

Fall 2008  
History 218

## The World in the Twentieth Century ([www.uncg.edu/~jwjones/world](http://www.uncg.edu/~jwjones/world))

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Office Hours: M 4:00-5; W 2:00-3; Th. 10:30-11:30 and by appointment	
Teaching Assistants: Todd Miller and John Kaiser (2323 MHRA)	

### Course Description

This class 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 regions 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; & environmental issues.

### Learning Outcomes

- Students will learn that history is not just the memorization of dates and facts, but rather the *interpretation* of the past
- Students will acquire a knowledge of the key terms, facts, and events in contemporary world history and thereby gain an informed historical perspective
- Students will take from the class the skills to critically appraise varying historical arguments and to clearly express their own interpretations
- Students will learn how to critically read and distinguish between different types of historical sources and to “read between the lines” of differing points of view
- Students will experience “hands-on” work with primary source material and gain insight on how to interpret history through such sources
- Students will develop analytical skills and the ability to apply principles and generalizations learned in this class to other problems and situations
- Students will develop the ability to synthesize and integrate information and ideas as well as to distinguish between fact and opinion
- Students will be encouraged to develop an openness to new ideas and, most importantly, the capacity to think critically

### Course Readings:

- *Three Cups of Tea*, Greg Mortenson and David Oliver Relin
- *When Heaven & Earth Changed Places*, Le Ly Hayslip
- *A Long Way Gone*, Ishmael Beah
- Online material identified below
- Optional: *The World Transformed: 1945 to the Present*, Michael H. Hunt

**Course Web Page:** The extensive course web page at [www.uncg.edu/~jwjones/world](http://www.uncg.edu/~jwjones/world) has class notes and readings; Video and Audio Archives; Maps; Visual Tours; Internet Resources; and Internet Assignments. We will also utilize aspects of the Blackboard course web page.

<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.
- 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 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.

**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 of the material) to the readings noted below. **Attendance is required in the Discussion Sections;** each unexcused absences will lead to three points being subtracted from the final participation grade.

**Grading:** Grades are compiled on a point system. For example, 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 Final Grade = **88.8 = 89** or B+. Grades will be posted on Blackboard.

## Lecture & Assignment Schedule:

Monday, August 25. Introduction: The Study of History & WWII

**\*\*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; and “Diary Shows Tojo Resisted Surrender Till End” by Mari Yamaguchi. Optional sources: web pages and material you identify. Refer to the Paper Guidelines for how to do citations and other questions regarding this assignment. **Due: Wednesday, September 10**

Wednesday, August 27. The Origins of the Cold War

Friday, August 29. The Origins of the Cold War (cont’d)

Wednesday, September 3. The Cold War (cont’d) & Marxism-Leninism in the Soviet Union

Friday, September 5. Stalinism in the USSR & Truman’s Decision to Bomb Japan

- Reading for Discussion Sections for Monday, September 8: the material for the 1<sup>st</sup> Paper Assignment listed above; **BRING AN OUTLINE OF YOUR PAPER WITH A CLEARLY STATED THESIS and 2-3 SUPPORTING POINTS TO TURN IN**
- Monday, September 8. DISCUSSION SECTIONS

Wednesday, September 10. The USSR After Stalin

- **1<sup>st</sup> Paper Due in class**

Friday, September 12. India: The Struggle for Independence

- Reading for Discussion Sections for Monday, September 15: 1) Excerpts from *Stalin* by Hiroaki Kuromiya); 2) Speech by Soviet leader Andrei Zhdanov and the Truman Doctrine; 3) Excerpts from *Putin’s Russia: Past Imperfect, Future Uncertain*, ed. by Dale Herspring; **POST YOUR REACTIONS TO THESE READINGS ON YOUR DISCUSSION SECTION’S BLACKBOARD DISCUSSION BOARD BY SUNDAY AT NOON**
- Monday, September 15. DISCUSSION SECTIONS

Wednesday, September 17. India: the Struggle for Independence (cont’d)

BEGIN READING *Three Cups of Tea*; **\*\*RP** due Monday, September 29

Friday, September 19. A Region in Conflict: India & Pakistan

- Reading for Discussion Sections for Monday, September 22: *Time*’s Man of the Year for 1930: Mohandas K. Gandhi; excerpts from *Nectar in a Sieve* by Kamala Markandaya; and “Who are India’s Untouchables?” by Tim O’Neill and Heidi Schultz; **POST YOUR**

