

Fall 2011: History 218 (01)  
MWF 11-11:50; SOEB 224

## The World in the Twentieth Century

([www.uncg.edu/~jwjones/world](http://www.uncg.edu/~jwjones/world))

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Office Hours: M 9-10:00; T 3:30-4:30; W 2:30-3:30 and by appointment	

### Course Description

This class, which fulfills the General College Historical Perspective, Modern era, and Global non-Western markers, examines global issues in the contemporary world, focusing mainly on the post-World War II period, from the dropping of atomic bombs on Japan in August 1945, to the complex, high-tech, evolving world of today. We will view this history from the point of view of those living it, including students in the class themselves. Everyone has an “historical consciousness,” an understanding of the way the world became what it is today, and the main purpose of this class is to introduce students to alternative ways of interpreting history by weighing the merits of differing points of view. We will examine the world by region—Europe, Asia, the Middle East, Africa, and Latin America—with a number of themes in mind: the Cold War; the rise & fall of communism; nationalism; the rise of terrorism; de-colonization/neo-colonialism; the international economy; racial, ethnic, & religious conflict; gender; class; & environmental issues.

### Student Learning Outcomes

Upon successful completion of this course students will be able to ...

- Comprehend that history is not just the memorization of dates and facts, but rather the *interpretation* of the past.
- Analyze historical duration, succession, and change in terms of human agency and larger systems or structures in a wide variety of places and periods.
- Use evidence-based reasoning to interpret the past coherently while developing and presenting an original argument, orally and in writing.
- Analyze the key terms, facts, and events in contemporary world history and thereby exhibit an informed historical perspective.
- Critically appraise varying historical arguments and clearly express their own interpretations.
- Critically read and distinguish between different types of historical sources and “read between the lines” of differing points of view.
- Use historical thinking to contextualize and analyze primary and secondary sources representing different points of view.

### Course Readings:

- Ishmael Beah, *A Long Way Gone: Memoirs of a Boy Soldier* (New York: Farrar, Straus, and Giroux, 2008; ISBN: 0374531269).
- Leah Chishugi, *A Long Way From Paradise: Surviving the Rwandan Genocide* (London: Virago Press, 2010; ISBN: 1844086577).
- Le Ly Hayslip, *When Heaven & Earth Changed Places* (New York: Plume, 1993; ISBN: 0452271681).
- Khaled Hosseini, *A Thousand Splendid Suns* (New York: Riverhead Trade, 2008; ISBN: 159448385X).
- Online material identified below

**Course Web Page:** The extensive course web page at [www.uncg.edu/~jwjones/world](http://www.uncg.edu/~jwjones/world) has class notes and readings; Video and Audio Archives; Maps; Visual Tours; Internet Resources; and Internet Assignments. We will also utilize aspects of the Blackboard course web page.

<b>Course Activities:</b>	Two 3-4 page papers	15% each
	Midterm Exam	15%
	Participation	30%
	Final Exam	25%

**Papers:** There are two papers for the course (3-4 pages, double-spaced, 12-point font) that are worth 15% each. The first is a set topic at the beginning of the semester (see the assignment below), while the other one allows for a choice of possible topics (see the topics on the course web page and the due date below). Refer to the [Paper Guidelines](#) for these assignments. All essays will be graded on the basis of these criteria:

- 1) Level of analysis/argumentation. Present a thoughtful argument and interpretation, *not* a mere summary of facts. (Note: it does not matter which side of an issue one argues, only how well or how poorly one makes the argument).
- 2) Use of evidence. The material you select to support your thesis must be relevant and must clearly back up your argument.
- 3) Clarity of communication. You must present the evidence and express your argument in a clear, comprehensible manner.

<p><b>A</b> = excellent performance on all three criteria. <b>B</b> = above average on all three, or excellent on some tempered by flaws in others. <b>C</b> = average across the board, or above average in part but with significant flaws. <b>D</b> = below average overall performance.</p>
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**Exams:** There is a midterm and a final for the course comprised of Identifications and Short Answer Questions. The exams cover *only* the part of the course for which they are designated so they are *not cumulative*. However, the final exam includes a comprehensive Take Home Essay (worth 10% of the overall course grade) that draws on broad themes dealt with all semester.

