

Fall 2014: History 218 (01); (3:3) GHP/GN/GMO/IGS  
MW 10-10:50 in FERG 100 with F Recitation Sections

## The World in the Twentieth Century

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

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Office Hours: M 11-11:50; T 1-2:15; F 9-9:50 and by appointment

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### Course Description

This class fulfills the General College Historical Perspective (GHP), Modern era (GMO), and Global non-Western markers (GN), and is cross-listed with IGS. The course examines 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 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 a “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; terrorism; de-colonization/neo-colonialism; the international economy; racial, ethnic, and religious conflict; gender; class; and environmental issues.

### Student Learning Outcomes

General College Historical Perspective (GHP) SLOs:

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

General College Global Non-Western (GN) SLOs:

- Find, interpret, and evaluate information on diverse global cultures.
- Describe interconnections among regions of the world beyond Great Britain and North America. (For GN marker, must include cultures, nations or sub-nationalities in the Caribbean, Latin America, Asia, Africa, Pacific Islands, or indigenous peoples around the world).

Course SLOs: 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:

- Leah Chishugi, *A Long Way From Paradise: Surviving the Rwandan Genocide* (London: Virago, 2012; ISBN: 9781844086573).
- David Harris-Gershon, *What Do You Buy the Children of the Terrorist Who Tried to Kill Your Wife? A Memoir* (London: One World Publications, 2013; ISBN: 9781851689965).
- Khaled Hosseini, *A Thousand Splendid Suns* (New York: Riverhead Trade, 2008; ISBN: 9781594483851).
- Online material identified below

**Course Films:** “A Separation” (2011); “Paradise Now” (2005); “The Official Story” (1985)

<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; defend your argument by effectively refuting “the other side” of the issue.
- 3) Clarity of communication. You must present the evidence and express your argument in a clear, comprehensible manner.

**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.

**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 (see the choice of questions for the Take Home Essay below).

**Participation:** Your 30% participation grade is based on the Discussion Sections led by the Teaching Assistants. The grade consists of your participation in discussion sections, online [Discussion Posts](#) (1-3 paragraphs in response to the readings designated below and the prompts on Bb), [Internet Assignments](#), and [Response Pieces](#) (1-2 pages in response to the prompts listed below to the three books for the course).

**Attendance is required in the Discussion Sections;** each unexcused absence will lead to three points being subtracted from the final participation grade.

**Grading:** Grades are compiled on a point system, i.e. 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 Grade = 88.8 = 89 or B+. Grades will be posted on Blackboard.

### **Lecture & Assignment Schedule:**

Monday, August 18. 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”](#) 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 Cajsa Wikstrom; view the video clip [“Truman and the Bomb”](#) (19:45). Refer to the [Paper Guidelines](#) for further information regarding this assignment. **Due: August 27.**

Wednesday, August 20. Truman & the Bomb and the Origins of the Cold War

Friday, August 22. Discussion Section: Bring a thesis statement and outline for the 1<sup>st</sup> paper

Monday, August 25. The Origins of the Cold War (cont'd)

Wednesday, August 27. Stalinism in the USSR & the USSR after Stalin. **1<sup>st</sup> Paper Due in class**

- 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 RESPONSE TO THE PROMPTS ON Bb DISCUSSION BOARD BY THURSDAY AT MIDNIGHT**

Friday, August 29. Discussion Section

Wednesday, September 3. The USSR after Stalin (cont'd) & Post-Soviet Russia

- Reading for September 5: [Excerpts from Putin's Russia: Past Imperfect, Future Uncertain](#), ed. by Dale Herspring and ["Is Vladimir Putin Insane? Hardly"](#) by Masha Gessen; **POST YOUR RESPONSE TO THE PROMPT ON Bb DISCUSSION BOARD BY THURSDAY AT MIDNIGHT**

Friday, September 5. Discussion Section

- BEGIN READING *A Thousand Splendid Suns* by Khaled Hosseini; **\*\*Prompt for Response Piece 1**: Provide evidence from the novel 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 19.**

Monday, September 8. India: the Struggle for Independence

Wednesday, September 10. India: the Struggle for Independence (cont'd)

- Reading for September 12: Excerpts from [Mahatma Gandhi: All Men Are Brothers: Autobiographical Reflections](#) compiled and edited by Krishna Kripalani; and ["Passive Resistance"](#) from Hind Swaraj or Indian Home Rule by M. K. Gandhi; **POST YOUR RESPONSE TO THE PROMPTS ON Bb DISCUSSION BOARD BY THURSDAY AT MIDNIGHT**

