

Fall 2016: History 218 (01-04); (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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Teaching Assistants: Kimberly Cheek; Ethan Roy

### 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 Books and Film:

- Ishmael Beah, *A Long Way Gone: Memoirs of a Boy Soldier* (New York: Sarah Crichton Books, 2008; ISBN: 9780374531263)
- Leah Chishugi, *A Long Way From Paradise: Surviving the Rwandan Genocide* (London: Virago, 2012; ISBN: 9781844086573).
- Najla Said, *Looking for Palestine: Growing Up Confused in an Arab-American Family* (New York: Riverhead Books, 2013; ISBN: 9781594487088).
- Khaled Hosseini, *A Thousand Splendid Suns* (New York: Riverhead Trade, 2008; ISBN: 9781594483851).
- “Paradise Now” (2005)

<b>Course Activities:</b>	Two 3-4 page papers	10% each	Participation	50%
	Midterm Exam	10%	Final Exam	20%

**Papers:** There are 2 papers for the course (3-4 pages—750-1000 words—double-spaced, 12-point font) that are worth 10% 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. State your thesis *clearly* and present a thoughtful argument and interpretation, *not* a mere summary of facts.
- 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, coherent, 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 50% 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](#) (1-2 paragraphs in response to the readings designated below and the prompts on Canvas), [Internet Assignments](#), and [Response Pieces](#) (1-2 pages in response to the prompts listed below to the 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. More than three absences in Discussion Sections will result in failing the course.

**Grading:** Grades are compiled on a point system, i.e. if you make 88 on the 1<sup>st</sup> paper (8.8/10) + 90 on the 2<sup>nd</sup> paper (9/10) + 86 on the Mid-term (8.6/10) + 90 on participation (45/50) + 88 on the Final (8.8/10) + 90 on your Final Take Home Essay (9/10), your Grade = **89.2** = B+. Grades will be posted on Canvas.

### 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”](#) 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; [“The Day Hiroshima turned into Hell”](#) by Cajsa Wikstrom; and the video [“Truman and the Bomb”](#) (23:15). Refer to the [Paper Guidelines](#) for more information. **Due August 31.**

Wednesday, August 24. Truman & the Bomb and the Origins of the Cold War

Friday, August 26. Discussion Section: Bring a thesis statement and outline for the 1<sup>st</sup> paper

Monday, August 29. The Origins of the Cold War (cont'd)

Wednesday, August 31. Stalinism in the USSR & the USSR after Stalin. **1<sup>st</sup> Paper Due in class**

- Reading for September 2: 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 the DISCUSSION BOARD BY THURSDAY AT 5:00PM**

Friday, September 2. Discussion Section

Wednesday, September 7. The USSR after Stalin (cont'd) & Post-Soviet Russia

- Reading for September 9: [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 the DISCUSSION BOARD BY THURSDAY AT 5:00PM**

Friday, September 9. 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 23.**

Monday, September 12. India: the Struggle for Independence

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

- Reading for September 16: 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 the DISCUSSION BOARD BY THURSDAY AT 5:00PM**

Friday, September 16. Discussion Section

Monday, September 19. Afghanistan—A Country in Turmoil

Wednesday, September 21. Afghanistan—A Country in Turmoil (cont'd)

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

Friday, September 23. Discussion Section

Monday, September 26. China: from Confucianism to Communism

Wednesday, September 28. Mao & China's “Constant Revolution”

- 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 RESPONSE TO THE PROMPTS ON the DISCUSSION BOARD BY THURSDAY AT 5:00PM**

Friday, September 30. China Since Mao

Monday, October 3. The Origins of the Vietnam War

Wednesday, October 5. The US in Vietnam

- Reading for October 7: [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 the DISCUSSION BOARD BY THURSDAY AT 5:00PM**

Friday, October 7. Discussion Section

Monday, October 10. **MID-TERM EXAM**

Wednesday, October 12. Iran: From Secularism to Fundamentalism

- Assignment for October 14: Do the Internet Assignment [“Operation Ajax”](#); **POST YOUR RESPONSE TO THE PROMPTS ON the DISCUSSION BOARD BY THURSDAY AT 5:00PM**

Friday, October 14. Discussion Section

Wednesday, October 19. Iran: From Secularism to Fundamentalism (cont’d)

- Reading and Assignment for October 21: [“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 the DISCUSSION BOARD BY THURSDAY AT 5:00PM**

Friday, October 21. Discussion Section

Monday, October 24. Persian Gulf Wars

Wednesday, October 26. Persian Gulf Wars (cont’d)

- Assignment for October 28: Do the Internet Assignment [“Reel Bad Arabs”](#); **POST YOUR RESPONSE TO THE PROMPT ON the DISCUSSION BOARD BY THURSDAY AT 5:00PM**

Friday, October 28. Discussion Section

- BEGIN READING *Looking for Palestine: Growing Up Confused in an Arab-American Family* by Najla Said; **\*\*Prompt for Response Piece 2:** According to [a reviewer](#) “one might argue that [this] book could have been titled *Looking for Edward* [or], better yet, *Looking for Najla*”—why do you think Said titled her memoir *Looking for Palestine* instead? (Remember to refer to evidence from the book; 1-2 pages double-spaced). **Due November 11.**

Monday, October 31. The Rise of ISIS

Wednesday, November 2. The Arab-Israeli Conflict

- Film and Reading for November 4: View [“Paradise Now”](#) (2005) and read the [controversy over the film](#); and [Abu Musab al-Zarqawi’s Letter to Osama bin Laden](#) (2004); **POST YOUR RESPONSE TO THE PROMPTS ON the DISCUSSION BOARD BY THURSDAY AT 5:00PM**

Friday, November 4. Discussion Section

Monday, November 7. The Arab-Israeli Conflict (cont’d)

Wednesday, November 9. The Arab-Israeli Conflict (cont’d)

- Reading for November 11: *Looking for Palestine*; **\*\*Response Piece 2 due in class**  
Friday, November 11. 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 reading and lectures to address this question; 1-2 pages double-spaced). **Due November 18.**

Monday, November 14. Genocide in Rwanda

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

- Reading for November 18: *A Long Way From Paradise*; **Response Piece 3 due in class**  
Friday, November 18. Discussion Section

- BEGIN READING *A Long Way Gone* by Ishmael Beah; **\*\*Prompt for Response Piece 4:** Based on your reading of this memoir respond to the following scenario: a good friend wants to propose to his fiancé. He tells you that he has a chance to buy a beautiful diamond ring for a bargain price, and all he knows about it is that the diamond originated in Sierra Leone during the conflict there in the 1990s. What advice would you give your friend about purchasing the ring? (Remember to use evidence from the reading and lecture to address this question; 1-2 pages double-spaced). **Due December 2.**

Monday, November 21. Sierra Leone: Diamond Wars

Monday, November 28. South America: Coup d'état in Chile

Wednesday, November 30. Central America: Coup d'état in Guatemala. **2<sup>nd</sup> Paper Due in class**—see the [list of possible topics](#)

- Reading for December 2: *A Long Way Gone* by Ishmael Beah; **Response Piece 4 due in class**  
Friday, December 2. Discussion Section

Monday, December 5. TBA

### **Final Exam: Wednesday, December 7 at Noon**

**FINAL EXAM TAKE HOME ESSAY: (3-6 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.