

# INTRODUCTION TO WORLD HISTORY

HIST-125-020 (Spring 2024)

Instructor: Vadim Staklo

TA: Courtney Algazi

Location: PLANET 120 Fairfax

Time: Tuesday, 16:30-19:10

e-mail: Please use Blackboard for communication

Office hours: by appointment

## Course description

The Introduction to World History course is a comprehensive exploration of the historical events, individuals, and intricate social, political, and cultural changes that have shaped the contemporary global world. This course takes students on a journey from the great civilizations of Ancient Middle East, China and Latin America, Greece and Rome, the Middle Ages, and the advent of the Renaissance, to the era of colonialism, the rise of the Industrial Age, the emergence of modern ideologies, and the collapse of old empires and political systems during the great wars and revolutions.

Throughout the course, students will learn about key terms, concepts, and methods that historians use in their work. The course aims to enhance students' understanding of today's interconnected world by exploring primary and secondary sources, historical methodology, periodization, and major economic and social developments. Additionally, students will have the opportunity to sharpen their independent study, analytical, and writing skills.

## Required text:

Ann Kordas, Ryan J. Lynch, Brooke Nelson, Julie Tatlock. *World History Volume 1, to 1500*. Vol. 1. 2 vols. Houston, Texas: OpenStax, 2023. <https://openstax.org/books/world-history-volume-1/pages/1-introduction>.

Ann Kordas, Ryan J. Lynch, Brooke Nelson, Julie Tatlock. *World History Volume 2, from 1400*. Vol. 2. 2 vols. Houston, Texas: OpenStax, 2022. <https://openstax.org/books/world-history-volume-2/pages/1-introduction>.

Additional weekly reading will be posted on Blackboard. Please pay special attention to these primary sources, and be ready to compare and analyze them; they will be part of the exams.

It is best to read the assigned chapters and primary sources before listening to the lecture.

## **Course requirements**

This course requires mostly independent work by students. You will not be supervised in the way you organize your time and learning. We will read the textbook and the primary source documents assigned for every class. It is your responsibility to keep up with the readings and lectures as we have no dedicated recitations. Lectures are not designed to replicate the textbook: they will supplement your reading and will help identify some of the most important events and concepts.

Please be considerate of others and turn off and put away cell phones and other electronic devices, unless you are emergency response personnel. It is OK to use your laptops, but only to take notes, and with WiFi turned off. No audio or video recording, please.

Attendance is required, and participation is essential to your grade—10%

The midterm exam will consist of short answer questions and short essays—22%

The final exam, similar in format to the midterm, will focus primarily on the second half of the course but may have questions from the previous period—24%

Four quizzes will test your knowledge of the previous weeks' material and will mostly consist of multiple-choice or short identification questions—23%

One or two analytical papers on one or both in-class movies, or on a contemporary important issue of your choice from a historical perspective (you have to see me before 15 February for the approval if you decide to explore your own subject). Writing prompts will be posted on BB—15%

Weekly reflection notes on primary sources and other items of interest. Questions will be posted on BB (weekly course content)—5%

All quizzes and exams are cumulative. They will be conducted online and are time-limited. You can start them anytime on the day of the test. You are expected to show your knowledge of the lectures, films, primary source readings, and textbook material. Answers copied from any Internet resources, including AI-generated content, are not acceptable.

We understand real life emergencies, but please provide a letter from a doctor or some other form of proof if you are missing a class or a test. If you are forced to miss a midterm or a final,

let me know immediately and we will arrange for a make-up. Late submissions may be accepted, with a loss of a grade.

Extra credit and Course Evaluation: While I don't believe in last-minute grade bumps from extra credit, you can choose to write two film essays instead of one. This optional assignment lets you explore the subject more, and gives you a chance to improve your grade.

Your involvement matters. Take part in the end-of-term course evaluation to assess your progress and help improve the course. Final grades will be raised by 1% for all participating students.

Yet, you need not wait for the evaluation period to voice concerns or suggestions. Feel free to share your input throughout the semester; your assistance in improving the course is valued.

This course meets the following Mason Core learning outcomes for Global History courses:

1. Identify major chronological developments in global history from the pre-modern period (before 1400 CE) to the present.
2. Communicate a historical argument through writing, speech, and/or digital media using a variety of primary and secondary sources.
3. Apply historical knowledge and historical thinking to contemporary global issues.