Friday, September 12. Discussion Section

Monday, September 15. Afghanistan: A Country in Turmoil

Wednesday, September 17. Afghanistan—A Country in Turmoil (cont'd)

- Reading for September 19: *Thousand Splendid Suns*; **Response Piece 1 due in class**

Friday, September 19. Discussion Section

Monday, September 22. China: from Confucianism to Communism

Wednesday, September 24. Mao & China's "Constant Revolution"

- Reading for September 26: ["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 RESPONSE TO THE PROMPTS ON Bb DISCUSSION BOARD BY THURSDAY AT MIDNIGHT**

Friday, September 26. China Since Mao

Monday, September 29. The Origins of the Vietnam War

Wednesday, October 1. The US in Vietnam

- Reading for October 3: [Material on Vietnam](#) from Michael Hunt, ed. *The World Transformed*; and excerpt from [When Heaven and Earth Change Places](#) by Le Ly Hayslip; **POST YOUR RESPONSE TO THE PROMPTS ON Bb DISCUSSION BOARD BY THURSDAY AT MIDNIGHT**

Friday, October 3. Discussion Section

Monday, October 6. **MID-TERM EXAM**

Wednesday, October 8. Iran: From Secularism to Fundamentalism

- Film for October 10: View the film [“A Separation”](#) (2011); **POST YOUR RESPONSE TO THE PROMPTS ON Bb DISCUSSION BOARD BY THURSDAY AT MIDNIGHT**

Friday, October 10. Discussion Section

Wednesday, October 15. Iran: From Secularism to Fundamentalism (cont'd)

- Reading and Assignment for October 17: [“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 YOUR RESPONSE TO THE PROMPTS ON Bb DISCUSSION BOARD BY THURSDAY AT MIDNIGHT**

Friday, October 17. Discussion Section

Monday, October 20. Persian Gulf Wars

Wednesday, October 22. Persian Gulf Wars (cont'd)

- Reading and Assignment for October 24: Do the Internet Assignment [“Reel Bad Arabs”](#); **POST YOUR RESPONSE TO THE PROMPT ON Bb DISCUSSION BOARD BY THURSDAY AT MIDNIGHT**

Friday, October 24. Discussion Section

- **BEGIN READING** *What Do You Buy the Children of the Terrorist Who Tried to Kill Your Wife? A Memoir* by David Harris-Gershon; **\*\*Prompt for Response Piece 2**: You are the Palestinian who bombed the cafeteria at the Hebrew Univ. in Jerusalem. Write a statement for court explaining why you decided to take this action (Remember to refer to evidence from the book; 1-2 pages double-spaced). **Due November 7.**

Monday, October 27. The Arab Spring

Wednesday, October 29. The Arab-Israeli Conflict

- Film for October 31: View the film [“Paradise Now”](#) (2005) and read the [controversy over the film](#); **POST YOUR RESPONSE TO THE PROMPTS ON Bb DISCUSSION BOARD BY THURSDAY AT MIDNIGHT**

Friday, October 31. Discussion Section

Monday, November 3. The Arab-Israeli Conflict (cont'd)

Wednesday, November 5. The Arab-Israeli Conflict (cont'd)

- Reading for November 7: *What Do You Buy the Children of the Terrorist Who Tried to Kill Your Wife?*; **\*\*Response Piece 2 due in class**

Friday, November 7. Discussion Section

- BEGIN READING *A Long Way From Paradise* by Leah Chishugi; **\*\*Prompt for Response Piece 3:** Which factor do you think played *the most significant role* in explaining the Rwandan genocide—tensions between Hutus and Tutsis, 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 November 14.**

Monday, November 10. Overview of Africa & Genocide in Rwanda

Wednesday, November 12. Genocide in Rwanda (cont'd)

- Reading for November 14: *A Long Way From Paradise*; **Response Piece 3 due in class**

Friday, November 14. Discussion Section

Monday, November 17. South America: Argentina

Wednesday, November 19. South America: Coup d'état in Chile

- Reading for November 21: View the film "[The Official Story](#)" (1985); **POST YOUR RESPONSE TO THE PROMPTS ON Bb DISCUSSION BOARD BY THURSDAY AT MIDNIGHT**

Friday, November 21. Discussion Section

Monday, November 24. Central America: Coup d'état in Guatemala. **2<sup>nd</sup> Paper Due in class**—see course web page for [list of possible topics](#)

Monday, December 1. TBA

**Final Exam: Wednesday, December 3 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? 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.