

Fall 2021: HIS-101 (01) (GHP; GMO; GN; MAC Foundations)
MWF 10-10:50; Jackson Library Rm. 032 (Jarrell Hall)

Contemporary World

Instructor: Jeff Jones

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Office Hours: M 12-1:30; T 11-12; W 11:30-1; and by appointment

Course Description:

This class fulfills the GHP, GMO and GN requirements of the old General Education System and the Foundations Competency (C1) of the new MAC General Education System. The purpose of this course is to introduce students to the historical roots of the key events, issues and themes in modern world history, 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 a goal 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; violent vs. non-violent resistance to oppression; the rise of terrorism; gender relations; colonialism/decolonization; racial/ethnic/religious diversity and conflict; and the international economy.

General Education Council Course MAC Foundations Competency:

Foundations courses connect students to the campus community by combining university transition content, information literacy, and transferable skills acquisition to facilitate academic and personal development. Upon successful completion of this foundations course, students will:

1. Develop academic skills in order to demonstrate the ability to identify and use campus services and resources (e.g. Library, Writing Center, Speaking Center).
2. Develop goals and plans related to personal purpose, interests, or values between self and community.
3. Build connections between self and community relationships with peers, faculty, and staff (e.g., UNCG, college/student/department, special interest group, social/leadership/service initiative).
4. Critically evaluate information and media sources in a variety of formats.
5. Incorporate and cite sources accurately and correctly.

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.
- Use a historical approach to analyze and contextualize primary and secondary sources representing divergent perspectives.
- Interpret and evaluate information on diverse global cultures.

Course Readings & Film:

- Ishmael Beah, *A Long Way Gone: Memoirs of a Boy Soldier* (New York: Sarah Crichton Books, 2008)
- Khaled Hosseini, *A Thousand Splendid Suns* (New York: Riverhead Trade, 2008)
- [“Paradise Now”](#) (2005) directed by Hany Abu-Assad
- Material identified below

Course Activities:	One 3-4 page paper	15%	Participation	45%
	Midterm Exam	15%	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 guidance. Essays are graded based on 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 clearly back up your argument; defend your argument by effectively refuting “the other side.”
- 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 Slide IDs, 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).

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, i.e. 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

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.**

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 and Policy on Missed Coursework and Exams: Attendance is not required for this course. If a student has to miss class for a valid reason, they can request the written notes for that class from the professor via email (up to three instances). If a student misses some of the required coursework, they can make it up in consultation with the instructor. Missed exams cannot be made up.

Health and Wellness Statement: Health and well-being impact learning and academic success. Student Health Services and The Counseling Center can help with these or other issues you may experience. You can learn about the free, confidential mental health services available on campus by calling 336-334-5874 or visiting the website at <https://shs.uncg.edu/>.

Accommodations for Students with Learning and/or Physical Differences: We 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.

Elasticity Statement: The idea is that this syllabus and course calendar will be followed as outlined; however, as the need arises there may be adjustments. In such cases, the instructor will notify students in class, via e-mail, and/or as an Announcement on Canvas with an updated syllabus and calendar within a reasonable timeframe to allow students to adjust as needed.

Course Lecture & Assignment Schedule:

Wednesday, August 18. 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 Cajska Wikstrom; view the video clip [“Truman and the Bomb”](#) (23:15). Refer to the [Paper Guidelines](#) for further information regarding this assignment. **Due: September 8 by 10:00AM (submit your paper online)**

- Assignment for August 20: do the [Information Literacy Assignment](#); **due online by 10:00AM**
Friday, August 20. The Origins of the Cold War

Monday, August 23. The Origins of the Cold War (cont'd)

- Reading for August 25: come prepared to discuss the readings for the Paper Assignment
Wednesday, August 25. US Containment (cont'd) and Truman & the Bomb

- Reading and Assignment for August 27: 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 10:00AM
Friday, August 27. Stalinism in the USSR

Monday, August 30. The USSR After Stalin

Wednesday, September 1. Post-Soviet Russia

Friday, September 3. India: British Colonial Rule

Wednesday, September 8. India: the Struggle for Independence

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

- Reading and Assignment for September 10: 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 10:00AM**

