

Introduction to World History

HIST 125-DLA

Fall Semester 2020

Sam Lebovic

Email is the best way to contact me: slebovic@gmu.edu.

Please note that, following Mason policy, I will only respond to gmu.edu email addresses.

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 online discussion about course materials

Course Requirements

Under normal circumstances, we would meet on campus twice a week to work through this material. Given the many ways that COVID-19 has disrupted our lives, it isn't possible to teach this material as usual. My goal in preparing this on-line course has been to approximate as best as possible the way the class was originally set-up, and to provide as much flexibility as possible for you all to complete the work given the disruptions to your schedules and lives that the current moment has caused.

The basic structure for the course is that there will be four basic elements each week: 1) I will record two short lectures to provide the context I would give you in class, alongside a required background reading 2) you will complete the assigned readings 3) you will discuss the readings with a small group of peers in on-line forums 4) I will post a short final lecture reacting to your online discussion of the documents and pointing out items or questions you may want to consider further.

This syllabus provides the clearest road-map of the work required and the deadlines for your assignments; please consult it regularly. On blackboard, the course is organized into weekly folders, which you can access by going to the green menu on the left-hand side of screen and clicking on "Weekly Folders: Learn Here" – within each folder you will find the lectures, class outlines, discussion prompts and readings you need to complete the work for that week.

To do well in this course, you will need to stay on top of all four elements – assessments will require you to draw from all of them. I appreciate that your schedules may change on short notice throughout the semester, and also that you may wish to engage in the material each week in a slightly different order depending on your preferred learning style. Apart from the assignment deadlines, posted below, the only weekly assignments with a deadline are the discussion posts. But while you can therefore adjust your work for this course to fit with your other commitments, I would encourage you to create a weekly schedule and follow it as closely as you can – if you fall behind and allow material to back-up, it will be very hard to catch up and there is a real risk you will fail the course.

If anything happens during the semester to interfere with your ability to complete the work of this course, please be in touch with me as soon as possible. With sufficient notice, I am almost always able to help strategize ways to get you back on top of the material.

1) Watching weekly lectures (posted by Friday at 6pm for the following week).

My lectures are designed to provide you with additional content as well as context for the readings. Please watch them and take notes. Lecture outlines will be posted as word documents when I post the lectures. They are designed to provide a broad overview of the 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 lectures and will not help you to make up missed classes.

Alongside the lectures, most weeks also require you to read some background material from the Marks' textbook. You will be expected to have completed these readings for the exams at the end of each module.

2) Participation (10% of final grade)

Each week, you will be responsible for posting twice to a discussion board to answer a question about the assigned reading. Before you post, you will therefore need to complete the reading assignment for the week; as you do so, please consider the question I will pose each week. There are two deadlines: 1) by Wednesday at 6pm, you will write your own answer to a question by creating a new thread on the discussion board 2) by Thursday at 6pm you will respond to at least one of your peer's initial answers (details about how to respond will be included in the discussion prompt I provide each week). Until you have posted your first response, you will not be able to see the posts of your peers. To make these discussion boards manageable, and to minimize the amount of posts you need to read, you have been randomly divided into groups of about 10-12 students.

By Friday at 6pm I will post a short lecture, responding to the discussion posts and wrapping up our discussion of the documents. (For those of you who have taken in-person classes, this will be similar to the common practice of having students divide into groups to discuss material for a time, and then come back together for a wrap-up session with the professor – this final lecture is my wrap-up).

The essays for this course will require you to answer similar questions about the primary sources as you will discuss on the discussion boards. Thoughtful engagement on the discussion boards will therefore help prepare you for the assignments; and the notes you create for yourself and with your peers will provide a collective resource that will help your group write more thoughtful and reflective essays.

The better you read the class materials, in other words, the better the conversation on the discussion boards; and the better the conversation, the better you will understand the material. 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.

You will earn a high participation grade by thoughtful engagement with discussion that is intended to increase our collective understanding of the texts.

3) Journal (20% of final grade) with 10 entries DUE Dec 7

Beginning with week 4, you will write a short journal entry each week. Please write the journal in a word document. 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 week 3, I will show you how to use scholarly databases to help you find your articles.

Including week 4, there are 12 weeks in which you can write a journal entry. You only need to write 10 entries, i.e., you can have a pass for any two weeks of your choice. (Please just note which two weeks when you submit your journal).

4) 4 Mini-exams (20% of final grade, combined) – Sep 16/17; Oct 8/9; Nov 8/9; Dec 3/4.

On four occasions we will have short, open-book mini-exams. The format for these mini-exams will be identical – there will be three short answer questions, 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.

You will have a 36-hour time window in which to answer these questions, which need to be submitted to me via email. If you are keeping up with the material each week, these tests should be relatively quick and could be completed in half an hour.

