

HIST 125 (DL1): Introduction to World History

Instructor:

Brian Platt, PhD

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Office hours: Tuesdays and Thursdays, 10:30-11:30, and by appointment

COURSE DESCRIPTION

In this course we explore the sweeping historical changes that created today's world. Beginning around 1250, we trace key processes reshaping the politics, cultures, & economies of various regions. While Europe & the United States are part of our focus, we primarily consider Africa, Asia, Latin America, & the Middle East. Each of these geographic regions became enmeshed in a global system affected by religious transformations, commercial activity, industrial growth and imperialism. 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 the last 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
- Become familiar with the complexity of human experience in different times and places.
- Learn to analyze primary and secondary sources of various kinds and using these sources as evidence to support interpretations of historical events (Mason Core Learning Outcome 2)
- Write analytic essays that present original and critical thinking in a clear, coherent and sustained argument.
- Apply historical knowledge and historical thinking to contemporary global issues (Mason Core Learning Outcome 3)

WEEKLY COURSE STRUCTURE

By Monday morning there will be one or two short lectures (15-30 minutes) available to you on the Blackboard course site. Those lectures, along with the required readings for that week, will be found in weekly folders on the site. These lectures and readings will provide the content for the course. All the assignments—the quizzes, papers, journal and discussion board postings—will be based on the lectures and the readings. **You should complete the readings and watch the lectures each week by Wednesday at noon.**

After completing the readings and watching the lectures, you will be responsible for posting **twice** to a discussion board to answer a question about the assigned readings and lectures. In the first post, **by Wednesday at 6:00 p.m.** you will write your own answer to a question by creating a new thread on the discussion board. In your second post, **by Thursday at 6:00 p.m.** you will respond to at least one of your peer's initial answers.

By Friday at 6:00 p.m. I will post a short lecture in which I will give feedback to you, collectively, about your discussion posts and tie together the key points from the material for that week. That lecture will

conclude the weekly rhythm of work. Watch the lecture over the weekend, and then await the next lecture that will come on Monday (though depending on your schedule, you might want to get started on the next week's readings over the weekend).

There is one more part of the weekly rhythm of work in this class: While you are doing the readings and watching the lectures for this class, pay attention for something—anything—that interests you personally. Make note of it, and then write about it very briefly in your **journal**. You must start keeping the journal in week 3, and during the semester you must submit a total of eleven journal entries. This means that you should plan on doing a journal entry every week, but you will be able to take one week off.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS & GRADING

Participation: 40%

The participation grade will be based on the quality of your weekly discussion board posts. The posts will be in response to a question that I pose on each week's discussion board. You must submit **two posts** per week: one by Wednesday at 6:00 p.m., and the second by Thursday at 6:00 p.m. In the first post, you will write your own answer to a question by creating a new thread on that week's discussion board. In the second post, you will respond to at least one of your peer's initial answers. You will not be able to see the posts of your peers until you have posted your first response. 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 8-10 students. Any missed posts will reduce your participation grade.

As part of your discussion grade, you must also come to my office hours at least once during the semester. [Here](#) is the link to the office hours sign-up sheet. The office hours are TR 10:30-11:30. On Tuesday the office hours will be online (Blackboard Collaborate Ultra), and on Thursday they'll be in person. (I'd prefer you come in person, if it's not too much of an inconvenience for you).

Journal: 15%

While you are doing the readings and watching the lectures for this class, pay attention for something—anything—that interests you personally. Make note of it, and then write about it very briefly in your **journal**. Your journal entries will be very short. They should consist of no more than 3-4 sentences, in which you 1) explain what it is that interests you; 2) explain why it interests you; 3) find an article from Mason library that would help you learn more about that issue, and then include the full citation of that article in your journal entry. I do not expect you to *read* the article; I just want you to find one. For help in using the Mason Library website to find articles, watch [these](#) videos. (The first and second videos are most helpful for this exercise)

You must start keeping the journal in week 3, and during the semester you must submit a total of eleven journal entries. This means that you should plan on doing a journal entry every week, but you will be able to take one week off.

Midterm and Final Exams (15% each)

There are four modules in this course. At the end of the first two modules will be the midterm exam, and at the end of the last four modules will be the final exam. The exams will be short and open-book, based only on material we have covered in class. They will require you to write short answers to questions about key ideas or developments in world history that we have addressed in the course. You should prepare for the exams by reviewing your notes on the lectures and readings.

You will have only a relatively short time window in which to complete the exams. **They will be posted on Thursday at 9:00 and will be due on Friday at 12:00 p.m. (noon).** If you are keeping up with the material and taking good notes, the quizzes should take not take more than a few hours. The exams will be posted on Blackboard, and you will submit your completed exams through Blackboard.

