

George Mason University
HIST 125: Introduction to World History
Fall Term 2020
Distance Learning Online

Course: Introduction to World History 125 (018)
Time: Flexible (Weekly Assignments)
Location: Blackboard
Instructor: Dr. Jessica Legnini
Office: By E-mail
Contact: jlegnini@gmu.edu

Course Description:

This course uses the theoretical framework of global history to survey our past. It will examine how societies around the world have been shaped, both culturally and politically, through interregional contact. The course will center specifically on the role of the “Silk Roads” as an important site of contact between Asia, Africa, Europe and eventually the Americas. It will examine how the trade route enabled the spread of religion, material goods and technologies, science, and imperialism, as well as more contemporary uses of the network by nations aiming to integrate economies and consolidate political power. By primarily 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 shapes political, social, and racial distinctions.

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 Readings:

There is no textbook for this class. All required readings are available on Blackboard.

Online Course Expectations

- Use time wisely, be organized, and be self-directed. Be willing to put in the needed time, read carefully, and be aware of deadlines.
- Due to the chronological nature of the course work must be completed on time. Students who fail to submit work on time will be unable to keep up with the course’s progression and continuity and, therefore, can expect their grade to suffer.
- 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 and weaken the value of a Mason degree. 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. <https://oai.gmu.edu/mason-honor-code/>

Disability Services

Under Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act, 1973, colleges are required by law to provide reasonable accommodations to students who they determine to have disabilities. GMU disability Services collaborates with students to provide reasonable accommodations that are individualized and based on documentation, functional limitations, and a collaborative assessment of needs. If you require accommodations contact Disability Services at: <https://ds.gmu.edu/> and for COVID-19 operations: <https://ds.gmu.edu/response-to-covid-19/>

NOTE: This course is asynchronous, so we DO NOT meet as a class on a specific day. You will complete weekly assignments and submit them by the due date.

Online Course Requirements:

There will be ONE mid-term written reflection for 20% of your grade. Weekly sets of questions concerning the readings and the material posted online (60%). The final assessment is worth (20%) and will be completed at home and submitted through Blackboard. Final 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 24	Thanksgiving Recess	November 25 -29
Labor Day	September 7	Last Day of Classes	December 5
Fall Break	October 12	Final Exam Due	December 12

Weekly Schedule

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

Week 1: Monday August 24th – 30th: Introduction, Course Overview, and Prehistory.

- The Earth at Night.
- Lecture: Migration and Early Civilization.
- Assigned Reading (A): "Where did Agriculture Begin?"
- Assigned Reading (B): "The Development of City-States."
- Primary Sources: Cave paintings and Venus Figurines, Images of Ancient Egypt, *The Story of Re*, Code of Hammurabi.
- **Answer and submit the Assignment Questions by 7pm, Monday August 31.**

Week 2: Monday August 31st – September 6th: Classical Civilizations and Religion.

- Lecture: Classical Civilizations.
- Assigned Reading (A): “Ashoka’s Moral Empire.”
- Assigned Reading (B): “The Legacy of the Silk Road.”
- Supplemental Reading: “Big Gods Came After the Rise of Civilizations.”
- Primary Sources: Classical Art, *The Analects*, “First Sermon,” and the *Bible*.
- **Answer and submit the Assignment Questions by 7pm, Tuesday September 8** (due date adjusted for Labor Day).

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

Week 3: September 8th – September 13th: Encounters and Conversions.

- Lecture: Post-Classical Overview.
- Assigned Reading (A): “Belief Systems Along the Silk Road.”
- Assigned Reading (B): “Origins of the Sunni/Shia Split.”
- Primary Sources: “In Defense of Buddhism,” Excerpts from the *Quran*, “Book of Matthew.”
- **Answer and submit the Assignment Questions by 7pm, Monday September 14.**

Week 4: September 14th – September 20th: Medieval Civilizations.

- Lecture: Europe, Vikings, Mongols.
- Examine Song Scroll.
- Assigned Reading (A): “Chinese Civil Service Exam.”
- Assigned Reading (B): “What Would Boccaccio Say About Covid-19?”
- Primary Sources: *An Oath of Homage and Fealty*, Sources from the Crusades, *Secret History of the Mongols*, Images of the Black Death.
- **Answer and submit the Assignment Questions by 7pm, Monday September 21st.**

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

Week 5: September 21st – September 27th: Overseas Expansion and Atlantic World Encounters.

