

HIST 125-002: INTRODUCTION TO WORLD HISTORY
SPRING 2024
TUESDAY & THURSDAY 9:30-10:15 A.M.
SANDBRIDGE HALL ROOM 107

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Office Hours: Online & By Appointment

Course Scope and Objectives:

In this course, we will explore the sweeping changes that mark the history of human civilization. We will examine a number of cultural, political, and economic landscapes as these have evolved, from King Hammurabi and Emperor Qin to the governments and regimes of our own time. We will also examine the role of religion, political and social structures, economic ideologies, industrialization, and the ideals of classical humanism and democracy, through the examination of primary source documents. By the end of the semester, I hope you have gained greater insight into patterns of global change over time, and will have the critical thinking skills necessary to assess global change over time, compare societies across time and place, and make history your own.

Learning Outcomes:

1. You will demonstrate familiarity with the major chronology of world history.
2. You will be able to narrate and explain long-term changes and continuities in world history.
3. You will be able to identify, evaluate, and appropriately cite online and print resources.
4. You will demonstrate the ability to analyze textbook readings and primary sources of various kinds, using these sources as evidence to support your interpretation of history.
5. You will communicate effectively—through writing, and use of digital media—an understanding of patterns, processes, and themes in the history of the world's civilizations.

WARNING: Not all of what we read will be pleasant: we will see some truly appalling, brutal behavior. But amidst all the brutality, we will also find moments of grace, and we will get to know some legendary advocates for greater freedom, decency, equity and prosperity.

You will have a valuable opportunity this semester to take a deep dive into our shared history and learn the often-complex origins of many of the challenges we face today. We urgently need to understand this stuff as well as we can; because if we don't know our past, we have no future.

Required Textbook:

A History of World Societies, 11th edition, by Weisner-Hanks, Ebrey, Beck, Davila, Crowston, McKay. "Combined Edition." Paperback. Bedford/St. Martin's, 2018.
 ISBN 978-1-319-05894-4.

Primary Sources:

In addition to chapter readings for each class, we will devote some time each week to primary sources—materials taken directly from the regions and time periods we are covering. You will find Word and PDF files for each week on our Blackboard site.

COURSEWORK & TEACHING METHOD:

This semester we will combine regular textbook reading with lectures, discussions, readings from primary sources, as well as links to images, memes and films. Take nothing at face value—we will not only question the mindset of the people we encounter we will also ask whether our own understanding of our world’s history is accurate.

Our questions, our provisional answers and our discussions will be geared towards answering much more than the traditional questions. It’s not just a matter of “who, what, when, where and why?” We will also be asking ourselves at a deeper level, “*What on earth were they thinking?*” and, perhaps more importantly, “*What does it have to do with me?*”

ASSIGNMENTS:

Here is a summary of the written (and performed) work I will expect from each of you during the semester:

#1: Introductory Essay (100 points. Posted on Blackboard). To get to know you better, and to earn your first “A” in this class, your first assignment will be a personal essay, due January 22, briefly describing your own background and your personal experiences with ‘outside’ cultures. It doesn’t need to be more than 1+ pages, double-spaced. [NOTE: I grade this assignment solely for completion; speak freely!] Upload your essay onto Blackboard as a Word or PDF file. *I will read, grade and respond to your essay, so look for my notes!*

#2: Brief, Notes on Each Week’s Reading (20 points/week, 300 points total, Posted on Blackboard in “Our Weekly Work” Section). Each week I will expect you to write—*briefly*, no more than 3-4 full paragraphs—about what you have learned. You will format these notes so that you make specific comments about the lecture, the chapter reading, and the primary source readings. *I must see you have covered all three to get full credit.*

[NOTE: Structure your notes so that I know you have covered the lecture, the textbook, *and* primary sources. I grade these assignments chiefly for completion; you’re free to respond to the readings as you see fit.] This is your chance to start thinking independently about the textbook and primary sources, to help you raise questions about them. *I will read, grade, and respond to your notes each week.*

In your posts I need you to write in complete sentences (no bullet points!) the following:

- A few key points from the lectures.
- The most important points from the chapters; *Cite Specific Page Numbers.*
- Your impressions of the primary sources—did they surprise you? What did you learn?
- The most surprising things you learned (things you didn’t know before—at least one!);
- And, last but not least, the things you want to discuss further and learn more about.
- *Upload these responses, as Word or PDF files, each week; Responses are graded for completion of all three weekly categories of lecture, textbook and primary sources).*

#3: Required Discussion Forums, 1 for Each of our 15 Units (Submitted under “Discussion Groups”). I will create required, but informal, discussion forums for each Unit in this course—the online equivalent of the time during in-class lecture when I write a question on the board, and you break into groups to talk things over. I will divide the class into several groups, and will regularly post questions for your smaller circle to discuss. Remember—this is designed for just you and your classmates. I just need to see you talking together about the material, no need to

get things “right.” This is also a great place to post observations that don’t make it into your Brief Notes. 6 points per week, 90 pts. total.

