

HIS 218 – 01 – The World of the Twentieth Century (1945 – present)

MWF 10:00 – 10:50, MHRA 1214

Instructor: Virginia L. Summey (vlsumme2@uncg.edu)

Office Hours: MWF 11:00 – 12:00 (MHRA 2102)

This syllabus is subject to change

COURSE DESCRIPTION:

This course surveys major developments in world history from 1945 to the present. This course focuses on a selection of important events, historical figures, and international issues that have had global significance. We will examine issues in the contemporary world, focusing on the post-World War II period, from the dropping of atomic bombs in August 1945, to the complex, geopolitical world of today. Because of its broad sweep of historical events and the variety of topics covered, this course makes no claim to be comprehensive. No single course can examine all of the important events in world history over a half-century. The major theme of this course will be perspectives. We will view the Twentieth Century 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.

This course also serves as an introduction to world history as an approach. World history is about understanding the interconnectedness of history across national borders, and thinking comparatively about events around the globe. Students will be trained to think as historians by analyzing evidence and learning to place evidence in historical context. Students will learn to analyze different types of evidence and make arguments based on such evidence. Fiction and films will be studied as sources for historical understanding. Articles and books written by historians will also be read and critically analyzed. It is hoped that the material explored in this course will provide the student with a springboard to further study in history in upper level courses.

COURSE OBJECTIVES:

- Students will examine the role of human agency in historical change, as well as understand the larger economic, political and social structures that shape human experience.
- Students will examine interconnections between different parts of the globe, and think comparatively about different cultures and peoples studied.
- Students will be able to historically contextualize and analyze primary and secondary sources representing different points of view.
- Students will be able to use evidence-based reasoning to interpret the past coherently while developing and presenting an original argument.
- Students will improve their writing and verbal skills.

COURSE POLICIES:

Attendance:

A student who is not present to sign the attendance sheet when it circulates at beginning of class will be marked “absent.” Once the sheet has circulated the room, no late students will be allowed to sign it. Students who leave class early without permission will be marked absent. More than five absences will lower your Final Grade by one-third of a grade for each subsequent absence (that is, your sixth absence will cause a “B” to become a “B-,” your seventh will make it a “C+,” your eighth will make it a “C,” etc.). Missing a total of 14 or more classes for any reason (one-third of the semester) will result in an automatic “F” for the course. No exceptions. Please use your five un-penalized absences wisely by saving them for emergencies or severe illness. Students are responsible to complete on time all work assigned or due on days in which they are absent.

If you suffer from a chronic illness, or have special needs that make the attendance policy burdensome, you **MUST** inform the instructor in the first week of class, and provide proof of your condition to the Dean of Students. I will do my best to accommodate any legitimate, documented, special needs.

Participation:

You must take notes during class lectures and be attentive and awake during class. Sleeping in class will cause you to be marked “absent.” Cell phones and tablets should be muted or turned off and stored away. No talking, texting, twittering, e-mailing (in other words, stay off the internet!!) during class. Laptop computers may be used for note-taking until it becomes a distraction.

Students are expected to complete the reading assignments in time to participate in class discussion. Participation is vital to your success in this class. Your participation grade will be based on the overall quality of your contributions in the discussion sections—not the quantity of contributions you make. Please make your contributions informed, intelligent, and constructive.

Grading Policies:

Students earn grades based on the work they submit. A common student misconception is that anyone can earn an A just by following instructions and doing the work. However, just following instructions is the same thing as doing the minimum. Most people do the minimum, and that makes their work Average (i.e. a C). Doing less than the minimum is either a D (“Below Average”) or an F (“Unsatisfactory”). Doing more than the minimum is worth either a B (“Above Average”) or, in rare cases, an A (“Excellent”). Therefore, students must submit work that proves their performance is better than the majority of their peers in order to earn the highest letter grades.

Assignments:

While there are no exams that require you to memorize dates, there will be periodic “pop quizzes” at the beginning of class covering the assigned reading for the day. Quizzes will be given on an “as needed” basis. If participation in the class is lively and students can demonstrate that they have read for each class, there will be fewer quizzes.

