

Spring 2021: HIS-101 (01A, 01B, 01C) (GHP/GN/GMO)  
MWF 10-10:50; School of Education Building, Rm. 114

## Contemporary World

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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 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 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 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; gender relations; colonialism/de-colonization; racial/ethnic/religious conflict; and the international economy.

### General Education Council Course Competency 9:

Courses in this competency provide students with knowledge and critical understanding of similarities and differences across world cultures over time and emphasize the development of global perspectives and skills to engage cross-culturally. Upon successful completion of this global engagement and intercultural learning through the humanities and fine arts OR through the social & behavioral sciences course, students will:

1. Describe dynamic elements of different cultures. These elements may include (but are not limited to) aesthetic systems, communication systems, economics, physical environments, ethics, gender norms, geography, history, politics, religious principles, or social beliefs, norms and practices.
2. Explain how similarities, differences, and connections among different groups of people or environmental systems affect one another over time and place.

### 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:

- Interpret and evaluate information on diverse global cultures.
- Describe interconnections among cultures, politics, and/or intellectual traditions of the world other than the dominant Euro-American ones.
- Use diverse cultural frames of reference and alternative perspectives to analyze issues.

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.

### 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

<b>Course Activities:</b>	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 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 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.

<p><b>A</b> = excellent performance on all three criteria. <b>B</b> = above average on all three, or excellent on some tempered by flaws in others. <b>C</b> = average across the board, or above average in part but with significant flaws. <b>D</b> = below average overall performance.</p>
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**Exams:** There is an online midterm and an online 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).

**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. For example, 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.**

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

**Required UNCG Syllabus Language: Approved by the Faculty Senate on July 1, 2020**

As UNCG returns to face-to-face course offerings in spring 2021, the campus community must recognize and address concerns about physical and emotional safety. As such, all students, faculty, and staff are required to uphold UNCG's culture of care by actively engaging in behaviors that limit the spread of COVID-19. Such actions include, but are not limited to, the following:

- [Wearing a face covering that covers both nose and mouth](#)
- Observing [social distance](#) in the classroom
- Engaging in proper hand washing hygiene when possible
- [Self-monitoring for symptoms of COVID-19](#)
- Staying home if you are ill
- Complying with directions from health care providers or public health officials to quarantine or isolate if ill or exposed to someone who is ill.

Instructors will have seating charts for their classes. These are important for maintaining appropriate social distance during class and facilitating contact tracing should there be a confirmed case of COVID-19. Students must sit in their assigned seat at every class meeting and must not move furniture. Students should not eat or drink during class time.

A limited number of disposable masks will be available in classrooms for students who have forgotten theirs. Face coverings will also be available for purchase in the UNCG Campus Bookstore. Students who do not follow masking and social distancing requirements will be asked to put on a face covering or leave the classroom to retrieve one and only return when they follow these basic requirements to uphold standards of safety and care for the UNCG community. Once students have a face covering, they are permitted to re-enter a class already in progress. Repeated

issues may result in conduct action. The course policies regarding attendance and academics remain in effect for partial or full absence from class due to lack of adherence with face covering and social distancing requirements.

For instances where the Office of Accessibility Resources and Services (OARS) has granted accommodations regarding wearing face coverings, students should contact their instructors to develop appropriate alternatives to class participation and/or activities as needed. Instructors or the student may also contact [OARS](mailto:OARS@uncg.edu) (336-334-5440) who, in consultation with Student Health Services, will review requests for accommodations.

### **Approved by the Faculty Senate Executive Committee on July 30, 2020:**

Health and well-being impact learning and academic success. Throughout your time in the university, you may experience a range of concerns that can cause barriers to your academic success. These might include illnesses, strained relationships, anxiety, high levels of stress, alcohol or drug problems, feeling down, or loss of motivation. 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, visiting the website at <https://shs.uncg.edu/> or visiting the Anna M. Gove Student Health Center at 107 Gray Drive. For undergraduate or graduate students in recovery from alcohol and other drug addiction, The Spartan Recovery Program (SRP) offers recovery support services. You can learn more about recovery and recovery support services by visiting <https://shs.uncg.edu/srp> or reaching out to [recovery@uncg.edu](mailto:recovery@uncg.edu)

### **COVID-19 Spartan Shield Video**

UNCG Chancellor Frank Gilliam has challenged us to create a Culture of Care at UNCG where we all wear face coverings and social distance, less to protect ourselves but rather more to protect everyone around us. It shows that you care about the wellbeing of everyone around you. We have created this video featuring your student body presidents to better explain how and why this is so important. **Please watch this [“Shield Our Spartans”](#) (1:42) video before the first day of classes.**

