

**INTRODUCTION TO WORLD HISTORY**

Spring 2024

HIST 125-007

Bristol, Greer, Howlett

**LECTURE ON WEDNESDAYS: 12:00 pm – 1:15 pm**

David King Hall 1006

**SECTIONS ON MONDAYS:**

125-306 : 10:30 am -11:45 am Research Hall 202 (Greer)

125-307: 12:00 pm - 1:15 pm Research Hall 202 (Bristol)

125-308: 12:00 pm - 1:15 pm Planetary Hall 127 (Howlett)

125-309 1:30 pm - 2:45 pm East Building 121 (Greer)

125-310 1:30 - 2:45 Innovation Hall 203 (Howlett)

**PERSONNEL:****Professor Joan Bristol**

Associate Professor of History

[jbristol@gmu.edu](mailto:jbristol@gmu.edu)**Office hours:** Mondays 10-11 and by appointment other times (email me to set up an appointment).**Your TAs (Caroline Greer and Daniel Howlett) will let you know how to contact them.****Course description:**

The first quarter of the 21<sup>st</sup> century world has been defined by rapid and far-reaching transformations in all areas of our lives. Climate change, war and violent conflict, the Covid-19 pandemic, and increasing wealth inequality have affected all people's access to health, shelter, food, and well-being. This course helps us understand our place in the global community by examining the political, economic, and cultural events that created the modern world and shaped the anthropocene that we inhabit. We focus on Africa, Asia, Latin America, and the Middle East and while also considering the U.S. and Europe. Over the period considered in this course these regions became enmeshed in a global system formed through far-reaching environmental transformations, mercantile activity, industrial growth, imperialism, and colonialism. These transformations produced modern nationalism, populism, anti-colonial movements, Cold War dynamics, and ecological changes in the twentieth and twenty-first centuries. By the end of the semester we will have a firmer understanding of how the modern world came to be.

**Required text:**

Robert B Marks, *The Origins of the Modern World: A Global and Ecological Narrative from the Fifteenth to the Twenty-First Century*

There will be other required readings each week. They are either online or on Blackboard (**BB**). The location is indicated in the syllabus.

**It is very easy to pass this class, and even get a good grade!**

To pass this class you must:

- 1) Attend lecture and section regularly and pay attention (more on this under “participation” below).
- 2) Read the weekly assignments and let us know if you do not understand them.
- 3) Take part in class discussions.
- 4) Put away all electronics unless we are discussing an online reading. (If we are discussing an online reading and you have your computer or phone open in front of you, we will expect you to speak up frequently with insights from the reading because it is right in front of you.)

**Assignments and grading:****1) Participation (20% of final grade):**

You are expected to attend all meetings of the course. To participate effectively you must read and think about the assigned reading before you come to the lecture on Wednesday. In lecture and discussion sections, be prepared to ask questions, think critically about the material, do in-class writing, and talk to your fellow students and instructor. If you are uncomfortable speaking in front of the group or have trouble contributing to the discussion that is not a problem at all, just talk to me about it and we can figure out ways to participate.

If you attend class and pay attention (e.g. you look at the person who is speaking, you look at the slides during lecture, you do not sneak peeks at your phone, you do not fall asleep) you receive an 80 for the day. *(It is so easy to get an 80!)* If you speak up and make comments that are relevant to the class discussion your grade goes up from there.

**2) Quizzes (30% of final grade):**

You will take quizzes in your Monday section most weeks. These will be simple quizzes (usually true/false) based on the class readings. Most will be closed-book. The quizzes do not require any study beyond reading the assignments and paying attention in class. If you pay attention in class, the quiz is an easy way to get a good grade. There is no way to make up a missed quiz but we will drop the two lowest grades.

**3) Three in-class essays (each one is 16.6% of final grade):**

You will short essays during your section meetings on 3/11, 4/15, and 4/29. The goal of these papers is to allow you to engage with the course material and improve your writing skills.

**Grading scale:**

A = 93.00 - 100%  
A- = 89.50 - 92.99%  
B+ = 87 - 89.49%  
B = 83 - 86.99%  
B- = 80 - 82.99%  
C+ = 77.00 - 79.99%  
C = 73 - 76.99%  
C- = 70 - 72.99%  
D + 60 - 69.99%  
F = 0 - 59.99%

**Class policies:**

- 1) Studies have shown that classroom use of electronics lowers student grades (Patterson and Patterson 2016, 2017). **I want you to succeed in this class.** Thus, you may only use electronic devices (laptop, phone) if we are discussing readings that are available online and you do not have any other way to refer to them during the class discussion. If you have your laptop or phone open in front of you we will call on you and expect you to frequently speak during the class discussion, because you will have immediate access to the texts.
- 2) We can only correspond with you through your GMU email address. Please use that to contact us and please check your email daily.
- 3) We would like to use the names and pronouns that you prefer so please let us know your preferred name and pronoun. You may do this on email or in person. I will also make an announcement in class inviting you to email me about your preferences.
- 4) If you must eat and drink during class, please be discreet and quick. Don't make a mess and don't distract other students.
- 5) If you miss a quiz you cannot make it up. We will drop the two lowest quiz grades.
- 6) If you miss an in-class writing assignment you can only make it up if you submit documentation of an illness or other unavoidable event to Professor Bristol.