#’s 4 & 5: Mid-Term & Final Essays (4-6 pages, 150 points each, 300 points total, Uploaded on Blackboard under “Writing Assignments”): Because I’m not a fan of traditional exams (and because every time I write, I keep my sources handy), I will give you two opportunities—at the mid-point and the end of our semester—to write brief essays that compare, contrast and critique the primary sources we are reading. I will give you a menu of possible topics to choose from – you will write about what interests or concerns you the most. *Make sure your answers are based on specific citations from our readings*, and use these essays to think further about what we are reading, and what those readings say about the culture of the Medieval world and its relevance to current events. For each of the Mid-Term and Final essays, I will expect you to look up at least one peer-reviewed source from the JSTOR database (available online through GMU’s library site) to complement the primary sources you are examining.
Mid-Term Essays are due March 11, Final Essays are due May 1.

#6: Research Paper: (5-7 Pages, Double-Spaced, Uploaded on Blackboard; Submitted under “Writing Assignments.” Three Phases, 200 points total). Within the first few weeks, you and I will agree on a research topic related to World Cultures—the topic will be entirely up to you. You will then go to GMU’s online databases, identify relevant articles/books, and by mid-semester, Friday, March 3, I expect you submit an Annotated Bibliography with at least five (5) articles on your topic. You will then read the articles and try to get a sense of the ongoing conversation about the topic you have chosen. Then offer your own insights – what do these scholars seem to get right? Do they agree or disagree with each other? Where do you stand on the questions raised by their work? Is there anything they missed, anything that needs to be considered more deeply?

Your Research Paper will occur in Three (3) stages:

- ✓ First, you will submit your Research Topic. Try to keep your research question narrow, and I’ll advise you if I think it’s too broad. Due Monday, February 5. **20 points.**
- ✓ Second, you will submit your Annotated Bibliography—telling me which articles you will read, and why you chose them. Due Monday, March 4. **20 points.**
- ✓ Third, you will submit your Final Research Paper, no later than Monday, April 15. **160 points.**

The resulting paper should consist of: Title page, followed by 5-7 pages of text, followed by a separate bibliography page. Footnotes (or in-text citations) are required, depending on how your citation method guides you.

A STATEMENT ON ANTI-RACISM:

As a member of the Department of History and Art History, I will always work to create an educational environment that is committed to anti-racism and inclusive standards of excellence. An anti-racist approach to higher education acknowledges the often-subtle ways that individual, interpersonal, institutional, and structural expressions of racism contribute to inequality and injustice, against Black individuals, indigenous people, and other people of color—in our classrooms, on our campuses, and in our communities.

Whether we meet in person or online, I want our class to be a place where we can still break bread together, and work in the spirit of mutual respect and openness to new ideas, new experiences. I believe that the work of anti-racism, of creating a truly civil society, starts with each of us. I sincerely hope that together, we will build a body of knowledge which will empower all of us to take actions rooted in principles of equity, inclusion, and justice that we will carry with us throughout our lives.

HONOR CODE:

A reminder about George Mason's Honor Code: you can't copy and paste anyone else's work and call it your own. Quotations and paraphrases are OK but must be in quotation marks and come with citations to tell me where the quote comes from.

GRADING ELEMENTS:

<u>Task or Assignment</u>	<u>Point Value</u>
Introductory Essay:	100
Brief Notes	300 (20/Week)
Required Discussion Forum	90 (6/Week)
Mid-Term Essays	150
Final Essays	150
<u>Research Paper</u>	<u>200 (20 + 20 + 160)</u>
Total:	990 Points

GRADING SCALE:

90-100%	A	Outstanding
	A+	97 – 100 (960--990 points)
	A	93-96.9 (920-959 points)
	A-	90-92.9 (891-919 points)
80-89%	B	Above Average
	B+	87-89.9 (861-890 points)
	B	83-86.9 (821-860 points)
	B-	80-82.9 (792-820 points)
70-79%	C	Average
	C+	77-79.9 (762-791 points)
	C	73-76.9 (722-761 points)
	C-	70-72.9 (693-721 points)
60-69%	D	Below Average (594-692 points)
59%-Below	F	Failure (no credit for the course) (593 points & Below)

HIST 125-002 – OUR WEEKLY SCHEDULE AT A GLANCE:

