GLOBAL HISTORY II: 1750–THE PRESENT
THE AGE OF CARBON

History 250-2-01
Mon., Wed., Fri., 10am–10:50am
Introductory undergraduate lecture
Fall 2016, Leverone Auditorium

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Discussion sections

Sian Dowis: Wed. 4 (62), Wed. 5 (63), Fri. 9 (66)
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Gil Engelstein: Thu. 2 (64), Thu. 3 (65), Thu. 4 (69)
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Guangshuo Yang: Wed. 11 (60); Wed. 2 (67), Wed. 3 (61)
GuangshuoYang2015@u.northwestern.edu):

Daniel Immerwahr: Thu. 10 (68)

COURSE DESCRIPTION

This course offers an introduction to the main episodes and themes in modern history. Unlike other history classes, however, the focus will be not on a particular region or nation, but on the planet, taken as a whole. That broad scope will allow us to better understand large-scale phenomena such as empire, industrial technology, communism, the two world wars, HIV/AIDS, and globalization.

As the subtitle of this course suggests, particular attention will be given to the unlocking around 1750 of energy from fossil fuels and to the prosperity, inequality, and ecological change that resulted as humanity unevenly switched from a low-energy diet to a high-energy one.

READING

Weekly reading assignments will average around 90 pages and will never exceed 150. There are two types of readings for this course. First, there are discussion readings, which you'll talk about in your discussion sections. Second, there are background readings that will help you follow the lectures. Both are required and will show up on quizzes and exams.

As you read, I strongly advise taking notes. You can do this by underlining key passages or writing in the margins (note: not in library books!) or by taking separate notes. Whatever system you use, you'll need some sort of record. It will be hard to keep up if you aren't writing things down.

A podcast that pairs particularly well with this course is *Seminars about Long-Term Thinking* by the Long Now Foundation, particularly the episodes featuring Charles C. Mann, Ian Morris, Michael Pollan, Nils Gilman, and Susan Freinkel.

CONTENTS

The lectures, slides, and reading in this course will explore extreme subjects: violence, racism, war, and famine. If you anticipate having difficulty engaging with those themes, please come talk to me and we'll figure something out.

DISCUSSION SECTION

The center of this course will be your discussion section, which will be your opportunity to talk about the readings. Attendance and participation are mandatory.

QUIZZES

Every week in the first minutes of discussion section, you'll receive a reading quiz. You might be asked to summarize a reading, respond to short-answer questions, or answer multiple-choice questions. The main questions, totaling twelve possible points, will all pertain to the discussion readings. But every quiz will also have a two-point extra-credit question drawn from the background readings.

If you miss a quiz, you'll get a zero unless your absence was pre-arranged (meaning you discussed it at least a day in advance with your section teacher and she excused you) or you can produce an exculpatory note from some appropriate authority (doctor, dean, parole officer). At the end of the term, we will drop your lowest quiz grade.

MIDTERM AND FINAL

The exams will cover material from lectures and from the assigned readings (including background readings). The question format on both will be varied and will likely include multiple-choice questions, short-answer questions, image identifications, chronologies (where you will be asked to place events in order), questions asking you to link two distant events by a chain of historical causes and effects, and essays. Your exams will be graded anonymously.

On the final, the last item will be a 40-minute essay on the following question: "Since 1750, the world has seen exponential economic growth and the introduction of countless new technologies. Why are so many people still poor?"

There is no option for an early final. But either the final or the midterm may be replaced by an essay (7 pages for the midterm, 12 pages for the final) *plus* an oral exam. The essays are due at the beginning of the in-class exams they are replacing and the oral exams must be completed before the in-class exams they are replacing. The subject of the midterm essay is: "Describe (briefly) the world as things stood on the eve of the First World War and explain how fossil fuels contributed to the making of that world." The subject of the final essay is the same as the subject of the 40-minute in-class exam question (above). Until you have *successfully* scheduled a time to take your oral exam, you will be expected to take the in-class exam.