Persepolis Paper: 15%

The paper will ask you to analyze the text of the book and connect it to themes in the course. I will post the question and more detailed instructions in advance of the paper. Papers will be submitted via Blackboard.

COURSE POLICIES

a) Late policy: All students are responsible for knowing and adhering to the deadlines for course assignments. Late work will be penalized **one full letter grade per day (including weekends & holidays)**. The only exceptions will be when you have a documented illness or receive explicit, advance permission from your instructor. If you anticipate a problem in completing or submitting your work on time, you must contact the instructor in a timely manner. If you do not hear back from your instructor, you should assume that your work is due on the original date. Regardless of whether or not you have been granted an extension, you must contact your instructor for how to submit late work.

b) Plagiarism and cheating: Don't do it. It's usually easy to spot and can result in expulsion from the University and/or loss of your degree. Plagiarism means using the exact words, opinions, or factual information from another source without giving that source credit. Writers give credit through the use of accepted documentation styles, such as parenthetical citation, footnotes, or endnotes. A simple listing of books, articles, and websites is not sufficient.

Student writers are often confused as to what should be cited. Some think that only direct quotations need to be credited; this is incorrect. While direct quotations do need citations, so do paraphrases and summaries of opinions or factual information formerly unknown to the writers or which the writers did not discover themselves. Exceptions to this rule include factual information which can be obtained from a variety of sources—what has been called common knowledge—or the writers' own insights or findings from their own field research. What constitutes common knowledge can sometimes be precarious; what is common knowledge for one audience may be so for another. If you have any questions about what constitutes plagiarism, or about when or how to properly cite a source, ask me! For more information see this very helpful [website](#).

c) Academic accommodations. If you are a student who has a documented condition that warrants academic accommodations, please let me know. All academic accommodations must be arranged through the Office of Disability Services. (<http://ods.gmu.edu/>)

d) Electronic communication. I am best reached by email (see address above). Note: I usually check email during normal business hours, namely M-F, 8 am-5pm. Please allow 24-48 hours for a reply to an email request or inquiry (excluding weekends). Be sure to note your course number in your email

subject line and include both your first and last name in your signature. For general advice on the best way to communicate via email, see: <http://mleddy.blogspot.com/2005/01/how-to-e-mail-professor.html>

Please visit me during my **office hours** on Tuesdays and Thursdays, 10:30-11:30 a.m. Indeed, I expect every student to visit me during my office hours at some point during the first 8 weeks of the semester. This visit will contribute toward your discussion grade. We will schedule your visit in 15-minute blocks; please go to [this Google Sheets page](#) and enter your name in the date/time you prefer (also please indicate in parentheses, after your name, which class you're in (125). The earlier you sign up for a slot, the more options you'll have. My Tuesday office hours will be virtual, and my Thursday office hours will be in person (Horizon Hall, room 3212). For the virtual office hours on Tuesday, just log into our course blackboard site and click on the "Blackboard Collaborate Ultra for Office Hours" (on the left-hand menu) and then select "Course Room." Please have your video and audio on. I will be waiting to answer any questions or discuss course material.

RESOURCES

Academic Advising for CHSS students: <https://academicaffairs.chss.gmu.edu/undergraduate-students>

Advising for History majors & minors. <https://historyarthistory.gmu.edu/undergraduate/welcome>

Career Services: For networking, mentors, and assistance applying for jobs. SUB 1 Room 3400, 703-993-2370, careers@gmu.edu, <https://careers.gmu.edu/>

Chosen Name & Pronoun Policy: For information on how to update your chosen name and pronouns. <https://registrar.gmu.edu/updating-chosen-name-pronouns/>

Counseling and Psychological Services: For free counseling. SUB I Room 3129, 703-993-2380, <http://caps.gmu.edu>

COVID-19 Safe Return to Campus: <https://www2.gmu.edu/coronavirus>

Disability Services: <http://ods.gmu.edu>

Financial Well-Being: Assistance understanding your finances and financial aid. <https://ssac.gmu.edu/fwb/>

Free speech information: <https://campusclimate.gmu.edu/1415-2/> and <https://www.gmu.edu/about-mason/university-policy/free-speech-mason>

Learning Services: Free coaching & academic skills workshops. <https://learningservices.gmu.edu/>

Library Info Guides: <http://infoguides.gmu.edu/>

Mason Alerts: Sign up at <https://ready.gmu.edu/masonalert/> for alerts related to emergencies and closings.

Office of Academic Integrity: <https://oai.gmu.edu/>

Patriot Pantry: For free food assistance or to make donations. <https://ssac.gmu.edu/patriot-pantry/> or email pantry@gmu.edu to make a private appointment to use the pantry.