**Participation:** Your 30% participation grade consists of online Discussion Posts (1-2 paragraphs in response to the readings and material designated below); two Internet Assignments as noted below; and Response Papers (1-2 pages double-spaced) to the readings and prompts designated below. The instructor may also assign pop quizzes based on the readings as part of the participation grade as well.

**Grading:** Grades are compiled on a point system. For example, if you make 88 on the 1<sup>st</sup> paper (13.2/15) + 90 on the 2<sup>nd</sup> paper (13.5/15) + 86 on the Mid-term (12.9/15) + 90 on participation (27/30) + 88 on the Final (13.2/15) + 90 on your Final Take Home Essay (9/10), your Final Grade = 88.8 = 89 or B+. Grades will be posted on Blackboard.

## Lecture & Assignment Schedule:

Monday, August 22. Introduction to the Course

**\*\*1<sup>st</sup> Paper Assignment: In your opinion, what were the main reasons US President Harry Truman decided to use atomic bombs on Japan in August 1945? Do you agree or disagree with his decision?**

Required Sources: [“Thank God for the Atomic Bomb”](#); [“Hiroshima: Needless Slaughter, Useful Terror”](#) by William Blum; *Extra!* Update, [“Media to Smithsonian: History is Bunk”](#); [Government documents](#) (Stimson’s diary entry and President Truman’s meeting with advisers); [Basic Information on the Bomb](#); [“Second Guessing Hiroshima”](#); [“Hiroshima: Was it Necessary?”](#) by Doug Long; [A Petition to the President of the United States](#); [“The Decision That Launched the Enola Gay”](#) by John Correll; [“Diary Shows Tojo Resisted Surrender Till End”](#) by Mari Yamaguchi; and [“The Day Hiroshima turned into Hell”](#) by Cajsa Wikstrom; view the video clip [“Truman and the Bomb”](#) (19:45). Refer to the [Paper Guidelines](#) for further information regarding this assignment.

**Due: Friday, September 2**

Wednesday, August 24. The Origins of the Cold War

Friday, August 26. The Origins of the Cold War (cont’d)

- Reading for August 29: come prepared to discuss the readings for the 1<sup>st</sup> Paper Assignment

Monday, August 29. Truman & the Bomb: Discussion of Readings for the 1<sup>st</sup> Paper

- Reading for August 31: 1) [Excerpts from Stalin](#) by Hiroaki Kuromiya; 2) [Speech by Soviet leader Andrei Zhdanov](#); and 3) speech by Harry Truman announcing the [Truman Doctrine](#); **POST YOUR REACTIONS TO THESE READINGS ON Bb DISCUSSION BOARD BY TUESDAY AT NOON**

Wednesday, August 31. Stalinism in the USSR

Friday, September 2. The USSR After Stalin

- **1<sup>st</sup> Paper Due in class**

- Reading for September 7: [Excerpts from Putin’s Russia: Past Imperfect, Future Uncertain](#), ed. by Dale Herspring; **POST YOUR REACTIONS TO THESE READINGS ON Bb DISCUSSION BOARD BY TUESDAY AT NOON**

Wednesday, September 7. Post-Soviet Russia

Friday, September 9. Conflict in the Balkans

- BEGIN READING *A Thousand Splendid Suns* by Khaled Hosseini; **\*\*Prompt for Response Paper 1**: Provide evidence from the novel to describe how patriarchy (male control or dominance over society) works in Afghanistan and to support one of these two arguments:
  - This source shows that women had little or no power in Afghan society and that they were mere objects in the eyes of men.

