History and Its Uses in International Affairs

Instructor: Garret Martin
Classroom: 1957 E, room 316
Wednesdays 6:10 – 8:00pm
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Office Hours: Virtual and by appointment
Web site: Syllabus and other links will be posted to Blackboard

Course Description and Objectives:

The German philosopher Hegel once expressed that History is “little more than the register of the crimes, follies, and misfortunes of mankind. But what experience and history teach is this: that peoples and governments have never learned anything from history, or acted on principles deduced from it.” Although one might find ample evidence that people and governments rarely “learn from history,” the power of history as a legitimizing force is undeniable. Various groups in history have vied to create and control narratives of history that dominate public discourse. This course will examine the various political, social, and cultural techniques that create historical narratives, and will concentrate on three key themes:

1. What is history? And what is it not? History is not some immutable thing just stuck in the past. The present day influences how we look back at the past. But there are of course also dates and facts that can't be changed. The "why" questions (why did something happen?) and the answers to the "why" questions about history, however, can and do change. Each class will involve learning about some important moments/events/periods in history that shed light on contemporary international affairs.

2. History matters to nations and their interactions with other nations. It forms people and states. It influences their view of the world, of themselves and of their relations with other states. History and a nation's understanding of its history are intimately linked with a sense of identity. This can give debates about history very high stakes.
3. History is used and abused in the present day. People and groups use the past, and sometimes consciously, sometimes not, people learn from the past. One of the most common ways people and policymakers learn from history is by drawing analogies. The latter can be a very useful way to use a previous similar event in history to guide what your policy today and in the future can be. But if it is the wrong analogy, this can cause significant problems; and not to mention that drawing analogies is not always a neutral process. A policymaker may use a particular analogy solely because he/she thinks it will force people to agree to a certain type of policy response and not because he/she thinks the two cases are in fact deeply analogous.

This course has no particular geographic focus, though we will move quickly from a general discussion of history and move into several case studies in the traumatic 20th century that illuminate the use of the past. No historical expertise is required of the course; however, students may wish to consult other textbooks or readings in order to gain greater contextual knowledge.

This course will be run in a discussion format. In addition to helping to lead class yourself, students will be expected to be prepared each week to intensely discuss the common class readings and to present their own research.

**Learning Outcomes:**

As a result of completing this course, students will:

- Gain familiarity with major English-language scholarly works on the case studies examined;
- Gain greater familiarity with the craft of historical scholarship;
- Understand the key historical issues and debates surrounding the twentieth century case studies examined in class;
- Recognize the importance of history for understanding contemporary international affairs and policymaking;
- Evaluate the ways policymakers and nations use and misuse history;
- Develop a greater or more general appreciation for the complexity and meaning of history;
- Develop oral and written analytical skills through the practice of historical argumentation.

**Required Books of the Course:**

Paul Cohen, *History in Three Keys: The Boxers as Event, Experience, and Myth*

Priscilla Hayner, *Unspeakable Truths: Facing the Challenges of Truth Commissions.*

Edward T. Linenthal and Tom Engelhardt, eds., *History Wars: The Enola Gay and Other Battles for the American Past*
Margaret MacMillan, Dangerous Games: The Uses and Abuses of History

Richard E. Neustadt and Ernest R. May, Thinking In Time: The Uses of History for Decision Makers

Peter Novick, The Holocaust in American Life

All article readings for the class will be distributed in class and/or placed on Blackboard. Please check Blackboard readings regularly; I will occasionally post short articles relevant to future discussions; students should also feel free to submit articles they also find interesting and relevant.

Class Policies:

Civil Discussion: This course cannot function without heavy student engagement in class discussion. Students will be expected to have read the material for the week, as listed on the syllabus, prior to class. Give and take between students is critical for the class, but so is civil discussion. Be aware of others, and please consider (and try to avoid) the 90/10 rule—that is, there is a gradual tendency of 90% of the talking to be done by 10% of the class.

Written Work: All written work in for this course must be submitted by email to gjmartin@gwu.edu. The analytical paper and final paper will also need to be submitted via SafeAssign on Blackboard.

Class Attendance: Unless you have a family emergency, documented illness, or are excused due to a religious observance (in advance by the professor), late papers will be accepted but will be reduced by a full letter grade for every day (24-hour period) that they are late.

Religious Holidays: If you will miss a class or deadline due to your observance of a religious holiday, please notify the professor by email during the first week of classes.

If you miss class, you must notify me in advance and complete a one-page paper summarizing and analyzing the readings for the class you miss.

Please come to each class with the readings for that day.