WRITTEN ASSIGNMENTS

You work for a consulting firm, NUIdeas, which has been hired by Bill McKibben's climate-change advocacy organization, 350.org. McKibben wants to know the prospects for weaning humans off of massive consumption of CO_2-emitting fossil fuels. NUIdeas will produce reports by a psychologist, an economist, an expert in alternative energy sources, an economist, a sociologist, and an anthropologist on this question. Your job is to write the historian's reports. For that purpose, your boss has sent you to Northwestern to take Global History II.

The reports that you do will be different from academic papers. Neither your boss at NUIdeas nor your clients at 350.org are professors. They haven't read the books that you've read, nor have they attended the lectures you've attended. But they are eager to learn what you have found out. Since they are busy, your job is to communicate what you know as clearly and concisely as you can.

The format of these reports is up to you. If you want to use graphs, illustrations, bullet points, tables, section headings, or anything like that, you should do so. But although these reports are not academic papers, they should still feature clear, correct, and persuasive prose. And any citations should be properly formatted (see Kate Turabian's *Manual for Writers* on the proper form for footnotes). Remember, you are trying to look good in front of your boss and your clients.

Other guidelines for the assignments:

- Do not put your name on your assignments. Instead, sign them with the middle letter and three numbers of your NetID. So, if your NetID is onr256, sign your assignments N256. This will allow us to grade your work anonymously.
- Upload a copy of your assignments to Canvas by the deadline and hand in a hard copy to your section teacher. Whether your assignment is late or not depends on when it is uploaded.
- If you have any trouble using Canvas to upload an assignment, email a copy to your section teacher before the deadline. It will still need to go up on Canvas, but at least this will ensure that you get it in by the deadline.
- If you need additional help with your writing assignments, contact the History Writing Center: historywriting@northwestern.edu.

FIRST ASSIGNMENT: TWO VISIONS, DUE OCT. 3

Your first report is just to your boss, not your clients at 350.org. It is a preliminary report outlining two important perspectives for thinking about the age of carbon: Ian Morris's from *Why the West Rules–For Now* and J. R. McNeill's from *Something New under the Sun*. The basic difference between the two is fairly obvious: Morris is interested in economic development, McNeill is interested in the environment. Your job is to analyze those two perspectives in greater depth. Where do they differ? Where do they converge? Is there some good reason to prefer one to the other, or perhaps a useful way of combining them?

The thesis of this report (that there are two distinct perspectives) is already given, so you don't need to come up with a thesis. But you *will* need to show that you understand the readings and that you have thought about them in the context of this course. You are encouraged to bring in other readings (do Smith, Marx, Landes, or Mumford help give some insight into these two perspectives?) or material from lectures.

Reports that engage intelligently and creatively with the course material will get higher grades. So don't forget to take time to mull things over.

The report should be 1,200–1,500 words (which is about 4–5 double-spaced pages in the usual format). Upload it to Canvas by 9:45 am on Monday, October 3 and hand a paper copy into your section teacher at the beginning of class at 10.

SECOND ASSIGNMENT: REPORT TO 350.ORG, DUE NOV. 21

This is the big assignment. You have now sat through twenty-some lectures and read widely in thought about the global economy from many different perspectives. What does that history tell us about the probability of humans restricting their use of fossil fuels enough to bring CO_2 levels back to under 350 parts per million? This is, I hasten to add, a hard question. There is no obvious answer and neither the lectures nor the reading have given you answers—most of them have not even addressed the question directly. Your job is thus not to repeat what you have learned in class but to *use* it, to draw creatively on the materials at hand to think your way through a difficult question. Your grade will depend on how well you can do that.

Two requirements: your report should feature an executive summary at the beginning (a concise overview of your main conclusions) and it should be at least 1,200 words. But length is not important; substance is. We will be far more impressed if you can put the course material to intelligent use than if you can cram in references to everything covered in this class. Remember, your imagined readers are at 350.org. They are broadly educated, but they are not professional historians, and so you should only present them with the details that you think will be useful to answering their question.

