

**North Carolina Agricultural and Technical State University
Spring 2008**

University Studies 120: *The Contemporary World*

Section: **CRN:** **Meets in:** @
Instructor:
Email: **Phone:**
Office location: **Office hours:**

Course Description:

This course examines the social, economic, political, and cultural roots of today's world. It focuses on the major developments, events, and ideas that have shaped the world since the beginning of the twentieth century. Students master concepts and categories that allow them to grasp the development of the contemporary world, thus providing them with a framework to understand our times. The course will help students develop an information base and critical thinking skills to be applied in their oral and written work at A&T, and requires them to use information technology effectively.

Course Objectives: University-wide Learning Objectives for UNST 120

Communication

1. Effectively use information technology to find, interpret, evaluate, and use information discerningly.
2. Effectively communicate in diverse settings and groups using written, oral, and visual means.

Multicultural Relations Within a Global Society

11. Understand and appreciate the diversity and interrelationship of cultures locally, regionally, nationally, and internationally

Historical and Social Processes in a Changing World

12. Understand the role of social, political, and economic institutions and processes in the development of societies and the factors that lead to dynamic change in societies over time.

Additional learning Objectives: After working through our readings and completing our scheduled tasks, you will be able to

- Compare and contrast differing political and academic positions on our most pressing global problems.
- Form and support with evidence your own positions on selected contemporary global issues.
- Understand the basic requirements of effective scholarly research.

Course Texts:

You need to buy James E. Harf and Mark Owen Lombardi, eds. *Taking Sides: Clashing Views on Global Issues*, 4th ed. New York: McGraw-Hill, 2007; AND World Watch Institute, *Vital Signs 2007-2008: The Trends That Are Shaping Our Future*. New York: W.W. Norton, 2007.

It is imperative that you do the assigned readings prior to coming to class, so that we can conduct informed discussions, so that you may perform well on exams and quizzes, and so that you will meet the course and university objectives. Set **aside enough time to digest the material assigned**. For some students, this may require multiple close readings.

Additionally, students must use **New York TimesSelect, a free online service to all students through <http://www.nytimes.com>**.

The University Studies Model of General Education:

University Studies is a bold, new approach to general education. Until now, general education utilized distribution requirements, which asked students to choose fairly randomly among a list of introductory courses in the humanities, social and natural sciences. Exposing students to a wide variety of subject matter and critical approaches was the primary objective of this educational tradition. Thus, little attention was paid to the ways students might synthesize or profit from the learning objectives and outcomes of different disciplines. As a result, students proceeded into their major studies with few identifiable skills and abilities gleaned from their general education experience. University Studies was conceived to redress these problems.

The rationale for an interdisciplinary approach to general education stems from the acknowledged complexities of the contemporary world. The problems facing modern humanity are rarely if ever understood using the perspectives and tools of a single discipline. Given that, University Studies maintains that critical thinking, logic, writing, humanistic and artistic inquiry, as well as the social and natural sciences are best understood via interdisciplinary methods. Indeed many interdisciplinary fields, such as African American Studies, Science and Technology Studies, Cultural Studies, and Women's Studies developed due to either the unwillingness or the inability of the traditional disciplines to address the issues posed in these bodies of scholarship.

All University Studies [UNST] courses are interdisciplinary. This means that they combine the intellectual methods and subject matter from a variety of disciplines in order to help students learn critical thinking and problem solving. UNST courses are interconnected in such a manner that they can guarantee that a student will be exposed to specified learning objectives that address real-life concerns. During the first year, students will learn skills for critical engagement; during the second and third years, students will apply these newly honed skills in theme-based courses; in the senior year, students will exercise the skills and knowledge they have gained in a capstone experience and service-learning activity. If undertaken seriously and with intentionality, UNST students can expect to emerge with a set of useful intellectual tools that will allow them to engage effectively a dynamic and complex world.

