

Fall 2020 HIS 217-11 Online Course Syllabus

The World in the Twentieth Century (1900-1945)



Instructor: Dr. Christopher Davis

Email: cwdavis@uncg.edu

Office: 2710 MHRA Building

Office Hours: Available by Zoom appointment 8:30-5:00 Monday-Friday

“World War I set the violent twentieth century in motion. It was the first use of chemical weapons. The first mass bombardment of civilians from the sky. The century’s first genocide. Never in history had so many taken up arms. Never had war reached so far from the battlefield. Everyone became a soldier, one way or another. . . It colored everything that came before, and shadowed everything that followed.”

- The Great War and the Shaping of the Twentieth Century

Course Description

The first half of the twentieth century was a period of intense global conflict and transformation. At the turn of the century, the Great Powers of Europe and Japan were expanding into Africa and Asia, and the United States was an up and coming power in Latin America and the Pacific. By 1945, Europe and Japan had been devastated by a second world war, and the new rival superpowers of the United States and the Soviet Union had risen from the war’s ashes to engage in a global Cold War. This course explores the events, ideas, movements, and individuals connected to this drastic transformation. The focus of this history is a global one, and as such we will be exploring a variety of social, political, and economic themes that occurred during this time on the regional and international level. Those themes will include the rise of nationalism both among the imperial powers and those resisting those powers, causes and consequences of the First and Second World War, and participation in those conflicts by peoples and nations across the globe.

Regardless of whether a student is, or is considering, majoring in history, this course will provide a valuable and interdisciplinary skillset by teaching how to critically interpret and analyze the past. While retaining a knowledge of the key individuals, events, etc. is an important aspect of learning history, the main goal of this course is to teach students how to understand changes over time, be able to describe how and why these changes occurred, and to use primary and secondary historical sources as evidence for interpretation and analysis. Furthermore, students should by the end of this course also have a greater understanding of how the events of 1900-1945 shaped the world in which they live today.

Course Goals and Outcomes:

A. General Education Historical Perspectives Student Learning Outcomes (GHP)

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

B. The Global Perspectives Student Learning Outcomes (GL)

1. Find, interpret, and evaluate information on diverse cultures, polities, and/or intellectual traditions.
2. Describe interconnections among regions of the world. (Must include substantial focus on at least one culture, nation, or sub-nationality beyond Great Britain and North America).
3. Use diverse cultural frames of reference and alternative perspectives to analyze issues.

Selected Reading:

Relevant selections will be uploaded into the corresponding modules. You do NOT need to purchase these texts:

Perry, Marvin, et al. *Sources of Twentieth Century Europe*. Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 2000.

Madaras, Larry. *Taking Sides: Clashing Views on Controversial Issues in 20th Century American History*. Dubuque: McGraw-Hill, 2006.

Class Performance Evaluation

UNCG defines the grading system for undergraduates as follows:

A = Excellent	Achievement of distinction in several if not all of the following aspects: 1) completeness and accuracy of knowledge; 2) intelligent use of knowledge; 3) independence of work; 4) originality.
B = Good	General achievement superior to the acceptable standard defined as a letter grade of C. It involves excellence in some aspects of the work, as indicated in the definition of A.
C = Average	The acceptable standard for graduation. It involves such quality and quantity of work as may fairly be expected of a student of normal ability who gives to the course a reasonable amount of time, effort, and attention

D = Lowest passing grade	Work falling below the acceptable standards defined as a letter grade of C but which is of sufficient quality and quantity to be counted in the hours of graduation, if balanced by superior work in other courses.
F = Failure	Indicates failure that may not be made up except by repeating the course

Grading Scale (point system)

A+ 100-97	A 96-93	A- 92-90
B+ 89-87	B 86-83	B- 82-80
C+ 79-77	C 76-73	C- 72-70
D+ 69-67	D 66-63	D- 62-60

F = 59 and below

Percentages of Final Grade:

Participation	70%
Mid-Term	15%
Final Exam	15%

Class Policies

1) **CLASS STRUCTURE**

This course is a 8-week course with a module per week to complete (see Module Schedule). Each module will focus on a specific topic of early twentieth century in chronological order, and will include a combination of slides, video lectures, and reading materials. Each module's reading materials will consist of either a primary source document or historiographical debate over an issue relevant to the module's theme. Having viewed and read the materials in each module, students will then complete that week's discussion.

2) **DISCUSSION BOARD PARTICIPATION**

The discussion board for each week's module is how students will demonstrate class participation. The discussion board will pose questions regarding the materials (particularly the primary or historiographical text sample) for which each student must answer one question. Each answer should be no less than five sentences, and each student must post a two-sentence response to TWO other classmates' posts. Responses should (preferably and if possible), be to classmates who answered a different question than themselves. Posts and responses are all due by 11:59pm on the last day of the module (ex. October 16 is the last day of Module Week 1).

3) **EXAMS**

There will be a mid-term exam and a final exam for this course. Both of these exams will be essay format, in which students will answer questions based on what they have learned during this course. Answers do not have a required word or sentence count, but they must be substantive and demonstrate that the student has given critical thought and analysis to their answers. Each exam will be divided into two sections, and each section will contain two questions. You are only required to answer **ONE** question in **EACH** section. Again, pay attention to the Module Schedule as the mid-term is due on November 8 and the final is due on December 3. Exams will be available to take online during the period of the

previous corresponding module (ex. Mid-term will become available during Module Week 4: October 30 – November 6).

4) LATE ASSIGNMENTS

Due to the nature and fact pace of a half-semester online course, late assignments **CANNOT** be accepted. Please pay close attention to the syllabus and modules for when assignments are due. You may turn in assignments early, but not late.

5) PLAGIARISM AND ACADEMIC INTEGRITY

Plagiarism in any form will not be tolerated. Historical study and research relies on the proper use of primary and secondary sources, and students are expected to properly cite any materials that are used in their writing assignments. Any instance of plagiarism will result in a zero for the assignment, and will be reported to the Dean of Students Office for appropriate action. Blatant plagiarism (such as copying and pasting text) or cheating will be grounds for failing the course and will be reported to the Dean of Students Office. For the full Academic Integrity Policy of the University, go to the website listed here:

<https://osrr.uncg.edu/academic-integrity/>

MODULE SCHEDULE

October 9 – October 16/Module Week 1 (On the Eve of The Great War: 1900-1914)

October 16 – October 23/Module Week 2 (World War I - Stalemate: 1914-1916)

October 23 – October 30/Module Week 3 (World War I – Gamechangers: 1917-1918)

October 30 – November 6/Module Week 4 (The Pursuit of a Lasting Peace: 1919)

November 6 – November 13/Module Week 5 (The Failure to Find Peace: 1920-1939)

November 8 – Mid-Term Exam

November 13 – November 20/Module Week 6 (World War II – Axis Power Victories: 1939-1942)

November 20 – November 27/Module Week 7 (World War II – Allied Power Victories: 1943-1945)

November 27 – December 3/Module Week 8 (Aftermath and Review)

December 3 – Final Exam