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

Answers will be submitted via blackboard.

Sample short questions:

- 1) What were two consequences of the Columbian exchange? Why were they 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.

- 5) **Paper 1 (5% of final grade) DUE on Sep 18**
- 6) **Paper 2 (15% of final grade) DUE on Oct 16**
- 7) **Paper 3 (20% of final grade) DUE on Dec 2**

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 submitted to me via email.

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

8) Final Take-Home Exam (15% of final grade) DUE Dec 11

The final for this course will be a take-home exam, issued on December 4. 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. The paper needs to be emailed to be (slebovic@gmu.edu) as a word doc by the due date.

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*, 4th edition, Rowman and Littlefield, 2020, 9781538127032

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>)

Extensions

If for any reason you will not be able to complete a mini-exam during the allotted time 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 an exam clashes with your schedule, speak to me well in advance.

Essays are due by email 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. If you have a valid reason, I am happy to discuss extensions with you, but request must be made in advance of the deadline.

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.

There is also a general discussion board for the entire course – “Questions and Issues” – where you can post general questions about the course requirements, course materials, etc.

Stop by during my **virtual office hours** on Thursdays from 4-5pm. No appointment necessary! Just log into our blackboard site, click “Course Tools,” then “Blackboard Collaborate Ultra” and then select “Course Room.” Please have your video and audio on. I will be waiting to answer any questions or discuss course material.

If you would like to set up a time for a private meeting to discuss anything related to the course or your studies, please just email me directly.

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.

Resources

- * For help with online learning, check out GMU Learning Services at this [link](#).
- * If you're struggling with mental health issues, reach out to [CAPS](#) – they offer a range of free help for students (including after-hours crisis services). For more resources focused on emotional and mental well-being, click on this [link](#).
- * Issues with technology? Check out the resources provided at this [link](#). If you can't find the answers there, you should reach out to the ITS Support Center for help (their contact information is [here](#)). Remember: completion of assignments is your responsibility and technological issues do not constitute an excuse.
- * Need assistance with writing assignments for this class? Make an appointment to work with a tutor online through the Writing Center (instructions for how to schedule a session are found [here](#)).

Course Schedule

Week 1 (Aug 24 – Aug 29)

Lectures:

- Why Study History?
- Introduction to Course and Expectations

Readings:

- Syllabus
- Marks, “Introduction”

Assignments:

- Discussion board post by 6pm Thursday, Aug 27

MODULE 1: EMPIRES AND INTER-IMPERIAL CONTACT

Week 2 (Aug 29-Sep 4)

Lectures:

- The World Before 1492
- Where was the center of the “civilized world”?
- Background Reading: Marks, pp.1-57.

Readings:

- Ibn Battuta, *Travels in Asia and Africa (1325-1354)*, excerpts
- “Zheng He's Inscription”

Assignments:

- Discussion board post by 6pm, Wednesday, Sep 2
- Discussion board response by 6pm, Thursday, Sep 3
- Remember to watch my response lecture

Week 3 (Sep 4 – Sep 11)

Lectures:

- The “New World”
- Rethinking “Conquest,” and its consequences
- How to Find Scholarly Resources
- Background Reading: Marks, pp.74-82
- Paper 1 Distributed

Readings:

- Sepulveda, “Just Causes of War Against the Indians” (1544)
- De Las Casas, “Apologetica historia de las Indias” (1550)

Assignments:

- Discussion board post by 6pm, Wednesday, Sep 9
- Discussion board response by 6pm, Thursday Sep 10
- Remember to watch my response lecture

Week 4 (Sep 11 – Sep 18)

Lectures:

- Imperial Expansion and State Formation
- The History of Gender and Sexuality
- Background Reading: Marks, pp.61-74, 82-101.

Readings:

- None

Assignments:

- Paper 1 due by Sep 18 at 6pm (including first journal entry)
- Mini-exam posted Sep 16 at 9am, Due Sep 17 at 9 pm.

MODULE 2: SLAVERY AND RIGHTS IN THE AGE OF EMPIRE

Week 5 (Sep 18-Sep 25)

Lectures:

- The Rise of the Transatlantic Slave Trade
- The Experience of Slavery
- Background Reading: Marks, pp.57-60

Readings:

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)

Assignments

- Discussion board post by 6pm, Wednesday Sep 23
- Discussion board response by 6pm, Thursday Sep 24
- Remember to watch my response lecture

Week 6 (Sep 25 – Oct 2)

Lectures:

- The Enlightenment and the Idea of Rights
- Racism
- Background Reading: Stuart Banner, *Possessing the Pacific: Land, Settlers, and Indigenous People from Australia to Alaska* (2007), 13-31
 - *Note*: the document on blackboard includes the whole chapter, but you only need to read to the end of the first paragraph on p.31.

