

HIST 125.007: Introduction to World History
Fall 2019

MWF 12:30–1:20 p.m.
Planetary Hall 120

Instructor: Sam Klug
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Office Hours: Friday, 10:30–12:30, and by appointment
Office: Robinson B 336

Course Description

This course will examine the major historical processes that have shaped the contemporary world. We will study social, political, economic, and cultural changes that have transformed the world from the 15th century to the present. The course's emphasis will be on global interactions—the relationships among different regions and peoples—although we will often study these interactions through closer looks at their local effects. Most of the course will focus on Asia, Africa, the Middle East, and Latin America, although Europe and the United States will be considered as well.

The course is divided into three units. The first unit will examine how the world's regions and peoples became linked to each other in the early modern period, roughly 1450–1750 CE. The second unit will examine the linked histories of slavery, capitalism, and modernity in the 18th and 19th centuries. The third unit will examine how a world dominated by empires was transformed into a world of nation-states over the course of the 20th century. Across the three units, we will focus on the development of political and economic systems (e.g., capitalism, democracy, empire), the transformation of understandings of culture and identity (e.g., race, gender, religion), and the origins and consequences of political ideologies (e.g., liberalism, socialism, fascism). By the end of the semester, students should have a grasp of the major trends underlying six centuries of world history.

Required Texts

There are three required books for this course.

1. James Carter and Richard Warren, *Forging the Modern World: A History*, Second Edition (Oxford University Press, 2018). ISBN: 9780190901899
2. James Carter and Richard Warren, eds., *Sources for Forging the Modern World* (Oxford University Press, 2018). ISBN: 9780190901936
3. Marjane Satrapi, *Persepolis: The Story of a Childhood* (Penguin Random House, 2004). ISBN: 9780375714573

These books are on order at the university bookstore and are also widely available through online retailers. Please make sure you acquire the second edition of *Forging the Modern World*.

Assignments and Grading

1) Participation (10% of final grade)

Class periods will consist of a mixture of lecture and discussion. On Mondays and Wednesdays, I will typically lecture for roughly half or two-thirds of the class. The remainder of the class will be spent in discussion. On Fridays, we will typically spend most or all of the class period discussing our primary source readings for the week.

Consistent, reflective participation in class discussions is expected. Successful discussions depend on collective dialogue, a willingness to ask questions, and an open attitude toward the ideas and perspectives of others. You will be assessed on the quality, not the quantity, of your contributions to class discussion. Productive participation does *not* require mastery or complete understanding of the material. Asking questions and pointing out issues that may be confusing are essential parts of the process of wrestling with historical documents and scholarly arguments.

In order to participate fully in class discussions, you must come to class having completed the reading assignment for the day. As you read, I strongly recommend you take notes on issues that are confusing or unclear, as well as on how the readings for a particular day connect to other readings, material from lectures, and the broader themes of the course.

To engage with the material of this course, students should be willing to question their assumptions about a wide range of important, and sometimes sensitive, topics. No one can approach issues related to the various forms of social inequality that will be a central focus of our course completely objectively. Everyone's views are conditioned by upbringing and by other personal characteristics of background and outlook. Everyone in the class should be prepared to listen—with respect—to opinions you do not share, and to contribute to a class environment in which discussion across a wide spectrum can take place without anyone feeling hesitant to voice an eccentric view. Disagreements are productive, but they must be expressed respectfully and thoughtfully.

Out of respect for you, there is no formal penalty for missing a class. Missing a significant number of classes will, however, inevitably have a negative impact on your participation grade and on your preparation for papers and exams.

2) Papers (15% each, 45% total)

Students will write three short papers (3–4 pages each), one for each unit of the course. Due dates are listed in the course schedule. I will distribute the prompts and more specific instructions in advance of each assignment. Papers will be submitted on Blackboard and are due by the start of the class period on the due date.

3) Writer's Notebook (10%)

Beginning in week 4, you will keep a "writer's notebook." Each week, you will write a brief entry (150–200 words). The entry should be a reflection on something you found interesting from that week's lectures, discussions, and/or readings. The writing can be informal, but it must be in complete sentences and paragraphs—i.e., more than just bullet points. At the end of each entry, pose a question about a topic related to the week's classes that you would like to learn more about. It can be something covered in class, something from the readings, a point of

intersection with another course you're taking—anything that relates to the course material for that week.

