

FALL 2021

# HUMAN RIGHTS & HUMAN DIGNITY

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Oxford College  
of Emory University

Human rights are not a privilege conferred by the government, they are every human being's entitlement by the virtue of their humanity.

Mother Teresa

In the last 220 years, the Supreme Court has invoked the word "dignity" in more than nine hundred opinions, including the landmark 2011 case mandate prison population reduction in California (*Brown v. Plata*). The concept of dignity undergirds mandates to respect people's legal personhood, their equality, their liberty, and their personal integrity.

The way we understand human dignity informs how we think about people's fundamental rights: How do we punish people? How do we distribute goods and services? How do we treat those with limited political, cultural, or socioeconomic power? This course will examine how human dignity -- the fundamental and innate value of a person -- is explored in literature and writing across the liberal arts.

Tuesdays & Thursdays  
Seney 310

[SAERAH.HIGINBOTHAM@EMORY.EDU](mailto:SAERAH.HIGINBOTHAM@EMORY.EDU)

OFFICE HOURS

HUMANITIES HALL 203

TUESDAYS 8 A.M.

COFFEE SHOP

THURSDAYS AT 11:30 OUTSIDE THE LIBRARY

[Canvas](#)

[Dr. H website](#)

[Oxford Library](#)

# Classroom Policies

In addition to **respectful, engaged** participation, I have the following (somewhat controversial) classroom policies:

- 1) please come to class with one quote -- taken from the day's reading -- marked and ready to write on the board with your name
- 2) cell phones on silent and in your bags; Please no laptops unless we are using them -- for example during the workshop days
- 3) you should ask at least two questions or make two comments in each class. One of those points must be in response to a peer, whom you name

## What if speaking during class is extremely uncomfortable for you?

You may write down your comments and/or questions and give them to me at the end of class.

Alternatively, if you are very enthusiastic about speaking in class, please refrain from making more than five comments or asking more than five questions. You may write down what you were not able to say and I will read it after class. I also urge you to come to my "coffee shop" days for extra discussion. This is to keep the entire class equitably participating during the time we have together.

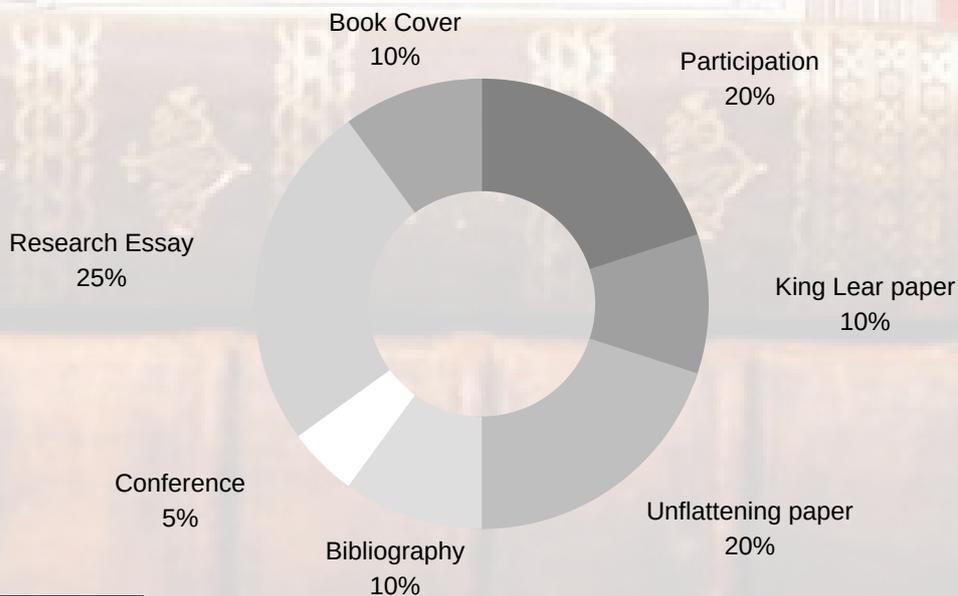


## Important Note on Academic Integrity:

Plagiarism, from the Latin word for "kidnapping," is presenting another person's work as your own.

