Biography is a popular form of historical writing, often appreciated for its narrative form and accessibility. Generally, biography follows the life of a particular individual (or of ideas, disease, or material objects) and sees the world unfold from the point of view (or in relation to) their chosen subject of study.

This course explores the global history the twentieth century through a series of such narratives. Each book we read will offer a unique perspective and set of insights onto overlapping events, focusing especially on, but not limited to, the stories of pioneering women who made contributions of international consequence.

How do we remember major events of the twentieth century? Who gets credited for their action and who does not? Who gets left out entirely? Why? And how do our understandings of the past change as we look at it through new eyes?

Readings:

One of:
Marie Curie, Susan Quinn
Einstein, Walter Isaacson

One of:
Alan Turing, The Enigma, Andrew Hodges
The Woman Who Smashed Codes, Jason Fagone

The Last Empress, Hanna Pakula
Eleanor Roosevelt Vol III, Blanche Wiesen Cook
The Price of Peace, Zach Carter
Frida, Hayden Herrera
The Secret History of Wonder Woman, Jill Lepore
Evita, Marysa Navarro
The Passage of Power, Robert Caro

Indira, Katherine Frank

The Immortal Life of Henrietta Lacks, Rebecca Skloot