

Frederick S. Pardee School of Global Studies, Boston University

## **IR539: History, Policy & Statecraft**

Tuesdays & Thursdays, 9:00 AM – 12:30 PM

**Professor Jayita Sarkar**

she/her/hers

Office Hours: Tuesdays & Thursdays, 1:00-2:30 PM  
Appointments mandatory: <https://jsarkar.youcanbook.me>

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**This is a screen down class. No laptops, tablets, cellphones are allowed.**

“History is the art of making an argument about the past by telling a story accountable to evidence”.  
— Jill Lepore, *The Story of America: Essays on Origins*

“We know the future only by the past we project into it. History, in this sense, is all we have.”  
— John Lewis Gaddis, *The Landscape of History*

### **COURSE DESCRIPTION**

What can we learn from our recent past? How can we use history to understand the past, contemplate the present, and anticipate the future? How effective is historical analysis to resolve contemporary policy problems? What is counterfactual reasoning? Are counterfactuals useful to understand strategies adopted by states and their leaders? How to effectively employ historical analogies to understand the present? How can we effectively use primary sources obtained through archival research for policy analysis and research? What is oral history and how can we effectively conduct oral history interviews for research? How is an onsite archival repository different from (and similar to) a library, and how to ace archival research? These are some of the questions that this course will collectively examine and seek to answer.

The course will connect history with current policy problems to make sense of national strategies and grand strategies of states in the international system, leaders' policy choices, and group dynamics at play in past events. It will integrate a conceptual analysis of the past with hands-on training in conducting archival research, oral history interviews and analyzing large corpus of textual data manually and through appropriate software. This course will conclude with a visit to John F. Kennedy Presidential Library in Boston, MA for a hands-on training in historical research (no additional cost anticipated). No background in historical research and/or history is required to take this course.

Pre-requisite: First-Year Writing Seminar (e.g., WR 100 or WR 120).

### **Course Hub Outcomes**

**HUB CAPACITY: Philosophical, Aesthetic and Historical Interpretation**

**AREA: Historical Consciousness**

Students will routinely analyze primary source documents on global politics, domestic politics and U.S. foreign policy from the twentieth century, especially after 1945. These primary sources—

textual documents, photographs and video clippings— will teach the students to identify various factors that influenced international, domestic and local politics related to the world we live in today, and the challenges therein. Students will learn to challenge the historical national narratives about international organizations like the United Nations, state-building, citizenship, borders, borderlands, and political violence.

### **HUB CAPACITY: Communication**

#### **AREA: Writing-Intensive**

Students will write three historically grounded op-eds comprising 45% of their total grade. The op-ed assignment is scaffolded because students will get guidelines to write the op-ed, receive detailed feedback on the first op-ed, which will enable them to improve their op-ed writing capabilities for the second and third op-eds. The op-ed assignment requires students to adopt an approach to writing that is different from a research paper in terms of intent, audience and hence, style. The instructor will circulate op-ed guidelines at the beginning of the semester, share op-ed samples for students to learn from, and offer writing advice during office hours. The instructor has successfully used op-eds in her courses (IR315, IR377 and IR522) during 2017-18, 2018-19 and 2019-20. Students will learn how to effectively undertake this innovative assignment that can have a moderately high payoff as a market-ready skillset after graduation. On historical op-eds see: <https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/made-by-history/wp/2017/06/26/welcome-to-made-by-history/>

Weekly response papers based on the readings, which comprise 30% of the total grade, will further ensure students are regularly improving their writing skills. At the beginning of the semester, students will be trained on how to read effectively using Patrick Rael's 'Predatory Reading' handout, and regular class discussions will focus on students' analysis of the assigned readings. Students' analyses will be demonstrated through weekly response papers that are also part of the assignments for this course. This way, the students will gradually develop an understanding and appreciation of critical judgment of the course materials.