Between week 4 and week 14, you will write ten entries, which means you can take one week off of your choosing. When submitting your notebook, please note at the top which week you've taken off. I will collect the writer's notebooks twice: on October 25 and on December 2. The writer's notebook is intended to help you think through the material in the course and prepare you for the papers and exams. Getting into the habit of writing your entries thoughtfully and consistently each week will help you succeed on the other writing assignments. I will be grading them on the consistency with which they are completed and the level of engagement with the course material they demonstrate.

4) Midterm Exam (15%)

The midterm exam will be given in class on Wednesday, October 16. This exam will cover material from course readings, lectures, and class discussions.

5) Take-Home Final Exam (20%)

The final exam for this course will be a take-home essay exam. I will distribute the exam during the reading period, and it will be due on Monday, December 16, at 5 p.m. We will discuss the exam in detail closer to the end of the semester.

Laptop Policy

Laptop computers, tablets, or other relevant electronic devices are allowed for the specific use of accessing course readings and taking notes, or if you have a documented disability. Use of your electronic device for any other purpose is prohibited. If students are using electronic devices for anything other than accessing readings and taking notes, I reserve the right to ban laptop use and require students to bring hard copies of the readings to class.

Writing Assistance

I believe that every class with a significant writing component doubles as a class on writing. One of the goals of this class is to improve your ability to write clear and engaging prose. To advance this goal, I encourage all of you to make use of the [Writing Center](#), which offers free writing support to Mason students, faculty, and staff.

Academic Integrity

This class operates under George Mason University's Honor Code, which states, "Student members of the George Mason University community pledge not to cheat, plagiarize, steal or lie in matters related to academic work." It is your responsibility to read and understand the policy, which is available in full [here](#).

Open discussion and the exchange of ideas are essential to academic work. You must ensure, however, that any written work you submit for evaluation is the result of your own research and writing and that it reflects your own approach to the topic. When you rely on another person's work, you must give full credit in the proper, accepted form. You must adhere to citation practices—which we will cover in class—and properly cite any books, articles, websites,

lectures, etc. that have helped you with your work. If you receive any help with your writing (feedback on drafts, etc.), you must also acknowledge this assistance.

Communications and Office Hours

I will use the Blackboard mail tool to communicate with the class. Students will need to check their GMU email regularly, as I will communicate changes to the syllabus and important information about assignments this way.

I will try to respond to all emails within one working day of receiving them. I will often be away from my email in the evenings and on weekends, so if you email me during those times, it may take me longer to respond than if you email me during the workday.

My office hours are held on Friday, from 10:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m., in Robinson B 336. I encourage all of you to stop by to discuss anything related to the course. If you cannot make that time, I am happy to meet at other times. Feel free to email me so that we can set something up.

Accommodations

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 703-993-2474 or on their [website](#). All academic accommodations must be arranged through the ODS.

Course Schedule and Readings

Readings are listed below the dates when they are due. Although we meet three times a week, I have generally assigned readings to be due only on Mondays and Fridays. Wednesday's class will also touch on the reading(s) due that Monday. *You must bring the assigned reading(s) to class with you in hard copy or electronic copy. This includes bringing Monday's reading(s) to Wednesday's class.*

Readings marked with a * will be made available on Blackboard (unless a link is provided on the syllabus). Any changes to the course schedule or readings will be announced over email.

Week 1

August 26: Introduction

August 28: Why study world history?

*William H. McNeill, "Why Study History?" (1985): [https://www.historians.org/about-aha-and-membership/aha-history-and-archives/historical-archives/why-study-history-\(1985\)](https://www.historians.org/about-aha-and-membership/aha-history-and-archives/historical-archives/why-study-history-(1985))

Carter and Warren, *Forging the Modern World*, Introduction

August 30: How to analyze a primary source

In-class primary source reading

Unit 1: Early Modern Connections, or, the First Era of Globalization

Week 2

September 4: The World before 1492

Forging the Modern World, ch. 1

September 6: Primary source discussion

*Ibn Khaldun, *The Muqaddimah* (1377), selection

Zheng He (*Sources for Forging the Modern World*, 1.2)

Al-Umari (*Sources*, 1.4)

Week 3

September 9: Newly Connected Worlds

Forging the Modern World, ch. 2

September 11: The “New” World

September 13: Primary source discussion

*Juan Ginés de Sepúlveda, *Democrates Alter, Or, on the Just Causes for War against the Indians* (1544), selection: <http://www.columbia.edu/acis/ets/CCREAD/sepulved.htm>

*Bartolomé de las Casas, *A Brief Account of the Destruction of the Indies* (1550), selection: <http://www.americanypawp.com/reader/the-new-world/bartolome-de-las-casas-describes-the-exploitation-of-indigenous-peoples-1542/>