*or*

  - This source shows that women in Afghan society had a great deal of *informal* power and could at times manipulate the patriarchal system to their advantage. (Remember to refer to evidence from the book to address this question; 1-2 pages double-spaced). **Due September 23**

- Reading for September 12: Richard Aldrich, [“America Used Islamicists to Arm the Bosnian Muslims;”](#) and [Book Review of \*The Balkan Tragedy: Chaos and Dissolution After the Cold War\*](#) by Susan Woodward  
Monday, September 12. Conflict in the Balkans (cont’d)

Wednesday, September 14. India: the Struggle for Independence

- Reading for September 16: [Time’s Man of the Year for 1930: Mohandas K. Gandhi](#); excerpts from [Nectar in a Sieve](#) by Kamala Markandaya; and [“Who are India’s Untouchables?”](#) by Tim O’Neill and Heidi Schultz; **POST YOUR REACTION TO THESE READINGS ON Bb DISCUSSION BOARD BY THURSDAY AT NOON**

Friday, September 16. India: the Struggle for Independence (cont’d)

Monday, September 19. A Region in Conflict: India & Pakistan

- Reading for September 21: David Gibbs, [“Forgotten Coverage of Afghan ‘Freedom Fighters’: the villains of today’s news were heroes in the 80s”](#)

Wednesday, September 21. Afghanistan: A Country in Turmoil

- Reading for September 23: *Thousand Splendid Suns*; **Response Paper 1 due in class**

Friday, September 23. Afghanistan—A Country in Turmoil (cont’d): Discussion of *Thousand Splendid Suns*

- BEGIN READING *When Heaven & Earth Changed Places* by Le Ly Hayslip; **\*\*Prompt for Response Paper 2**: Based on your reading of this memoir respond to the following scenario: it is 1968 and the draft applies to both men and women; the US Army drafted you to fight in Vietnam but you could get out of it by going to college? What would you do and why? (Remember to refer to evidence from the book to address this question; 1-2 pages double-spaced). **Due October 14**

Monday, September 26. Afghanistan: A Country in Turmoil (cont’d)

Wednesday, September 28. China: from Confucianism to Communism

- Reading for September 30: [“Lei Feng, Chairman Mao’s Good Little Fighter”](#); and [“Father is Close, Mother is Close, but Neither Is as Close as Chairman Mao”](#) from *Wild Swans* by Jung Chang; **POST YOUR REACTION TO THESE READINGS ON Bb DISCUSSION BOARD BY THURSDAY AT NOON**

Friday, September 30. Mao & China’s “Constant Revolution”

Monday, October 3. Mao & China’s “Constant Revolution” (cont’d) & China Since Mao

Wednesday, October 5. China Since Mao (cont’d)

Friday, October 7. The Origins of the Vietnam War

Wednesday, October 12. The US in Vietnam

- Reading for October 14: *When Heaven & Earth Changed Places*; **Response Paper 2 due in class**

Friday, October 14. The US in Vietnam (cont’d): Discussion of *When Heaven & Earth Changed Places*

Monday, October 17. **MID-TERM EXAM**

Wednesday, October 19. Iran: From Secularism to Fundamentalism

- Assignment for October 21: do the Internet Assignment [“Operation Ajax”](#); **POST YOUR RESPONSE TO THIS ASSIGNMENT ON Bb DISCUSSION BOARD BY THURSDAY AT NOON**

Friday, October 21. Iran: From Secularism to Fundamentalism (cont’d)

Monday, October 24. Iraq & Kuwait: A Collision Course

- Reading and Assignment for October 26: [“Excerpts from the 9/11 National Commission Report on Terrorist Attacks Upon the United States”](#) (Chapters 7 & 10) and do the Internet Assignment [“What Would Muhammad Drive?”](#); **POST A BRIEF REACTION TO THESE READINGS AND YOUR RESPONSES TO THE INTERNET ASSIGNMENT ON Bb DISCUSSION BOARD BY TUESDAY AT NOON**

Wednesday, October 26. Persian Gulf Wars

Friday, October 28. Persian Gulf Wars (cont’d) & the Origins of the Arab-Israeli Conflict