WEEK & DATES	TOPICS	REQUIRED READINGS & MAJOR ASSIGNMENTS:
Week 1: 1/16 & 1/18/24	Complex Societies of Southeast Asia & the Nile Valley, The Foundation of Indian Society	(Chapter 1--Optional) Chapters 2 & 3, & Primary Sources
Week 2: 1/23 – 1/25/24	China's Classical Age & The Greek Experience	Chapters 4 & 5 & Primary Sources
Week 3: 1/30 – 2/1/24	The World of Rome & East Asia and the Spread of Buddhism <u>RESEARCH TOPIC DUE 2/5/24</u>	6 & 7, Primary Sources
Week 4: 2/6 – 2/8/24	Continuity & Change in Europe and Western Asia, & The Islamic World	Chapters 8 & 9 & Primary Sources
Week 5: 2/13 – 2/15/24	African Societies & Kingdoms & The Americas	Chapters 10 & 11 & Primary Sources
Week 6: 2/20 – 2/22/24	Cultural Exchange in Central and Southern Asia, & States and Cultures in East Asia	Chapters 12 & 13 & Primary Sources
Week 7: 2/27 – 2/29/24	Europe and Western Asia in the Middle Ages & Europe in the Renaissance and Reformation	14 & 15, & Primary Sources <u>RESEARCH PAPER: ANNOTATED BIB DUE</u>
Week 8: 3/5 – 3/7/24	!! SPRING BREAK—NO LECTURES !! <u>Selected Readings from:</u> The Acceleration of Global Contact & The Islamic World Powers	16 & 17, Primary Sources <u>MID-TERM ESSAYS DUE MARCH 11</u>
Week 9: 3/12 – 3/14/24	European Power and Expansion & New Worldviews and Ways of Life	18 & 19 & Primary Sources
Week 10: 3/19 – 3/21/24	Africa and the World & Continuity and Change in East Asia	20 & 21 & Primary Sources
Week 11: 3/26 – 3/28/24	Revolutions in the Atlantic World & Ideologies of Change in Europe	22 & 24, & Primary Sources (23 – <i>Optional</i>)
Week 12: 4/2 – 4/4/24	Africa, the Ottoman Empire, the New Imperialism & Asia and the Pacific in the Era of Imperialism	25 & 26 & Primary Sources
Week 13: 4/9 – 4/11/24	The Americas in the Age of Liberalism & World War & Revolution <u>RESEARCH PAPER DUE APRIL 15</u>	27 & 28 & Primary Sources
Week 14: 4/16 – 4/18/24	The Great Depression and World War II & Decolonization, Revolution, and the Cold War	(29 – <i>Optional</i>) 30 & 31 & Primary Sources
Week 15: 4/23 – 4/25/24	Liberalization & The Contemporary World in Historical Perspective	32 & 33 & Primary Sources
Week 16: 4/30 – 5/2/24	<u>END-OF-SEMESTER ESSAYS DUE WEDNESDAY, MAY 1</u>	

A REMINDER ABOUT INTERNET ETIQUETTE:

Just remember: respect is a two-way street. I do not tolerate trolling or deliberate provocations of any kind; failure to use our Blackboard site responsibly will have consequences.

MORE ON THE HONOR CODE:

The integrity of the University community is affected by the individual choices made by each of us. Mason has an Honor Code with clear guidelines regarding academic integrity. Three fundamental and rather simple principles to follow at all times are that: (1) all work submitted be your own; (2) when using the work or ideas of others, including fellow students, give full credit through accurate citations; and (3) if you are uncertain about the ground rules on a particular assignment, ask for clarification. No grade is important enough to justify academic misconduct. Plagiarism means using the exact words, opinions, or factual information from another person without giving the person credit. Writers give credit through accepted documentation styles, such as parenthetical citation, footnotes, or endnotes. Paraphrased material must also be cited, using MLA or APA format. A simple listing of books or articles is not sufficient. Plagiarism is the equivalent of intellectual robbery and cannot be tolerated in the academic setting. If you have any doubts about what constitutes plagiarism, please see me.

LEARNING DISABILITIES:

If you are a student with a disability and you need academic accommodation, please see me and contact the office of Disability Services (DS) at 703-993-2474, or online at: <https://ds.gmu.edu/>. *All academic accommodations must be arranged through that office.* Students must inform the instructor at the beginning of the semester, and DS will make arrangements for the specific accommodations you need.

GEORGE MASON UNIVERSITY'S DIVERSITY STATEMENT:

George Mason University promotes a living and learning environment for outstanding growth and productivity among its students, faculty and staff. Through its curriculum, programs, policies, procedures, services and resources, Mason strives to maintain a quality environment for work, study and personal growth.

An emphasis upon diversity and inclusion throughout the campus community is essential to achieve these goals. Diversity is broadly defined to include such characteristics as, but not limited to, race, ethnicity, gender, religion, age, disability, and sexual orientation. Diversity also entails different viewpoints, philosophies, and perspectives. Attention to these aspects of diversity will help promote a culture of inclusion and belonging, and an environment where diverse opinions, backgrounds and practices have the opportunity to be voiced, heard and respected.

The reflection of Mason's commitment to diversity and inclusion goes beyond policies and procedures to focus on behavior at the individual, group and organizational level. The implementation of this commitment to diversity and inclusion is found in all settings, including individual work units and groups, student organizations and groups, and classroom settings; it is also found with the delivery of services and activities, including, but not limited to, curriculum, teaching, events, advising, research, service, and community outreach.

Acknowledging that the attainment of diversity and inclusion are dynamic and continuous processes, and that the larger societal setting has an evolving socio-cultural understanding of diversity and inclusion, Mason seeks to continuously improve its environment. To this end, the University promotes continuous monitoring and self-assessment regarding diversity. The aim is to incorporate diversity and inclusion within the philosophies and actions of the individual, group and organization, and to make improvements as needed.