

Introduction to World History

HIST 125:010

Spring Semester, 2019

Sam Lebovic

Class Details

Time: MW 1:30-2:45

Location: Planetary Hall 120

Office Hours: Wednesday 3-5, or by appt

Contact Details

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Course Description

In this course we explore the sweeping historical changes that created today's world. Beginning around 1450, we trace key processes reshaping the politics, cultures, and economies of various regions. Our focus will be on global interactions and connections – especially the history of globalization – which we will balance with consideration of local developments and differences. While Europe and the United States are part of our focus, we primarily consider Africa, Asia, Latin America, and the Middle East. Each of these geographic regions became enmeshed in a global system affected by far-reaching cultural transformation, mercantile activity, industrial growth and imperialism/colonialism. Finally, we study the influences of modern nationalism, Cold War dynamics, and anti-colonial movements in the twentieth century. By the end of the semester, students should have a grasp of the major trends underlying six centuries of world history.

Learning Goals

- Demonstrate familiarity with the major chronology of World History, especially the history of global connections and power inequalities (Mason Core Learning Outcome 1)
- Demonstrate the ability to narrate and explain long-term changes and continuities in World history (Mason Core Learning Outcome 2)
- Become familiar with the complexity of human experience in different times and places.
- Identify, evaluate, and appropriately cite online and print resources (Mason Core Learning Outcome 3)
- Develop multiple historical literacies by analyzing primary and secondary sources of various kinds and using these sources as evidence to support interpretations of historical events (Mason Core Learning Outcome 4)
- Write analytic essays that present original and critical thinking in a clear, coherent and sustained argument. (Mason Core Learning Outcome 5)
- Engage in thoughtful classroom discussion about course materials

Class Requirements

1) Participation (10% of final grade)

Participation is essential to the success of this class as well as your success in it. I will not lecture the whole time; instead we will discuss the readings and issues in the course as a group. In the first place, then, you should feel free to ask me questions at any point. And you must come to class having completed the reading assignment for the day and ready to talk about the arguments and ideas in the texts. The better you read the class materials, the better the conversation, and the better the conversation, the better the class. Come to class with questions about the readings (including sections or ideas that you found to be unclear or confusing), comments and thoughts about their arguments (including their strengths and weaknesses), and notes on how these readings connect to the themes of the course and other readings in the semester.

During discussions, I expect everyone to respect the contributions, questions, and comments of others – disagreements are great, but they must be expressed respectfully and thoughtfully.

The lectures and discussions are designed to help you learn, and I expect you to take advantage of them. There is no formal penalty for missing a class, out of respect to you, but missing numerous classes will reduce your participation grade and will inevitably have an impact on the quality of your preparation for the assessments.

In class, I expect you to show courtesy to me and your fellow students – please turn your cellphones off, please use laptops only for taking class notes and accessing readings, and please do not arrive late or leave early. If you need to leave early on a particular day, are waiting on an urgent call etc., please bring this up with me before class begins. If students are using laptops for anything other than accessing readings or taking class notes, I reserve the right to ban laptop use and require students to bring printed copies of the reading to class.

Class outlines will be posted as word documents on the course website by 5pm on the day prior to class. They are designed to provide a broad overview of the day's class and to help you take notes during class– printing or downloading them prior to class is recommended. They are not summaries of the readings or my lecture, and will not help you to make up missed classes.

2) 4 Mini-exams (20% of final grade, combined) – Feb 11, Mar 6, Apr 8, May 6

On four occasions we will have twenty-minute mini-exams in class. The format for these mini-exams will be identical – there will be five short-answer questions, of which you must answer three. Each question will be worth 2 points. The questions will ask you to identify and explain the significance of central ideas, developments, and events in World History. To prepare for these exams, you should revise both your lecture notes and the readings in consultation with my class outlines.

Each mini-exam will examine only the material we have covered since the previous exam (i.e., they are not cumulative).

Sample short questions:

- 1) What was the Columbian Exchange, and why was it significant?
- 2) Who was Emilio Aguinaldo, and why was he significant?
- 3) Briefly describe the way that the Cold War interacted with decolonization in two different locations.

3) Journal (15% of final grade) with 10 entries DUE in class on May 6

Beginning with week 4, you will write a short journal entry each week. Each entry will have three parts. 1) In 150-200 words, outline what you learned in class that was most interesting to you, and explain why. 2) Pose a question about a topic related to the week's classes that you would like to know more about. It can be a topic covered in class that you want to learn more about, something that wasn't covered that you feel was relevant, something you came across in another course, something you've always wondered about – anything, really, as long as it is related to the week's classes in some way. 3) Find an academic article that would help you answer the question, and then copy the citation and the abstract into your journal.

