

**HIST 411: Saving Nations (Reacting to the Past)**  
University of Oregon – Winter 2018 – CRN [27201](#)

**Instructor:** Ian F. McNeely, Professor of History  
**Meeting times:** MW 10:00-11:50 in 189 PLC  
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### **Description**

This course employs an exciting new approach to learning called [Reacting to the Past](#), or simply “Reacting.” Reacting courses consist of elaborate games, set in the past, in which students are assigned roles informed by historical texts. In this class, you will learn to construct arguments from these texts and then support your positions through reasoned, sometimes impassioned, writing and speeches. As you take control of an unfolding historical drama and struggle for your characters to prevail, you will become deeply engaged, both intellectually and emotionally, with the subject matter. I will act as the gamemaster, determining your roles, preparing you to play, grading your work, and occasionally nudging the games as they develop.

We will be playing two games over the ten-week term, each of which focuses on the theme of “saving nations.” The first focuses on the lead-up to the Partition of India in 1947, the second on the U.N. debate on the Rwandan genocide in 1994. Both games (but especially India) highlight the ethnic, religious, social, and political divisions that can tear nations apart. Both (but especially Rwanda) also highlight the practical and moral limits to interventions by Western powers and the rest of the international community to prevent violence. Each game is described in more detail below.

*Defining a Nation: India on the Eve of Independence, 1945* is set at Simla, in the foothills of the Himalayas, where the British viceroy has invited leaders of various religious and political constituencies to work out the future of Britain’s largest colony. Will the British transfer power to the Indian National Congress, which claims to speak for all Indians? Or will a separate Muslim state—Pakistan—be carved out of India to be ruled by Muslims, as the Muslim League proposes? And what will happen to the vulnerable minorities—such as the Sikhs and untouchables—or the hundreds of princely states? As British authority wanes, smoldering tensions among Hindus, Muslims, and Sikhs increasingly flare into violent riots that threaten to ignite all India. Towering above it all is the frail but formidable figure of Gandhi, whom some revere as an apostle of non-violence and others regard as a conniving Hindu politician. Students struggle to reconcile religious identity with nation building—perhaps the most intractable and important issue of the modern world.

***The Needs of Others: Human Rights, International Organizations and Intervention in Rwanda, 1994*** invites students to consider what responsibility individuals and states have to each other, to their own citizens and to citizens of other nations. The game asks players to respond to rapidly spreading genocidal massacres in Rwanda in April and May of 1994. Some players will, as part of the United Nations Security Council (UNSC), have the authority and responsibility to debate proposals and make policy. Others, as leaders of non-governmental organizations (NGOs), journalists or representatives of public opinion, will attempt to learn more about what's going on in Rwanda and influence public policy based on this knowledge. During the game, they decide whether events in Rwanda constitute genocide and, if so, how the international community should respond. As they do, they gain a deeper understanding of genocide, of ideas about humanitarian intervention and of the dynamics of debates about humanitarian intervention in the international community.

### **Learning objectives**

This course will improve your ability to:

1. Speak and write clearly, analytically, and persuasively.
2. Read complicated texts and critically evaluate their arguments and evidence.
3. Lead discussions, conduct negotiations, and work in teams to solve problems in a climate of rival interests, irreconcilable values, and incomplete information.
4. Analyze—through simulated firsthand experience—the extent to which individuals and groups can affect the course of history.
5. Explain why some historical situations lead to intractable conflicts and tragic outcomes.
6. Explain the successes and failures of both nation-states and the international community to organize human beings politically.

### **Workload**

The readings at the beginning of each game are difficult by design, intended to familiarize you very rapidly with complex historical, political, and moral dilemmas. Don't be alarmed or discouraged; this is part of the plan. Nor should you be fooled by the absence of reading assignments in the weeks when the game is being played. During this time, you will be frantically caucusing with other members of your factions (both online and in person), drafting speeches and writing assignments using arguments derived from course texts, rebutting and co-opting your fellow students' own speeches and writings, and repeatedly delving back into the course material to fashion new arguments and develop an ever deeper understanding of the issues. Many students become so immersed in their roles that they devote extra time to the course over and above the formal requirements. Don't hesitate to get involved in this way—it's part of what Reacting is all about—but don't let other obligations fall by the wayside!

## Grades and assignments

- 10% Quiz #1 on 1/15 (due online by 11:59pm)
- 15% Paper #1 due between 1/22 and 1/29 depending on your role
- 15% Paper #2 due either 2/5 or 2/7 depending on your role
- 10% Quiz #2 on 2/19
- 30% Two further papers due between 2/21 and 3/7 depending on your role
- 20% Class participation

Grades and other course materials will be posted on Canvas ([canvas.uoregon.edu](https://canvas.uoregon.edu)). There is no final exam and no assignments are due during exam week.

The **quizzes** test your understanding of the background history that we will be studying during the preparation for each game; they will be objective in format, with multiple-choice and/or short answer questions.

The **papers** you are responsible for depend on your role; more guidance will be given in class and on role sheets. Most will take the form of short speeches or position papers taking a particular stance on a given issue. You may be called upon to read yours aloud in class. While papers need not (and probably should not) be written in traditional academic style, they should still cite evidence, make logical arguments, consider the views of others, and exhibit good style and perfect grammar and spelling. The length is up to you, but three pages ( $\pm 750$  words) is typical. General grading standards will be discussed in class.