Patriot Web: For registration, transcripts, and degree evaluations. <https://patriotweb.gmu.edu/>

Stay Mason Emergency Assistance Fund: For degree-seeking students in acute financial distress who are at risk of dropping out. NOTE: The application process takes a while, and funds are limited. But, it's worth a try! <https://ulife.gmu.edu/forms/stay-mason-student-support-fund-application/>

Student Support & Advocacy Center: For health, well-being, and support. SUB I Suite 3200, 703-993-3686, <https://ssac.gmu.edu/>

University Policies: All members of the Mason community are responsible for knowing and following established policies.

- The Catalog, <http://catalog.gmu.edu>

- University Policies <http://universitypolicy.gmu.edu/>
- CHSS Policies <https://academicaffairs.chss.gmu.edu/ugradpolicies>

Writing Center: Multiple locations, 703-993-1200, <http://writingcenter.gmu.edu>

FINAL NOTE: This syllabus is subject to revision as the semester proceeds. Announcements of changes will be made online and during class meetings. Students are responsible for being aware of any changes.

REQUIRED TEXTS

1. 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

2. Marjane Satrapi, *Persepolis: The Story of a Childhood*, 9780375714573

Both 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 either on the internet or as pdfs on the Blackboard course site.

COURSE SCHEDULE

Week 1 (Aug. 21-25): Introduction

Lectures:

- Introduction to Course
- Feedback Lecture (Posted by Friday at 6:00)

Readings:

- Syllabus
- Peter N. Stearns, "Why Study History?," available online [here](#).

Assignments:

- Discussion board post by 6:00 p.m., Wednesday, Aug. 23
- Discussion board response by 6:00 p.m., Thursday, Aug. 24

Week 2 (Aug. 28-Sept. 1): Where are we now?

Lectures:

- Globalization and the Post-9/11 World
- Feedback Lecture (posted by Friday at 6:00)

Readings:

- "[The World's Losers are Revolting](#)"
- "[Globalization and Its Discontents](#)"

- [“What do the Brexit Movement and Donald Trump Have in Common?”](#)

Assignments:

- Discussion board post by 6:00 p.m., Wednesday, Aug. 30
- Discussion board response by 6:00 p.m., Thursday, Aug. 31

MODULE 1: EMPIRES AND INTER-IMPERIAL CONTACT**Week 3 (Sept. 4-8)****Lectures:**

- The World Before 1492
- Where was the center of the “civilized world”?
- Feedback Lecture (posted by Friday at 6:00)

Readings:

- Ibn Battuta, *Travels in Asia and Africa (1325-1354)*, excerpts
- “Zheng He's Inscription”
- Marks, pp.1-57

Assignments:

- Discussion board post by 6:00 p.m., Wednesday, Sept. 6
- Discussion board response by 6:00 p.m., Thursday, Sept. 7
- Journal entry, posted by 6:00 p.m., Friday, Sept. 18

Week 4 (Sept. 11-15)**Lectures:**

- Motives of Discovery and Conquest
- The Columbian Exchange and its consequences
- Journal entries/How to Use the Library
- Feedback Lecture (by Friday at 6:00)

Readings:

- Marks, pp.74-82
- Sepulveda, “Just Causes of War Against the Indians” (1544)
- De Las Casas, “Apologetica historia de las Indias” (1550)

Assignments:

- Discussion board post by 6:00 p.m., Wednesday, Sept. 13
- Discussion board response by 6:00 p.m., Thursday, Sept. 14
- Journal entry, posted by 6:00 p.m., Friday, Sept. 15

Week 5 (Sept. 18-22) – NEED NEW DISCUSSION BOARD POST!

Lectures:

- Empires and states
- Feedback Lecture (by Friday at 6:00)

Readings:

- Marks, pp.61-74, 82-85

Assignments:

- Discussion board post by 6:00 p.m., Wednesday, Sept. 20
- Discussion board response by 6:00 p.m., Thursday, Sept. 21
- Journal Entry, by 6:00 p.m., Friday, Sept. 22

MODULE 2: SLAVERY AND RIGHTS**Week 6 (Sept. 25-29)****Lectures:**

- The Rise of the Transatlantic Slave Trade
- The Experience of Slavery
- Feedback lecture (by Friday at 6:00)

Readings:

- Marks, pp. 57-60
- Equiano, Interesting Narrative
- Jacobs, Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl
- Alpers, "Story of Swema"

Assignments

- Discussion board post by 6:00 p.m., Wednesday, Sept. 27
- Discussion board response by 6:00 p.m., Thursday, Sept. 28
- Journal Entry, by 6:00 p.m., Friday, Sept. 29

Week 7 (Oct. 2-6)**Lectures:**

- Mercantilism and the growth of European empires
- The emergence of Enlightenment ideals
- Feedback lecture (by Friday at 6:00)

Readings:

- Marks, pp. 91-101
- Nicholas Hudson, "From 'Nation' to 'Race': The Origin of Racial Classification in Eighteenth-Century Thought," *Eighteenth-Century Studies*, vol. 29, No. 3 (Spring 1996), pp. 247-264.
- John Locke, "Of Property," Chapter 5 of *The Second Treatise of Government* (1690)

