

## DHP H205: THE HISTORIAN'S ART AND CURRENT AFFAIRS- Sulmaan Khan

### Course Description:

We all use history, whether consciously or unconsciously, to understand the present and make decisions about the future. But we misuse it all too often and to our peril. Through a series of case studies, this course aims to give students the historical powers they need as they go out into the world: empathy, detachment, and relentless scepticism.

### Assignments:

Three four page papers and one take-home final exam.

### Required readings:

Ernest May and Richard Neustadt, *Thinking in Time*.  
Barbara Tuchman, *The Guns of August*.  
Rudyard Kipling, *Kim*.  
M.E. Sarotte, *1989*.  
Paul Kennedy, *The Rise and Fall of the Great Powers*.  
Roberta Wohlstetter, *Pearl Harbor: Warning and Decision*.  
Caroline Fraser, *Rewilding the World*.

Additional readings available on Trunk.

### Note:

Doing all the readings thoroughly is important. You will get nothing out of the course if you do not complete the readings; experience shows that your grade will suffer too (you cannot do the assignments competently without having done the reading). One of the skills you will need in the course--- and in life--- is the ability to digest large amounts of information accurately in a short time. The only way of developing this skill is practice.

It might prove helpful to read as many of the books as you can in the week before the semester starts.

*The Guns of August* is the reading assignment for the first session. That means you are to come to class having completed it.

### Electronics Policy

The use of laptops or other electronic devices is not permitted in this class.

### Sessions:

- 1) The Origins of World War I. Readings: Tuchman, *The Guns of August*
- 2) The Cuban Missile Crisis. Readings: May and Neustadt, xi-16, Kennedy Tapes, excerpts
- 3) World War I: Analogies Today. Readings: Kissinger, excerpts, FT coverage.
- 4) Appeasement. Readings: Chamberlain, Churchill, and all; Snyder.
- 5) The Sicilian Expedition. Readings: Thucydides, excerpts.
- 6) Korea. Readings: May and Neustadt, 34-48, Truman, excerpts
- 7) Vietnam. Readings: May and Neustadt, 75-90, 157-171, Halberstam, excerpts
- 8) The Many Endings of the Cold War. Readings: *Cambridge History of The Cold War*, excerpts; Kennedy, excerpts. **First paper due.**
- 9) American Lessons from the Cold War---and Beyond. Readings: Bush National Security Strategy, Fukuyama, “The End of History?”, Goldberg, “The Obama Doctrine”.
- 10) Russian Lessons from the Cold War. Readings: Freeland, excerpts, Alexievich, excerpts, Sarotte, “A Broken Promise?”
- 11) Crimea. Readings: Kramer, CWIHP Working Paper, Saakashvili, “Let Georgia Be a Lesson for what will happen to Ukraine,” Snyder, “Fascism, Russia, and Ukraine”
- 12) China’s Lessons from the Cold War. Readings: Sarotte, “China’s Fear of Contagion”, Jan Wong, excerpts, Kissinger, excerpts.
- 13) An Exercise in Placement: Xi Jinping. Readings: Osnos, Xi.
- 14) Placing Japan: The Okinawa Base and More. FT coverage; Yamada.
- 15) Taiwan Tangle. Readings TBA.

- 16) Trouble in the China Seas. Readings: Fravel, excerpts, Crisis Group report, FT coverage. **Second paper due.**
- 17) Korea Revisited. Readings TBA.
- 18) Revolutions: Velvet. Readings: M.E.Sarotte, 1989; NYT, “Obama Hails Poland as Model for Arab Nations in Upheaval.”
- 19) Shifting Power: Big History. Kennedy, *The Rise and Fall of the Great Powers*.
- 20) The Trump Presidency As Contemporary History. Readings TBA.
- 21) Surprise Attack: Pearl Harbour and 9/11. Readings: Wohlstetter, *Pearl Harbor: Warning and Decision*, May and Neustadt, 9/11 Commission Report (extracts).
- 22) The Environment as a Security Problem. Readings: Fraser, *Rewilding the World*; Brook, excerpts, Parker, excerpts. FT coverage.
- 23) The Great Game and Af-Pak. Readings: Kipling, *Kim*, Mason and Johnson, “No Sign Until the Burst of Fire”.
- 24) The Historian as Grand Strategist. Readings: Kissinger, “The White Revolutionary”, National Security Archive, Memcons, excerpts, Kissinger, *White House Years*, excerpts. **Third paper due.**
- 25) The Historian as Prophet. Readings: Gaddis, excerpts, Kennan, “The Long Telegram”.
- 26) Thinking like a Historian. Readings: May and Neustadt. **Final exam due.**