



Roots of Current Global Conflict

Syllabus

HIDI 1455 ~ 4 credit class ~ Fall 2019

Section 1: M/W 10:00-10:40 am, Rounds Hall 223

Section 2: M/W 2:00-2:40 pm, Rounds Hall 307

Dr. Whitney Howarth

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Office: 102 Memorial Hall, 535-3204 (x5-3204)

Office Hours: M, T, and W from 1-2 pm or by appointment

The COURSE SCHEDULE is available at the end of this document and at the following links:

- **[Section One Roots \(10 am\)](#)**
- **[Section Two Roots \(2 pm\)](#)**


What is this Course About?

This course will introduce you to some of the world's most problematic political conflict zones. It will teach you a little bit about the culture and history of each of these conflicts and the regions where the conflicts are unfolding. To understand how these conflicts came to be we will focus on economics, religion, political organization/dis-organization, the role of the USA in these regions, and why so many participants have chosen violence to try to resolve their conflicts, usually, unsuccessfully. We will be focusing on the role of states, political organizations, and international relations.

In this course you'll be asked to do historic research, read & blog about many news stories in one particular region of your choosing, and create a web page about a political conflict that interests you. You'll develop media literacy skills and new perspectives.

How does this course help you?

This is a General Education course that fulfills the "Past & Present" requirement. Specifically, this is a world history course, an HIDI (History Directions) and I am a History professor. I created this course for everyone and anyone who cares about what is happening in Our World today and who is curious about how we got here.

I love this course so much, I actually think every PSU student should take it!  Very few students who take this course are history majors so you don't have to be "good at history" – or even a history *buff* -- to be here. Yet, I hope after you take this course you'll love history, even if just a bit. Some of you may come to love it a lot!

Political History covered in this course:

- Week 1: Introduction to World Conflicts, Open Pedagogy & Your Voice
- Week 2: Introduction to the Middle East and the History of Islam
- Week 3: From Prophet Mohammed to the Ottoman Empire
- Week 4: Persian history: from Safavids to the Ayatollah Khomeini
- Week 5: Iraqi history: the Gulf Wars and ISIS
- Week 6: The Arab-Israeli Conflict: Jewish nationalism, British Empire and Palestine

- Week 8: History of the British Empire: India, Partition and Kashmir
- Week 9: History of the British Empire: South Africa, Ghana and the Sudan
- Week 10: Colonialism, Nationalism, and Genocide – conflict of your choice
- Week 11: Rwandan Genocide – the violence of “othering”
- Week 12: Rwandan Genocide – “Never Again?”
- Week 13: Thanksgiving (history here too!)
- Week 14: Your conflict choice
- Week 15: Your conflict choice

WARNING: This course is an experiment.

I’ve taught it many times before, but this time we’re trying something different, exciting, & new! We are going to be embracing a philosophy called OPEN PEDAGOGY. It is a way of teaching and learning and sharing knowledge in the classroom. It honors student agency, awareness, accessibility, connection and co-creation of knowledge. In an OPEN class, the teacher isn’t THE SAGE on the STAGE, and she’s not always the Guide on the Side. Sometimes I’m a resource, a partner, a cheer leader, a boundary setter, a mentor, a creator, and an instructor. My role will change in different moments and I will be figuring stuff out alongside you. I will be, at times, vulnerable, and honest about my limitations. I will see you as a whole person – with your own ideas and opinions – and I will always push you, challenge you, cheer you, and help you to grow your ideas, sharpen your opinions, find evidence for your argument, and explore.

We’ll talk a lot more about OPEN PEDAGOGY over the semester. If you’d like to read more about it now, check out [this link to the definition at the Open Pedagogy Notebook.](#))

What you need to bring to class

- Yourself. (Your full self, as much as possible. Your heart and your head, especially. But we will accept your tired, bedraggled, distracted, and/or grumpy self, too.)
- A laptop computer. You don’t need to own one. You can check one out at the front desk of the library with your PSU ID. (Tablets are okay for a lot of what we do, but not all of it).
- Some paper and something to write with because sometimes we’ll use old fashioned tools.
- A willingness to experiment and explore new places, new times, new ideas, new terms, foreign names, and challenging perspectives that you are unfamiliar with, may or may not agree with, are open to examine. A willingness to actively listen, engage, participate and discover.

