

## Spring 2018 HIS 217-03 Course Syllabus

### *The World in the Twentieth Century (1900-1945)*

Instructor: Christopher Davis

Email: [cwdavis@uncg.edu](mailto:cwdavis@uncg.edu)

Office: 2710 MHRA Building

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

Class Location and Time: 1214 MHRA Building, TR 5:00-6:15

*“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 Africans, Asians, and Latin Americans.

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. General Education Global Non-Western Perspectives

1. Find, interpret, and evaluate information on diverse cultures. (GN 1)

2. Describe interconnections among regions of the world. (Must include substantial focus on cultures, nations or sub-nationalities in the Caribbean, Latin America, Middle East/North Africa, Asia, Africa, Pacific Islands, or indigenous peoples around the world). (GN 2)
3. Use diverse cultural frames of reference and alternative perspectives to analyze issues. (GN 3)

### **Required Reading:**

**Stevenson, D. *Cataclysm: The First World War As Political Tragedy*. New York: Basic Books, 2004.**

**Hastings, Max. *Inferno: The World at War, 1939-1945*. New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2011.**

Additional readings will be made available on Canvas. Be sure to read these before class along with the regular reading in order to participate in class discussion.

### **Writing Assignments:**

There will be three writing assignments for the course this semester.

**Assignment 1: Historical Interpretation Writing Assignment** - In response to the in-class video on January 11, write a 1-2 page analysis of the problems faced by those trying to reconstruct a historical event that were covered in the video "Living Witness". When historians in this story encounter someone who was present at a major historical event 300 years ago, what are some of the "facts" that they got wrong? Why are some reluctant to believe the "living witness", and why are others willing to embrace his version of events? How does his version impact issues within that society? **Due January 18**

**Assignment 2: World War I Writing Assignment** – Choose any country outside of Europe, North America, or Russia and write a 3-5 page paper on that country's role in the First World War. The country you choose need not have been an active participant in the conflict, as long as you explain how the war affected them and how they responded to it. **Due February 22**

**Assignment 3: World War II Writing Assignment** – Take whatever country you chose to write about in Assignment I and write a 3-5 page paper on that country's role in the Second World War. This will allow you to see how/if that country's response to international conflict changed over time. **Due April 19**

### **Class Policies**

#### 1) ATTENDANCE

Attendance at class meetings is not only required, but is also essential to passing this course. Students are permitted three unexcused absences, and excused absences will require either a doctor's note or some other form of legitimate documentation. If a

student has more than six absences, it may result in being dropped from the class. Along with the expectation that students attend this course, it is also expected that students be on time. Three instances of tardiness by an individual student will be counted as an absence.

## 2) CLASS PARTICIPATION

As mentioned earlier, attendance is required and essential. Class participation is the reason it is essential. Because demonstrating that they are analyzing and interpreting historical events and materials is the primary goal of this course, students are expected to demonstrate that they have read the required material prior to the assigned class and be prepared to discuss it.

## 3) LATE ASSIGNMENTS

Assignments that are not turned in by hardcopy to me in class by the assigned due date will be deducted 10 points from 100 for each day it is late. Assignments not turned in within ten days of the due date will not be accepted.

## 4) 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://drive.google.com/file/d/0B0rFGGhJvbDHUExSZmFFaWFmb00/view>

## 5) ELECTRONIC DEVICES

Laptops and tablets are acceptable to have in class during regular discussions in order to take notes. Cellphones must be turned off during the duration of ANY class, and NO electronic devices are permitted during exams.

## **Course Schedule**

### **Week 1**

**January 9** – Introductions, review of the syllabus and course expectations, and discussion of history as a field of study.

**January 11** – In class video on the issues of historical interpretation. Instructions for the writing assignment based on the video will be handed out at the end of class and will be due **January 18**.

