

Spring 2014: History 218 (01);  
(3:3) GHP/GN/GMO/IGS  
MWF 10-10:50; MHRA 1214

## The World in the Twentieth Century

([www.uncg.edu/~jwjones/world](http://www.uncg.edu/~jwjones/world))

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Office Hours: M 11-11:50; T 1-2:15; F 9-9:50 and by appointment	
Teaching Assistants: Jamie Mize and Brian Suttell	

### 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 global 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 an “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; de-colonization/neo-colonialism; the international economy; racial, ethnic, & 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 Readings:

- Ishmael Beah, *A Long Way Gone: Memoirs of a Boy Soldier* (New York: Farrar, Straus, and Giroux, 2008; ISBN: 0374531269).
- David Harris-Gershon, *What Do You Buy the Children of the Terrorist Who Tried to Kill Your Wife? A Memoir* (London: One World Publications, 2013; ISBN: 9781851689965).
- Khaled Hosseini, *A Thousand Splendid Suns* (New York: Riverhead Trade, 2008; ISBN: 159448385X).
- Online material identified below

<b>Course Activities:</b>	Two 3-4 page papers	15% each
	Midterm Exam	15%
	Participation	30%
	Final Exam	25%

**Papers:** There are two papers for the course (3-4 pages, double-spaced, 12-point font) that are worth 15% 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. Present a thoughtful argument and interpretation, *not* a mere summary of facts. (Note: it does not matter which side of an 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.

**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 30% participation grade is based on the Discussion Sections led by the Teaching Assistants. The grade consists of online Discussion Posts (1-2 paragraphs in response to the readings as designated below), Internet Assignments, and Reaction Pieces (1-2 pages; these are intended to be your reaction to or opinion of the readings—not a summary—illustrated with specific examples from the material to support your interpretation) to the readings noted below. **Attendance is required in the Discussion Sections**; each unexcused absence will lead to three points being subtracted from the final participation grade.

**Grading:** Grades are compiled on a point system, i.e. if you make 88 on the 1<sup>st</sup> paper (13.2/15) + 90 on the 2<sup>nd</sup> paper (13.5/15) + 86 on the Mid-term (12.9/15) + 90 on participation (27/30) + 88 on the Final (13.2/15) + 90 on your Final Take Home Essay (9/10), your Grade = 88.8 = 89 or B+. Grades will be posted on Blackboard.

### Lecture & Assignment Schedule:

Monday, January 13. 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; and [“The Day Hiroshima turned into Hell”](#) by Cajska Wikstrom; view the video clip [“Truman and the Bomb”](#) (19:45). Refer to the [Paper Guidelines](#) for further information regarding this assignment. **Due: January 22.**

Wednesday, January 15. Truman & the Bomb and the Origins of the Cold War

Friday, January 17. Discussion Section: Bring a thesis statement and outline for the 1<sup>st</sup> paper

Wednesday, January 22. The Origins of the Cold War (cont'd): **1<sup>st</sup> Paper Due in class**

- Reading for January 24: 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 Bb DISCUSSION BOARD BY THURSDAY AT MIDNIGHT**

Friday, January 24. Discussion Section

Monday, January 27. Stalinism in the USSR & the USSR after Stalin

Wednesday, January 29. The USSR after Stalin (cont'd) & Post-Soviet Russia

- Reading for January 31: [Excerpts from \*Putin's Russia: Past Imperfect, Future Uncertain\*](#), ed. by Dale Herspring; **POST YOUR RESPONSE TO THE PROMPT ON Bb DISCUSSION BOARD BY THURSDAY AT MIDNIGHT**

Friday, January 31. Discussion Section

- BEGIN READING *A Thousand Splendid Suns* by Khaled Hosseini; **\*\*Prompt for Response Paper 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 February 14.**

Monday, February 3. India: the Struggle for Independence

Wednesday, February 5. India: the Struggle for Independence (cont'd)

- Reading for February 7: Excerpts from [Mahatma Gandhi: All Men Are Brothers: Autobiographical Reflections](#) compiled and edited by Krishna Kripalani; **POST YOUR RESPONSE TO THE PROMPTS ON Bb DISCUSSION BOARD BY THURSDAY AT MIDNIGHT**