When you use someone else's language, ideas, images, or other original material without fully acknowledging its source, you will be in violation of Emory Oxford's Honor Code. But more importantly, citing your sources is how to foster the full intellectual conversation in which you are participating.

*Every assignment will have specific, clear guidelines. While the work itself will be challenging, you should never be confused about what is expected or how it will be evaluated. If you do, please ask questions in class, email, or come see me.*



# We Should Disagree

I think most of what I have learned that is of any consequence has come through disagreement and further exploration. I welcome your respectful disagreements with me. If we all interpret what we are reading in the same way, we have a problem, because no true learning will happen.

Learn to relish when someone disagrees with you! Disagreements make the classroom environment more interesting, productive, generative, and challenging.

**Our classroom is not Plato's Cave.**

Please note, though, that the college classroom is a place where ideas are exchanged respectfully. I look forward to an environment where this will occur, but I don't have much tolerance for distracting behavior, such as rudeness, texting, sleeping, or side communications during class. If your participation is disruptive to the classroom discussion, if it creates a hostile, intimidating, or offensive environment, you are subject to removal from the classroom at my discretion.

See [Emory Oxford's Code of Conduct](#)

**You may revise any of your projects in this course.**

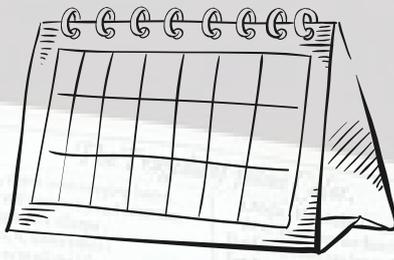
The ability to **accept and act on criticism** is one of the most valuable abilities you can develop. Can you hear constructive criticism with an open mind, build on lessons learned, and make revisions in response to suggestions?

*Then I will assess your revised project a second time.*

A revision isn't just a quick fix of the obvious errors, but a **"re-vision,"** or **another look** at your project, in which you address feedback. If you choose to revise, it can only help, not hurt your grade. The revision must be emailed to me within one week and include a cover letter, in which you explain to me what and why you revised what you did.

YOU CAN  
ALWAYS  
*Revise*

REVISING IS HOW YOU  
LEARN



# Weekly Schedule

COMPLETE READING BEFORE  
YOU COME TO CLASS

Thursday, August 26	"Allegory of the Cave," Plato -- we will read in class
Tuesday, August 31	<i>King Lear</i> , act 1
Thursday, September 2	<i>King Lear</i> , act 1
Tuesday, September 7	<i>King Lear</i> , act 2
Thursday, September 9	<i>King Lear</i> , act 3
Tuesday, September 14	<i>King Lear</i> , act 4
Thursday, September 16	<i>King Lear</i> , act 5
Tuesday, September 21	<b>Paper 1, written in class, <i>King Lear</i> in conversation</b>
Thursday, September 23	"Awe as Prosocial Behavior"
Tuesday, September 28	Zoom (Dr. H in Utah) " <u>The Caging of America</u> "
Thursday, September 30	No Class (Dr. H in Utah)
Tuesday, October 5	<i>Unflattering</i> pp. 1-30 (mark two images to discuss)
Thursday, October 7	<i>Unflattering</i> pp. 31-67 (mark two images to discuss)
Tuesday, October 12	Fall Break
Thursday, October 14	Finish <i>Unflattering</i>
Tuesday, October 19	Library Research -- <b>come with research question to share out loud</b>
Thursday, October 21	<b>Paper 2, Connect <i>Unflattering</i> to another discipline</b>
Tuesday, October 26	Citations and Bibliography
Thursday, October 28	Bibliography due
Tuesday, November 2	<b>Book Covers Due</b>
Thursday, November 4	Introductions and Conclusions (bring the most boring intro you've read)
Tuesday, November 9	Writing Workshop
Thursday, November 11	Writing workshop
Tuesday, November 16	Draft due for peer review
Thursday, November 18	<b>Research essay due</b>
Tuesday, November 30	<b>Conference</b>
Thursday, December 2	<b>Conference</b>
Tuesday December 7	The rest is silence