A few warnings. First, don't turn in the technologist's report rather than the historian's report. If your report is mainly about the viability of renewable energies rather than about the past, it won't be very successful. Second, get particular about the past. Avoid vague appeals to human nature ("History shows that humans can solve any problem" or "History shows that humans are greedy and bad at long-term thinking") and try to replace them with arguments that engage deeply with some part of the past.

Upload your report to Canvas on Nov. 21 by 9:45 am and hand in a paper copy to your section teacher at 10 am in class.

GRADING

Participation	10%	Midterm	20%
Quizzes	15%	Assignment 2	20%
Assignment 1	5%	Final	30%*

* = If you fail the final, you fail the class.

APPEALING GRADES

If, after receiving a graded paper or exam back, you are confused by the grade or feel that it is not an accurate representation of your work, you have two options:

1. Go to your section teacher's office hours and ask for a clarification. You can then sit down and talk about your work, grading standards, possibilities for improvement, and so on.
2. Submit to your section teacher, in writing, an account of why you felt that the grade you received was inaccurate (not disappointing—inaccurate). If appropriate, she will be happy to regrade your work. This will not result in a lower grade.

It's fine if you'd like to meet with your section teacher and then, after that meeting, request a regrade, but regrade requests must be made in writing and not during office hours.

PLAGIARISM

An easy way for an undergraduate to destroy her college career is by plagiarizing. The college's rules concerning academic integrity can be found at www.northwestern.edu/uascc. Please read them, as you will be held accountable to them. The main principles you need to know are these:

1. If you are relying on somebody else's ideas or information, cite that person.
2. If you use someone else's words, enclose those words in quotation marks and cite that person. Taking someone else's prose, modifying it slightly, and passing it off as your own is never appropriate, even if you include a footnote.
3. You may not turn in work that is identical to or derivative of work you have turned in for another class without both prior permission and a clear accounting of what is old and what is new.

I will report all suspected cases of plagiarism immediately to the dean.

ELECTRONICS

Laptops and tablets are great for note-taking but carry an enormous potential to distract both their users and, more importantly, anyone sitting behind their users. So I'll request that, if you plan to use a laptop or other electronic device, you sit in the designated section of the classroom. I'll also request that you monitor your own behavior and ask yourself whether your computer is helping you learn or distracting you. Internet surfing, phones, headphones, and noise-creating devices are prohibited and will be punished—and not without some small amount of glee on my part—by public shaming.

COURSE BOOKS

These books are all available at the university bookstore in Norris (except for the course reader). There is, however, no need to purchase them as I've also placed them on reserve at the library. It doesn't matter which edition or, in the case of Verne, which translation you buy or use.

1. Mohandas K. Gandhi, *"Hind Swaraj" and Other Writings* (1909; Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009)—*Hind Swaraj* is available online.
2. Jules Verne, *Around the World in Eighty Days*, trans. George Makepeace Towle (1872; New York: Dover Publications, 2000)—online, too.
3. Course reader, available at Quartet Digital Printing, 825 Clark Street

SCHEDULE OF MEETINGS, READINGS, AND ASSIGNMENTS

D = Discussion reading
B = Background reading

Week of September 19
Wed. Introduction
Fri. Race and culture

Reading (78pp.)
- D: Ian Morris, *Why the West Rules–For Now* (2010), 494–550 in reader (56pp.)
- D: J. R. McNeill, *Something New under the Sun* (2000), chap. 1 in reader (22pp.)
- B: Course syllabus (i.e., the document you are currently reading)

Week of September 26

Mon. The great divergence
Wed. Industrial revolution
Fri. Hierarchy

Reading (65pp.)

- D: Adam Smith, *The Wealth of Nations* (1776), Book I: intro and chaps. 1–3 in reader (15pp.)
- D: Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels, *Manifesto of the Communist Party* (1848), introduction and sections 1–2 and 4 in reader (20pp.)
- B: Joel Mokyr, *The Lever of Riches* (1990), chap. 9 in reader (30pp.)