Monday, October 31. The Arab-Israeli Conflict

- **BEGIN READING** Excerpts from *In Search of Fatima: A Palestinian Story* by Ghada Karmi: [Part A](#); [Part B](#); and [“In Search of Fatima by Ghada Karmi: Review”](#) by Natalie Bennett; **\*\*Prompt for Response Paper 3**: It is 1948 and you are a young girl (roughly Ghada Karmi’s age at the time) in a family of Jewish Holocaust survivors from Poland who emigrated to Israel and moved into the Karmi family home, where you grew up. Relay the events described in Karmi’s account from your perspective. (Remember to refer to evidence from the book to address this question; 1-2 pages double-spaced). **Due November 4**

Wednesday, November 2. The Arab-Israeli Conflict (cont’d)

- Reading for November 4: Excerpts from *In Search of Fatima*; **Response Paper 3 due in class**

Friday, November 4. The Arab-Israeli Conflict (cont’d)

- **BEGIN READING** *A Long Way Gone* by Ishmael Beah; **\*\*Prompt for Response Paper 4**: Based on your reading of this memoir respond to the following scenario: you have a chance to buy a beautiful diamond ring for a bargain price; all you know about it is that the diamond originated in Sierra Leone in the late 1990s or early 2000s. Would you purchase the ring? Why or why not? (Remember to refer to evidence from the book to address this question; 1-2 pages double-spaced). **Due November 11**

Monday, November 7. The Arab-Israeli Conflict: Is there hope for peace?

Wednesday, November 9. Conflict in West Africa: Sierra Leone

- Reading for November 11: *A Long Way Gone*; **\*\*Response Paper 4 due in class**

Friday, November 11. Conflict in West Africa—Sierra Leone (cont’d): Discussion of *A Long Way Gone*

- BEGIN READING *A Long Way From Paradise* by Leah Chishugi; **\*\*Prompt for Response Paper 5:** Based on your reading of this memoir, which factor do you think played *the most significant role* in explaining the Rwandan genocide—ethnic hatred, economic problems (i.e. the collapse of world coffee prices), or demographic/population issues—and why? (Remember to refer to evidence from the book to address this question; 1-2 pages double-spaced). **Due Monday, November 21**

Monday, November 14. Genocide in Darfur

Wednesday, November 16. Genocide in Darfur (cont'd) & Genocide in Rwanda

- Reading for November 18: Jared Diamond, [“Malthus in Africa: Rwanda’s Genocide”](#)

Friday, November 18. Genocide in Rwanda (cont'd)

- Reading for November 21: [“The Life After”](#) by Phillip Gourevitch and *A Long Way From Paradise* by Leah Chishugi; **\*\*Response Paper 5 due in class**

Monday, November 21. Genocide in Rwanda (cont'd)

- Reading for November 28: Excerpts from *Child of the Dark* by Maria Carolina de Jesus and [“Causes of World Hunger”](#); **POST YOUR REACTION TO THIS MATERIAL ON Bb DISCUSSION BOARD BY SUNDAY AT NOON**

Monday, November 28. South America: Brazil

Wednesday, November 30. South America: Chile

Friday, December 2. Central America: Guatemala. **2<sup>nd</sup> Paper Due in class**

Monday, December 5. TBA

**Final Exam: Monday, December 12 Noon-3:00**

**FINAL EXAM TAKE HOME ESSAY (4-6 pages double-spaced); DUE THE DAY OF THE EXAM.**

**Choose 1** of the following topics for your essay:

1. We have examined the contemporary world with a number of general themes in mind, including the Cold War; the rise and fall of communism; nationalism; de-colonization/neo-colonialism; the rise of terrorism; the international economy; racial, ethnic, and religious conflict; gender; class; and environmental issues. Which of these themes do you think has been most important in shaping the contemporary world and why? Which of these themes do you think is likely to be most important in the future? Defend your choice(s) against some of the other themes and use at least three readings from the course to support your argument.
2. In your opinion, why has the so-called “third world” been the site of most of the world’s conflicts since 1945? Use at least three readings from the course to support your argument.
3. One scholar has argued that the history of the post-World War II era shows that “Western” ideas of democracy, human rights, and capitalism have triumphed around the world. Do you agree? Why or why not? Provide specific examples from at least three course readings to support your argument.