Friday, September 10. A Region in Conflict: India & Pakistan

Monday, September 13. China: from Confucianism to Communism

Wednesday, September 15. Mao & China's "Constant Revolution": The Cultural Revolution

- Reading and Assignment for September 17: ["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 10:00AM**

Friday, September 17. The Cultural Revolution (cont'd) & China Since Mao

- BEGIN READING *A Thousand Splendid Suns* by Khaled Hosseini; **Reaction Piece (What aspects of Afghan culture, society, and history are highlighted by the novel?) due October 6 (submit your RP online by 10:00AM on that date)**

Monday, September 20. Korea: A Divided Nation

Wednesday, September 22. Korea: A Divided Nation (cont'd)

Friday, September 24. The Origins of the Vietnam War

Monday, September 27. The US in Vietnam

- Reading and Assignment for September 29: Excerpt from [When Heaven & Earth Change Places](#) by Hayslip; **POST YOUR RESPONSE TO THE PROMPTS ON Canvas by 10:00AM**
Wednesday, September 29. The US in Vietnam (cont'd)

Friday, October 1. The Cambodian Genocide: Pol Pot's "Killing Fields"

Monday, October 4. Afghanistan: A Country in Turmoil

- Reading for October 6: *A Thousand Splendid Suns*; **RP-1 (submit online by 10:00AM)**
Wednesday, October 6. Afghanistan: A Country in Turmoil (cont'd)

Friday, October 8. **MID-TERM EXAM**

Wednesday, October 13. Iran: From Secularism to Fundamentalism

- Reading and Assignment for October 15: do the Internet Assignment "[Operation Ajax](#)"; **POST YOUR RESPONSE TO THE PROMPT ON Canvas by 10:00AM**

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

Monday, October 18. The Iran-Iraq War

Wednesday, October 20. Persian Gulf Wars

- Reading and Assignment for October 22: "[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 10:00AM**

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

- 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 (What can the excerpts from this memoir tell us about the early stages of the Arab-Israeli conflict?) due October 29 (submit your RP online by 10:00AM on that date)**

Monday, October 25. The Rise and Fall of ISIS

Wednesday, October 27. The Origins of the Arab-Israeli Conflict

- Reading for October 29: *In Search of Fatima*; **RP-2 due (submit online by 10:00AM)**

Friday, October 29. The Arab-Israeli Conflict (cont'd)

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

- BEGIN READING *A Long Way Gone* by Ishmael Beah; **Reaction Piece (What aspects of traditional culture come across in this book and how are the author and society as a whole impacted by the war?) due November 17 (submit your RP online by 10:00AM on that date)**

- Assignment for November 3: View the film [“Paradise Now”](#) (2005) and read the [controversy over the film](#); **POST YOUR RESPONSE TO THE PROMPTS ON Canvas by 10:00AM**
Wednesday, November 3. The Arab-Israeli Conflict: Prospects for Peace?

Friday, November 5. The Origins of Apartheid in South Africa

Monday, November 8. Apartheid South Africa (cont’d)

- Reading for November 10: [“City Lovers”](#) and [“Country Lovers”](#) by Nadine Gordimer; **POST YOUR RESPONSE TO THE PROMPTS ON Canvas by 10:00AM**
Wednesday, November 10. The Fall of Apartheid

Friday, November 12. The Origins of Genocide in Rwanda

Monday, November 15. Genocide in Rwanda (cont’d)

- Reading for November 17: *A Long Way Gone*; **RP-3 due in class (submit online by 10:00AM)**
Wednesday, November 17. Conflict in West Africa—Sierra Leone: Discussion of *A Long Way Gone*

Friday, November 19. South America: Coup d’état in Chile

Monday, November 22. Central America: Coup d’état in Guatemala

Monday, November 29. Cuba: Communism in the Caribbean

Wednesday, December 1. TBA

Final Exam: Wednesday, December 8 at Noon

FINAL EXAM TAKE HOME ESSAY: (3-5 pages double-spaced); (submit your essay online by noon Wednesday, December 8). 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.