Attendance, Participation & Assignments

University Studies strives to professionalize its students; therefore, regular attendance and punctuality are mandatory in all UNST courses. Attendance will be taken at the beginning of each class. Tardiness will not be tolerated. ***Doors to the classroom will be closed ten minutes after class begins. Students arriving after that point will be marked absent.***

Students having four unexcused absences will automatically receive an "F" for the course.

It is strongly suggested that students see their instructor after a third unexcused absence to make a plan to successfully complete the course. Absent or tardy students are responsible for any

missed class work, including any changes to the syllabus or assignments announced in class. In short, absences and tardiness can/will diminish your grade. If your course schedule is such that you could be consistently late (i.e. walking from one end of the campus to the other), you should consider dropping the course or rescheduling during a better time slot. If you suffer prolonged illness or misfortune, you should consider dropping the course. Persistent tardiness and failure to observe established classroom etiquette will lead to failure of the course. Student athletes must submit a schedule of days they will be absent within the first week of classes.

The instructor may ask students to leave class for disruptive behavior including side conversations and cellphone use, and determine if and when those students may return.

Appropriate documentation for an excused absence must be provided to the instructor within one week of any missed classes. Attendance is absolutely essential to be successful in this course. A large percentage of the questions on the quizzes and the final exam will be based exclusively on the material covered in class lectures and activities. During class, students are expected to be alert, active, and taking notes, arriving prepared to learn, initiate, and engage in class discussions and activities. An active interchange amongst all present will contribute to an energized environment and enriched experience. Your questions, comments, and contributions keep the class interesting and relevant. To be counted present you must “click on” using the Classroom Response System “clickers.” “Clicking in” an absent classmate is cheating, and all students involved will be suspended from class and reported to Dean Graves. Clickers are also used as part of regular classroom instruction including “clicker quizzes.” All students must register clickers on Blackboard at the beginning of the semester, bring them to every class, and make sure that they are working properly. Coming to class without your clicker constitutes an unexcused absence.

You are responsible for all assignments whether you are present or not, including quizzes (online, in-class, or take-home), exams, and short “response papers” (typing double-spaced on a sheet of paper, usually of 1-2 pages, your original thoughts and words on an assigned reading question). Students may also be asked to complete worksheets derived from the readings and bring these to class. “Makeup” policy for missed tests, quizzes, or assignments is at the discretion of the instructor. Penalties for late work may be imposed.

Aggie Pride & Academic Integrity :

Students will conduct themselves according to the ethical and behavioral principles of the Aggie Pride Compact, which calls on students to develop intellectual curiosity about a subject by adhering to the following principles and practices:

- (A) Study: active listening in class and taking good lecture notes; reading all assignments and good notes on the reading; reviewing notes for quizzes, exams; intellectual rigor
- (B) Collaboration: working effectively in small groups (teamwork), being accountable, sharing information, finding consensus among diverse viewpoints
- (C) Scholastic honesty: Cheating of any kind will not be tolerated, and the penalties are severe. We will follow university policies with regard to this matter. See the NCA&TSU Student Handbook at <http://www.ncat.edu/~acdaffrs/academicdishonestypolicy.htm>.

It reads as follows:

ACADEMIC HONESTY POLICY

“North Carolina Agricultural and Technical State University is committed to a policy of academic honesty for all students. Examples of Academic Dishonesty include but are not limited to:

- Cheating or knowingly assisting another student in committing an act of academic dishonesty;
- Plagiarism (unauthorized use of another person’s words or ideas as one’s own) which includes but is not necessarily limited to submitting examinations, theses, reports, drawings, laboratory notes or other materials as one’s own work when such work has been prepared by another person or copied from another person.
- Unauthorized possession of examinations or reserve library materials, destruction or hiding of source materials, library materials, or laboratory materials or experiments or any other similar action;
- Unauthorized changing of grades or marking on an examination or in an instructor’s grade book, or such change of any grade record;
- Aiding or abetting in the infraction of any of the provisions anticipated under the general standards of student conduct; or
- Assisting another student in violating any of the above rules.