### **HUB CAPACITY: Intellectual Toolkit**

#### **AREA: Critical Thinking**

Students will be trained to develop the habit of making causal inference through both inductive and deductive reasoning: this will be undertaken by understanding the distinction of how the past is studied by social scientists (deduction) in comparison to how it is done by historians (induction). The discussion on 'analogies,' 'causation,' and 'memory,' for instance, will guide them to distinguish empirical claims of various historical events, and distinguish facts from interpretations derived from normative and evaluative judgments. Students will be evaluating the validity of arguments through weekly response papers on the assigned readings. Finally, the three historically grounded op-eds will test their skills of critical thinking through requiring them to explain a current policy problem to a lay audience through the historical origins of that problem.

### **COURSE LEARNING OBJECTIVES**

By the end of this course, students will have achieved the following course learning outcomes:

- Demonstrate a strong basis of knowledge of what history is, and how it helps understand contemporary international politics

- Demonstrate an understanding of what the historical method is, and how it is related to but distinct from social science research using historical data
- Demonstrate the ability to conduct research and analysis by visiting an onsite archive in the city
- Develop the ability to use knowledge of the past to investigate contemporary policy problems

### STATEMENT ON ACADEMIC INTEGRITY

Plagiarism is a serious offence and will not be tolerated. The undergraduate members of this class will follow the “Academic Code of Conduct” of Boston University, accessible here:

<https://www.bu.edu/academics/policies/academic-conduct-code/>

All graduate members of this class will follow the Graduate School of Arts and Sciences Academic Conduct Code can be found at <http://www.bu.edu/cas/students/graduate/grs-forms-policies-procedures/academic-discipline-procedures/>.

### Community of Learning: Class and University Policies

**1) This is a screen down class. No laptops, tablets, cellphones are allowed. If you need to use any of the devices for accessibility, please submit a letter from the Office of Disability Services.**

2) Course members’ responsibilities for ensuring a positive learning environment  
Students are expected to be punctual in class. Late arrivals will affect class participation grade.

3) It is important to be respectful, logical and evidence-based in class discussions.

- On argumentation, see: <http://www.csun.edu/~hcpas003/argument.html>
- On logical fallacies, see: <http://writingcenter.unc.edu/handouts/fallacies/>

The instructor will respond to emails within 24 hours of receiving them, except on weekends. So, clarifications related to Monday sessions must be sought during the previous week, and not over the weekend.

### 4) Attendance & Absences

Students’ attendance in this class is mandatory. If a student cannot attend a session, they must email the instructor in advance in order to excuse themselves. Any more than two absences during the semester will result in a deduction in the participation grade by one grade letter. Students who must be absent from class for religious observance must notify the instructor as early as possible, and at least two weeks in advance.

### 5) Assignment Completion & Late Work

All assignments must be sent by email to the instructor before 5pm (Eastern Standard Time) on the day it is due. Late work without adequate justification will be penalized by one letter grade for that

assignment. Students who will miss examinations for unforeseen factors or factors beyond their control must contact me as early as possible so that makeup assignments can be scheduled.

### INSTRUCTIONAL FORMAT

This course will be taught as a weekly seminar. Each session will begin with an introduction by the instructor. This will be followed by a structured discussion led by the students based on a close and critical analysis of the assigned readings.

### BOOKS & COURSEWARE

There is no required textbook for this course. There are required readings. These readings will be made available to the students through Blackboard.