Friday, February 7. Discussion Section

Monday, February 10. Afghanistan: A Country in Turmoil

Wednesday, February 12. Afghanistan—A Country in Turmoil (cont'd)

- Reading for February 14: *Thousand Splendid Suns*; **Response Paper 1 due in class**

Friday, February 14. Discussion Section

Monday, February 17. China: from Confucianism to Communism

Wednesday, February 19. Mao & China's "Constant Revolution"

- Reading for February 21: "[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 Bb DISCUSSION BOARD BY THURSDAY AT MIDNIGHT**

Friday, February 21. China Since Mao

Monday, February 24. The Origins of the Vietnam War

Wednesday, February 26. The US in Vietnam

- Reading for February 28: [Material on Vietnam](#) from Michael Hunt, ed. *The World Transformed*; **POST YOUR RESPONSE TO THE PROMPTS ON Bb DISCUSSION BOARD BY THURSDAY AT MIDNIGHT**

Friday, February 28. Discussion Section

Monday, March 3. **MID-TERM EXAM**

Wednesday, March 5. Iran: From Secularism to Fundamentalism

- Film for March 7: View the film “A Separation”; **POST YOUR RESPONSE TO THE PROMPTS ON Bb DISCUSSION BOARD BY THURSDAY AT MIDNIGHT**

Friday, March 7. Discussion Section

Monday, March 17. Iran: From Secularism to Fundamentalism (cont’d)

Wednesday, March 19. Persian Gulf Wars

- Reading and Assignment for March 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 Bb DISCUSSION BOARD BY THURSDAY AT MIDNIGHT**

Friday, March 21. Discussion Section

Monday, March 24. Persian Gulf Wars

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

- Reading and Assignment for March 28: Do the Internet Assignment “[Reel Bad Arabs](#)”; **POST YOUR RESPONSE TO THE PROMPT ON Bb DISCUSSION BOARD BY THURSDAY AT MIDNIGHT**

Friday, March 28. Discussion Section.

- **BEGIN READING** *What Do You Buy the Children of the Terrorist Who Tried to Kill Your Wife? A Memoir* by David Harris-Gershon; **\*\*Prompt for Response Paper 2:** You are the Palestinian who bombed the cafeteria at the Hebrew University in Jerusalem. Write a page statement for court explaining why you decided to take this action (Remember to refer to evidence from the book; 1-2 pages double-spaced). **Due April 11.**

Monday, March 31. The Arab-Israeli Conflict

Wednesday, April 2. The Arab-Israeli Conflict (cont’d)

- Film for April 4: View the film “Paradise Now” and read the [controversy over the film](#); **POST YOUR RESPONSE TO THE PROMPTS ON Bb DISCUSSION BOARD BY THURSDAY AT MIDNIGHT**

Friday, April 4. Discussion Section

Monday, April 7. The Arab-Israeli Conflict (cont'd)

Wednesday, April 9. The Arab-Israeli Conflict: Is there hope for peace?

- Reading for April 11: *What Do You Buy the Children of the Terrorist Who Tried to Kill Your Wife?*; **\*\*Response Paper 2 due in class**

Friday, April 11. Discussion Section

- BEGIN READING *A Long Way Gone* by Ishmael Beah; **\*\*Prompt for Response Paper 3:** Based on your reading of this memoir respond to the following scenario: it is the year 2000 and a good friend wants to propose to his fiancée. 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 refer to evidence from the book to address this question; 1-2 pages double-spaced). **Due April 25**

Monday, April 14. Genocide in Rwanda

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

Monday, April 21. Sierra Leone

Wednesday, April 23. South America: Coup d'état in Chile

- Reading for April 25: *A Long Way Gone*; **Response Paper 3 due in class**

Friday, April 25. Discussion Section

Monday, April 28. Central America: Coup d'état in Guatemala. **2<sup>nd</sup> Paper Due in**—see course web page for [list of possible topics](#)

Tuesday, April 29. TBA

**Final Exam: Monday, May 5 Noon-3:00**

**FINAL EXAM TAKE HOME ESSAY: (4-6 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.