What you do NOT need to bring to class

- A textbook. We don't have one. (Most readings are free and on-line. We will read one book on Rwanda by Philip Gourevitch, Please purchase or rent that book, text/digital (\$9-20) ASAP.
- Cynicism, intolerance, and an inflexible set of opinions about people different than you.
- Smelly cheeses, porn, booze, drugs, and other (exciting but unhealthy) distractions.



How many classes can you miss?

- As many as **six** and as few as you possibly can.
- I want you to come to every single class, if possible. Showing up in life is key.
- I hope you don't miss any classes because missing even one class can impact your learning. You are part of a learning community and we need your ideas and your energy. If you miss class, you'll not only miss material, we will miss you!
- Your absence will be noticed and the absence of your voice will impact others.
- That being said, life happens. You are an adult and you have to make choices. If you are really sick and don't think coming to class is a good idea, let me know. If you are facing some personal issues or a family situation, prioritize that. If you have a court date, a child care issue, or if you just need a mental health day, let me know.
- Please come talk to me and let me know what's going on if you are struggling. I want to respect your privacy. I'm also a really good listener. If you need someone to talk to I am here. We also have a really good counseling center (which you've paid for!) and amazing on-campus resources, specialists, and warm-hearted folks who care. We also have a food pantry and a spirituality center.
- If you are frequently absent, choose not to provide documentation, or fail to communicate with me, we'll have to talk about how your grade will be impacted (six absences may equal an F or a request to Withdraw). Let's try to figure things out before we even come close to that. I want you to succeed and

I care about your health, happiness, and WHOLENESS.

Consequences for Choices:

- If you walk in after class has begun, you are late. Frequently coming to class late will disrupt others and will insure you miss important information and collaboration. We'll need to talk about this will impact your participation and collaboration grade if you are often late and/or disruptive to learning.
- If you miss more than three classes, without an excused absence, we'll have to discuss how your participation/collaboration grade will be impacted, also. Excused absences are discussed in the university policy here: [PSU excused absence policy](#)

Holding you responsible for lateness and absences is not a judgement about you being a good person or not, it is about fair grading (holding everyone to the same standards). I think that those who attend regularly and contribute to class discussions deserve to be acknowledged. Those who routinely show up unprepared and do not actively engage in class should be aware of how their choices impact the class, and their own learning. Their grade should reflect those choices.

- If you miss six classes or more, you are in jeopardy of failing the course and we'll have to decide whether or not you should Withdraw from the class. If there's a lot going on in your life, you may want to talk to Dr. David Zehr, the Academic and Student Advocate, about possibly taking a leave of absence from Plymouth State University. Sometimes life gets complicated and you need to take time away to focus on other matters. Dr. Zehr can help you consider your options, you can reach him at zehr@plymouth.edu or 603-535-3294 or visit him in the Frost House.
- You can only request an INCOMPLETE (INC) for this course if you are only missing ONE major assignment at the end of the term. More than one major assignment is too much for an IC to handle and you'll have to take the "F" or Withdraw.
- My hope is everyone will enjoy this class, do their best and learn new things. I want everyone to pass and most of you to excel beyond your imaginings! If you are struggling with these expectations, consequences, or choices, please come speak to me so we can form a plan for you to do your best.
- **Sharing:** In this class, you are expected to be willing to share your work with your peers in class and to be willing to allow your peers to access your work. Choosing not to do this, to miss deadlines, or to miss collaborative goals will impact your course grade. I hope, too, that you will share your final project, even if anonymously or pseudonymously, with the world at large. (Note that the final grade for this course is a digital wiki article of your collaborative research which will be on-line for all to see). You will have opportunity to rework, edit, revise, & publish the web page for the public when you feel it is ready for prime time!

How is this course graded?

