

Fall 2012: History 218 (01)
MWF 10-10:50; MHRA 1215

The World in the Twentieth Century

(www.uncg.edu/~jwjones/world)

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Office Hours: M 11-11:50; T 2-3:15; F 9-9:50 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

General College Historical Perspective (GHP) SLOs:

1. Use a historical approach to analyze and contextualize primary and secondary sources representing divergent perspectives.
2. Use evidence to interpret the past coherently, orally and/or in writing.

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

- Comprehend that history is not 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.
- 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.

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 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.

Course Activities:	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>A = excellent performance on all three criteria. B = above average on all three, or excellent on some tempered by flaws in others. C = average across the board, or above average in part but with significant flaws. D = below average overall performance.</p>

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 1st paper (13.2/15) + 90 on the 2nd 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 20. Introduction to the Course

****1st 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”](#) by Paul Fussell; [“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 Cajsja Wikstrom; view the video clip [“Truman and the Bomb”](#) (19:45). Refer to the [Paper Guidelines](#) for further information regarding this assignment. **Due: Friday, August 31**

Wednesday, August 22. The Origins of the Cold War

Friday, August 24. The Origins of the Cold War (cont’d)

- [Reading for August 27](#): come prepared to discuss the readings for the 1st Paper Assignment
Monday, August 27. Truman & the Bomb: Discussion of Readings for the 1st Paper

- [Reading for August 29](#): 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 WEDNESDAY AT 8AM**

Wednesday, August 29. Stalinism in the USSR

Friday, August 31. The USSR After Stalin

- **1st Paper Due in class**

- [Reading for September 5](#): [Excerpts from *Putin’s Russia: Past Imperfect, Future Uncertain*](#), ed. by Dale Herspring; **POST YOUR REACTIONS TO THESE READINGS ON Bb DISCUSSION BOARD BY WEDNESDAY AT 8AM**

Wednesday, September 5. Post-Soviet Russia

Friday, September 7. 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 21**

- [Reading for September 10](#): 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 10. Conflict in the Balkans (cont’d)

Wednesday, September 12. India: the Struggle for Independence

- Reading for September 14: [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 FRIDAY AT 8AM**

Friday, September 14. India: the Struggle for Independence (cont'd)

Monday, September 17. A Region in Conflict: India & Pakistan

- Reading for September 19: David Gibbs, ["Forgotten Coverage of Afghan 'Freedom Fighters': the villains of today's news were heroes in the 80s"](#)

Wednesday, September 19. Afghanistan: A Country in Turmoil

- Reading for September 21: *Thousand Splendid Suns*; **Response Paper 1 due in class**

Friday, September 21. 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 agree or disagree with this comment: "despite everything US intervention in Vietnam was definitely justified." (Remember to refer to evidence from the book to address this question; 1-2 pages double-spaced). **Due October 10**

Monday, September 24. Afghanistan: A Country in Turmoil (cont'd)

Wednesday, September 26. China: from Confucianism to Communism

- Reading for September 28: ["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 FRIDAY AT 8AM**

Friday, September 28. Mao & China's "Constant Revolution"

Monday, October 1. Mao & China's "Constant Revolution": The Cultural Revolution

Wednesday, October 3. China Since Mao

Friday, October 5. The Origins of the Vietnam War

Monday, October 8. The US in Vietnam

- Reading for October 10: *When Heaven & Earth Changed Places*; **Response Paper 2 due in class**

Wednesday, October 10. The US in Vietnam (cont'd): Discussion of *When Heaven & Earth Changed Places*

Friday, October 12. **MID-TERM EXAM**

- Assignment for October 17: do the Internet Assignment ["Operation Ajax"](#); **POST YOUR RESPONSE TO THIS ASSIGNMENT ON Bb DISCUSSION BOARD BY WEDNESDAY AT 8AM**

Wednesday, October 17. Iran: From Secularism to Fundamentalism

Friday, October 19. Iran: From Secularism to Fundamentalism (cont'd)

Monday, October 22. Iraq & Kuwait: A Collision Course

- Reading and Assignment for October 24: “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 WEDNESDAY AT 8AM**

Wednesday, October 24. Persian Gulf Wars

Friday, October 26. Persian Gulf Wars (cont'd) & the Origins of the Arab-Israeli Conflict

Monday, October 29. 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:** You are a young Jewish girl from Poland who survived the Holocaust along with your mother (your father and two siblings died in the Holocaust); in 1948 the two of you emigrated to Israel along with your aunt and moved into the abandoned Karmi family home. How might you remember some of the events described in Karmi’s account, i.e. the bombing of the King David Hotel, Deir Yassin, Arab flight, the 1948 War, etc. from *your* perspective? (Remember to refer to evidence from the book to address this question; 1-2 pages double-spaced). **Due November 2**

Wednesday, October 31. The Arab-Israeli Conflict (cont'd)

- Reading for November 2: Excerpts from *In Search of Fatima*; **Response Paper 3 due in class**
- Friday, November 2. 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: it is the year 2000 and 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 during the conflict there in the 1990s. 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 9**

Monday, November 5. The Arab-Israeli Conflict: Is there hope for peace?

Wednesday, November 7. An Overview of Modern Africa: “With These Hands”

- Reading for November 9: *A Long Way Gone*; **Response Paper 4 due in class**

Friday, November 9. Conflict in West Africa—Sierra Leone: Discussion of *A Long Way Gone*

- BEGIN READING *A Long Way From Paradise* by Leah Chishugi; ****Prompt for Response Paper 5:** 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 readings and lectures to address this question; 1-2 pages double-spaced). **Due Monday, November 19**

Monday, November 12. Genocide in Darfur

Wednesday, November 14. Genocide in Darfur (cont'd) & Genocide in Rwanda

- Reading for November 16: Jared Diamond, [“Malthus in Africa: Rwanda’s Genocide”](#)

Friday, November 16. Genocide in Rwanda (cont'd)

- OPTIONAL Reading for November 19: [“The Life After”](#) by Phillip Gourevitch and *A Long Way From Paradise* by Leah Chishugi; ****Response Paper 5 due in class**

Monday, November 19. Genocide in Rwanda (cont'd): Discussion of the Reading

- Reading for November 26: 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 MONDAY AT 8AM**

Monday, November 26. South America: Brazil & the IMF

Wednesday, November 28. South America: Chile

Friday, November 30. Central America: Guatemala. **2nd Paper Due in class**

Monday, December 3. TBA

Final Exam: Wednesday, December 5 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.