A student who has committed an act of academic dishonesty has failed to meet a basic requirement of satisfactory academic performance. Thus, academic dishonesty is not only a basis for disciplinary action but must also affect the evaluation of the student’s level of performance. Any student who commits an act of academic dishonesty is subject to disciplinary action as defined below.

The first offense for cheating/plagiarism in UNST 120 is an automatic “F” for the assignment and a report to the Dean. The second offense is an F for the course and a second call on the Dean. Repeated offenses will lead to dismissal from the University.

Email and Office Hours:

As part of our mission to train NCA&T students in professional conduct, we must uphold professional standards in all our communications. Therefore, all email communication must include your name, proper greeting and salutation, correct grammar, spelling, and punctuation, and detailed information so that you can receive an accurate and timely response. Put your class and section # in the subject line.

Examples:

Professional:

Dear Professor X:

My name is Student Z in section Y of UNST 120. I have a question about this week’s readings. I have consulted the syllabus and my classmates but am still unsure which chapter we should read for next Thursday. Could you please clarify the assignment.

Thank you,

Student Z

_____ Unprofessional:

what’s the homework?

You must have, and use, your NCAT email account for electronic course communications. If you prefer to use another email service, set up your NCAT account to forward messages to your preferred address and your preferred account to use your NCAT account as an alias.

Please make use of office hours for clarification of any issues you encounter in the course. Office hours are set aside specifically for the purpose of professor/student communication

Blackboard: The Course Website

Learning to use Blackboard technology skillfully is a key element for success in this course. Students must develop a basic mastery of its e-learning component. Students are personally responsible for accessing and using Blackboard.

Check your course Blackboard site daily for new information! Many of the assignments and assessments of student learning in this course will be done electronically using Blackboard. You must establish access to this new version of Blackboard at the start of the semester, using your Aggie Email username and password.

Use these parts of the course website to:

- Read and consult the syllabus
- Check for daily/weekly announcements from instructors
- Take the online quizzes = Course Information
- Check your quiz and exam scores
- View the lists of key terms
- Investigate issues
- Discuss issues

You must resolve any A&T Email and Blackboard issues by exercising due diligence on your own. Call or visit the Aggie Help Desk = (336) 334-7195 (basement of Bluford Library) when you have any technical problems. For Aggie Email Accounts go to <http://www.ncat.edu/accounts/request.php>

DISABILITY SUPPORT SERVICES: The Office of Disability Support Services operates as an integral part of the [Division of Student Affairs](#) at North Carolina A&T State University. The scope of the services offered are essential to our students' total development as they matriculate at the University. The basic philosophy of the Office reflects an attitude of human worth, value and ability in all persons. Thus, the mission is that of providing the necessary services and aid for the comprehensive development of the students served. Students with documented disability and who are registered with the Office have access to services such as: Personal, career and academic counseling, testing accommodations, note takers/scribes, assistive listening devices, use of tape recorders (2 and 4 track), accessible Housing, classroom and program accessibility, assistance with textbooks on tape, and assistance with the registration process. (This is only a partial listing of services available.) Services are fashioned in response to individual student disability and need. Accommodations and academic adjustments must be requested by students. Office hours are from 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m., Monday - Friday. For additional information, please contact Peggy Oliphant, Veteran and Disability Support Services, Room 005 Murphy Hall, 336.334.7765 or email her at oliphant@ncat.edu.

Grading/ Assessment Plan

Assessment	Points
Exam 1	100
Exam 2	100
Exam 3	100
Exam 4	100
Final Exam	200
Attendance/Participation Worksheets, Clicker Quizzes, Response Papers, and other assignments	100 - 200
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Total Points	700 - 800

Grade Scale

The grading scale is A, B, C, D, F

Grade	Percentage (%)
A	90-100
B	80-89
C	70-79
D	60-69
F	Below 60

Lists of Key Terms:

While reading each assignment and at the end of each unit, students are encouraged to create and use lists of key terms to review and prepare for the quizzes. Make sure you can identify each term and its relationship to the major themes of the course. The lists should also help students stay focused on the main points when they take notes on the readings.