

Fall 2017: History 218 (01-02); (3:3) GHP/GN/GMO/IGS
MW 10-10:50 in MHRA 1214 with F Recitation Sections

The World in the Twentieth Century

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

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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 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).
- Khaled Hosseini, *A Thousand Splendid Suns* (New York: Riverhead Trade, 2008; ISBN: 9781594483851).
- “Paradise Now” (2005)

Course Activities:	Two 3-4 page papers	10% each
	Midterm Exam	15%
	Participation	40%
	Final Exam	25%

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 40% participation grade is based on the Discussion Sections led by the Teaching Assistant. The grade consists of 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 1st paper (8.8/10) + 90 on the 2nd paper (9/10) + 86 on the Mid-term (12.9/15) + 90 on participation (36/40) + 88 on the Final (13.2/15) + 90 on your Final Take Home Essay (9/10), your Grade = **88.9 = 89 B+**. Grades will be posted on Canvas.

Lecture & Assignment Schedule:

Wednesday, August 16. 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; [“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 28.**

Friday, August 18. **LECTURE IN MHRA 1214:** Truman & the Bomb and the Origins of the Cold War

Monday, August 21. The Origins of the Cold War (cont’d)

Wednesday, August 23. Stalinism in the USSR & the USSR after Stalin.

- Discussion Section: Bring a thesis statement and outline for the 1st paper
- Friday, August 25. Discussion Section

Monday, August 28. The USSR after Stalin (cont'd) & Post-Soviet Russia. **1st Paper Due in class**

Wednesday, August 30. India: the Struggle for Independence

- Reading for September 1: 1) [Excerpts from *Stalin*](#) by Hiroaki Kuromiya; 2) [Speech by Soviet leader Andrei Zhdanov](#); 3) speech by Harry Truman announcing the [Truman Doctrine](#); and 4) [“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 1. 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 15.**

Wednesday, September 6. India: the Struggle for Independence (cont'd)

- Reading for September 8: 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 8. Discussion Section

Monday, September 11. Afghanistan: A Country in Turmoil

Wednesday, September 13. Afghanistan: A Country in Turmoil (cont'd)

- Reading for September 15: *Thousand Splendid Suns*; **Response Piece 1 due in class**

Friday, September 15. Discussion Section

Monday, September 18. China: from Confucianism to Communism

Wednesday, September 20. Mao & China’s “Constant Revolution”

- Reading for September 22: [“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 22. Discussion Section

Monday, September 25. China Since Mao

Wednesday, September 27. The Origins of the Vietnam War

Friday, September 29. **LECTURE IN MHRA 1214:** The US in Vietnam

Monday, October 2. **MID-TERM EXAM**

Wednesday, October 4. Iran: From Secularism to Fundamentalism

- Assignment for October 6: Do the Internet Assignment [“Operation Ajax”](#); **POST YOUR RESPONSE TO THE PROMPTS ON the DISCUSSION BOARD BY THURSDAY AT 5:00PM**

Friday, October 6. Discussion Section

Wednesday, October 11. Iran: From Secularism to Fundamentalism (cont’d)

Friday, October 13. **LECTURE IN MHRA 1214:** Persian Gulf Wars

Monday, October 16. Persian Gulf Wars (cont’d)

Wednesday, October 18. The Rise and Fall of ISIS

- Readings and Assignment for October 20: 1) [“Excerpts from the 9/11 National Commission Report on Terrorist Attacks Upon the United States”](#) (Chapters 7 & 10); 2) [Abu Musab al-Zarqawi’s Letter to Osama bin Laden](#) (2004); and 3) 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 20. Discussion Section

Monday, October 23. Origins of the Arab-Israeli Conflict

Wednesday, October 25. The Arab-Israeli Conflict (cont’d)

- Film and Reading and Assignment for October 27: View [“Paradise Now”](#) (2005) and read the [controversy over the film](#); **POST YOUR RESPONSE TO THE PROMPTS ON the DISCUSSION BOARD BY THURSDAY AT 5:00PM**

Friday, October 27. Discussion Section

- **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 2:** You and your mother are Holocaust survivors from Poland (your father and brother did not survive); in 1948 you immigrated to Israel and moved into the abandoned Karmi home, where you found Ghada’s diary. Write a letter to Ghada explaining *your* side of some of the events she describes, 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 reading to address this question; 1-2 pages double-spaced). **Due November 3.**

Monday, October 30. The Arab-Israeli Conflict (cont’d)

Wednesday, November 1. Prospects for Peace? The Arab-Israeli Conflict

- Reading for November 3: Excerpts from *In Search of Fatima*; **Response Piece 2 due in class**

Friday, November 3. 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 10.**

Monday, November 6. Genocide in Rwanda

Wednesday, November 8. Genocide in Rwanda (cont'd)

- Reading for November 10: *A Long Way From Paradise*; **Response Piece 3 due in class**
- Friday, November 10. 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 November 17.**

Monday, November 13. Sierra Leone: Diamond Wars

Wednesday, November 15. South America: Coup d'état in Chile

- Reading for November 17: *A Long Way Gone*; **Response Piece 4 due in class**
- Friday, November 17. Discussion Section

Monday, November 20. Central America: Coup d'état in Guatemala. **2nd Paper Due in class**—see the [list of possible topics](#)

Monday, November 27. Cuba: Communism in the Caribbean

Wednesday, November 29. TBA

Final Exam: Wednesday, December 6 at Noon

FINAL EXAM TAKE HOME ESSAY: (3-5 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.