

Fall 2019: History 101 (GHP/GN/GMO)  
MWF 10-10:50; Bryan Bldg. 160

## Contemporary World

Instructor: Jeff Jones	jwjones@uncg.edu
Office: 2139 MHRA Bldg.	Phone: 334-4068
Office Hours: T 12-1:30; W 1-1:50; F 11-12 and by appointment	

### Course Description:

This class fulfills the General College Historical Perspective (GHP), Modern era (GMO), and Global Non-Western markers (GN). The course examines global issues in the contemporary world, focusing mainly on the post-World War II period, from the use 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 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; the rise of terrorism; gender; colonialism/de-colonization; racial/ethnic/religious conflict; and the international economy.

### 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:

- Interpret and evaluate information on diverse global cultures.
- Describe interconnections among cultures, polities, and/or intellectual traditions of the world other than the dominant Euro-American ones.
- Use diverse cultural frames of reference and alternative perspectives to analyze issues.

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.

### Course Readings:

- Ishmael Beah, *A Long Way Gone: Memoirs of a Boy Soldier* (New York: Sarah Crichton Books, 2008; ISBN: 9780374531263)
- Khaled Hosseini, *A Thousand Splendid Suns* (New York: Riverhead Trade, 2008; ISBN: 9781594483851)
- Material identified below

**Required Films:**

- [“Paradise Now”](#) (2005); [“Sometimes in April”](#) (2005)

<b>Course Activities:</b>	One 3-4 page paper	15%
	Midterm Exam	15%
	Participation	45%
	Final Exam	25%

**Paper:** There is one paper for the course (3-4 pages, double-spaced, 12-point font) worth 15% of the course grade. Refer to the [Paper Guidelines](#) for this assignment. 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 the 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.

<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.

**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 at the end of the syllabus).

**Participation:** Your 45% participation grade consists of nine responses to online readings and material (1-2 paragraph replies to the designated prompts, including two Internet Assignments); and three Reaction Pieces (1-3 pages double-spaced; 12-point font) to the designated readings. The RPs are intended to be your *reaction to* or *opinion of* the assigned readings with evidence from the reading(s) to back it up, *not* a summary of the reading.

**Grading:** Grades are compiled on a point system. For example, if you make 88 on the paper (13.2/15) + 86 on the Midterm (12.9/15) + 90 on participation (40.5/45) + 89 on the Final (13.4/15) + 90 on your Final Take Home Essay (9/10), your Final Grade = **89** or B+. Grades will be posted on Canvas. Grading Scale:

A	93-99	B	83-86	C	73-76	D	63-66
A-	90-92	B-	80-82	C-	70-72	D-	60-62
B+	87-89	C+	77-79	D+	67-69	F	59 and below

**Academic Integrity Policy:** Each student is required to sign the Academic Integrity Policy on all major work submitted for the course and to uphold the policy throughout the course. For additional information consult <http://academicintegrity.uncg.edu/complete/>

**Attendance Policy:** We will not take attendance in this course; however, the exams rely *very* heavily on information conveyed in lectures, and consequently students who miss class often will *not* be in a position to do well on the exams. If you have to miss class for a legitimate reason feel free to request the notes missed via email from the instructor, but, of course, each student can only rely on this option a few times at most during the semester.

**Technology Policy:** Studies show that the best way to remember material from a class is to write it down the old-fashioned way with pen and paper and then type it into a computer within 24-48 hours; studies likewise reveal a cumulative *disadvantage* to the use of laptops in classes because of the constant temptation to divert one's attention, and they can also be disruptive to others in the class. For these reasons, and primarily for students' own benefit, **PLEASE DO NOT USE LAPTOPS IN CLASS.**

**Accommodations for Students with Learning and/or Physical Differences:** I will accommodate differently-able students in any way in this class. Students who require accommodations should discuss this with me and/or contact the Office of Disability Services to make any necessary arrangements.

**Course Lecture & Assignment Schedule:**

Wednesday, August 21. Introduction to the Course

**\*\*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”](#) (23:15). Refer to the [Paper Guidelines](#) for further information regarding this assignment. **Due: September 4 by 10AM (submit your paper online)**

Friday, August 23. The Origins of the Cold War

Monday, August 26. The Origins of the Cold War (cont'd)

- Reading for August 28: come prepared to discuss the readings for the Paper Assignment
- Wednesday, August 28. US Containment (cont'd) and Truman & the Bomb

- Reading for August 30: 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 Canvas BY THURSDAY AT 5PM**  
Friday, August 30. Stalinism in the USSR

Wednesday, September 4. The USSR After Stalin

- **Paper Due (submit paper online by 10AM)**

Friday, September 6. Post-Soviet Russia

- BEGIN READING *A Thousand Splendid Suns* by Khaled Hosseini; **Reaction Piece due September 25 (submit your RP online by 10AM on that date)**