### **Week 2**

**January 16** – Pre-war Europe and the “End of Peace”

Readings: *Cataclysm, Chapter 1 “The Destruction of Peace”*

**January 18** – The Great War: Beginning of the War and Stalemate  
Readings: *Cataclysm, Chapter 2 “The Failure of the War of Movement, Summer – Winter 1914”*

**\*Historical Interpretation Writing Assignment due in class**

### Week 3

**January 23** – The Great War: Escalation of the Conflict  
Readings: *Cataclysm, Chapter 3 “Making a New World, Spring 1915-Spring 1916”, and Chapter 4 “The Widening of the War”*

**January 25** – The Great War: Goals of the Conflict  
Readings: *Cataclysm, Chapter 5 “War Aims and Peace Negotiations”*

### Week 4

**January 30** – The Great War: The Price of War – Economic Impact  
Readings: *Cataclysm, Chapter 9 “Armaments and Economics”*

**February 1** – The Great War: The Price of War – Social and Political Impact  
Readings: *Cataclysm, Chapter 11 “The Politics of the Home Fronts”*

### Week 5

**February 6** – The Great War: Exit Russia, Enter America  
Readings: *Cataclysm, Chapter 12 “The Third Phase, Spring 1917 – Autumn 1918”, and Chapter 13 “The February Revolution and American Intervention, Spring 1917”*

**February 8** – The Great War: Exhaustion  
Readings: *Cataclysm, Chapter 14 “Towards Exhaustion, Summer – Autumn 1917”*

### Week 6

**February 13** – The Great War: Final Year (part I)  
Readings: *Cataclysm, Chapter 15 “The Central Powers’ Last Throw, Autumn 1917 – Summer 1918”*

**February 15** – The Great War: Final Year (part II)  
Readings: *Cataclysm, Chapter 16 “The Turn of the Tide, Summer – Autumn 1918”*

### Week 7

**February 20** – The War Ends

Readings: *Cataclysm, Chapter 17 “Ceasefire”*

**February 22** – Peace at Last . . . ?

Readings: *Cataclysm, Chapter 18 “Peacemaking, 1919-1920”*

**\*World War I Writing Assignment Due in Class**

### Week 8

**February 27** – Mid-Term Exam

**March 1** – Aftermath of the Great War (Political and Economic Crises)

Readings: *Europe in the Twentieth Century, Chapter 10 “The Depression and Its Effects”* (Provided in Canvas)

### Week 9

**Spring Break – No Classes This Week**

### Week 10

**March 13** – The Rise of Fascism in Europe (Spain, Italy, and Germany)

Readings: *Europe in the Twentieth Century, Chapter 11 “The Depression and Its Effects”* (Provided in Canvas)

**March 15** – Expansion of the Japanese Empire in Asia and the Pacific

**No Reading. Primary Source Interpretation Activity.**

### Week 11

**March 20** – Outbreak of the Second World War (The Invasion of Poland)

Readings: *Inferno, Chapter 1 “Poland Betrayed”, and Chapter 2 “No Peace, Little War”*

**March 22** – The Early German Offensive

Readings: *Inferno, Chapter 3 “Blitzkriegs in the West (Norway and the Fall of France)”*

### Week 12

**March 27** – The Battle of Britain

Readings: *Inferno, Chapter 4 “Britain Alone”*

**March 29** – The War in the Mediterranean

Readings: *Inferno*, Chapter 5 “The Mediterranean (Mussolini Gambles, A Greek Tragedy, and Sandstorms)”

### **Week 13**

**April 3** – Operation Barbarossa (Invasion of the Soviet Union)

Readings: *Inferno*, Chapter 6 “Barbarossa”

**April 5** – Outbreak of War in the Pacific

Readings: *Inferno*, Chapter 8 “America Embattled”, and Chapter 9 “Japan’s Season of Triumph”

### **Week 14**

**April 10** – The Human Impact of the War

Readings: *Inferno*, Chapter 13 “Living with War (Warriors, Home Fronts, and A Woman’s Place)”, and Chapter 20 “Victims”

**April 12** – The Tide Turns in the Pacific

Readings: *Inferno*, Chapter 10 “Swings of Fortune”

### **Week 15**

**April 17** – The Tide Turns in Europe

Readings: *Inferno*, Chapter 14 “Out of Africa”, and Chapter 15 “The Bear Turns: Russia in 1943”

**April 19** – The World’s War

Readings: *Inferno*, Chapter 16 “Divided Empires”, and Chapter 17 “Asian Fronts”

**\*World War II Writing Assignment Due in Class**

### **Week 16**

**April 24** – The War (And This Class) Ends!

Readings: *Inferno*, Chapter 24 “The Fall of the Third Reich” pp. 584-610, and Chapter 25 “Japan Prostrate”

**April 26** – Reading Day (No Class)

**Final Exam – May 3, 7:00pm-10:00pm**