- You will receive a letter grade in week six for the early work you have done. This grade is a snap shot of what you've contributed to class discussions and how well you've been keeping up with class readings. It is early in the semester and can not, therefore, be an accurate predictor of how well you'll do in the course, since 85% of the work is yet to unfold. So unless you are looking at a D or F at six weeks, don't worry. If you are not sure why you are getting the grade you received at that time, come talk to me.
- Throughout the course of the semester you will be asked to complete many assignments that will not be graded. I will give you feedback and frequently ask you to come talk to me about assignments you are submitting. You will also be asked to reflect on work you are doing and self-assess your progress. If there seems to be a huge discrepancy between your self-assessment of your progress/participation/collaboration and my assessment, let's talk. Conversations help us understand one another better!
- We will use Moodle from time to time but not all grades will be recorded there for each and every assignment. I would like us to keep track of what you've submitted on Moodle so you know which assignments are complete. Since many items you submit will be UNGRADED (not letter graded, but feedback driven), you'll have a chance to see how you are doing, what you need to improve, and how you can progress.
- There will also be self-evaluations that will help you know how you're doing and help me understand what's going well for you and what's not.
- Your overall course grade will be weighted in this way:

20% class participation, preparedness, presence, active listening, and collaboration
20% mid-term exam
20% quizzes (average of 4 quizzes)
20% weekly news blogs and comments on blogs
20% final research project and wiki web page (Domain of Ones Own)



Omani men in prayer (wiki media commons) CC BY-SA 4.0

https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Omanis_%D9%85%D8%B1%D8%AF%D9%85_%D8%B9%D9%85%D8%A7%D9%86_21.jpg

How do I get HELP?

In almost all cases, the best way to get help is to ask as soon as you know you need help. Contact me (Dr. Howarth) or stop by my office in Memorial Hall (in between Rounds and the HUB). Come during my office hours, make an appointment, or just swing by to see if I'm in and free to chat. My door is usually open and I love visitors (if I'm not frantically prepping for this class moments before we meet).

Asking for help is GOOD! It shows that you are aware of what you need and that you are able to take some control of your life and education, even if it's just to say, "I have no control over my life and education! Help!"

Here are specific cases:

1) If you don't understand course material

Tell somebody as soon as possible! Everybody struggles with the material for this course at some point or another. It's totally expected. Don't let things snowball. It's easier to deal with difficulties earlier rather than later. The problem may not even be you; it may be a glitch in the course that you're the first person to discover.

2) If you need accommodations for accessibility

We love our Campus Accessibility Office and work with them a lot. They'll share official accommodation plans with us, but we strive to be accessible to all students, regardless of official status. If we're not meeting your accessibility needs, let somebody know and we'll do our best to adjust. We want this course to be a community of learners, and communities take care of their members. If we can do things to make it easier for you to learn and participate, please tell us. (You can even leave an anonymous note at the office you want.)

3) If you are having problems with other stuff at the university

I'm always happy to help you, if I can, for any reason. If I can't suggest something useful, at least I can guide you to other offices that can help. There are a lot of resources available on this campus, and it's unlikely you know what they all are. I recommend that students use the counseling center on campus (which is free and very welcoming) or turn to Academic & Student Advocate, Dr. David Zehr. His office is in Frost House, his email address is zehr@plymouth.edu, and his phone number is 603-535-3294. If you are worried about a classmate, a friend, or someone in your residence hall, you can fill out a CARE form to let Dr. Zehr and others know someone is struggling. Faculty do this, too.

4) If you are having problems with basic needs

You cannot learn well if you are anxious about food or shelter. We have some short-term resources to help, and there are resources on campus to help with longer term needs. We hope you won't hesitate to let me know if you need help with food and housing. I can try to help. Because if you are worried about these basic elements of life, you will not be able to be a good participant in our learning community, and we want you to be.

The **Student Support Foundation** runs a food pantry at the back of Belknap Hall which is available to all students, and they also have a program of emergency financial assistance. The CoLab has a small in-house food pantry in Lamson 003 where you can get supplies if you are hungry (we also stock menstrual products, gas cards, and a few other basics. If you need something and can't find it, please see Hannah, Matt, Robin, or Martha). We are committed to helping you get your needs met so that you can focus on your studies.