You should post each of your papers on Canvas **twice**, once under `Assignments` for me to grade, and once under `Discussions` to give your classmates a record of what your character has argued. Newspaper-writers in the Rwanda game must, additionally, bring enough hard copies of their stories to class sessions *for me and everyone else in the class*.

The **class participation** component of your grade is based on how *successfully* you play your assigned role, but also on how *faithfully* you do so. Do not be tempted into being untrue to your character purely to advance your victory objectives, or to avoid a tragic end of the game. It will cost you if you do so.

In determining your class participation grade, I'll be paying close attention to a number of factors: the quality and quantity of your public statements during open discussions and faction meetings, your ability to make alliances—and handle disagreements—with other players, and the depth of your engagement with course readings. Lastly, you may be rewarded for winning the game and achieving your victory objectives, but this is a small component of the participation grade since the game is to some extent biased toward certain outcomes.

As a practical matter I maintain a log with a record of each student's participation. I also keep track of what students are doing outside of class in preparation for the game.

Because I will be in frequent communication with game players, I have a good idea of what different individuals and different factions are doing and thinking about doing.

**Class attendance is required:** the games simply will not function in your absence. You will not be able to properly play your roles without attending the pre-game sessions. Missing two sessions of the games themselves without a valid excuse will result in failure for the course.

### Readings

All readings for this course are posted as PDF files on Canvas ([canvas.uoregon.edu](https://canvas.uoregon.edu)) under Files > Readings. You do not need to buy anything at the UO Duckstore.

Reading assignments on the schedule below should be completed *before* the relevant class. I highly recommend that you download the readings, print them out, and mark them up as you read, underlining key sentences and making notes in the margins. This will help you retain what you read.

#### India game

Ian Copland, *India 1885-1947: The Unmaking of an Empire* (London and New York: Routledge, 2014 [2001]), 53-63.

Ainslie Embree and Mark C. Carnes, *Defining a Nation: India on the Eve of Independence, 1945* (Pearson, 2006), 1-33, 44-56.

Stephen Hay (ed.), *Sources of Indian Tradition*, vol. 2 (“Modern India and Pakistan”), 2nd ed. (Columbia/Perseus, 1988), 222-33, 236-41, 243-70, 289-95, 324-32.

Stanley Wolpert, *India*, 3<sup>rd</sup> ed. (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 2005), 118-33.

#### Rwanda game

Michael Barnett, *Eyewitness to a Genocide: The United Nations and Rwanda* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2002), 22-48.

Kelly McFall, *The Needs of Others: Human Rights, International Organizations and Intervention in Rwanda, 1994*. Reacting to the Past Game in Development.

Jerome Slater and Terry Nardin, “Nonintervention and Human Rights,” *Journal of Politics* 48 (1986): 86-96.

Fernando Tesón, *Humanitarian Intervention: An Inquiry into Law and Morality* (Ardstley, NY: Transnational Publishers, 2005), 111-123.

Additional readings TBD (=to be determined) will be assigned after each game ends (on 2/12 and 3/14 for India and Rwanda, respectively) and will be chosen to shed light on whatever issues were most salient during the class sessions. Expect about 100 pages of reading on each day. PDFs will be posted to Canvas.

## Schedule

<b>Date</b>	<b>Activity</b>	<b>Homework (complete before class)</b>
1/8	Introduction to the course; structure of the India game: rules and roles	Embree and Carnes, 1-10
1/10	Historical background; roles assigned; reading sources and writing speeches	Embree and Carnes, 11-33, 44-56
(1/15)	<b>MLK DAY.</b> Quiz #1 due online; factions caucus outside of class	Read role sheet; Hay; Copland; Wolpert
1/17	Governors General convene; factions caucus in class	Catch up on readings
1/22	Presentations by Sikhs, Nizam, Maharaja, Communists, Untouchables	Paper #1 due for these factions
1/24	Presentations by Indian National Congress, Muslim League, and Gandhi adherents	Paper #1 due for these factions
1/29	Governors General present draft plan; open discussion	Paper #1 due for Governors General
1/31	Replies from factions; open discussion	None
2/5	Further discussion	Paper #2 due for all but Governors General
2/7	Implementation of British Plan; postmortem discussion	Paper #2 due for Governors General
2/12	Continue postmortem discussion	TBD – readings to be assigned
2/14	Introduction to Rwanda game	McFall; Barnett
2/19	The philosophy of humanitarian intervention; roles assigned	Slater and Nardin; Tesón
2/21	Quiz #2; the UN, NGOs, the press, and the global community	Catch up on readings; read role sheet
2/26	1 <sup>st</sup> UN Security Council session 1 <sup>st</sup> set of press conferences	Papers due for some roles
2/28	2 <sup>nd</sup> UN Security Council session 2 <sup>nd</sup> set of press conferences	Papers due for some roles
3/5	Read 1 <sup>st</sup> newspapers 3 <sup>rd</sup> UN Security Council session 3 <sup>rd</sup> set of press conferences	Papers due for some roles
3/7	Read 2 <sup>nd</sup> newspapers 4 <sup>th</sup> UN Security Council session 4 <sup>th</sup> set of press conferences	Papers due for some roles
3/12	Read 3 <sup>rd</sup> newspapers 5 <sup>th</sup> UN Security Council session	Papers due for some roles
3/14	Postmortem discussion	TBD – readings to be assigned