

George Mason University
Department of History and Art History

Spring 2023
Meeting Time: TR 9:00-10:15 AM
Classroom: Innovation 222
Office Hours: M 10:15-12:00, T 2-3, and by appt.

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HISTORY 125-002: INTRODUCTION TO WORLD HISTORY

We are never as steeped in history as when we pretend not to be, but if we stop pretending we may gain in understanding what we lose in false innocence. Naiveté is often an excuse for those who exercise power. For those upon whom that power is exercised, naiveté is always a mistake.

Michel Rolph-Trouillot, *Silencing the Past: Power and the Production of History*, 1995

COURSE DESCRIPTION

This class examines the forces, trends, relationships, and events that have shaped the modern world, from about 1300 to the present. We will touch on the particular histories of a variety of regions—East Asia, South Asia, Europe, the Middle East, Africa, Central America, South America, the Caribbean, and North America—but the overall theme of the class is less these particular histories than the creation and evolution of the global systems of trade and power relations that tied them all together. Through a variety of sources, we will explore and attempt to understand the ways in which these global systems were created, contested, and transformed over the course of the late medieval, early modern, and modern eras. The main themes of this history include trade and mercantile activity, colonialism and imperialism, industrialization and consumption, revolution and nationalism, and resistance and anti-colonialism. These are big concepts and broad themes, but we will also try to be attentive to the ways these processes shaped and were shaped by individual and local experiences.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

There are three categories of learning objectives for this class: (1) building content knowledge; (2) developing historical thinking and consciousness; and (3) practicing analytical skills and expression. In addition, this course fulfills the Western Civilization/World History requirement of the Mason Core.

Content Knowledge

- You will understand major events and chronologies in the making of the modern world.
- You will develop definitions and nuanced understandings of key concepts such as mercantilism, sovereignty, colonialism, imperialism, nationalism, industrialization, consumption, and anti-colonialism.

- You will be able to cite specific examples and explain historical developments that illuminate these concepts.
- You will gain broad familiarity with key developments and events in different regions of the world.
- You will develop a framework for understanding how the world is interconnected and how power relations shape and are shaped by those connections.

Historical Thinking and Consciousness

- You will develop concepts and practice habits of thought crucial to historical understanding, including what Thomas Andrews and Flannery Burke call the five Cs of history:
 - 1) understanding *change* over time
 - 2) the importance of *context* for understanding the meaning and significance of historical changes—things matter in relationship to other things
 - 3) the nature of historical *causality* (i.e., why did things happen, how do we build historically informed explanations of events or developments)
 - 4) the important role of *contingency* (i.e., things did not necessarily have to turn out the way they did)
 - 5) the irreducible *complexity* of history (usually, there's not a single cause for a particular change, but many overlapping and even conflicting causes).
- You will gain tools and concepts for understanding the ways in which institutions, identity, power, authority, and governance are shaped by these forces and located in history.
- You will gain the building blocks for a perspective of a world beyond your own personal location in order to understand other people, places and environments.

Analytical Skills and Expression

- You will practice reading and comprehending information from secondary sources and turning that information into knowledge by applying it to historical questions and analysis.
- You will learn the distinction between primary and secondary sources (this is sometimes trickier than it seems).
- You will learn to employ techniques and approaches used by historians to understand and interpret primary sources of various kinds (texts, images, film, music, e.g.).
- You will gain extensive practice in clearly and concisely expressing yourself in writing and speaking, focusing on two dimensions of expression: narration and argument. The first focuses on clearly describing events, ideas, or the content of sources; the second focuses on using and applying that material to answer historical questions, address historical debates, or explain historical developments.
- You will learn how to properly cite print and online material in your papers.

Mason Core

The Western Civilization/World History requirement includes five specific learning outcomes, all of which apply to this course and intersect with those outlined above:

- You will demonstrate familiarity with the major chronology of modern world history
- You will demonstrate the ability to narrate and explain long-term changes and continuities in world history.
- You will be able to identify, evaluate, and appropriately cite online and print resources.
- You 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.

- You will practice communicating effectively your understanding of patterns, process, and themes in the history of the modern world—through speech, writing, and the use of digital media.

