

*Department of History  
University of Wisconsin -- Madison  
Semester I, AY 2007-2008*

**History 200  
Historical Studies: The Korean War**

Wednesday, 9:30 – 12:00  
2241 Humanities

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**First-Year Interest Group**

FIGs give twenty-person sets of first-year students with similar intellectual interests the opportunity to interact with each other in three courses. One of those offerings is a seminar in which the students work directly with a single professor on a specific topic. This syllabus is for that course, History 200, Historical Studies: The Korean War. The other two usually involve broader lecture courses in which, if the enrollment is adequately large, the FIG students constitute a separate discussion section.

Campus administrators and faculty members hope that students in FIGS will discover that learning involves the integration of perspectives from different disciplines, each of which asks its own questions and has its own methods for approaching problems. Students should also come to see that learning entails not only acquisition of facts but also recognition of continuing arguments about disputed information, about the interpretation of events, and about values. The educated person is not one who always has the right answers but one who understands the use of evidence to establish facts and employs the process of argument to reduce interpretive disagreements to the extent possible in the context of continuing differences over values.

The FIGS initiative also exists to help students stave off feelings of anonymity that sometimes overtake newcomers to large institutions. Your professors hope that you develop a sense of camaraderie, some part of which will be and should be social. With time, you will develop a wide range of friends; at the moment, these classmates constitute a beginning – increasingly familiar faces seen on a regular basis several days each week.

In addition to the unique problems each human faces, first-year students at places like UW – Madison confront the common challenge of having to balance adult responsibility with adult freedom. You will have heavy workloads, but parents and teachers will not be closely supervising whether or not you carry them out properly or on time. Although few of you are old enough to drink legally, alcohol will be available – sometimes in dangerous amounts. Illegal drugs will also be present. The likelihood of romantic involvement will increase and, with it, opportunities for myriad imprudent risks. Discouragement will also be a possibility. Like you, the other members of the first-year class will also have been

top students at their high schools; the competition will be intense, and former levels of effort may prove inadequate to obtain the results you desire.

The camaraderie of your FIG should be academic as well as social. Each of you will be a reference point for his or her peers. Help one another establish high, but reasonable, expectations about what it means to be a responsible student. Protect each other from the temptation to lose focus in the looser atmosphere of college life. Share with one another your concerns with work load, study techniques, and the difficulties you are facing.

College should not feel like high school, and the FIG experience will serve, I hope, as a “rite of passage” helping you through that change. The volume of information covered in each course will rise dramatically, but, more important, education will increasingly change from a passive to an active endeavor. You will learn that you will never know everything and that much of what you hear in classes will soon be rendered outdated by new information. Therefore, the most important thing you will learn should be how to continue learning – on your own.

My goals are not only to teach you about the subject of the seminar but also to introduce you to skills that will help you in all your classes across your college years. Although history will be the medium I use to convey them, the abilities you acquire will often be non-specific to that discipline. The seminar sometimes may seem disturbingly different from what your high school experience taught you to expect in a history course. On those occasions, do not hesitate to ask for explanations and reasons.

### **Office Hours and Beyond**

My office is in 4135 Humanities. My scheduled office hours are on Wednesdays from 1:00 to 3:30 PM. I am often available at other times as well, and you are free to stop by whenever I am present. I shall be ready to talk with you if pressing business is not pending. Outside of class, email is, by far, the best way to contact me. My email address is [tjarchde@wisc.edu](mailto:tjarchde@wisc.edu). I monitor it throughout the day and usually in the evening as well. To make appointments for times other than the scheduled office hours, email me, see me at class, or call me at 263-1778 (office) or at 251-7264 (home). Both phones have answering machines; leave a message if necessary.

### **The Korean Conflict**

Fought between the summers of 1950 and 1953, the Korean conflict pitted the forces of the United States, other members of the United Nations, and South Korea directly against those of North Korea and the People’s Republic of China and less obviously against those of the Soviet Union. It took place between World War II, which interpreters portray as a just and necessary undertaking, and America’s engagement in Vietnam, which the dominant narrative presents as neither just nor necessary. American political objectives were similar in both ventures; the United States wanted to prevent the Communist northern half of a recently partitioned nation from using military means to take over the pro-Western southern half of it. The presence of Communists among the peoples of South Korea and South Vietnam meant that, in each case, the fighting, even within those areas, was partly a civil war. In regard to operations and outcomes, however, the conflicts differed. In Korea, ground combat usually consisted of large-unit en-

agements along a shifting line of contact, as seen in World War II; in Vietnam, it took the form of guerrilla warfare, involving small-unit clashes in scattered locations. The United States accomplished its main political objective in Korea; America failed to achieve it in Vietnam.

Sandwiched chronologically between an international struggle of massive proportions and a war that deeply divided the nation, the Korean Conflict has become the “Forgotten War.” That is unfortunate. The Korean conflict was the most important example of “containment” strategy that the United States adopted after World War II to limit expansion of Soviet and Communist power. Moreover, although the total number of deaths was higher in the longer Vietnam conflict, than in Korea, the average annual number of American combat deaths in Korea exceeded that in Vietnam by fifty percent.

The Korean War helped create the political context in which the Cold War was fought. It accelerated the implementation of the recommendations for a military buildup presented in National Security Document Number 68 (NSC-68) in April 1950. It defined the parameters for conducting “limited wars,” including an unwillingness to use nuclear weapons.

The Korean War had important domestic ramifications. It established racial integration as the norm condition for persons serving in the military. It helped bring to an end twenty years of Democratic control of the White House. It added to the tensions spawning “McCarthyism.”