Please be on time. Entering class late is a huge distraction not just for the professor but for the rest of the class as well. Continued late entry will adversely affect your grade. Also please turn off all laptops, cell phones, beepers, sidekicks, PDAs, etc. during class—phones are NOT to be set to vibrate; they are to be completely off.
Assignments and Academic Integrity:

All written work must be submitted by email on the days they are due. I am happy to read drafts or portions of papers if you e-mail them to me within a reasonable window before deadlines. All written work must be typed, paginated, and double-spaced in 12-point font in Times New Roman (or equivalent) with standard margins. Significant and consistent errors in grammar and syntax will affect your grade accordingly, as will sloppy or meandering oral presentations.

Cheating, plagiarism, and all forms of academic dishonesty are strictly prohibited and will be treated in accordance with GWU’s official code of student conduct. GW’s Code of Academic Integrity states: “Academic dishonesty is defined as cheating of any kind, including misrepresenting one's own work, taking credit for the work of others without crediting them and without appropriate authorization, and the fabrication of information.” The Code in its entirety is available at http://www.gwu.edu/~ntegrity/code.html

Support For Students Outside the Classroom:

DISABILITY SUPPORT SERVICES (DSS)

Any student who may need an accommodation based on the potential impact of a disability should contact the Disability Support Services office at 202-994-8250 in the Marvin Center, Suite 242, to establish eligibility and to coordinate reasonable accommodations. For additional information please refer to: http://gwired.gwu.edu/dss/

UNIVERSITY COUNSELING CENTER (UCC) - 202-994-5300

The University Counseling Center (UCC) offers 24/7 assistance and referral to address students' personal, social, career, and study skills problems. Services for students include:

- crisis and emergency mental health consultations
- confidential assessment, counseling services (individual and small group), and referrals

http://gwired.gwu.edu/counsel/CounselingServices/AcademicSupportServices

SECURITY

In the case of an emergency, if at all possible, the class should shelter in place. If the building that the class is in is affected, follow the evacuation procedures for the building. After
evacuation, seek shelter at a predetermined rendezvous location.

**Student Responsibilities:**

**Class Participation** (20%) This course relies heavily on student engagement in class discussion. The give and take between students will be crucial to the exchange of ideas. Since the course is designed in discussion format with students leading each week’s discussion, students will have plenty of opportunity to express their views and ideas during the term. Please note that students are expected to read all assigned readings for a particular class before that class begins. Participation should be qualitative as well as quantitative. Critical thoughts and original analysis will be important for this part of the grade. Be aware of others, and please consider (and try to avoid) the 90/10 rule—that is, there is a gradual tendency of 90% of the talking to be done by 10% of the class.

**Discussion leader presentation** (15%): Discussion leaders will be chosen to lead each class based on the course readings. In order to facilitate discussion, the leaders will need to prepare questions based on the readings for the class. These questions should be cleared by the instructor and distributed via Blackboard NO LATER THAN 6PM the night before class. The questions will help you plan the class session and the issues you want to cover, but always leave room for open discussion—and do not worry about covering all of your questions during class time: I base your presentation grade in part on the questions submitted via e-mail and am able to assess you on that basis even if we do not have time to address them all in class. The discussion is not a presentation; discussion leaders may not monopolize discussion or substitute presentation for leading discussion; students who are not leading discussion are expected to come prepared to discuss the week’s reading.

Discussion leaders will be expected to communicate in person, by e-mail, or phone among themselves to coordinate their presentations and distribution of the questions. Feel free to communicate with me for any reason about any aspect of your presentation. You are also welcome to use handouts, multimedia, or any other approaches or tools you deem necessary to make the presentation more effective. I will interject from time to time to emphasize certain points you make during your presentation, or to illuminate broader themes from the course, but this is really your presentation and your time, and I will be expecting students to try and contextualize where appropriate and to connect themes from the readings from previous weeks in making presentations.

**Annotated Bibliography** (10%): As a way of demonstrating progress toward the completion of the final paper, students will submit a partial bibliography of sources to be used in the final paper. These sources should be annotated and separated into primary and secondary source categories. This is due by email on 21 October. Further advice about this assignment is available on blackboard under the folder ‘guidance’.
Analytical Paper (15%): At the start of the semester, students will be assigned an analytical paper of four to five pages. The discussion leaders will never have to turn in an analytical paper for the week of their presentation, so that they may concentrate on preparing questions and class discussion. The analytical paper should contextualize the reading(s) and connect them with themes discussed from previous weeks. This paper is not a book review. This paper should avoid commenting on the quality of the book or whether you personally found it interesting. Further advice about this assignment is available on blackboard under the folder ‘guidance’.