In our class on Monday Feb 11 we will have a workshop to show you how to use scholarly databases to help you find your article.

Including week 4, there are 11 weeks in which you can write a journal entry. You only need to write 10 entries, i.e., you can have a pass for one week of your choice. (Please just note which week when you submit your journal).

4) Short Writing Assignment (5% of final grade) DUE in class on Feb 18**5) Paper 1 (15% of final grade) DUE in class on Mar 20****6) Paper 2 (20% of final grade) DUE in class on Apr 29**

The papers will ask you critically analyze some of the texts we have read in class. I will distribute the questions and more detailed instructions in advance of each assignment. Papers will be due in class, in hard copy.

When you turn in the short writing assignment, you will also turn in your first journal entry.

7) Final Take-Home Exam (15% of final grade) DUE Friday May 10 by 5pm.

The final for this course will be a take-home exam, issued on the last day of class. I will provide you with a question and you will write an essay making an argument based on the material we have covered over the semester. We will discuss the exam further closer to the end of the semester, and we will devote a portion of the final class to review. The paper needs to be emailed to be (slebovic@gmu.edu) as a word doc by the due date.

There will be no final written exam during the scheduled exam period.

Textbooks

There are three books required for this course:

Trevor R Getz and Liz Clarke, *Abina and the Important Men: A Graphic History*, 2nd edition, Oxford University Press, 2016, 9780190238742

Robert B Marks, *The Origins of the Modern World: A Global and Ecological Narrative from the Fifteenth to the Twenty-First Century*, 3rd edition, Rowman and Littlefield, 2015, 9781442212404

Marjane Satrapi, *Persepolis: the Story of a Childhood*, 9780375714573

All three books are available in the bookstore in the Johnson Center. Feel free to purchase them elsewhere if you'd like, or to borrow them from the library or get e-books, but please make sure to get the correct editions.

All other readings for the class are available as pdfs on the course site on Blackboard (<https://mymasonportal.gmu.edu/webapps/portal/frameset.jsp>)

You are not required to bring the Marks text class, but you must bring copies of the other readings so we can refer to them during our discussion (e-copies are completely fine).

Make-Up Exams and Extensions

If you cannot attend an exam for any reason you must contact me **before** the exam begins. If you miss an exam without contacting me in advance, you will receive a zero for the assignment. If it is impossible for you to make an exam, speak to me well in advance.

Essays are due in class on the day they are due. Late papers will be docked half a letter grade each day they are tardy.

In general, if something happens in your life to interfere with your work for this course, please inform me as soon as possible so we can work together to make sure you stay on track to succeed in the class.

On Academic Integrity

GMU is an Honor Code university; please see the Office for Academic Integrity (<http://oai.gmu.edu/>) 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 this: when you are responsible for a task, you will perform that task. When you rely on someone else's work in an aspect of the performance of that 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.

You should familiarize yourself with the Honor Code, which is available at:
<http://oai.gmu.edu/honor-code/masons-honor-code/>.

If you have any questions, concerns or confusion about this policy during the semester, please bring them directly to me – I'll be happy to help, and it is better to be safe than sorry.

Communications

Students in this class need to check their GMU email accounts regularly throughout the semester – I will rely on the mailtool in blackboard to communicate all announcements, such as changes to the syllabus or to class meetings.

I will endeavor to respond to all emails within one working-day of receiving them. I am regularly away from my mail in the evenings and on the weekends, so while I *will* respond to your mail, I may not do so instantaneously. I will check and respond to email more regularly in the immediate lead-up to exams and assignments in order to handle more urgent questions.

My office hours are between 3 and 5 every Wednesday afternoon – please feel free to stop by if you want to discuss anything related to the course or your studies. If your schedule is tight, you are welcome to email me so that we can arrange an appointment at a particular time. Throughout the semester, I am also more than happy to meet by appointment if you cannot make my office hours – just send me an email or speak to me after class.

Special Accommodations

If any of these course policies pose a particular hardship for you, please come and speak to me directly.

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.

Course Schedule

Week 1

Wed, Jan 23 Introduction

Week 2

Mon, Jan 28 CLASS CANCELLED – I’M AT A CONFERENCE

Wed, Jan 30 Why study world history?

Marks, 1-17

Week 3

Mon, Feb 4 The Eurasian World in 1450

Marks, 19-26, 33-55.