Readings:

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

Assignments:

- Discussion board post by 6pm, Wednesday Sep 30
- Discussion board response by 6pm, Thursday Oct 1
- Remember to watch my response lecture

Week 7 (Oct 2 – Oct 9)**Lectures:**

- The Age of Revolution
- The Limits of Revolution
- Paper 2 distributed

Readings:

- 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)

Assignments:

- Discussion board post by 6pm, Wednesday, Oct 7
- Discussion board response by 6pm, Thursday, Oct 8
- Mini-Exam 2 – Post at 9am on Thursday Oct 8, due Friday at 9pm Oct 9
- Remember to watch my response lecture

MODULE 3: INDUSTRIAL REVOLUTION AND NEW IMPERIALISM**Week 8 (Oct 9 - Oct 16)****Lectures:**

- Industrial Revolution
- Time-Discipline and the Division of Labor
- Background Reading: Marks, ch.4

Readings:

- None

Assignments:

- Paper 2 Due by Friday, Oct 16 at 6pm

Week 9 (Oct 16-Oct 23)**Lectures:**

- Industrial Cores and Agricultural Peripheries
- New Imperialism
- Background Reading: Marks, ch.5

Readings:

- Fukuzawa Yukichi, "Good-bye Asia" (1885)

- William McKinley, “Decision to Occupy the Philippines” (1898)
- “Aguinaldo’s Case Against the United States,” *North American Review* (1899)

Assignments:

- Discussion board post by 6pm, Wednesday, Oct 21
- Discussion board response by 6pm, Thursday, Oct 22
- Remember to watch my response lecture

Week 10 (Oct 23-Oct 30)

Lectures:

- The Experience of Empire
- *Screening*: Namibia Genocide and the Second Reich

Readings:

- *Abina*

Assignments:

- Discussion board post by 6pm, Wednesday, Oct 28
- Discussion board response by 6pm, Thursday, Oct 29
- Remember to watch my response lecture

Week 11 (Oct 30-Nov 6)

Lectures:

- Modern Life and Mass Consumption
- The Crisis of Capitalism

Readings:

- 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.

Assignments:

- Discussion board post by 6pm, Wednesday, Nov 7
- Discussion board response by 6pm, Thursday, Nov 8
- Remember to watch my response lecture
- Mini-exam posted Thu Nov 8 at 9am, due Friday Nov 9 at 9pm

MODULE 4 – DECOLONIZATION AND GLOBALIZATION

Week 12 (Nov 6 – Nov 13)

Lectures:

- World War 1 and the Failure of Decolonization
- World War 2 and the Failure of Empire
- Background Reading: Marks, pp.175-188

Readings:

- 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)
- Ho Chi Minh, “Declaration of Independence of the Democratic Republic Of Vietnam” (1945)
- Aime Cesaire, *Discourse on Colonialism* (1955) - selections

Assignments:

- Discussion board post by 6pm, Wednesday, Nov 11
- Discussion board response by 6pm, Thursday, Nov 12
- Remember to watch my response lecture

Week 13 (Nov 13-Nov 20)**Lectures:**

- Decolonization in a Cold War World
- The Experience of Decolonization
- Background Reading: Marks, pp.188-213
- Paper 3 Distributed

Readings:

Satrapi, *Persepolis*

Assignments:

- Discussion board post by 6pm, Wednesday, Nov 18
- Discussion board response by 6pm, Thursday, Nov 19
- Remember to watch my response lecture

Week 14 (Nov 20-Nov 27)**Lectures:**

- Neoliberalism

Readings:

- Listen to “The Chicago Boys, Part 1 and 2” on NPR’s Planet Money
 - Part 1 available at
<https://www.npr.org/sections/money/2019/04/10/711918772/episode-905-the-chicago-boys-part-i>
 - Part 2 available at:
<https://www.npr.org/sections/money/2019/04/12/712817739/episode-906-the-chicago-boys-part-ii>

Assignments:

No discussion, no assignments – enjoy thanksgiving!

Week 15 (Nov 27-Dec 4)

Lectures:

- The End of the Cold War and the End of History?
- The Anthropocene
- Background Reading: Marks, pp.213-247.

Readings:

- Mikhail Gorbachev, "On Socialist Democracy" (1987)
- "Global Warming Report an "ear-splitting wake-up call," warns UN chief," *UN News*, October 8, 2018.

Assignments:

- Paper 3 Due, Wednesday Dec 2 at 6pm
- Mini-exam 4, distributed Thursday, Dec 3 at 9am, due Friday Dec 4 at 9pm

Week 16 (Dec 4-Dec 11)

Assignments:

- Final Exam posted Dec 4; Due by email to slebovic@gmu.edu at 6pm on Dec 11
- Journals Due Monday Dec 7 at 6pm