### **Course Lecture & Assignment Schedule:**

Wednesday, January 20. 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: February 3 by 10:00AM (submit your paper online)**

Friday, January 22. The Origins of the Cold War

Monday, January 25. The Origins of the Cold War (cont’d)

- Reading for January 27: come prepared to discuss the readings for the Paper Assignment Wednesday, January 27. US Containment (cont'd) and Truman & the Bomb
- Reading for January 29: 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 Friday at 10:00AM** Friday, January 29. Stalinism in the USSR

Monday, February 1. The USSR After Stalin

Wednesday, February 3. Post-Soviet Russia

- **Paper Due (submit paper online by 10AM)**
- BEGIN READING *A Thousand Splendid Suns* by Khaled Hosseini; **Reaction Piece due February 17 (submit your RP online by 10:00AM on that date)**

Friday, February 5. India: British Colonial Rule

Monday, February 8. India: the Struggle for Independence

- Reading for February 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 Wednesday at 10:00AM**

Wednesday, February 10. A Region in Conflict: India & Pakistan

Friday, February 12. Afghanistan: A Country in Turmoil

Monday, February 15. Afghanistan: A Country in Turmoil (cont'd)

- Reading for February 17: *A Thousand Splendid Suns*; **RP-1 (submit online by 10:00AM)** Wednesday, February 17. Afghanistan: A Country in Turmoil (cont'd)

Friday, February 19. China: from Confucianism to Communism

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

- Reading for February 24: ["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 Wednesday at 10:00AM**

Wednesday, February 24. The Cultural Revolution (cont'd) & China Since Mao

Friday, February 26. Korea: A Divided Nation

Monday, March 1. Korea: A Divided Nation (cont'd)

Friday, March 5. The Origins of the Vietnam War

Monday, March 8. The US in Vietnam

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

Friday, March 12. **MID-TERM EXAM (Online)**

Monday, March 15. Iran: From Secularism to Fundamentalism

- Assignment for March 17: do the Internet Assignment [“Operation Ajax”](#); **POST YOUR RESPONSE TO THE PROMPT ON Canvas by Wednesday at 10:00AM**  
Wednesday, March 17. Iran: From Secularism to Fundamentalism (cont'd)

Friday, March 19. The Iran-Iraq War

Monday, March 22. Persian Gulf Wars

- Reading and Assignment for March 24: [“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 Wednesday at 10:00AM**  
Wednesday, March 24. 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 due March 31 (submit your RP online by 10:00AM on that date)**

Friday, March 26. The Rise and Fall of ISIS

Monday, March 29. The Origins of the Arab-Israeli Conflict

- Reading for March 31: *In Search of Fatima*; **RP-2 due (submit online by 10:00AM)**  
Wednesday, March 31. The Arab-Israeli Conflict (cont'd)

Monday, April 5. The Arab-Israeli Conflict (cont'd)

- BEGIN READING *A Long Way Gone* by Ishmael Beah; **Reaction Piece due April 21 (submit your RP online by 10:00AM on that date)**
- Assignment for April 7: View the film [“Paradise Now”](#) (2005) and read the [controversy over the film](#); **POST YOUR RESPONSE TO THE PROMPTS ON Canvas by Wednesday at 10:00AM**  
Wednesday, April 7. The Arab-Israeli Conflict: Prospects for Peace?

Friday, April 9. The Origins of Apartheid in South Africa

Monday, April 12. Apartheid South Africa (cont'd)

- Reading for April 14: “City Lovers” and “Country Lovers” by Nadine Gordimer; **POST YOUR RESPONSE TO THE PROMPTS ON Canvas by Wednesday at 10:00AM**

Wednesday, April 14. The Fall of Apartheid

Friday, April 16. The Origins of Genocide in Rwanda

Monday, April 19. Genocide in Rwanda (cont'd)

- Reading for April 21: *A Long Way Gone*; **RP-3 due in class (submit online by 10:00AM)**

Wednesday, April 21. Conflict in West Africa—Sierra Leone: Discussion of *A Long Way Gone*

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

Monday, April 26. Central America: Coup d'état in Guatemala

Wednesday, April 28. TBA

**Final Exam: Monday, May 3 at Noon (Online)**

**FINAL EXAM TAKE HOME ESSAY: (3-5 pages double-spaced); (submit your essay online by noon Monday, May 3). 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.