REQUIRED TEXTS

The following books are required reading for this class, and are available for purchase at the GMU Barnes and Noble in the Johnson Center:

- Carter, James and Richard Warren. *Forging the Modern World: A History*. 3rd ed. New York: Oxford University Press, 2023.
- Satrapi, Marjane. *The Complete Persepolis*. New York: Pantheon, 2003, 2004. (This is a combined volume that includes both *Persepolis* and *Persepolis 2*, which were the English compilations and translations of four volumes, originally in French, published from 2000 to 2003.)

Additional required readings listed on the syllabus are available via Blackboard.

Other short readings not listed on the syllabus may be handed out in class or distributed electronically, and those will also be considered part of the required reading.

***** You should always bring a paper copy or some other method of referring to the reading in class *****

COURSE REQUIREMENTS AND GRADING

Class Attendance, Participation, and Preparation:

Your attendance and active participation are crucial to the success the class. Not coincidentally, participation is a significant portion of your grade. Obviously, if you are not in class, you are not participating, so attendance is necessary to fulfill this requirement for the class.

In lecture (usually Tuesdays), participation means being there on time, bringing appropriate materials to class (note taking materials, textbook and other readings for the week), listening carefully, taking notes, and engaging with whatever exercises, thought experiments, short writing, brainstorming, or questions are raised. Attending lecture should be an active learning experience, not just a passive one: you should be *thinking* about what is going on, digesting it, and developing your own questions and ideas in response.

In discussion (usually Thursdays), participation means being there on time, having done and thought about the reading, the previous lecture, and any discussion questions or other assignments given ahead of time. It also means actively participating—speaking in discussion, making relevant points that are based in the reading and other class material, engaging with other students' ideas thoughtfully and respectfully, and fully engaging with in-class exercises and writing.

Exercises & Activities:

Most weeks, we will do some kind of written exercise or other activity in class (usually in discussion on Thursdays). When these exercises are written, you will be asked to turn them in, and when they do not produce any formal writing, you will be asked to submit a brief self-assessment of the effort you put in, what you learned, and what you may still have questions about. These are counted as credit/no credit rather than formally graded, so the most important thing for this component of the work for the class is simply being present and doing the work.

Quizzes

Quizzes on the reading or other material are designed to encourage and reward attention to readings and lecture, as well as to help with retention. The exact number of quizzes will vary depending on how much it seems necessary to remind everyone to do the reading.

Short Papers:

You will write three short (about 600 words, or roughly 2 double-spaced pages) papers based on the course materials, one in the first half of the semester and two in the second half of the semester. *Details of these assignments will be distributed in class.*

Midterm:

There will be a midterm exam in class on Tuesday, March 7. The midterm will consist of identifications and an essay question.

Final Exam:

There will be a final exam on Thursday, May 11 from 7:30 am to 10:15 am. The final exam will consist of a section of identifications from the second half of the semester, one essay on the second half of the semester, and one comprehensive essay that covers the whole semester.

Grading:

Class Participation	15%
Exercises & Activities	15%
Short Papers & Quizzes	30%
Midterm	20%
Final	20%

IN-CLASS BEHAVIOR

Behaviors such as frequent tardiness, leaving early, packing up to leave before class is over, sleeping, eating, talking when others are speaking, texting, checking email, wearing headphones/earbuds, using social media, and doing work for other classes have a strong negative effect on your own learning as well as on your classmates' ability to concentrate in class. Please make the effort to respect the class and your classmates—avoid or minimize disruption and distraction and help create an engaged, positive environment in class!

Laptop or other device use should be restricted to things directly relevant to class—primarily note-taking or consulting course readings or other online course resources. I reserve the right

to request that people close laptops and/or shut down/put away other devices if they become a distraction or if in-class activity would benefit from it.

DUE DATES AND LATE WORK

All assignments are officially due at the time specified in the assignment. Meeting these due dates is important for the pacing of the class, for student interaction, and for the way in which assignments are designed to build upon one another.

That said, I also recognize the complexity of working and learning in busy circumstances. Work that is turned in up to a week after its due date will be accepted with no questions asked and a 5% penalty. If you need more time than that, please contact me (rscully@gmu.edu) in order to make a plan.

