

HIST 2701: WORLD CIV I: PREHISTORY TO 1500 C.E.

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Course Description:

We are living in a world of plural cultures. What are the relationships between these distinct cultural traditions? What kind of framework should we employ when elaborating world history? In traditional China, Chinese people located China proper in the center of the world and celebrated Chinese culture as the eminent tradition. In the twentieth century, a group of scholars claimed Europe as the center of the world and praised European culture as the superior tradition. Against those Sinocentric or Eurocentric worldviews, this course will lead students to observe how distinct civilizations emerged and flourished simultaneously and how different civilizations connected and interacted with one another culturally, economically, and politically.

Objectives:

The objectives of this course are to:

1. Familiarize ourselves with some basic knowledge of major civilizations and religions in a comparative framework and a global context;
2. Train ourselves to read critically;
3. Learn to examine the historical evidence from different perspectives with different methodologies; and
4. Develop skills to speak and write clearly and persuasively.

Textbooks:

Howard Spodek, *World's History: To 1500* (3rd ed.), Upper Saddle River: Pearson Prentice Hall, 2005.

Alfred J. Andrea and James H. Overfield, *The Human Record: Sources of Global History : To 1700*

Janet L. Abu-Lughod, *Before European Hegemony: the World System A.D. 1250-1350*, New York: Oxford University Press, 1989.

Mary Lynn Rampolla, *A Pocket Guide to Writing in History*, Boston: Bedford, 2004.

Course Requirements

I. Weekly Responses

Select a reading in *Human Records* assigned for the week and write a short critical (as in “thinking critically,” i.e. “analytically,” and not necessarily as in “criticizing”) essay responding to one or both of the following questions:

1. Identify the author(s) and the agenda(s) and analyze the aim(s) of the author(s) in historical context: What argument is being made? Who are the intended readers? What do you think the author(s) intentionally neglect to say, and why? What significance does/do the reading(s) have for your understanding of "China"?
2. Is it possible to relate the ideas and accounts in the reading(s) with your own ideas and experience? How does/do the reading(s) give you a fresh vantage on your own society and country? How do you analyze differences between what the reading(s) reveal(s) about "China" and what you think about the social, economic, and political context of your own life?

Questions to ask yourself about the readings (they may not apply in every case):

What is the object or topic of the passage?

What is the question or problem posed?

What is the agenda or purpose of the writer?

What is the argument being made and what kind of logic or methodology does it use?

What is the evidence or documentation being used to support the argument?

What is avoided or kept silent?

What is your attitude toward the reading?

What is the value of this reading for understanding something about China and/or the world or life in general?

Students must turn in a total of 4 short written responses (roughly 2 paragraphs each) during the semester. Two of these must be chosen from assignments from weeks 2 to 8, and the remaining two must be chosen from assignments from weeks 9 to 14. These questions and responses may form the basis of that week’s discussion. Each assignment will be graded as follows:

0 = Not completed

1 = Poor work

3 = Satisfactory work

5 = Excellent work

There are therefore a total of 4 responses at 5 points each and so 20 possible points on the written assignments. In this way, weekly responses accounts for 20% of students’ final course grade.

II. Attendance and Participation

You will be **allowed three absences** throughout the course of the semester. This is designed to account for possible family emergencies, doctor's appointments, and other such unfortunate events. **A fourth absence will result in a full letter grade reduction in your final course grade and a sixth absence will result in an F grade for the course. Unexcused tardiness (arriving late or leaving early) will be counted as absence.** There are no excused absences for this class, so please use your first three absences wisely. Participation in class accounts for 5% of students' final course grade.

III. Quizzes

There will be two in-class quizzes. Each counts as 5% of the total grade. They will take up roughly 20 minutes of class on those days. Quizzes are likely to focus on geography, periodization, and identification (e.g., major figures, schools, events).

IV. Take-Home Essays

There will be two take-home examinations consisting primarily of a choice of essay questions. Midterm take-home examination counts for 25% of the final course grade and Final take-home examination 30%. Since these are take-home examinations, ***absolutely no late papers will be accepted.***

IV. Presentation

Each of you will give a 5-minute presentation on a particular topic that you will be assigned at the beginning of the class.

V. Discussion leading

Each student will lead discussion once throughout this semester. The discussion leader should concentrate on one or two items in *Human Record* or one chapter in Abu-Lughod's *Before European Hegemony* assigned for that week. She or he is responsible to 1) make a brief presentation regarding the content of the reading(s) and 2) pose questions for discussion. I also request the discussion leader to email me her /his discussion questions one day before class meeting time. For example, if you will be a discussion leader on 8/16, then you should email me your discussion questions on 8/15.