### ASSIGNMENTS

- 1. Attendance & Active Participation (30 points):** Regular attendance in class is mandatory but merely showing up to class will not suffice. In order to do well, do your readings prior to class, ask clarifying questions in and outside of class, and contribute to in-class discussions of the course content. Throughout the semester, each student will make presentation on a chosen academic assigned reading for 15 minutes, which will be followed by a 5-minute Q&A by the entire class. Presentation (10%), participation in Q&A (10%), and regular attendance and in-class discussions (10%) will account for the 30% of the final grade. Students will be briefed on how to read effectively through handouts like Patrick Rael's 'Predatory Reading'. \*same expectations for undergraduate and graduate levels\*
- 2. Weekly Response Papers (25 points):** Students are required to submit prior to the beginning of each class a response paper by email to the instructor in which they will analyze any two of the required readings of the day, and share what intellectual reactions the reading generated. What are its historical insights? Does s/he agree with the author? Why? Why not? These are some of the questions that the response essay will tackle. Each response paper should be between 750 and 1000 words long. \*same expectations for undergraduate and graduate levels\*
- 3. Historical Op-Eds (15 x 3 = 45 points):** Students are expected to write historically grounded op-eds, where they will begin with a policy hook, cite 2-3 primary source documents, and relevant scholarly books and articles, to explain a current policy problem through historical analysis to a lay audience. Three such op-eds of 15 points each will be part of 45% of the total grade for this course. These op-eds will be submitted on Week 3, Week 5 and Week 7 and will be 1000-1100 words each for graduate students, and 900-1000 words for undergraduate students. Guidelines will be circulated on Week 2.

- o On historical op-eds see: <https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/made-by-history/wp/2017/06/26/welcome-to-made-by-history/>

### **GRADING CRITERIA & SCALE**

Explanation of grades and GPA at Boston University can be found by following this link:  
<https://www.bu.edu/reg/academics/grades-gpa/>

A	93 – 100
A-	90-92
B+	87-89
B	83-86
B-	80-82
C+	77-79
C	73-76

### **STATEMENT ON ACCESSIBILITY**

BU is committed to providing equal access to our coursework and programs to all students. In order to be sure that accommodations can be made in time for all exams and assignments, please plan to turn in your accommodations letter as soon as possible and no later than 14 days from the first exam/assignment. After you turn in your letter, please meet with your professor to discuss the plan for accommodations so we can be sure that they are adequate and you are supported in your learning. If you have further questions or need additional support, please contact the Office of Disability Services ([access@bu.edu](mailto:access@bu.edu)).

### **CAMPUS RESOURCES FOR STUDENTS IN DISTRESS**

Please make use of BU resources to support yourself, friends and classmates when in distress:  
[http://www.bu.edu/helpinfo/pdf/10102\\_SHS.pdf](http://www.bu.edu/helpinfo/pdf/10102_SHS.pdf)

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## DETAILS OF CLASS MEETINGS

### WEEK 1: INTRODUCTION: THINKING HISTORICALLY

*Why study the past? How do we study the past? How to study the past most effectively? Why bother?*

#### Thursday, May 21:

- Elman, Colin, and Miriam Fendius Elman. *Bridges and Boundaries: Historians, Political Scientists, and the Study of International Relations*. Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 2001.
  - Chapter 16: "International History: Why Historians Do It Differently than Political Scientists" by Paul W. Schroeder
- Jervis, Robert. "International Politics and Diplomatic History: Fruitful Differences." *H-Diplo/ISSF*, 12 March 2010.  
<https://issforum.org/essays/essay-1-jervis-inagural>
- Ted Talk, Chris Nichols on "The untold story about American isolationism," 2018:  
[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Ehlaox\\_bxi4](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Ehlaox_bxi4)

### WEEK 2: ANALOGIES, CAUSATION & COUNTERFACTUALS

**\*\*Weekly response papers will be due from Week 2 onward.**

*What are historical analogies? Why are they so commonly abused?*

*What is a causal relationship? When is it a correlation instead?*

*What is counterfactual reasoning? How does historical context interfere with counterfactual reasoning?  
What is the utility of counterfactuals in deriving causal relationships?*