Extensions without penalty can be granted in appropriate circumstances if they are requested at least a day ahead of time.

My goal is to make sure that you are able to complete the required work and get as much as possible out of the class, but that requires clear communication and planning in the event of major challenges.

IMPORTANT: In order to be counted and graded, all work besides the final exam must be turned in by the end of reading period (currently scheduled as Tuesday, May 9) unless you have contacted me and we have agreed in writing (email counts) on another specific plan.

In general, if you have any kind of problem that interferes with your work for the class, please consult with me as soon as possible.

HONOR CODE STATEMENT

All work in the course is governed by the George Mason University honor code: *To promote a stronger sense of mutual responsibility, respect, trust, and fairness among all members of the George Mason University community and with the desire for greater academic and personal achievement, we, the student members of the university community, have set forth this honor code: **Student members of the George Mason University community pledge not to cheat, plagiarize, steal, or lie in matters related to academic work.***

More information can be found at the GMU [Office of Academic Integrity](#).

OTHER POLICIES AND IMPORTANT INFORMATION

Administrative Dates (this is up-to-date and correct at time of completion of this syllabus; please double check the semester calendar on the Registrar's website)

Last day to add classes: Monday, January 30

Last day to drop with full tuition refund: Monday, February 6

Final drop deadline (50% tuition refund): Monday, February 13

Unrestricted withdrawal period (no refund): Tuesday, February 14 to Monday, February 27

Selective withdrawal period (no refund): Tuesday, February 28 to Monday, April 3

Disabilities

If you are a student with a disability and you need academic accommodations, please see me and contact the Office of Disability Services (ods.gmu.edu) at (703) 993-2474. All academic accommodations must be arranged through that office.

GMU Email Accounts

Students must use their Mason email accounts to receive important University information, including messages related to this class.

Useful Resources

Writing Center (writingcenter.gmu.edu): Johnson Center, Room 227E, (703) 993-1200, wcenter@gmu.edu.

Counseling and Psychological Services (caps.gmu.edu): SUB I, Room 3129, (703) 993-2380.

University Catalog: catalog.gmu.edu.

Other university policies: universitypolicy.gmu.edu.

SCHEDULE OF CLASSES

NOTE: this schedule is subject to change due to a variety of possible factors—weather-related cancellations, illness, class interests, current events or new information, and more. Any changes will be announced in class, via email, and on Blackboard. Please make sure to keep informed about any changes.

WEEK ONE: INTRODUCTION

T, Jan. 24: Thinking about the World, Thinking about History: Thinking about World History

R, Jan. 26: What is World History, and Why?

Reading

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

WEEK TWO: DIMENSIONS OF THE FIFTEENTH-CENTURY WORLD

T, Jan. 31: The Disruption and Reconstruction of the Medieval World System

Reading

- Carter and Warren, *Forging the Modern World*, ch. 1.

R, Feb. 2: The World in the Fifteenth Century

Reading

- Ma Huan, “On Calicut, India” (1433).
- Journal of the First Voyage of Vasco da Gama (1498).

WEEK THREE: EUROPEAN CONQUEST OF THE AMERICAS

T, Feb. 7: Motives of Discovery and the Columbian Exchange

Reading

- Carter and Warren, *Forging the Modern World*, ch. 2.

R, Feb. 9: The Meanings of Conquest

Reading

- Requerimiento (1510/1513)
- Bartolomé de las Casas, “The Devastation of the Indies” (1555).

WEEK FOUR: THE EARLY MODERN GLOBAL ECONOMY

T, Feb. 14: Sugar, Slaves, Textiles, and Silver

Reading

- Carter and Warren, *Forging the Modern World*, pp. 77-84, 90-99 (parts of ch. 3), and all of ch. 4.

R, Feb. 16: The Transatlantic Slave Trade

Reading

- Thomas Phillips, “A Journal of a Voyage Made in the *Hannibal*” (1693-4).

WEEK FIVE: THE CHALLENGES OF EMPIRE**T, Feb. 21:** Colonialism and “World War Zero”**Reading**

- Carter and Warren, *Forging the Modern World*, ch. 5.