## **Courseware**

Learn@UW is the principal on-line courseware used to support FIG Seminar on the Korean War (History 200). . The URL is <https://learnuw.wisc.edu>. Your user name is your UW-Madison NetID, and your password is your UW-Madison NetID password. Once you have logged in, you will see a list of the courses you are taking that are using Learn@UW. If you do not see that list, click on the “+” next to the heading “2007 – Fall.”

When you open the Learn@UW page for the “FIG Seminar for the Korean War,” a series of tabs will appear across the top of it. The “Content” tab leads to folders containing materials relevant to the course. The “Dropbox” tab leads to folders where you will submit electronic versions of your written assignments and where you will receive critiques of your work. We shall discuss these and other components of Learn@UW during the first meeting.

The heading “Syllabus” will appear at the top of the page after you click on “Content.” Under it, you will find a copy of this syllabus in Word and PDF (Portable Document Format) versions. The next heading will be “Schedule of Meetings.” The subheadings under it will provide information about the weekly topics. The next major heading is “Resources,” and under it you will find various supplemental materials for the course.

## Readings and Activities

Most of the meetings involve training by the instructor in the use of some tool that may prove useful in the course and in your broader education, a review of assigned readings, or student presentations. The following explanation should help you understanding what actually will be required.

**Meeting 1** (5 September) is primarily a chance for the members of the seminar to meet and for the seminar leader (me) to offer an orientation to the course.

For **Meeting 2** (12 September), you should become well acquainted with the “Brief Narrative of Korean Combat Operations.” I plan to lead you through it, but I expect you to be well prepared.

During **Meeting 3** (19 September), I shall discuss with you basic information about military ground units. We shall also discuss an article by Kelly C. Jordan: “Right for the Wrong Reasons: S.L.A. Marshall and the Ratio of Fire in Korea, *Journal of Military History*, 66 (January 2002), 135-162.

By Meeting 3, you will need to submit a **750-word essay** on an important political or military figure from the Korean War era or on a single battle from the conflict. In preparing the essay, you should follow closely the advice from “The Writer’s Handbook,” which appears under Meeting 4.

**Meetings 4 and 5** (26 September and 3 October) will focus on the topic of map reading. Read the chapters on direction, elevation, and grids that I have put under the “Map Reading” heading. You may find them difficult, but the information will prove useful in later meetings. I hope to clarify the essentials of the chapters during the class.

During **Meeting 6** (10 October), I plan to critique your papers and review the lessons from “The Writer’s Handbook.”

I have set aside **Meetings 7 and 8** (17 and 24 October), for visits to the Wisconsin Veterans Museum and to Memorial Library. The museum and the library, however, have not yet confirmed that those dates are possible. Therefore, some minor re-arranging of the schedule may be necessary.

**Meetings 9 and 10** (31 October and 7 November) will focus on the Battle of Chipyeong-Ni, which took place in February 1951, and on some other clashes associated with it. Students will get experience working with maps as well as with both primary (first-hand) and secondary (historical) sources. They will read, in particular, Kenneth E. Hamburger, *Leadership in the Crucible: The Korean War Battles of Twin Tunnels and Chipyeong-ni* (College Station, TX: Texas A&M University Press, 2003).

The goal of **Meeting 11** (14 November) will be to connect the Korean War with the broader politics of the 1950s and with issues of historical interpretation. Every important historical event has two lives – its own and its “history,” by which I mean its subsequent use to teach “lessons.” Despite what non-historians and even some historians claim, however, that second life often teaches very little. History becomes another form of argument about the present, and the value of knowing history comes in the form of be-

ing better prepared to distinguish plausible from non-plausible claims about the “lessons of the past.”

**Meeting 12** (21 November) takes place on the day before Thanksgiving. Bowing before reality, I shall not attempt to hold an actual meeting that day. I plan to be available to meet with any student needing to see me at alternative times.

Students will present fifteen-minute oral reports at **Meetings, 13, 14 and 15** (30 November, 5 and 12 December) about the topics on which they have been doing research in anticipation of writing the 1500-word essay that constitutes their final assignment.

### **Written and Oral Presentations**

Each student will have four assignments. Students should submit all papers in electronic format to the appropriate folder (First Essay, Second Essay, Final Essay Draft, Final Essay Revision) in Learn@UW Dropbox, on or before the due dates. They will receive, through Learn@UW, corrected electronic versions of the first two essays and of the final essay draft. The assignments are:

1. 750-word essay on a major political or military figure of the Korean War era from that conflict. Due 21 September in First Essay Dropbox.
2. 750-word essay on an assigned topic from Kenneth E. Hamburger, *Leadership in the Crucible*. Due 26 October in Second Essay Dropbox.
3. 1500-word essay on a research topic to be determined in consultation with the instructor. Draft due by 30 November in Final Essay Draft Dropbox. Revision due by Noon, Monday, 17 December in Final Essay Revision Dropbox.
4. Each student will one fifteen-minute oral presentation on the topic of his or her final paper. The presentations will take place during Meetings 13, 14, and 15 according to a schedule to be determined.

### **Grading**

Each student’s grade will reflect his or her performance on a combination of written and oral work as well as on his or her participation in the seminar. Participation in the seminar refers to the student’s attendance, preparation, readiness to answer questions, and overall contribution to discussions.

Written assignment #1	10 percent
Written assignment #2	25 percent
Written assignment #3	30 percent
Oral presentation	15 percent
<u>Participation</u>	<u>20 percent</u>
<b>Total</b>	<b>100 percent</b>