This course has a heavy reading load, and students are expected to have completed the assigned reading prior to class. Additionally, students will be required to complete three short papers. Papers will be written from various historical perspectives. Students will be able to choose three of four possible prompts. All papers should be written in 12-point Times New Roman font, double spaced with 1” margins. Papers should be a minimum of three pages (maximum of five) and will be turned in using the SafeAssign feature on Blackboard. Due dates are **January 30, February 27, March 27, and April 24**. Paper topics will be assigned several weeks before the assignment is due. Your assignments will be weighted as follows:

Three papers – 20% each

Quizzes – 15%

Final Exam – 15%

Participation – 10%

Academic Integrity Policy:

All work submitted in your name must be your own original work for this class with proper citation or credit given to all sources. All papers will be turned in using the “Safe Assignment” function on Blackboard which automatically scans your paper for plagiarism. Each student should be familiar with the Academic Integrity Policy, and the penalties for plagiarism. Refer to this address on the UNCG website for more details: <http://studentconduct.uncg.edu/>

Required Texts: (available online or at the UNCG Bookstore): George Orwell, *Animal Farm*; Le Ly Hayslip, *When Heaven and Earth Changed Places*; Kevin Sites, *In the Hot Zone: One Man, One Year, Twenty Wars*

Course Schedule: (Note: the assigned readings are due on the date they are listed on the syllabus. Please view the syllabus prior to each class).

Monday, January 12 – Introductions

Wednesday, January 14 – Russia leading up to the Cold War

Friday, January 16 – Entering the Atomic Age

Monday, January 19 – **NO CLASS (Martin Luther King, Jr. Day)**

Wednesday, January 21 – A post-war world

Friday, January 23 – Discussion

Reading Due: *Animal Farm*; Excerpts from *Stalin* (Blackboard)

Monday, January 26 – Communism vs. Capitalism – The Ideological Divide

Wednesday, January 28 - Entering the Cold War

Friday, January 30 – Discussion, **Paper Due**

Reading Due: Excerpt from *For the Soul of Mankind* (Blackboard)

Monday, February 2 – China

Wednesday, February 4 – China

Friday, February 6 - Discussion

Reading Due: “The Cult of Mao”, “Chairman Mao’s Good Fighter” (Blackboard)

Monday, February 9 – Decolonization and Nationalism

Wednesday, February 11 – The Korean War

Friday, February 13 – Discussion

Reading Due: Watch PBS film (Blackboard)

Monday, February 16 – The Space Race

Wednesday, February 18 – The U.S. Affluent Society

Friday, February 20 - Discussion

Reading Due: The Kitchen Debate Readings; film (Blackboard)

Monday, February 23 – Latin and South America

Wednesday, February 25 – The Cuban Missile Crisis

Friday, February 27 – Discussion, **Paper Due**

Reading Due: Watch film (Blackboard)

Monday, March 2 – Civil Rights in the United States

Wednesday, March 4 – Mandela and South African Apartheid

Friday, March 6 – Discussion

Reading Due: Apartheid documents (Blackboard)

Monday, March 9 – **SPRING BREAK**

Wednesday, March 11 – **SPRING BREAK**

Friday, March 13 – SPRING BREAK

Monday, March 16 - Vietnam

Wednesday, March 18 – Vietnam

Friday, March 20 – Discussion

Reading Due: *When Heaven and Earth Changed Places*

Monday, March 23 – The Middle East

Wednesday, March 25 – Afghanistan

Friday, March 27 – Discussion, **Paper Due**

Reading Due: Excerpts from *In Search of Fatima*; film (Blackboard)

Monday, March 30 – Human Rights

Wednesday, April 1 – The End of the Cold War

Friday, April 3 – SPRING HOLIDAY

Monday, April 6 – War in the Balkans

Wednesday, April 8 – Genocide in the 20th Century

Friday, April 10 – Discussion

Reading Due: Excerpts from *Zlata's Diary*; film (Blackboard)

Monday, April 13 - Globalization

Wednesday, April 15 – The European Union

Friday, April 17 – Discussion

Reading Due: *In the Hot Zone*

Monday, April 20 – Entering the Twenty-first century

Wednesday, April 22 – A post-9/11 world

Friday, April 24 – Discussion, **Paper Due**

Reading Due: *In the Hot Zone*

Monday, April 27 – Last Day of Class

Monday, May 4 – FINAL EXAM, 12:00 – 3:00