R, Feb. 23: Authority and Sovereignty in an Age of Empires**WEEK SIX: THE AGE OF ATLANTIC REVOLUTIONS****T, Feb. 28:** Independence Movements in the Atlantic World**Reading**

- Carter and Warren, *Forging the Modern World*, ch 6.

R, Mar. 2: Contesting the Limits of Liberty**Reading**

- French Declaration of the Rights of Man and Citizen (1789).
- Olympe de Gouges, French Declaration of Rights for Women (1791).
- Haitian Declaration of Independence (1804)
- Haitian Constitution (1805)

WEEK SEVEN: MIDTERM, INDUSTRIALIZATION**T, Mar. 7:** Midterm Examination**R, Mar. 9:** Industrial Revolution**Reading**

- Carter and Warren, *Forging the Modern World*, ch. 7 and pp. 215-224, 227-230 (part of ch. 8).

WEEK EIGHT: SPRING BREAK (Monday, Mar. 13 to Sunday, Mar. 19)**WEEK NINE: IMPERIALISM & NATIONALISM RESHAPE GLOBAL POWER RELATIONS****T, Mar. 21:** Nationalism and Imperialism, 1870-1900**R, Mar. 23:** Modernization, Imperialism, and History**Reading**

- Carter and Warren, *Forging the Modern World*, pp. 231-242 (the end of ch. 8), and pp. 245-257 (the beginning of ch. 9).

WEEK TEN: WESTERNIZATION AND ITS DISCONTENTS**T, Mar. 28:** Trouble in the Global System: Anti-Imperialism, Inequality, and the Rise of Japan, 1895-1945**Reading**

- Carter and Warren, *Forging the Modern World*, pp. 224-226 (part of ch. 8), pp. 257-276 (the rest of ch. 9).

R, Mar. 30: Anti-Imperialist Westernization?

- Fukuzawa Yukichi, “Good-bye Asia” (1885).
- Images from Japan: Views of Westernization (late nineteenth century).

WEEK ELEVEN: MODERNITY, NATIONALISM, AND WORLD WAR

T, Apr. 4: Nations, States, and Empires in the Era of the First World War

Reading

- Carter and Warren, *Forging the Modern World*, ch. 10.
- [Wilfred Owen, “Dulce et Decorum Est” \(1917-18\).](#)

R, Apr. 6: Two Outcomes of World War I: The Soviet Union and the League of Nations

Reading

- V.I. Lenin, “War and Revolution” (1917).
- Article 22 of the Covenant of the League of Nations (1919).
- Syrian Congress Memorandum (1919).

WEEK TWELVE: DEPRESSION, TOTALITARIANISM, AND WAR

T, Apr. 11: The Rise of the United States and the Coming of World War II

Reading

- Carter and Warren, *Forging the Modern World*, ch. 11.

R, Apr. 13: Total War and the Atomic Bomb: Towards the Cold War

Reading

- President Truman’s Announcement of the Dropping of an Atomic Bomb on Hiroshima (1945).
- Akihiro Takahashi, “Memory of Hiroshima” (1945/1986).

WEEK THIRTEEN: THE COLD WAR

T, Apr. 18: The Cold War’s Hot Spots

Reading

- Carter and Warren, *Forging the Modern World*, ch. 12.

R, Apr. 20: Colonialism, Oil, and the Cold War: Iran

Reading

- Satrapi, *The Complete Persepolis*, Introduction and pp. 3-71.

WEEK FOURTEEN: LIVING THROUGH REVOLUTION

T, Apr. 25: The Iranian Revolution

Reading

- Satrapi, *The Complete Persepolis*, 72-206.

R, Apr. 27: Diaspora

Reading

- Satrapi, *The Complete Persepolis* 206-341.

WEEK FIFTEEN: MAKING THE TWENTY-FIRST CENTURY

T, May 2: The End of History and Other Misconceptions

Reading

- Carter and Warren, *Forging the Modern World*, ch. 13 & Epilogue.

R, May 4: Using History to Think About the Present

READING PERIOD: Monday, May 8 to Tuesday, May 9.

All remaining work from the semester (aside from the Final) must be turned in by the end of Tuesday, May 9, unless I have agreed to specific alternate plans.

FINAL EXAM: 7:30-10:15 am, Thursday, May 11.