

Spring 2019: History 101 (01)
(3:3) GHP/GN/GMO
MWF 10-10:50; Bryan Bldg. 160

Contemporary World

Instructor: Jeff Jones	jwjones@uncg.edu
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Office Hours: M 1:30-2:30; W 2:30-3:30; Th. 11-12:30 and by appointment	

Course Description

This class fulfills the General College Historical Perspective (GHP), Modern era (GMO), and Global Non-Western markers (GN). 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, 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 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: Sarah Crichton Books, 2008; ISBN: 9780374531263)
- Khaled Hosseini, *A Thousand Splendid Suns* (New York: Riverhead Trade, 2008; ISBN: 9781594483851)
- Online material identified below

Required Films:

- [“Paradise Now”](#) (2005)
- [“Sometimes in April”](#) (2005)
- [“Missing”](#) (1982)

Course Activities:	One 3-4 page paper	15%
	Midterm Exam	20%
	Participation	35%
	Final Exam	30%

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 this assignment. 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 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 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.

<p>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.</p>

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 at the end of the syllabus).

Participation: Your 35% participation grade consists of eight online Discussion Posts (1-2 paragraphs in response to the prompts for the readings and material designated below); two Internet Assignments as noted below; and four Response Papers (1-2 pages double-spaced) to the readings and prompts designated below.

Grading: Grades are compiled on a point system. For example, if you make 88 on the paper (13.2/15) + 86 on the Mid-term (17.2/20) + 90 on participation (31.5/35) + 88 on the Final (17.6/20) + 90 on your Final Take Home Essay (9/10), your Final Grade = **88.5** or B+. Grades will be posted on Blackboard. 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

Career Aspirations & the Liberal Arts Advantage

The UNCG History Department wants this to be your introduction as a General Education course to crucial issues and events in the history of the Contemporary World, but also possibly a first step toward pursuing a major in history. What, you ask, can you do with a history major (or any other major within the Humanities for that matter)? Absolutely anything you want to do! View these four video modules on how a major within the Humanities can give you a leg up in the world of employment that awaits you:

- [Chapter 1: Self-Assessment: Knowing Yourself](#)
- [Chapter 2: Introducing the Three C's Skills](#)
- [Chapter 3: Translating Your Skills Into Professional Success](#)
- [Chapter 4: Where to Go From Here?](#)

Also, please plan on attending (before and after class) the **Liberal Arts Advantage Professional Development Event, Friday, March 22, 8:30am - 12:00pm, in the EUC Auditorium.**

Course Lecture & Assignment Schedule:

Monday, January 14. 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 Cajsa Wikstrom; view the video clip [“Truman and the Bomb”](#) (23:15). Refer to the [Paper Guidelines](#) for further information regarding this assignment. **Due: January 28.**

Wednesday, January 16. The Origins of the Cold War

Friday, January 18. The Origins of the Cold War (cont’d)

- [Reading for January 23](#): come prepared to discuss the readings for the 1st Paper Assignment
- Wednesday, January 23. Truman & the Bomb: Discussion of Readings for the 1st Paper

- Reading for January 25: 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 5PM**

Friday, January 25. Stalinism in the USSR

Monday, January 28. The USSR After Stalin

- **Paper Due in class**

- Reading for January 30: [“Is Vladimir Putin Insane? Hardly”](#) by Masha Gessen

Wednesday, January 30. Post-Soviet Russia

- BEGIN READING *A Thousand Splendid Suns* by Khaled Hosseini; ****Prompt for Response Paper 1:** Provide evidence from the novel to describe how patriarchy (male control or dominance over society) works in Afghanistan and 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 15.**

Friday, February 1. Conflict in the Balkans

- Reading for February 4: Richard Aldrich, [“America Used Islamicists to Arm the Bosnian Muslims”](#)

Monday, February 4. Conflict in the Balkans (cont’d)

Wednesday, February 6. India: the Struggle for Independence

- Reading for February 8: 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 Bb DISCUSSION BOARD BY THURSDAY AT 5PM**

Friday, February 8. India: the Struggle for Independence (cont’d)

Monday, February 11. A Region in Conflict: India & Pakistan

- Reading for February 13: David Gibbs, [“Forgotten Coverage of Afghan ‘Freedom Fighters’: the villains of today’s news were heroes in the 80s”](#)

Wednesday, February 13. Afghanistan: A Country in Turmoil

- Reading for February 15: *Thousand Splendid Suns*; **Response Paper 1 due in class**
Friday, February 15. Afghanistan: A Country in Turmoil (cont'd)—Discussion of Reading

Monday, February 18. Afghanistan: A Country in Turmoil (cont'd)