Activities and assignments in this course will regularly use the Blackboard learning system. Students are required to have regular, reliable access to a computer with an updated operating system and a stable broadband Internet connection with a consistent 1.5 Mbps download speed or higher.

All course materials posted to Blackboard or other course site are private to this class and should not be shared.

If you are a student with a disability and you need academic accommodations, please see me and contact the Office of Disability Services (ODS) at 993-2474, <http://ods.gmu.edu>. All academic accommodations must be arranged through the ODS.

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.

As a faculty member and designated “Responsible Employee,” I am required to report all disclosures of sexual assault, interpersonal violence, and stalking to Mason’s Title IX Coordinator per university policy 1202. *If you wish to speak with someone confidentially, please contact one of Mason’s confidential resources, such as Student Support and Advocacy Center (SSAC) at 703-993-3686 or Counseling and Psychological Services (CAPS) at 703-993-2380. You may also seek assistance or support measures from Mason’s Title IX Coordinator by calling 703-993-8730, or emailing [titleix@gmu.edu](mailto:titleix@gmu.edu).*

*Other Resources and Support Services for undergraduate students:*  
<https://historyarthistory.gmu.edu/undergraduate/resources-and-support-services>

## CLASS SCHEDULE

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Lecture 1 (01/16)	Introduction to History, Terms and Concepts
	Read: <i>World History Vol. 1</i> , Ch. 1, 2.
	Strongly recommended: How to Read a Primary Source (see Course Content)
	Optional: Iceman documentary; videos on memory wars.
Lecture 2 (01/23)	Early Civilizations
	Read: <i>World History Vol. 1</i> , Ch. 3, 4, 6.1. Optional: Ch. 5, 8, 9.
	Primary sources on Blackboard/Course content

Lecture 3 (01/30)      Cradle of Democracy

Read: *World History Vol. 1*, Ch. 6.2-6.3.

Primary sources on Blackboard/Course content

**Quiz 1 (02/06)**

Lecture 4 (02/06)      Roman Republic and Empire

Read: *World History Vol. 1*, Ch. 6.4-6.5, 7.

Primary sources on Blackboard/Course content

Lecture 5 (02/13)      The Post-Roman World and the European “Middle Ages”

Read: *World History Vol. 1*, Ch. 10.1-10.2, 11.1, 13.1, 13.3-13.4, 14.4, 16, 17.1.

Optional: Ch. 10.3-10.4, 11, 12, 13.2, 14.1-14.3, 15, 17.

Primary sources on Blackboard/Course content

Lecture 6 (02/20)      Cultural Revival and Reformation of the Church

Read: *World History Vol. 1*, Ch. 17.1 (The Renaissance section); *Vol. 2*, Ch. 2.3, 4.2, 5.

Optional: Ch. 2.1, 3, 4.

Primary sources on Blackboard/Course content

**Quiz 2 (02/27)**

Lecture 7 (02/27)      The Age of Enlightenment and the French Revolution

Read: *World History Vol. 2*, Ch. 6, 7.1-7.3

Primary sources on Blackboard/Course content

-----Spring break 4-10 March-----

**Paper 1 due (first film response) (03/12)**

**Midterm exam (03/12)**

Lecture 8 (03/12)      Industrialization, and the European Liberal Revolutions

Read: *World History Vol. 2*, Ch. 9.1, 10

Optional: Ch. 8

Lecture 9 (03/19)      Nationalism, Imperialism and World War I

Read: *World History Vol. 2*, Ch. 7.4, 9.2-9.4, 11.

Primary sources on Blackboard/Course content

**Quiz 3 (03/26)**

**Paper 2 due (optional second film response or Approved topic) (03/26)**

Lecture 10 (03/26)      Ideologies, Marxism, and the Russian Revolutions

Read: *World History Vol. 2*, Ch. 10.5

Primary sources on Blackboard/Course content

Lecture 11 (04/02)     Interwar Years: The Rise of Authoritarianism

Read: *World History Vol. 2*, Ch. 12.

Primary sources on Blackboard/Course content

Lecture 12 (04/09)     World War II

Read: *World History Vol. 2*, Ch. 13.

**Quiz 4 (04/16)**

Lecture 13 (04/16)     The Cold War and Beyond

Read: *World History Vol. 2*, Ch. 14, 15.

Primary sources on Blackboard/Course content

Lecture 14 (04/23)     Course review, Q&A

**Final exam (05/07/24)**