#### Tuesday, May 26:

- Carr, Edward Hallett. *What Is History?* The George Macaulay Trevelyan Lectures, 1961, New York: Knopf, 1962. Chapter IV: Causation in History
- Morgenthau, Hans J. "Remarks on the Validity of Historical Analogies," *Social Research* 39, no. 2 (Summer 1972): 360-364.
- Neustadt, Richard E. and Ernest R. May, *Thinking in Time: The Uses of History for Decision-Makers*. New York: Simon & Schuster, 1986.
  - Chapter 5: Dodging Bothersome Analogues
- Gordon, Peter, "Why Historical Analogy Matters," *The New York Review of Books*, 7 January 2020. <https://www.nybooks.com/daily/2020/01/07/why-historical-analogy-matters/>

- Richard Fontaine and Vance Serchuk, "The Uses and Abuses of Historical Analogy on North Korea," *The Atlantic*, 17 October 2017.  
<https://www.theatlantic.com/international/archive/2017/10/the-uses-and-misuses-of-historical-analogy-on-north-korea/541866/>

#### Thursday, May 28:

**\*\*Instructor will discuss historical op-eds, and their expectations.**

- Gaddis, John Lewis. *The Landscape of History: How Historians Map the Past*. Oxford ; New York: Oxford University Press, 2002.
  - Chapter 6: Causation, Contingency and Counterfactuals
- Gavin, Francis J. "What If? The Historian and the Counterfactual." *Security Studies* 24, no. 3 (2015): 425-30.
- Levy, Jack S. "Counterfactuals, Causal Inference, and Historical Analysis." *Security Studies* 24, no. 3 (2015): 378-402.

### **WEEK 3: MEMORIES & PRIMARY SOURCES**

*Guiding Questions: How to interpret primary sources? What are their limitations? How do memory and politics play out in archives and how does that influence history writing?*

#### Tuesday, June 2:

- Trachtenberg, Marc. *The Craft of International History: A Guide to Method*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2006.
  - Chapter 3: The Critical Analysis of Historical Texts
- Berger, Thomas U. *War, Guilt, and World Politics after World War II*. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2012.
  - Chapter 1: Politics and memory in an age of apology
- "How do governments and citizens shape historical memory?" <https://vimeo.com/182718473>
- "What is historical memory?" <https://vimeo.com/182718468>

#### Thursday, June 4:

- Farmer, Ashley D. "In Search of the Black Women's History Archive," *Modern American History* vol. 1, no. 2 (July 2018): 289-293.

- Smallwood, Stephanie E. "The Politics of the Archive and History's Accountability to the Enslaved," *History of the Present* vol. 6, no. 2 (Fall 2016): 117-132.
- Kendi, Ibram X. "The Hopefulness and Hopelessness of 1619," *The Atlantic*, 20 August 2019. <https://www.theatlantic.com/ideas/archive/2019/08/historical-significance-1619/596365/>

#### WEEK 4: FIELD TRIP & THEME 1

##### Tuesday, June 9: JFKL

##### **DAY-LONG FIELD TRIP TO JOHN F. KENNEDY PRESIDENTIAL LIBRARY, BOSTON, MA**

The library can accommodate up to 15 students at a time in their research room. Hence, advance notice will be required. If you cannot join the class on this field trip, or would prefer to do so on your own, please let the professor know as early as possible in the semester. You are encouraged to visit the JFKL's digitized collection prior to your visit, especially National Security Files: <https://www.jfklibrary.org/Asset-Viewer/Archives/JFKNSF.aspx>

##### Thursday, June 11: Gun Rights & Gun Control

##### **Guest speaker: Cari Babitzke, BU History (10-11:30 AM)**

Charles, Patrick J. *Armed in America: A History of Gun Rights from Colonial Militias to Concealed Carry* (Amherst, NY: Prometheus Books, 2018)

- Chapter 6: The NRA Comandeers the Gun-Rights Movement
- Chapter 7: Gun Rights Fire
- Chapter 8: The Birth of the Gun-Rights Golden Age

Jill Lepore, "Battleground America: One Nation Under Gun," *The New Yorker*, 16 April 2012.

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#### WEEK 5: THEMES 2 & 3

##### Tuesday, June 16: International Organizations

- Sluga, Glenda and Patricia Clavin (ed.). *Internationalisms: A Twentieth-Century History* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2016).