Week of October 3

Mon. Time—FIRST WRITING ASSIGNMENT DUE BEFORE CLASS, 9:45 AM. (Upload via Canvas by 9:45am and hand a paper copy to your section teacher at beginning of class)
Wed. Space
Fri. Empire

Reading (112pp.)

- D: Jules Verne, *Around the World in Eighty Days* (1872), chaps. 1–14, 29–37 (100pp.)
- B: Karl Marx, "On Imperialism in India" (1853) in reader (12pp.)

Week of October 10

Mon. Class
Wed. Racism
Fri. War

Readings (152pp.)

- D: Mohandas K. Gandhi, *Hind Swaraj* (1909) plus Gandhi's 1909 letter to H. S. L. Polak (131pp.). Note: the Cambridge edition contains a lot of other material, but you just to read the text of *Hind Swaraj* plus the Polak letter. I'll post the letter to Canvas.
- B: Fukuzawa Yukichi, *An Outline of a Theory of Civilization* (1875), preface and excerpts from chap. 2 in reader (21pp.)

Week of October 17
Mon. MIDTERM
Wed. Communism
Fri. Nationalism

Reading (83pp.)
- D: Bill McKibben, *Eaarth* (2010), chap. 1 in reader (46pp.)
- D: Bill McKibben, "Global Warming's Terrifying New Math," (2012) in reader (17pp.)
- D: Sample reports to 350.org (20pp.)

Week of October 24
Mon. The economy
Wed. Imperial war
Fri. Pax Americana

Reading (128pp.):
- D: W. E. B. Du Bois, *Color and Democracy: Colonies and Peace* (1945), preface and chaps. 1–2, 4, 6–7 in reader (114pp.)
- B: Pankaj Mishra, *From the Ruins of Empire* (2012), 245–53 in reader (8pp.)
- B: Eberhard Jäckel, "Germany's Way into the Second World War," (1988) in reader (6pp.)

Week of October 31
Mon. Decolonization
Wed. Cold war
Fri. Oil

Reading (62pp. plus four comic book stories)
- D: Carl Barks, "Tralla La" (1954), "The Lost Crown of Genghis Khan" (1956), "The Mines of King Solomon" (1957), and "The City of Golden Roofs" (1958) in reader and on Canvas
- D: Ariel Dorfman and Armand Mattelart, *How to Read Donald Duck* (1971), preface, introduction and chapters 3–4 in reader (30pp.)
- B: Daron Acemoglu and James A. Robinson, *Why Nations Fail* (2012), chap. 12 in reader (32pp.)

Week of November 7
Mon. Development
Wed. Globalization
Fri. The market

Reading (75pp.)
- D: W. W. Rostow, "Some Lessons of History for Africa" (1960) in reader (12pp.)
- D: Kwame Nkrumah, *Neo-Colonialism* (1965), introduction, chaps. 1 and 18, and conclusion (47pp.)
- B: Daniel J. Sargent, "The United States and Globalization in the 1970s" (2010) in reader (15pp.)

Week of November 14
Mon. Human rights
Wed. Poverty
Fri. Terrorism

Reading (102pp.)
- D: Thomas Pogge, "Priorities of Global Justice" (2001) in reader (19pp.)
- D: Martin Wolf, *Why Globalization Works* (2004), chap. 9 in reader (34pp.)
- B: Frederick Cooper, *Africa since 1940* (2002), pp. 156–174 in reader (18pp.)
- B: Timothy Mitchell, *Carbon Democracy* (2011), chap. 8 in reader (30pp.)

Week of November 21
Mon. The environment—REPORT TO 350.ORG DUE AT 9:45 AM (upload via Canvas at 9:45 and hand in to section teacher at start of class)
Wed. No class

No reading

FINAL: Wed., Dec. 7, 3–5pm, Leverone Auditorium (i.e., the regular room)