

George Mason University
HIST 125: Introduction to World History
Fall Term 2018

Course: Introduction to World History 125 (017)
Time: Wed. 7.20pm – 10pm
Location: Music/Theatre Building 1005
Instructor: Dr. Jessica Legnini
Office: Rob B377A
Office Hours: By Appointment
Contact: jlegnini@gmu.edu

Course Description:

This course uses the theoretical framework of global history. It will examine how societies around the world have been shaped, both culturally and politically, by increased interregional contact. The course will be centered specifically on the role of the “Silk Roads” as an important site of contact between Asia, Africa, and Europe. It will examine the trade routes’ role in spreading religious change, material goods, science, and imperial conquest, as well as more contemporary uses of the network by nations aiming to integrate economies and consolidate political power. By examining the experiences of non-western societies, this course encourages students to develop a global outlook, and to deepen their understanding of the ways in which interregional contact makes and unmakes political, social, and racial boundaries.

Mason Core General Education Objectives:

- Students will demonstrate familiarity with the major chronology of World History.
- Students will demonstrate the ability to narrate and explain long-term changes and continuities in World History.
- Students will identify, evaluate, and appropriately cite online and print resources.
- Students will 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.
- Students will communicate effectively—orally, in writing, and/or using digital media—their understanding of patterns, processes, and themes in the history of the world.

Required Text:

Peter Frankopan, *The Silk Roads: A New History of the World* (Vintage, 2017). ISBN 978-1-101-91237-9.
Wole Soyinka, *Aké: The Years of Childhood* (Vintage International, 1989). ISBN 0-679-72540-7.

- Additional readings are on Blackboard. It is your responsibility to read them *before* class and be ready to discuss them.

Classroom Expectations:

- Please do not arrive late to class, and please be considerate of others with your use of electronics.
- For a complete list of university-wide policies see: “Student Rights and Responsibilities” at <https://catalog.gmu.edu/policies/student-rights-responsibilities/>

Honor Code

Plagiarism and other forms of academic dishonesty are serious offenses. Students that engage in academic dishonesty discredit not only themselves, but also the reputation of the university and, therefore, damage the reputation of their fellow students. Students will abide by the University’s Academic Honor Code.

Failure to do so will result in a failing grade. All incidents of academic dishonesty will be reported to the applicable academic program. <http://oai.gmu.edu/the-mason-honor-code-2/>

Attendance:

Due to the nature of the course regular attendance is expected. Students who fail to attend class regularly will be unable to keep up with the course’s progression and continuity and, therefore, can expect their grade to suffer.

Course Requirements:

There will be two reflection assignments (40%), one book review (20%), and a final assessment (30%). Class participation (attendance and frequency of contribution to discussion) will count for 10% of the overall grade. Grades will be given according to the following grading scale:

A+ : 98-100	B+ : 87-89	C+ : 77 -79	D+ : 67-69	F : 0-59
A : 93-97	B : 83-86	C : 73-76	D : 63-66	
A- : 90-92	B- : 80-82	C- : 70-72	D- : 60-62	

Important Dates:

Class Begins	August 29
Thanksgiving Break	November 21 to November 25
Last Class	December 5
Final Exam	December 12 (7.30pm to 10.15pm)

Weekly Schedule

Topic 1: Foundations and Classical Era (8,000 BCE – 600 CE)

For This Topic, Read: Chapters 1-3, *The Silk Roads: A New History of the World*

Wednesday – 8/29: Introduction, Course Overview, and Prehistory

- Early Human Migration
- Cave paintings and Venus Figurines
- The Urban Revolution and “Civilization” (3500-1000 BCE)
 - Effects of Agriculture
 - The Epic of Gilgamesh
 - Code of Hammurabi
 - Images of Ancient Egypt

Wednesday – 9/5: Classical Civilizations and Religion (1000 BCE – 500 CE)

- *Bhagavad Gita: Caste and Self*
- Confucius, *The Analects*
- Herodotus: from *The History of the Persian War*
- *The Buddha’s First Sermon*
- *The Bible: Genesis*

Topic 2: Post-Classical Era (600 CE – 1450 CE)

For This Topic, Read: Chapters 4-10, *The Silk Roads: A New History of the World*

Wednesday – 9/12: Encounters and Conversions (400 BCE – 1400 CE)