- Chapter 6: “Empires, States and the League of Nations,”– Susan Pedersen
- Stephen Wertheim, “Instrumental Internationalism: The American Origins of the United Nations, 1940–3,” *Journal of Contemporary History* Vol. 54 No. 2 (2019): 265–283.
- Manela, Erez. “Imagining Woodrow Wilson in Asia: Dreams of East-West Harmony and the Revolt against Empire in 1919,” *American Historical Empire* Vol. 111, No. 5 (Dec. 2006): 1327-1351.

**June 16: Op-Ed #1 due by 5 PM through Blackboard as a Turnitin assignment.**

### Thursday, June 18: Global Capitalism & U.S. Empire

- Vanessa Ogle, “Archipelago Capitalism: Tax Havens, Offshore Money, and the State, 1950s–1970s,” *American Historical Review* 15 (2016): 331-362.
- Brooke Blower, “Nation of Outposts: Forts, Factories, Bases, and the Making of American Power,” *Diplomatic History* Vol. 41, No. 3 (2017): 439- 459.
- Katharina Pistor, *The Code of Capital: How Law Creates Wealth and Inequality* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2019)
  - Chapter 1: Empire of Law

## WEEK 6: THEMES — 4 & 5

### Thursday, June 23: White Power Movement

- Belew, Kathleen, *Bringing the War Home: The White Power Movement and Paramilitary America* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2018)
  - Introduction
  - Chapter 3: A Unified Moment
  - Chapter 4: Mercenaries and Paramilitary Praxis
  - Chapter 5: The Revolutionary Turn

Podcast, “Rallying Behind Racism: The Women of White Supremacy,” 18 Oct. 2019  
<https://audioboom.com/posts/7400412-rallying-behind-racism-the-women-of-white-supremacy>

- Southern Poverty Law Center, “Stephen Miller’s Affinity for White Nationalism revealed in Leaked Emails,” 12 Nov. 2019. <https://www.splcenter.org/batewatch/2019/11/12/stephen-millers-affinity-white-nationalism-revealed-leaked-emails>

### Thursday, June 25: Global Fascism

- Sluga, Glenda and Patricia Clavin (ed.). *Internationalisms: A Twentieth-Century History* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2016).
  - Chapter 9: “Fascist Internationalism” – Madeleine Herren
- Motadel, David. “The Global Authoritarian Moment and the Revolt Against Empire,” *American Historical Review* Vol. 124, No. 3 (June 2019): 843-877.
- Tworek, Heidi. *News from Germany: The Competition to Control World Communications, 1900-1945* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2019).
  - Chapter 6: False News and Economic Nationalism
  - Chapter 8: The World War of Words

**June 25: Op-Ed #2 due by 5 PM through Blackboard as a Turnitin assignment.**

### WEEK 7: THEMES 6 & 7

### Tuesday, June 30: Silicon Valley

O’Mara, Margaret, *The Code: Silicon Valley and the Remaking of America* (New York, NY: Penguin, 2019).

- Ch. 5: The Money Men
- Ch. 8: Power to the People

Broussard, Meredith. *Artificial Unintelligence: How Computers Misunderstand the World* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2018).

- Ch. 6: People Problems
- Ch. 11: Third-Wave AI

### Thursday, July 1: Identity Politics

Kruse, Kevin M. and Julian E. Zelizer, *Fault Lines: A History of the United States since 1974* (London and New York: W.W. Norton, 2019).

- Chapter 3: A Crisis of Identity
- Chapter 4: A Crisis of Equality

- Chapter 5: Turning Right

Schulman, Bruce. "Post-1968 U.S. History: Neo-Consensus History for the Age of Polarization,"  
*Reviews in American History* Vol. 47, No. 3 (September 2019): 479-499.

**July 1: *Op-Ed #3 due by 5 PM through Blackboard as a Turnitin assignment.***

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