- Lecture: Early-Modern Era Overview, Africa and the Americas, the Plantation.
- Assigned Reading (A): “How Slave Holders in the Caribbean Maintained Control.”
- Assigned Reading (B): “Is ‘Race’ Modern?”
- Primary Sources: Letter from Kongo, Columbus, *Letter to King Ferdinand*, *Aztec Account*, Olaudah Equiano, *The Middle Passage*.
- **Answer and submit the Assignment Questions by 7pm, Monday September 28th.**

Week 6: September 28th – October 4th: Reactions to the Rise of Europe.

- Lecture: Japan, China, Islam, and Russia.
- Assigned Reading (A): “The Great Aurangzeb is Everybody’s Least Favorite Mughal.”
- Assigned Reading (B): “Everyday Politics.”
- Primary Sources: Matteo Ricci, Akbar, Peter the Great.
- **Answer and submit the Assignment Questions by 7pm, Monday October 5th.**

Week 7: October 5th – October 11th: Mid-term Written Reflection **due by 7pm Tuesday October 13th**
(due date adjusted for Fall Break)

Module 4: Modern Era (1750-1900)

Week 8: October 13th – October 18th: Enlightenment and Revolution

- Lecture: Modern Era Overview.
- Assigned Reading (A): “How did Europe Become the Richest Part of the World?”
- Assigned Reading (B): “What We Can Learn from the French Revolution Today.”
- Primary Sources: 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*
- **Answer and submit the Assignment Questions by 7pm, Monday October 19th.**

Week 9: October 19th – October 25th: Capitalism, Liberalism, and Industrialization

- Lecture: Revolution and Reform.
- Assigned Reading: “How the Victorians Invented the Future for Us.”
- Watch: History of Capitalism and Marxism
- Primary Sources: “On Liberalism” John Stuart Mill, Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels, *The Communist Manifesto*, Excerpts from the *Sadler Report of the House of Commons*
- **Answer and submit the Assignment Questions by 7pm, Monday October 26th**

Week 10: October 26th – November 1st: Colonization, Westernization, and Nationalism

- Lecture: Imperialism in Asia and Africa.
- Assigned Reading (A): “Europeans Came to Asia not as Conquerors but as Customers.”
- Assigned Reading (B): “Belgium Wakes Up to its Bloody Colonial Past.”
- Primary Sources: Images from Japan, Mohandas K. Gandhi, from *Hind Swaraj*, Iwasaki Yataro, *Mitsubishi Letter to Employees*
- **Answer and submit the Assignment Questions by 7pm, Monday November 2nd.**

Module 5: Contemporary Era (1914-Now)

Week 11: November 2nd – November 8th: World War I and its Consequences

- Lecture: Contemporary Era Overview, World War I
- Assigned Reading (A): “The Russian Revolution.”
- Assigned Reading (B): “Balfour Declaration: The Divisive Legacy of 67 Words.”
- Primary Sources: Wilfred Owen, *Dulce et Decorum Est*, V. I. Lenin, *War and Revolution*, *Balfour Declaration*
- **Answer and submit the Assignment Questions by 7pm, Monday November 9th.**

Week 12: November 9th – November 15th: Economic Depression and World War II

- Lecture: Economic Depression and the Rise of Dictators, WWII.
- Assigned Reading (A): “The Lure of Fascism.”
- Assigned Reading (B): “Hiroshima.”
- Primary Sources: Mussolini, “What is Fascism?” and *Triumph of the Will*
- **Answer and submit the Assignment Questions by 7pm, Monday November 16th.**

Week 13: November 16th – November 22nd: Decolonization and the “Cold War”

- Lecture: The “Cold War” and Decolonization.
- Assigned Reading (A): “Partition of India.”
- Assigned Reading (B): “Collapse of the Soviet Union.”
- Primary Sources: South Africa: National Party's Colour Policy, 1948, India/Pakistan Partition Documents, *Editorial of the Liberation Army Daily*
- **Answer and submit the Assignment Questions by 7pm, Monday November 23rd.**

Week 14: November 23rd – November 29th NO CLASS: THANKSGIVING BREAK

Week 15: November 30th – December 5th: Globalization and the New Silk Roads

- Lecture: The 21st Century.
- Assigned Reading (A): “The End of the World of Nation-States May Be Upon Us.”
- Assigned Reading (B): “The Silk Road is Once More the Center of the World.”
- Primary Sources: *China Daily*, China's Belt and Road Initiative, Benjamin Barber, *Jihad vs. McWorld*.
- **Final Exam instructions made available.**
- **Answer and submit the Assignment Questions by 7pm, Saturday December 5th (due date adjusted for final week schedule).**

Week 16: Final assessment due via Blackboard by 7pm, Saturday December 12th.