- Eusebius, *The Life of Constantine*
- Buddhism in China: *The Disposition of Error*
- Christianity: Jesus according to Matthew
- *Excerpts from the Quran*
- Ichisada Miyazaki, *The Chinese Civil Service Exam*

Wednesday – 9/19: Medieval Civilizations and the Crusades (1000 – 1400)

- *An Oath of Homage and Fealty*
- From the *Magna Carta*
- Fulcher of Chartres, *Pope Urban at Clermont*
- *The Seizure of Jerusalem As Told By Ibn Al-Athir*
- *Images of the Black Death*

Wednesday – 9/26: Raiders of the Steppe, and Sea (900 - 1450)

- *The Saga of Erik the Red*
- *The Secret History of the Mongols*

Take-Home Written Reflection #1: Due Wednesday 10/3

Topic 3: Early-Modern Era (1450 – 1750)

For This Topic, Read: Chapters 11-14, *The Silk Roads: A New History of the World*

Wednesday – 10/3: Overseas Expansion and Atlantic World Encounters (1450-1750)

- Zheng He, *Inscription to the Goddess*
- Christopher Columbus, *Letter to King Ferdinand and Queen Isabella*
- *The Broken Spears: The Aztec Account of the Conquest of Mexico*
- Nzinga Mbemba, *Appeal to the King of Portugal*
- William Bosman, *Slave Trader*
- Olaudah Equiano, *The Middle Passage*

Wednesday – 10/10: State, Religion, and the Scientific Revolution (1500- 1750)

- Matteo Ricci, *Jesuit Missionaries in Ming China*
- Martin Luther, *95 Theses*
- Galileo Galilei, *Letter to the Grand Duchess Christina*
- Lady Mary Wortley Montagu, *Smallpox Vaccination in Turkey*

Wednesday – 10/17: Islamic Empires

- Bada'uni, *Akbar and Religion*
- Letters from the Ottoman Empire
- Art of the Safavids (Metropolitan Museum of Art)

Take-Home Written Reflection #2: Due Wednesday 10/24

Topic 4: Modern Era (1750-1900)

For This Topic, Read: Chapters 15-20, *The Silk Roads: A New History of the World*

Wednesday – 10/24: Enlightenment and Revolution (1650-1850)

- Immanuel Kant, *On Enlightenment*
- Condorcet, *On the Progress of the Human Mind*
- *American Declaration of Independence*
- Mary Wollstonecraft, *A Vindication of the Rights of Women*
- Simón Bolívar, *A Constitution for Venezuela*

Wednesday – 10/31: Capitalism and Industrialization (1850-1914)

- Adam Smith, *Wealth of Nations*
- Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels, *The Communist Manifesto*
- From *The Sadler Report of the House of Commons*
- Iwasaki Yataro, *Mitsubishi Letter to Employees*

Wednesday – 11/7: Colonization, Westernization, and Nationalism (1850-1914)

- George Orwell, *Burmese Days*
- Images from Japan: Views of Westernization
- Mohandas K. Gandhi, from *Hind Swaraj*

Topic 5: Contemporary Era (1914-Now)

For This Topic, Read: Chapters 20-25 and Conclusion, *The Silk Roads: A New History of the World*

Wednesday – 11/14: World War and its Consequences (1914-1945)

- Wilfred Owen, *Dulce et Decorum Est*
- V. I. Lenin, *War and Revolution*
- *The Zionist and Arab Cases to the Anglo-American Committee of Inquiry*
- Iris Chang, from *The Rape of Nanking*

Wednesday – 11/21: NO CLASS: THANKSGIVING BREAK

Book Review Due 11/28

Wednesday – 11/28: Decolonization (1945-2000)

- South Africa: National Party's Colour Policy, 1948
- Nelson Mandela, *Speech on Release from Jail, 1990*
- India/Pakistan Partition Documents
- *Editorial of the Liberation Army Daily*
 - Watch “Ghosts of Rwanda”

Wednesday – 12/5: Globalization and the New Silk Roads (2000-Now)

- *China Daily*, China's Belt and Road Initiative
- Benjamin Barber, *Jihad vs. McWorld*

Wednesday – 12/12: Final Assessment: 7.30pm - 10.15pm.