Week 4

September 16: Asian Empires

Forging the Modern World, ch. 3, 4

September 18: Problems of the Early Modern State

September 20: Primary source discussion

Seydi Ali Reis (*Sources*, 3.2)

Hugo Grotius (*Sources*, 2.5)

Niccolò Machiavelli (*Sources*, 3.1)

Week 5

September 23: Global Commodities

Forging the Modern World, ch. 5

September 25: Africa and the Trans-Atlantic Slave Trade

September 27: Primary source discussion

Afonso of Congo (*Sources*, 4.2)

*Walter Rodney, *How Europe Underdeveloped Africa* (1972), ch. 3

Paper 1 due

Unit 2: Slavery, Capitalism, and the Making of Modernity

Week 6

September 30: Societies with Slaves and Slave Societies

*Ira Berlin, *Many Thousands Gone* (1998), Introduction

October 2: Experiences of Slavery

October 4: Primary source discussion

*Olaudah Equiano, *The Interesting Narrative of the Life of Olaudah Equiano* (1789): <http://www.vgskole.net/prosjekt/slavrute/primary.htm> (read #3 and #6 only)

*Harriet Jacobs, *Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl* (1861), selections

Week 7

October 7: Capitalism and Slavery

Forging the Modern World, ch. 6

*Eric Williams, *Capitalism and Slavery* (1944), ch. 3

October 9: The Enlightenment and Its Limits

October 11: Primary source discussion

John Locke (*Sources*, 5.1)

US Declaration of Independence (*Sources*, 6.1)

Olympe de Gouges (*Sources*, 6.3)

Fall break, October 14

Week 8

October 15 (Tuesday): The Age of Revolution

No reading – study for midterm

October 16: **Midterm exam**

October 18: Primary source discussion

*Haitian Declaration of Independence (1804)

Toussaint Louverture (*Sources*, 6.4)

Simón Bolívar (*Sources*, 6.5)

Week 9

October 21: Liberalism

Forging the Modern World, ch. 7, 8

October 23: Industrialization in Global Context

October 25: Primary source discussion

*Mary Wollstonecraft, *A Vindication of the Rights of Woman* (1792), ch. 2

*Alexis de Tocqueville, *Democracy in America* (1835, 1840), selections

Writer's notebook due

Week 10

October 28: The Structure of Industrial Capitalism

*Eric Hobsbawm, *Age of Capital* (1975), ch. 3, 11–12

*Matthew Desmond, “In Order to Understand the Brutality of American Capitalism, You Have to Start on the Plantation” (2019):

<https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2019/08/14/magazine/slavery-capitalism.html>

October 30: The New Imperialism

November 1: Primary source discussion

*Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels, *The Communist Manifesto* (1848), selections

Zeng Guofan, Li Hongzhang, and Xue Fucheng (*Sources*, 8.6)

Paper 2 due

Unit 3: From Empires to Nations?

Week 11

November 4: Experiences of Empire

Forging the Modern World, ch. 9

November 6: The Birth of Mass Society
November 8: Primary source discussion
 Rudyard Kipling (*Sources*, 9.1)
 Fukuzawa Yukichi (*Sources*, 9.4)
 *Modern Girl around the World advertisements

Week 12

November 11: A Global Racial Order
 Forging the Modern World, ch. 10, 11
November 13: The Crisis of the Eurocentric Order
November 15: Primary source discussion
 *W. E. B. Du Bois, “The African Roots of War” (1915)
 *The Balfour Declaration (1917)
 Woodrow Wilson and Nguyen Ai Quoc (Ho Chi Minh) (*Sources*, 10.2)

Week 13

November 18: Decolonization
 Forging the Modern World, ch. 12
 Film: Göran Olsson, *Concerning Violence* (2014). Selections to be shown in class.
November 20: The Global Cold War
November 22: Primary source discussion
 *Aimé Césaire, *Discourse on Colonialism* (1955), excerpts
 Ding Ling (*Sources*, 11.4)

Week 14

November 25: Experiences of Postwar Politics
 Marjane Satrapi, *Persepolis: The Story of a Childhood* (2004), Introduction, 3–79

Thanksgiving recess, November 27–December 1

Week 15

December 2: After the Cold War
 Satrapi, *Persepolis*, 80–153
 Writer’s notebook due
December 4: Final Exam Review
December 6: The Contemporary World
 *Mike Davis, “Planet of Slums” (2004)
 Paper 3 due

December 9: Reading day – optional study session in class. **Take-home final exam distributed**
December 16: **Take-home final exam due**