Monday, September 9. Conflict in the Balkans

Wednesday, September 11. Conflict in the Balkans (cont'd)

Friday, September 13. India: the Struggle for Independence

Monday, September 16. India: the Struggle for Independence (cont'd)

- Reading for September 18: 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 Canvas BY TUESDAY AT 5PM**

Wednesday, September 18. A Region in Conflict: India & Pakistan

Friday, September 20. Afghanistan: A Country in Turmoil

Monday, September 23. Afghanistan: A Country in Turmoil (cont'd)—Discussion of Reading

- Reading for September 25: *Thousand Splendid Suns*; **RP-1 (submit online by 10AM)**

Wednesday, September 25. Afghanistan: A Country in Turmoil (cont'd)

Friday, September 27. China: from Confucianism to Communism

Monday, September 30. Mao & China's “Constant Revolution”: The Cultural Revolution

- Reading for October 2: [“Lei Feng, Chairman Mao's Good Little Fighter”](#); [“Father is Close, Mother is Close, but Neither Is as Close as Chairman Mao”](#) from *Wild Swans* by Jung Chang; and [“Chinese KFC restaurant dedicated to Communist hero Lei Feng”](#); **POST YOUR RESPONSE TO THE PROMPTS ON Canvas BY TUESDAY AT 5PM**

Wednesday, October 2. China Since Mao

Friday, October 4. The Origins of the Vietnam War

Monday, October 7. The US in Vietnam

- Reading for October 9: Excerpt from [When Heaven & Earth Change Places](#) by Hayslip; **POST YOUR RESPONSE TO THE PROMPTS ON Canvas BY TUESDAY AT 5PM**

Wednesday, October 9. The US in Vietnam (cont'd)

Friday, October 11. **MID-TERM EXAM**

Wednesday, October 16. Iran: From Secularism to Fundamentalism

- Assignment for October 18: do the Internet Assignment [“Operation Ajax”](#); **POST YOUR RESPONSE TO THE PROMPT ON Canvas BY THURSDAY AT 5PM**

Friday, October 18. Iran: From Secularism to Fundamentalism (cont'd)

Monday, October 21. Iraq and Kuwait: A Collision Course

- Reading and Assignment for October 23: [“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 Canvas BY TUESDAY AT 5PM**

Wednesday, October 23. Persian Gulf Wars

- 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; **Reaction Piece due October 30 (submit your RP online by 10AM on that date)**

Friday, October 25. Persian Gulf Wars (cont'd)

Monday, October 28. The Rise (and Fall?) of ISIS

- Reading for October 30: *In Search of Fatima*; **RP-2 due (submit online by 10AM)**

Wednesday, October 30. The Origins of the Arab-Israeli Conflict

- BEGIN READING *A Long Way Gone* by Ishmael Beah; **Reaction Piece due November 8 (submit your RP online by 10AM on that date)**

Friday, November 1. The Arab-Israeli Conflict (cont'd)

Monday, November 4. The Arab-Israeli Conflict (cont'd)

- Assignment for November 6: View the film [“Paradise Now”](#) (2005) and read the [controversy over the film](#); **POST YOUR RESPONSE TO THE PROMPTS ON Canvas BY TUESDAY AT 5PM**

Wednesday, November 6. The Arab-Israeli Conflict: Prospects for Peace?

- Reading for November 8: *A Long Way Gone*; **RP-3 due in class (submit online by 10AM)**

Friday, November 8. Conflict in West Africa—Sierra Leone: Discussion of *A Long Way Gone*

Monday, November 11. The Origins of Genocide in Rwanda

- Assignment for November 13: View the film [“Sometimes in April”](#) (2005) and read the review [“A Grim Excursion to Rwanda’s Hell”](#) by Alessandra Stanley; **POST YOUR RESPONSE TO THE PROMPTS ON Canvas BY TUESDAY AT 5PM**

Wednesday, November 13. Genocide in Rwanda (cont’d)

Friday, November 15. The Origins of Apartheid in South Africa

Monday, November 18. Apartheid South Africa (cont’d)

- Reading for November 20: [“City Lovers”](#) and [“Country Lovers”](#) by Nadine Gordimer; **POST YOUR RESPONSE TO THE PROMPTS ON Canvas BY TUESDAY AT 5PM**

Wednesday, November 20. The Fall of Apartheid

Friday, November 22. South America: Coup d’état in Chile

Monday, November 25. South America: Turmoil in Venezuela

Monday, December 2. Central America: Coup d’état in Guatemala

Wednesday, December 4. TBA

**Final Exam: Wednesday, December 11 at Noon**

**FINAL EXAM TAKE HOME ESSAY: (3-5 pages double-spaced); (submit your essay online by noon Wednesday, December 11). 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 and/or films 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 and/or films 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 readings and/or films from the course to support your argument.