown:

30% - Reflection Papers (10% each)

15% - Human Rights Quiz

25% - Human Rights News Critiques

20% - Transformative Project

10% - Class Participation (Discussions, Surveys, Online Quizzes, etc.)

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

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@etamu.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>

COURSE AND UNIVERSITY PROCEDURES/POLICIES

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.etamu.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>

ETAMU Attendance

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

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

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

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

AI Use Policy

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

Velma K. Waters Library Rm 162

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

Email: studentdisabilityservices@etamu.edu

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

<http://www.etamu.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.etamu.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.etamu.edu/counsel



<http://telusproduction.com/app/5108.html>