Grading:

20% Weekly Responses
5% Course Participation
10% Quizzes
25% Midterm Take-Home Essay
30% Final Take-Home Essay
5% Presentation
5% Discussion leading

NOTE: The course syllabus is a general plan for the course: deviations announced to the class by the instructor may be necessary.

Weekly Schedule:

Part 1 *Origins of Civilizations*

Week 1 Myth, Archaeology, and History

Introduction: What is world history and what is this class about?

Readings: *A Pocket Guide to Writing in History*

World's History, Introduction, Chapter 1

Human Records, Prologue

Week 2 Origins of Civilization: Village Community and City-state

Discussion: *Human Record*, Chapter 1

Readings: *World's History*, Chapter 2

Week 3 Egypt Civilization

Discussion: Handouts; *Human Records*, 17-24, 37-39

Readings: *World's History*, Chapter 3

Week 4 Indus Valley Civilization

Discussion: Handouts; *Human Records*, Chapter 3

Readings: *World's History*, Chapter 3

Week 5 Ancient Civilizations in Mesoamerica, South America, and West Africa

Readings: *World's History*, Chapter 4

Quiz # 1 Wednesday, September 17th in class

Week 6 Ancient China

Discussion: Handouts; *Human Records*, Chapter 4

Readings: *World's History*, Chapter 4

Take-Home Essay Exam # 1 is posted on Friday, September 28th.

Week 7 The Earliest Writing Systems: Script invention as History and Process

ELECTRONIC RESERVE #1 Robert Bagley, "Anyang Writing and the Origin of the Chinese Writing System" In *The First Writing: Script Invention as History and Process*, ed. Stephen D. Houston, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004, pp. 190-249.

Take-Home Essay Exam # 1 is due on Monday, October 3rd in class

Part 2 Empire and Imperialism

Week 8 The Persian Empire, the Greek City-States, and the Empire of Alexander the Great

Lecture 1: Persian Empire and the Greek City-states

Lecture 2: Film: "The True Story of Alexander the Great" presented by the History Channel.

Readings: *World's History*, Chapter 5

Week 9 The Roman Empire

Lecture 1: Creation of Empire

Lecture 2: Film: "Rome: Engineering an Empire," presented by the History Channel.

Readings: *World's History*, Chapter 6

Week 10 Spring Break

Week 11 Imperial China and Its Neighbors

Lecture 1: Political and social history of Imperial China

Lecture 2: Vietnam, Korea, and Japan

Discussion: Handouts; *Human Records*, Chapter 5

Readings: *World's History*, Chapter 7

Janet L. Abu-Lughod, *Before European Hegemony*, Chapters 1-4

Week 12 Indian Empires

Lecture 1: the Empires of India

Lecture 2: Cross-cultural connection between Rome, India, and China

Readings: *World's History*, Chapter 8

Part 3 World System: Cultural and Economic Connections and Interactions

Week 13 Hinduism and Buddhism

Lecture 1 Hinduism and Buddhism in India

Lecture 2 Buddhism in East Asian

Discussion: Handouts; *Human Records*, Chapter 6

Readings: *World's History*, Chapter 9

Janet L. Abu-Lughod, *Before European Hegemony*, Chapters 5-7

Week 14 Judaism and Christianity

Lecture 1: Scripture, authority, and ritual

Lecture 2: Film: "The Crusades: Crescent & The Cross" presented by the History Channel

Discussion: Handouts; *Human Records*, Chapter 7

Readings: *World's History*, Chapter 10

Janet L. Abu-Lughod, *Before European Hegemony*, Chapters 8-11

Quiz 2

Week 15 Islamic World

Lecture 1: The origins of Islam

Lecture 2: Muslims in China

Discussion: Handouts; *Human Records*, Chapter 8

World's History, Chapter 11

Week 16 World System before European Hegemony

Lecture 1: The Early Economic System

Lecture 2: The Mongol Empire

Discussion: Handouts; *Human Records*, Chapter 12

World's History, Chapter 12

Week 17 Final Exam

Plagiarism and Academic Integrity: All academic work must meet the standards contained in *a Culture of Honesty*. Each Student is responsible to inform themselves about those standards before performing any academic work. The policy is available at: <http://www.uga.edu/ovpi/honesty/ah.pdf>. Students suspected of academic dishonesty will be subject to the university's official process for adjudicating such complaints. Anyone found guilty will receive an "F" for the course at minimum.

Classroom Etiquette: There is no talking, reading newspaper, checking emails, surfing online, blowing bubblegum, or otherwise engaging in activities in my judgment disrupt the learning process once the class has begun. Please turn off your cell phones during the class time. Violation of this requirement may involve grade or other penalties, including being dropped from the class. Unless you have pressing reasons, do not come late or leave early. You are welcome and encouraged at any point in the class to ask questions.