**REACTION TO THESE READINGS ON YOUR DISCUSSION SECTION'S  
BLACKBOARD DISCUSSION BOARD BY SUNDAY AT NOON**

Monday, September 22. DISCUSSION SECTIONS

Wednesday, September 24. Afghanistan: A Country in Turmoil

Friday, September 26. Afghanistan in the "War on Terrorism"

- Reading for Discussion Sections for Monday, September 29: *Three Cups of Tea* by Greg Mortenson and David Oliver Relin; **\*\*Reaction Piece due in Discussion Sections**
- Monday, September 29. DISCUSSION SECTIONS

BEGIN READING *When Heaven & Earth Changed Places*; **\*\*RP** due Monday, October 13

Wednesday, October 1. China: from Confucianism to Communism

Friday, October 3. Mao & China's "Constant Revolution"

- Reading for Discussion Sections for Monday, October 6: "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 REACTION TO THESE READINGS ON YOUR DISCUSSION SECTION'S BLACKBOARD DISCUSSION BOARD BY SUNDAY AT NOON**

Monday, October 6. DISCUSSION SECTIONS

Wednesday, October 8. China Since Mao

Friday, October 10. The Origins of the Vietnam War

- Reading for Discussion Sections for Monday, October 13: *When Heaven & Earth Changed Places* by Le Ly Hayslip; **\*\*Reaction Piece due in Discussion Sections**
- Monday, October 13. DISCUSSION SECTIONS

Wednesday, October 15. The US in Vietnam

Friday, October 17. The US in Vietnam (cont'd)

Wednesday, October 22. **MID-TERM EXAM**

BEGIN READING *A Long Way Gone*; **\*\*RP** due Monday, November 3

Friday, October 24. Issues in Modern African History: An Overview

**{NOTE: WE WILL NOT HAVE DISCUSSION SECTIONS THIS WEEK; MEET IN Jarrell Hall (LIBRARY 032) at 9:00 ON MONDAY}**

Monday, October 27. Genocide in Rwanda

Wednesday, October 29. Genocide in Rwanda (cont'd) & Darfur

**THURSDAY, OCTOBER 30:** Ishmael Beah will discuss “Children at War” at the Aycock Auditorium at 7:00 and **Friday, October 31:** Lecture by Micheline Ishay, “Debating Human Rights: Critical Historical and Contemporary Controversies,” at 9:00 AM **in the Virginia Dare Room of the Alumni House**; ATTENDANCE REQUIRED AT BOTH EVENTS

- Reading for Discussion Sections for Monday, November 3: *A Long Way Gone* by Ishmael Beah; **\*\*Reaction Piece due in Discussion Sections**  
Monday, November 3. DISCUSSION SECTIONS

Wednesday, November 5. Genocide in Darfur (cont’d)

Friday, November 7. Iran: From Secularism to Fundamentalism

**{NOTE: WE WILL NOT HAVE DISCUSSION SECTIONS THIS WEEK; MEET IN Jarrell Hall (LIBRARY 032) at 9:00 ON MONDAY}**

Monday, November 10. Iran: From Secularism to Fundamentalism (cont’d)

Wednesday, November 12. Iraq & Kuwait: A Collision Course

Friday, November 14. Wars in the Persian Gulf

- Reading for Discussion Sections for Monday, November 17: “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?” and **POST YOUR REACTION TO THIS MATERIAL ON YOUR DISCUSSION SECTION’S BLACKBOARD DISCUSSION BOARD BY SUNDAY AT NOON**

Monday, November 17. DISCUSSION SECTIONS

Wednesday, November 19. Origins of the Arab-Israeli Conflict

Friday, November 21. The Arab-Israeli Conflict (cont’d)

Monday, November 24. The Arab-Israeli Conflict (cont’d)

- Reading for Discussion Sections for Monday, December 1: Excerpt from *In Search of Fatima: A Palestinian Story* by Ghada Karmi and “*In Search of Fatima* by Ghada Karmi: Review” by Natalie Bennett; **\*\*Reaction Piece due in Discussion Sections**

Monday, December 1. DISCUSSION SECTIONS

Wednesday, December 3. The Arab-Israeli Conflict: Is there hope for peace?

Friday, December 5. South America: Chile. **2<sup>nd</sup> Paper Due in class**

**{NOTE: WE WILL NOT HAVE DISCUSSION SECTIONS THIS WEEK; MEET IN Jarrell Hall (LIBRARY 032) at 9:00 ON MONDAY}**

Monday, December 8. Central America: Guatemala

**Final Exam: Friday, December 12 8/9:00-11:00**