Assignments:

- Discussion board post by 6:00 p.m., Wednesday, Oct. 4
- Discussion board response by 6:00 p.m., Thursday, Oct. 5
- Journal Entry, by 6:00 p.m., Friday, Oct. 6

Week 8 (Oct. 9-13)**Lectures:**

- Atlantic Revolutions
- The Haitian Revolution
- Feedback lecture (by Friday at 6:00)

Readings:

- American Declaration of Independence, 1776
- Olympia De Gouges, *Declaration of the Rights of Women* (1791)
- Haitian Declaration of Independence (1803)

Assignments:

- Midterm exam posted Friday, Oct. 13 at 9:00 a.m, due Oct. 16 at noon
- Journal Entry, by 6:00 p.m., Friday, Oct. 13

MODULE 3: INDUSTRIAL REVOLUTION AND NEW IMPERIALISM**Week 9 (Oct. 16-20)****Lectures:**

- Industrial Revolution
- Opium Wars
- Feedback lecture (by Friday at 6:00)

Readings:

- Marks, ch.4

Assignments:

- Discussion board post by 6:00 p.m., Wednesday, Oct. 18
- Discussion board response by 6:00 p.m., Thursday, Oct. 19
- Journal Entry, by 6:00 p.m., Friday, Oct. 20

Week 10 (Oct. 23-27)**Lectures:**

- New Imperialism, pts. 1 and 2
- Feedback lecture (by Friday at 6:00)

Readings:

- Marks, ch.5
- Lugard, Rise of our East African Empire, 1893
- Jules Ferry, Speech, 1884
- Albert Beveridge, The March of the Flag, 1898

Assignments:

- Discussion board post by 6:00 p.m., Wednesday, Oct. 25
- Discussion board response by 6:00 p.m., Thursday, Oct. 26
- Journal Entry, by 6:00 p.m., Friday, Oct. 27

Week 11 (Oct. 30-Nov. 3)**Lectures:**

- The Rise of the U.S. as a World Power, pts. 1 and 2
- Feedback lecture (by Friday at 6:00)

Readings:

- John L. O'Sullivan, "The Great Nation of Futurity"
- John L. O'Sullivan, "Annexation"

Assignments:

- Discussion board post by 6pm, Wednesday, Nov. 1
- Discussion board response by 6pm, Thursday, Nov. 2
- Journal Entry, by 6:00 p.m., Friday, Nov. 3

Week 12 (Nov. 6-10)**Lectures:**

- Non-Western modernization and empire, pts. 1 and 2
- *Screening*: Namibia Genocide and the Second Reich
- No discussion board, so no feedback lecture

Readings:

- Fukuzawa Yukichi, "Leaving Asia"
- "The Imperial Rescript on Education, 1890"
- "Okakura Kakuzō: Aesthetic Pan-Asianism"

Assignments:

- Discussion board post by 6pm, Wednesday, Nov. 8
- Discussion board response by 6pm, Thursday, Nov. 9
- Journal Entry, by 6:00 p.m., Friday, Nov. 10

MODULE 4 – DECOLONIZATION AND GLOBALIZATION

Week 13 (Nov. 13-17)**Lectures:**

- Great Depression and World War Two
- Independence Movements
- Feedback lecture (by Friday at 6:00)

Readings:

- Marks, pp.180-195
- Vietnamese Declaration of Independence
- Nkrumah, "I Speak of Freedom"
- Konoe, "We Must Do Away with Economic Imperialism"

Assignments:

- Discussion board post by 6:00 p.m., Wednesday, Nov. 15
- Discussion board response by 6:00 p.m., Thursday, Nov. 16
- Journal Entry, by 6:00 p.m., Friday, Nov. 17

Week 14 (Nov. 21-25)**Lectures:**

- The Global Cold War
- Decolonization and Iran

Readings:

- *Persepolis*

Assignments:

- Start planning for *Persepolis* paper (**due Tuesday, Nov. 28, at noon.**)

Week 15 (Nov. 27-Dec. 1) – NEW DISCUSSION BOARD**Lectures:**

- The Economy and the Environment since WWII
- Globalization and the post-9/11 World

Readings:

- Marks, pp.195-247.
- "Global Warming Report an "ear-splitting wake-up call," warns UN chief," *UN News*, October 8, 2018

Assignments:

- *Persepolis* paper due Tuesday, Nov. 28, at noon
- Discussion board post by 6:00 p.m., Wednesday, Nov. 29

- Discussion board response by 6:00 p.m., Thursday, Nov. 30
- Journal Entry, by 6:00, Friday, Dec. 1

Final Exam posted Dec. 1; Due by Dec. 4 at noon