Wed, Feb 6 The “New” World

Marks, 72-83

Sepulveda, “Just Causes of War Against the Indians” (1544)

De Las Casas, “Apologetica historia de las Indias” (1550)

Week 4

Mon, Feb 11 How to Find Scholarly Resources

Assignment: Mini-exam 1

Wed, Feb 13 Imperial Expansion and State Formation

Marks, 58-72, 86-96

Week 5

Mon, Feb 18 The History of Gender & Sexuality

Assignment: Writing assignment 1 due

Wed, Feb 20 Africa and the Atlantic System

Marks 55-58, 83-86

Four selections from Steven Mintz (ed), *Excerpts from Slave Narratives*
(<http://www.vgskole.net/prosjekt/slavrute/primary.htm>)

- a. James Barbot Jr., “A Supplement to the Description of the Coasts of North and South Guinea” (1732)
- b. Venture, “A Narrative of the Life and Adventures of Venture, A Native of Africa” (1798)
- c. Olaudah Equiano, “The Interesting Narrative of the Life of Olaudah Equiano” (1789)
- d. Alexander Falconbridge, “An Account of the Slave Trade on the Coast of Africa” (1788)

Week 6

Mon, Feb 25 Liberalism and Property

John Locke, “Of Property,” Chapter 5 of *The Second Treatise of Government* (1690)

Wed, Feb 27 Racism and the Limits of Liberalism

Stuart Banner, *Possessing the Pacific: Land, Settlers, and Indigenous People from Australia to Alaska* (2007), 13-31

Note: the document on the website includes the whole chapter, but you only need to read to the end of the first paragraph on p.31.

Week 7

Mon, Mar 4 The Age of Revolution, and its Limits

Olympia De Gouges, *Declaration of the Rights of Women* (1791)

Olympia De Gouges, *Preface to The Slavery of the Blacks* (1792)

Haitian Declaration of Independence (1803)

Frederick Douglass, *Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass* (1845) (selection)

Wed, Mar 6 Nationalism

Assignment: Mini-exam 2

Week 8

NO CLASS – Spring Break

Week 9

Mon, Mar 18 The Industrial Revolution

Marks, ch.4

Wed, Mar 20 Time-Discipline and the Division of Labor

Assignment: Paper 1 Due

Week 10

Mon, Mar 25 Industrial Cores and Agricultural Peripheries

Marks, 127-148

Fukuzawa Yukichi, “Good-bye Asia” (1885)

Wed, Mar 27 New Imperialism

Marks, 148-160

William McKinley, “Decision to Occupy the Philippines” (1898)

“Aguinaldo’s Case Against the United States,” *North American Review* (1899)

Week 11

Mon, Apr 1 The experience of empire

Getz and Clark, *Abina and the Important Men*

Wed, Apr 3 Modern Life & Mass Consumption

Modern Girl around the World Research Group, “A Research Agenda and Preliminary Findings,” *Gender and History* 17(2) August 2005, 245-294.

Note: This is long, but there are a lot of illustrations. Please spend as much time looking at these ads as the text, and if you have to skim parts of the text, that is fine. You can also skip the text on pps.246-256 (from the heading “problematics” to the heading “the modern girl and technologies of the self”) – though please look at the ads.

Week 12

Mon, Apr 8 – Modernity and Mass Violence

Assignment: **Mini-exam 3**

Screening: Namibia Genocide and the Second Reich

Wed, Apr 10 – The thirty-year crisis

Marks, 161-173

M.N. Roy, “Open Letter to Woodrow Wilson” (1917)

Note: please focus on the introduction, the first two subheads on p.68, pp.74-78, pp.82-83.

M.N. Roy, “An Indian Communist Manifesto” (1920)

Ho Chi Minh, “Appeal Made on the Occasion of the Founding of the Communist Party of Indochina” (1930)

Week 13

Mon, Apr 15 – Decolonization in a Cold War World

Marks, 173-188

Ho Chi Minh, “Declaration of Independence of the Democratic Republic Of Vietnam” (1945)

Aime Cesaire, *Discourse on Colonialism* (1955) - selections

Wed, Apr 17 – The Experience of Postwar Politics

Satrapi, *Persepolis*

Week 14

Mon, Apr 22 – Migrations

Marks, 188-196

Wed, Apr 24 – The End of the Cold War and the End of History?

Marks, 196-201

Mikhail Gorbachev, “On Socialist Democracy” (1987)

Chai Ling, “I am Still Alive” (1989)

Week 15

Mon, Apr 29 – Make up day for snow/review

Assignment: Paper 2 due

Wed, May 1 – the Anthropocene

Marks, 201-207

“Global Warming Report an “ear-splitting wake-up call,” warns UN chief,” *UN News*, October 8, 2018.

Week 16

Mon May 6 Take-Home exam distributed

Assignment: **Mini-exam 4**

Assignment: **Diary due.**

Friday, May 10 Final Exam due by 5pm

Emailed to slebovic@gmu.edu