The paper can be submitted any time during the following time frame: between 7th October and 4th November.

Executive Summary (5%): This is a one- to two-page summary (double-spaced) of your oral presentation that you will submit via e-mail to the class at the latest the day before you are scheduled to present. Your colleagues will then have a chance to see a summary before you present and will facilitate discussion or questions. It will also help you distill your presentation to its bare essentials, making it easier to focus on the key issues during the oral presentation itself. Further advice about this assignment is available on blackboard under the folder ‘guidance’.

Oral Presentation (10%): You will present on your final paper topic. This presentation may include multimedia if you choose it to underscore certain points. Additionally, handouts and/or outlines could help focus the presentation. Please consult with me if you have any concerns. It’s a good idea to run through your presentation as practice beforehand, as you will be graded on your ability to focus on the topic and to limit yourself to the allocated time frame. Be prepared after your presentation for the possibility of questions from your colleagues, as time permits. Further advice about this assignment is available on blackboard under the folder ‘guidance’.

Final Paper (25%): You are to type a 20-page, double-spaced, paginated paper with footnotes and a list of works cited. The final paper must also include a bibliography of at least one page, which does not count toward the 20-page total. The topic is up to you, so long as the paper demonstrates how a government, organization, or individuals have promoted a narrative that serves their cause and have attempted to silence or marginalize competing narratives about the past. You will have to have my approval for the topic: step one is a one-page topic proposal, due 16 September by email, which should contain a survey of available primary and secondary literature you plan to use; second is an annotated bibliography, due by email on 21 October. All citations should be according to the Chicago Manual of Style. The final version of the paper is due on 9 December by email.

E-mail Communication: I am happy to communicate with you about any concerns you may have about assignments, to provide a cursory “quality control” of drafts or to green-light paper ideas, and to schedule meetings. Please allow a reasonable time for me to respond, since I do not necessarily read my e-mail every day, particularly on weekends. Under no circumstances will I discuss a grade over e-mail.
Class Schedule:

Class 1. Sep 2. Intro and Syllabus

Class 2. Sep 9. History and Myth: What do we mean by History?
Read: Introduction, Parts I and III of Cohen, History in 3 Keys

Class 3. Sep 16. History in the Public Realm
Read: Margaret Macmillan, Dangerous Games

Paper Proposals are Due

Class 4. Sep 23: Changes in Historical Interpretation over Time
Read: Novick, The Holocaust in American Life

NO CLASS SEPTEMBER 30

Class 6: Oct 7: Korea, China, Japan and the legacy of the 1930s and World War II
Read: Shuko Ogawa, “The difficulty of apology: Japan’s Struggle with Memory and Guilt.”
Read: Chunghee Sarah Soh, “The Korean ‘Comfort Women:’ Movement for Redress,”.
Read: Victor Cha, “Hypotheses on History and Hate in Asia: Japan and the Korean Peninsula” and Daqing Yang, “Reconciliation Between Japan and China: Problems and Prospects.”
Read: Alexis Dudden, “Apologizing for the Past between Japan and Korea”.
Read: Selection of newspaper articles on the conflict between Japan, China, and Korea in recent years.

Oct. 7:  Analytical Paper Window is open.
Class 7: Oct 14: Turkey and Armenia and the events of 1915. Genocide or not?


Materials from discussions and votes in the House of Representatives in fall 2000 and fall 2005 on a Congressional resolution on the Armenian genocide. BB

Related newspaper articles. BB

Class 8: Oct 21: History and Policy

Read: May and Neustadt, Thinking in Time.

Annotated Bibliographies are Due.


Read: Linenthal and Engelhardt, History Wars, Intro and Chapters 1, 4, 5, 6, 7
Read: Thelen, “History after the Enola Gay: An Introduction”
Read: Fussell, “Thank God for the Atomic Bomb”

Class 10: Nov 4: History and Decision-Making, Part II: Vietnam

Read: George Packer, “The Last Mission”
Read: John Bodnar, “Memory and History: An Introduction”
Read: Kendrick Oliver, The My Lai Massacre in American History and Memory, excerpt
Nov 4: **Analytical Paper window is closed.**

Class 11: Nov 11: Truth and Reconciliation in History
Read: Hayner, *Unspeakable Truths*

Class 12: Nov 18: Student Presentations

Class 13: Nov 25: **NO CLASS THANKSGIVING**

Class 14: Dec 2: Student Presentations

**Final Paper Due Date:** Dec 9