5) Names

For the sake of submitting your final term grade to the Registrar, I need to know the name by which PSU links you to your records. Other than that, you're welcome to use whatever name you prefer in class, on your written work, and for on-line assignments. We in the class will address you as you wish to be addressed. This is true, also, of the pronouns you want us to use, if you have a preference. Our community supports diversity, inclusion, & equity. Swing by my office to chat or shoot me an email about your preferences.

Other course policies, university policies, & items required to be on this syllabus

Course Description: In order to comprehend the present and envision the future, we must understand the past. This course examines the historic origins of several global conflicts, both regionally and thematically, so that we may better comprehend the past and envision the future. Historic themes such as nuclear proliferation, ethnic cleansing, terrorism, nationalism and dictatorship will be examined from a political, economic and cultural perspective. We will discuss conflicts in the Middle East, nuclear tensions between India and Pakistan, communism in Cuba, and ethnic wars in Africa, particularly Rwanda. We will also discuss how these issues impact our own lives and why we should care.

This history course is a Past Present, DIRECTIONS course (HIDI) in Gen. Ed. lingo. Curious what that means? See: [PSU Gen Ed page on Directions requirements](#).

Course Objectives

- 1) Students will articulate why the interpretation of the past may change over time, using cultural, political and economic motivations for doing so.
- 2) Students will examine the parallel processes and similarities between those conflicts happening today and those that shook our world centuries ago.
- 3) Students will illustrate through research, written work and digital presentations why the historic roots of current conflicts matter.
- 4) Students will establish a practice of reading world news regularly and will learn how to construct a series of questions about the news, its presentation, and its bias.

Academic Integrity

You must adhere to the [Academic Integrity policy](#) as outlined in the PSU Academic Catalog. Basically this asks that you please don't: cheat, copy words off the internet, use other people's work as your own, buy a paper, or plagiarize in any way shape or form.

In addition to the grading information above, you should be aware of PSU's Fair Grading Policy. **Click this link to read PSU's: [Fair Grading Policy](#)**

PSU's official Accommodation Statement

Plymouth State University is committed to providing students with documented disabilities equal access to all university programs and facilities. If you think you have a disability requiring accommodations, you should contact [Campus Accessibility Services \(CAS\)](#), located in Speare Hall (535-3300) to determine whether you are eligible for such accommodations. Academic accommodations will only be considered for students who have registered with CAS. If you have authorized CAS to electronically deliver a Letter of Accommodations for this course, please communicate with your instructor to review your accommodations. You can find more info on the [CAS web page](#).

Snow Days

If class is canceled because it is unsafe to travel to campus, either officially by PSU or by me (because I cannot get to Plymouth), we will move our class work online and stick to the general plan in the syllabus. I may assign a video (in lieu of my lecture) or a few short articles to read and respond to, instead of a class discussion. This work will require less than 100 minutes of your time (the average time we spend in one class) and will support your readings/homework prep. Please complete these assignments on the day they are assigned, if possible, so we not need re-adjust the course schedule. You will receive a pass or no-pass grade for these assignments which will go towards your participation grade (20% of your course grade). If you lose power or have trouble accessing a computer to do this work from home, please let me know as soon as you can.

The Frost House

The Frost House is home to a variety of helpful services that support students in need. These include the CARE program, information about student rights and responsibilities related to student conduct, and the office of Dr. David Zehr (Student Advocate) who can help students who are struggling and may need to Withdraw from classes. More info. about these and many more services can be found on the [FROST HOUSE WEB PAGE](#).

Do you know someone who may be in need? Who has experienced an emergency or significant incident impacting their ability to succeed at PSU? You can send a CARE for on their behalf. **[Click HERE to learn more and find a link to the form.](#)**

NOTE: This syllabus is intellectual property. It is work that has been licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial-ShareAlike 4.0 International License. Much of this syllabus was borrowed and adapted from Dr. Matthew Cheney's syllabus materials for his IDS class. Cheney is brilliant and wise beyond measure. I not only credit him for many of these words, and most of these ideas, but also acknowledge his wisdom and kindness. Thank you for sharing. I am so grateful.