**Academic Accommodations/Disability Services**

If you are a student with a disability and you need academic accommodations, please go to <http://ds.gmu.edu/> for detailed information about registering with Disability Services. All academic accommodations must be arranged through that office. Disability Services is located in Student Union Building I (SUB I), Suite 2500. Email:ods@gmu.edu, Phone: (703) 993-2474.

**Honor Code:**

George Mason has an honor code and you are expected to adhere to it. <https://oai.gmu.edu/full-honor-code-document/>

All work you submit must be your own, completed without using AI tools or copying the work of other people, whether published or unpublished. If you use the work of others to support your own ideas (for example if you use information from an assigned reading as evidence in your written work) you must give credit to the other people by using proper citation, which we will discuss further in class.

If you are unsure about how to avoid plagiarism please see me and also consult the Composition Program Statement on Plagiarism (<https://oai.gmu.edu/faculty-resource-center/syllabus-language-2/>).

If I suspect plagiarism or the use of AI I will submit my findings to the Honor Committee immediately. Thus it is best if you consult me with any questions before you hand in an

assignment, rather than afterwards because I cannot help you then.

**How this class works: The week begins on WEDNESDAY**

This class meets Wednesdays and Mondays. Our week begins on WEDNESDAY with a lecture. Everyone enrolled in 125-007 will attend. Then we will meet in our individual sections on Mondays to discuss the week's topics and readings.

Each week we will read a chapter from our textbook, Robert Marks' *Origins of the Modern World*. Most weeks we will also read a primary source, noted on the syllabus. The primary sources are available online, either on Blackboard or from another source. The locations are noted on the syllabus.

It is best to complete the reading by WEDNESDAY so that you are prepared for the lecture. You will be quizzed and discuss the readings in your sections on Monday.

**Class schedule:****PART I: History and Globalization****Week 1 (1/17 & 1/22)**

1/17 Lecture: Introduction to the class, primary sources, and secondary sources.

1/22 Section: Syllabus quiz (you may consult the syllabus during the quiz) and discuss reading.

**Reading:**

1) Marks, Introduction "The Rise of the West?," pp. 1-18. If the books are not yet available for purchase I will scan this and put it on Blackboard under "readings."

*1/23: Last day to add classes.*

**Week 2 (1/24 & 1/29)**

1/24 Lecture: Key concepts in World History

1/29 Section: Quiz on reading (closed-book from now on) and discuss reading

**Reading:**

1) Marks, Chapter 1: "The Material and Trading Worlds, circa 1400," pp. 19-41.

**PART II: Before European Hegemony****Week 3 (1/31 & 2/5)**

1/31 Lecture: The Eurasian World System 1250-1450

2/5 Section: Quiz on reading and discuss reading

**Reading:**

1) Marks, Chapter 2: "Starting with China," pp. 43-68.

2) Ma Huan, "Excerpt from the Memoirs of Ma Huan,"

<https://worldhistorycommons.org/excerpt-memoirs-ma-huan>

3) Ibn Battuta, Excerpt from Ibn Battuta's Travels in Africa and Asia,"

<https://worldhistorycommons.org/excerpt-ibn-battutas-travels-asia-and-africa-1325-1354>

*1/23 Last day to drop with full tuition refund.*

#### **Week 4 (2/7 & 2/12)**

2/7 Lecture: The Americas to 1491

2/12 Section: Quiz on reading and discuss reading

##### Reading:

1) Kilroy-Ewbank, "Mesoamerica, an introduction," <https://smarthistory.org/mesoamerica-an-introduction/>

2) (video) Kilroy-Ewbank and Zucker, "Monolith of Tlaltecuhli (Earth Lord),"

<https://smarthistory.org/tlaltecuhli/>

*2/7 – 2/20 Unrestricted withdrawal period (you may withdraw (no tuition refund) but there are certain restrictions. Speak with your advisor about this.)*

### **PART III: Transatlantic Contacts and Violence**

#### **Week 5 (2/14 & 2/19)**

2/14 Lecture: Contact and Columbian Exchange

2/19 Section: Quiz on reading and discuss reading

##### Reading:

1) Marks, Ch 3, "Empires, States, and the New World," ONLY pp. 69-85. Stop when you get to "New World Economy" halfway down on page 85.

