

Fall 2018 Hist 125-003: Introduction to World History

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Office hours: Tues 4:30-5:30, Wed. 6:00-7:00 and by appointment

Class location: Sandbridge Hall 107
Class times: Tues/Thurs 1:30-2:45pm
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Welcome to class!

History 125 introduces students to the History of World Civilization from Antiquity to the 21st century. While we will briefly consider the beginnings of human civilization, we will focus on the web of human interactions and the transference of knowledge among early established civilizations, along with the ways in which the hunger for varying forms of energy has driven the fates of peoples around the globe. In this class we will also examine how growing interest in goods created avenues of communication that grew from modest beginnings to super highways of commercial exchange fusing the fates of East and West. As the semester progresses students will be asked to consider the history of economic, political and cultural dominance of the West and the global forces challenging this dominance in the modern world.

Class Goals

Regardless of academic interests or major most students benefit from the study of world history by gaining a better understanding of the world around us and the forces that have shaped our societies and cultures. In a recent study the American Association of Colleges and Universities defined Liberal Education as “an approach to college learning that empowers individuals and prepares them to deal with **complexity, diversity, and change.**” While according to a 2013 survey conducted by Hart Research Associates, 74 % of employers would recommend this educational approach to college-bound students as it provides breadth of knowledge and adaptability skills that prepare them for challenges of the professional world. (source: <https://www.aacu.org/leap/what-is-a-liberal-education>)

Our goal in this class is to make sure that along with an understanding of the world in which we live you also gain specific analytical skills useful in many professional fields that will give you a real advantage in your future job searches.

Specifically, by the end of the semester students will be able to:

1. Demonstrate familiarity with the major chronology of world history.
2. Demonstrate the ability to narrate and explain long-term changes and continuities in world history.
3. Identify, evaluate, and appropriately cite online and print resources.
4. Develop multiple historical literacies by analyzing primary sources of various kinds (texts, images, music) and using these sources as evidence to support interpretation of historical events.
5. Communicate effectively— through speech, writing, and use of digital media—their understanding of patterns, process, and themes in the history of the world.

History 125 satisfies the general education requirement in Western civilization/world history.

Required Texts

Crosby, Alfred. *Children of the Sun: A History of Humanity's Unappeasable Appetite for Energy*. W.W. Norton & Company, Inc., 2007. ISBN: 9780393931532

Frankopan, Peter. *Silk Roads: A New History of the World* (15th Edition). First Vintage Books, 2017. ISBN: 9781101946336.

MacGregor, Neil. *A History of the World in 100 Objects*. Penguin Books, 2013. ISBN: 9780143124153.

McNeill, J.R. and McNeill, W.H. *The Human Web: A Bird's-Eye View of World History*. W.W. Norton & Company, Inc., 2003. ISBN: 9780393925685.

Morris, Ian. *Why the West Rules – for Now: The Patterns of History and What They Reveal About the Future*. Picador Books, 2011. ISBN: 9780312611699.

Schedule

August 28	Introduction,
August 30	Food production and early civilizations <i>The Human Web</i> , pp. 1-43
September 4	Civilizations, markets and wealth <i>The Human Web</i> , pp. 43-116 Last day to add classes
September 6	Civilizations, religions and markets <i>The Human Web</i> , pp. 116-154
September 9	Last day to drop (no tuition penalty)
September 11	Global markets, and local economies <i>The Human Web</i> , pp. 155-221
September 13	Population growth, science and imperialism <i>The Human Web</i> , pp. 221-267
September 18	Local economies, or Global economy? <i>The Human Web</i> , pp. 268-327
September 20	Humanity's early introduction to solar energy <i>Children of the Sun</i> , pp. 1-45

September 25	New sources of energy: coal, steam, oil, electricity <i>Children of the Sun</i> , pp. 45-127
September 27	Energy beyond the Industrial Revolution <i>Children of the Sun</i> , pp. 127-166
October 1-28	Selective Withdrawal Period (100% tuition penalty)
October 2	The Silk Road and the rise of Christianity <i>The Silk Roads</i> , pp. 3-61
October 4	Midterm
October 9	No Tuesday classes (Columbus Day Recess) - No Reaction Essay due this week
October 11	Islam, trade routes and wealth / Europe clashes with the East <i>The Silk Roads</i> , pp. 62-213
October 16	Early European Expansion <i>The Silk Roads</i> , pp. 214-271
October 18	New trade routes <i>The Silk Roads</i> , pp. 271-311
October 23	Trading goods, ideas and power <i>The Silk Roads</i> , pp. 311-363
October 25	Warfare, ideology and power <i>The Silk Roads</i> , pp. 364-385
October 30	A world divided: superpower rivalry <i>The Silk Roads</i> , pp. 385-472
November 1	The new silk road <i>The Silk Roads</i> , pp. 472-509
November 6	Before East and West – The West takes the lead <i>Why the West Rules - For Now</i> , pp. 3-135
November 8	Taking measure of the past <i>Why the West Rules - For Now</i> , pp. 135-173
November 13	The East catches up – Neck and neck <i>Why the West Rules - For Now</i> , pp. 174-280