Wednesday, February 20. China: from Confucianism to Communism

- Reading for February 22: "[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 5PM**

Friday, February 22. Mao & China's "Constant Revolution": The Cultural Revolution

Monday, February 25. China Since Mao

Wednesday, February 27. The Origins of the Vietnam War

- Reading for March 1: [Material on Vietnam](#) from Michael Hunt, ed. *The World Transformed*; and excerpt from *When Heaven and Earth Change Places* by Le Ly Hayslip; **POST YOUR RESPONSE TO THE PROMPTS ON Bb DISCUSSION BOARD BY THURSDAY AT 5PM**

Friday, March 1. The US in Vietnam

Monday, March 11. The US in Vietnam (cont'd)

Wednesday, March 13. **MID-TERM EXAM**

- Assignment for March 15: do the Internet Assignment "[Operation Ajax](#)"; **POST YOUR RESPONSE TO THE PROMPT ON Bb DISCUSSION BOARD BY THURSDAY AT 5PM**

Friday, March 15. Iran: From Secularism to Fundamentalism

Monday, March 18. Iran: From Secularism to Fundamentalism (cont'd)

Wednesday, March 20. Iraq and Kuwait: A Collision Course

- Reading and Assignment for March 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 Bb DISCUSSION BOARD BY THURSDAY AT 5PM**

Friday, March 22. Persian Gulf Wars

- **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; ****Prompt for Response Paper 2:** You are a young Jewish girl from Poland who survived the Holocaust along with your mother (your father and two siblings died in the

Holocaust); in 1948 the two of you immigrated to Israel along with your aunt and moved into the abandoned Karmi family home, where you found the diary of the young girl Ghada who lived there before you. Write a letter to Ghada explaining *your* side of some of the events she describes, i.e. the bombing of the King David Hotel, Deir Yassin, Arab flight, the 1948 War, etc. from *your* perspective. (Remember to refer to evidence from the book; 1-2 pages double-spaced). **Due March 29.**

Monday, March 25. Persian Gulf Wars (cont'd)

- Reading for March 27: [Abu Musab al-Zarqawi's Letter to Osama bin Laden](#) (2004)

Wednesday, March 27. The Rise (and Fall?) of ISIS

- Reading for March 29: Excerpts from *In Search of Fatima*; **Response Paper 2 due in class**
- Friday, March 29. The Origins of the Arab-Israeli Conflict

- 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 10.**

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

Wednesday, April 3. The Arab-Israeli Conflict (cont'd)

- Assignment for April 5: View the film "[Paradise Now](#)" (2005) and read the [controversy over the film](#); **POST YOUR RESPONSE TO THE PROMPTS ON Bb DISCUSSION BOARD BY THURSDAY AT 5PM**

Friday, April 5. The Arab-Israeli Conflict: Prospects for Peace?

- Reading for April 8: "[Africa—Realizing the Promise of the Demographic Dividend](#)" by Graça Machel

Monday, April 8. An Overview of Modern Africa: "With These Hands"

- Reading for April 10: *A Long Way Gone*; ****Response Paper 3 due in class**

Wednesday, April 10. Conflict in West Africa—Sierra Leone: Discussion of *A Long Way Gone*

- Assignment for April 12: View the film "[Sometimes in April](#)" (2005) and read the review "[A Grim Excursion to Rwanda's Hell](#)" by Alessandra Stanley; **POST YOUR RESPONSE TO THE PROMPTS ON Bb DISCUSSION BOARD BY THURSDAY AT 5PM**

Friday, April 12. The Origins of Genocide in Rwanda

Monday, April 15. Genocide in Rwanda (cont'd): Discussion of the film

Wednesday, April 17. The Origins of Apartheid in South Africa

Monday, April 22. Apartheid South Africa (cont'd)

- Reading for April 24: “City Lovers” and “Country Lovers” by Nadine Gordimer; **POST YOUR REACTION TO THIS READING ON Bb DISCUSSION BOARD BY TUESDAY AT 5PM**

Wednesday, April 24. The Rise and Fall of Apartheid in South Africa

- Assignment for April 26: View the film “Missing” (1982); read [News and Information on the Charles Horman case](#) (including the four pages of documents linked therein), and “[2 Sentenced in Murders in Chile Coup](#)” by Pascale Bonnefoy, *New York Times*, January 28, 2015; **POST YOUR RESPONSE TO THE PROMPTS ON Bb DISCUSSION BOARD BY THURSDAY AT 5PM**

Friday, April 26. South America: Coup d'état in Chile

Monday, April 29. Central America: Coup d'état in Guatemala.

Wednesday, May 1. TBA

Final Exam: Monday, May 6 Noon-3:00

FINAL EXAM TAKE HOME ESSAY: (3-5 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.