2) "Pedro de Gante's Letter to Charles V, Mexico City," pp. 104-112. **On Blackboard under "readings."**

#### **Week 6 (2/21 & 2/26)**

2/21 Lecture: Atlantic Plantation Complex and Slavery

2/26 Section: Quiz on reading and discuss reading

##### Reading:

1) Marks, Ch 3, "Empires, States, and the New World, ONLY pp. 85-90. Begin with "The New World Economy" and stop when you get to "The Global Crisis of the Seventeenth Century and the European State System" on page 90.

2) Equiano, "Excerpts from the Interesting Narrative of the Life of Olaudah Equiano,"

<https://worldhistorycommons.org/excerpts-interesting-narrative-life-olaudah-equiano>

3) Equiano, "The Interesting Narrative of the Life of Olaudah Equiano: Kidnapping,"

<https://worldhistorycommons.org/interesting-narrative-life-olaudah-equiano-kidnapping>

*There is some overlap in these readings but please read both.*

**Week 7 (2/28 and 3/11): Review and in class writing**

2/24 Lecture: Review and prep for in-class writing assignment.

3/11 Section: In-class writing.

**SPRING BREAK no class Monday 3/4 and Wednesday 3/6**

**PART IV: Creating “Modernity”**

**Week 8 (3/13 & 3/18)**

3/13 Lecture: Atlantic Revolutions and Limits of Enlightenment

3/18 Section: Quiz on reading and discuss reading

Reading:

1) Marks, Ch 3, “Empires, States, and the New World, ONLY pp. 91-100. Begin at “The Global Crisis of the Seventeenth Century and the European State System” and read to the end of Chapter 3.

2) “United States Declaration of Independence,” focus on first two paragraphs,

<https://www.archives.gov/founding-docs/declaration-transcript>

3) “French Declaration of the Rights of Man and Citiozen,” <https://www.elysee.fr/en/french-presidency/the-declaration-of-the-rights-of-man-and-of-the-citizen>

Olympe de Gouges, “French Declaration of Rights for Women,”

<https://revolution.chnm.org/d/293/>

4) Touissaint L’Ouverture, “Letter to the Directory,” **on BB under “readings.**

**Week 9 (3/20 & 3/25)**

3/20 Lecture: “The Industrial Revolution in Britain and the World”

3/25 Section: Quiz on reading and discuss reading.

Reading:

1) Marks, Chapter 4, “The Industrial Revolution and its Consequences, 1750-1850,” 101-130. (The whole chapter.)

2) “Indian Textiles,” Victoria and Albert Museum, <https://www.vam.ac.uk/articles/indian-textiles>

**PART V: Formal and informal imperialism**

**Week 10 (3/27 & 4/1)**

3/27 Lecture: “Industrialization and High Imperialism”

4/1 Section: Quiz on reading and discuss reading.

Reading:

- 1) Marks, 131-167. Chapter 5, “The Gap.”
- 2) “(1885) General Act of the Conference of Berlin,  
<https://www.blackpast.org/global-african-history/general-act-conference-berlin/>
- 3) “(1890) George Washington Williams’s Open Letter to King Leopold on the Congo,”  
<https://www.blackpast.org/global-african-history/primary-documents-global-african-history/george-washington-williams-open-letter-king-leopold-congo-1890/>

**Week 11 (4/3 & 4/8) Review and In-class Writing**

4/3 Lecture: Review and prep for in-class writing assignment.

4/8 Section: In-class writing

**Week 12 (4/10 & 4/15)**

4/3 Lecture: “Non-Western Imperialism and the End of Empires”

4/8 Section (4/8): Quiz on reading and discuss reading.

**Reading:**

- 1) Marks, Ch. 6 “The Great Departure,” ONLY 169-182. Stop when you get to the bottom of 182.
- 2) Fukuzawa Yukichi (attributed), “On Leaving Asia,”  
<https://www.asianstudies.org/publications/ea/archives/lesson-plan-on-leaving-asia-primary-source-document/>

**Week 13: (4/17 & 4/22)**

4/17 Lecture: “The Not So Cold War in Asia and Latin America”

4/22 Section: Quiz on reading and discuss reading.

**Reading:**

- 1) Marks, Ch. 6 “The Great Departure, ONLY 183-239.
- 1) Introduction (first four paragraphs) of “CIA and Assassinations: The Guatemala 1954 Documents,” Doyle and Kornbluth eds. <https://nsarchive2.gwu.edu/NSAEBB/NSAEBB4/>
- 3) Ho Chi Minh, “The Vietnamese Declaration of Independence,”  
<https://historymatters.gmu.edu/d/5139/>

**Week 14: (4/24 & 4/29): Review and In-class Writing**

4/24 Lecture: Review and prep for in-class writing assignment.

4/29 Section: In-class writing.

**Reading:**

Marks, Conclusion, “Changes, Continuities, and the Shape of the Future,” 241-251.