November 15	Decline and Fall <i>Why the West Rules - For Now</i> , pp. 280-331
November 20	The eastern age – Going global <i>Why the West Rules - For Now</i> , pp. 331-434
November 22-26	Thanksgiving Holiday – No Class
November 27	The West catches up <i>Why the West Rules- For Now</i> , pp. 434-490
November 29	The western age <i>Why the West Rule - For Now</i> , pp. 490-557
December 4	Why the West rules - for now <i>Why the West Rules - For Now</i> , pp. 557-622
December 6	Conclusion <i>Appendix: On social development</i> , pp. 623-646
December 18	Final Exam, 1:30-4:15

Assignments

1. **Attendance and weekly preparation:** This class is an intensive reading and writing class. Completing the assigned readings **before class** is critical for you to keep up with in-class activities, and being in class, alert and engaged in discussion is mandatory. Attendance will be taken every class period [5% of your total grade]. Leaving class early, arriving late, or being disruptive in any way (including using cell phones or computers for purposes other than class use) may result in a full grade reduction from your final grade.
2. **Reaction Essays:** Each student must turn in a brief reaction essay (no less than one page and no more than two pages in length) on a **weekly basis** for a total of 13 short essays during the semester (essays due every Tuesday before class). In this assignment you are asked to choose one artifact from MacGregor's, *A history of the World in 100 Objects* and briefly describe the item **and** connect it to a section of the readings assigned on that week. The types of questions you are asked to answer include:
 - what was the purpose of the artifact and when was it created?
 - what does it tell us about the culture that produced it, its principles, social structure, or technical achievements?
 - how does the source or artifact help us understand the “bigger picture” presented in the associated readings?
 - please make sure to cite the work/s you are connecting to the artifact (for this

assignment you may use in-line citation).
[5% each for a total of 65% of your total grade].

3. **Midterm:** This is an in-class exam in which you will answer a number of short identifications (we will work on compiling a list during our class meetings), and essay questions that will require both basic historical information for the period covered and a discussion of the strengths and weaknesses of the two books you have read so far, *The Human Web* and *Children of the Sun* [15% of your total grade].

4. **Final:** This is an in-class exam in which you will answer a number of short identifications (see above), and essay questions that will require both basic historical information for the period covered and a discussion of the strengths and weaknesses of the two books you have read over the last half of the semester, *The Silk Roads* and *Why the West Rules – For Now* [15% of your total grade].

Class policies

- *Because this is a computer classroom, we will frequently be using the internet as a means to enhance our discussions. Please be respectful of your peers and your instructor and do not engage in activities that are unrelated to the class. Such disruptions show a lack of professionalism and may affect your participation grade.*
- *Mason is an Honor Code university; please see the Office for Academic Integrity for a full description of the code and the honor committee process. The principle of academic integrity is taken very seriously, and violations are treated gravely. What does academic integrity mean in this course? Essentially, you are responsible for performing all class related tasks, assignments and readings. When you rely on someone else's work in any task, you will give full credit in the proper, accepted form. Another aspect of academic integrity is the free play of ideas. Vigorous discussion and debate are encouraged in this course, with the firm expectation that all aspects of the class will be conducted with civility and respect for differing ideas, perspectives, and traditions. When in doubt (of any kind) please ask for guidance and clarification. (<https://oai.gmu.edu/mason-honor-code/>)*
- *If you have a documented learning disability or other condition that may affect academic performance you should: 1) make sure this documentation is on file with Disability Services (SUB I, Rm. 4205; 993-2474; <http://ds.gmu.edu>) to determine the accommodations you need; and 2) talk with me to discuss your accommodation needs.*
- *Students must use their MasonLive email account to receive important University information, including communications related to this class. I will not respond to messages sent from or send messages to a non-Mason email address. Please include the subject line: **Hist 125-03** in all communications.*

Grading Scale

90-100 A = work that shows complete command of the subject.

A+ : 98 -100

A : 93-97.99

A- : 90 – 92.99

80-89 B = work that shows very good understanding of the subject.

B+ : 87 – 89.99

B : 83 – 86.99

B- : 80 – 82.99

70-79 C = work that shows basic command of the subject of study, but lacks detail and in-depth analysis and examples

C+ : 77 – 79.99

C : 73 – 76.99

C- : 70 – 72.99

60-69 D = work that shows limited or partial understanding of the historical discussion.

D+ : 67-69.99

D : 63-66.99

D- : 60-62.99

F : 0-59 = work that fails to show understanding of the events, context, or chronology of the subject.

Resources

Please take the time to review and take advantage of the student resources available to you at GMU. See the webpage with specific information on the services available to George Mason Students:

<http://stearnscenter.gmu.edu/teaching/student-support-resources-on-campus>