

George Mason University
HIST 125: Introduction to World History
Fall Term 2023

Course: Introduction to World History 125 (015)
Time: Monday 7.20pm – 10pm
Location: Sandbridge Hall 107
Instructor: Dr. Jessica Legnini
Office Hours: By Appointment
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 are shaped, 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. It will also examine 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. An open-access online textbook supplement can be accessed here: <https://openstax.org/details/books/world-history-volume-2>

Course Expectations:

- **This is an in-person class and therefore you MUST attend every class.** If you have to miss a class let me know ahead of time by email.
- A fundamental skill you will learn in this class is how to read at the college level. **Weekly readings are between 20 and 50 pages.** Budget your time appropriately.
- 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. **Be aware of deadlines.**

- 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/> **All assignments are submitted on Blackboard and will be run through SafeAssign antiplagiarism software.**

Please remember that **Chatbot is a form of academic dishonesty** if you are passing off what it wrote as your own work. **SafeAssign picks up AI generated content.** If you are having trouble answering the weekly questions let me know so I can help you.

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/> .

Course Requirements:

There will be **ONE** mid-term exam (70pts - 20% of your grade). **WEEKLY** sets of questions concerning assigned readings (140pts – 40% of your grade). **ONE** final exam worth 70pts – 20% of your grade. In-class activities count as 70 pts (20%) of your grade. Grades will be given according to the following grading scale:

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|-------------|------------|-------------|------------|----------|
| 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 | |

***** Class review materials will be made available 48 hours after each class.**

Important Dates:

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|--------------------------------|---|
| Class Begins | Monday August 21st |
| Labor Day (No Class) | Monday September 4th |
| Last Day to Drop w/full refund | Monday September 5 th |
| Fall Break | Monday October 9 th (Class meets Tuesday Oct 10th - Tuesday classes do not meet) |
| Thanksgiving Recess | Wednesday Nov. 22 nd – Sunday Nov. 26th |
| Last Day of Class | Monday Nov. 27th |
| Reading Day | Monday December 4th |
| Final Exam | Monday December 11th (7.30pm – 10.15pm) |

Weekly Schedule

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

Week 1: Monday August 21st: Introduction, Course Overview, Prehistory, and Classical Civilizations.

- The Earth at Night.
- Lecture: Migration, Early Civilization, and Classical Civilizations.
- How to Analyze a Primary Source.
- Primary Source Analysis: Cave paintings and Venus Figurines, Images of Ancient Egypt, *The Story of Re*, Code of Hammurabi, Classical Art, *The Analects*, “First Sermon,” and the *Bible*.

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

Week 2: Monday August 28th: Encounters and Conversions.

- **Answer and submit the Reading Assignment Questions on Blackboard by 7pm.**
 - Assigned Reading (A): “Where did Agriculture Begin?”
 - Assigned Reading (B): “The Development of City-States.”
 - Lecture: Post-Classical Overview.
 - Primary Source Analysis: Excerpts from the *Quran*, “Book of Matthew.”

Week 3: Labor Day (No Class)

Week 4: Monday September 11th: Medieval Civilizations.

- **Answer and submit the Assignment Questions on Blackboard by 7pm.**
 - Assigned Reading (A): “Belief Systems Along the Silk Road.”
 - Assigned Reading (B): “Origins of the Sunni/Shia Split.”
 - Assigned Reading (C): “Islam and Modern Mathematics.”
 - Assigned Reading (D): “What Would Boccaccio Say About Covid 19?”
 - Lecture: Europe, Vikings, Mongols. Primary Source Analysis: Song Dynasty Scroll, *An Oath of Homage and Fealty*, Sources from the Crusades, *Secret History of the Mongols*, Images of the Black Death.

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

Week 5: Monday September 18th: Overseas Expansion and Atlantic World Encounters.

- **No Reading this Week**
 - Lecture: Early-Modern Era Overview, Africa and the Americas, the Plantation.
 - Primary Source Analysis: Letter from Kongo, Columbus, *Letter to King Ferdinand*, *Aztec Account*, Olaudah Equiano, *The Middle Passage*.

Week 6: Monday September 25th: Reactions to the Rise of Europe.

- **Answer and submit the Assignment Questions on Blackboard by 7pm.**
 - Assigned Reading (A): “Is ‘Race’ Modern?”
 - Assigned Reading (B): “Why Haiti Should be at the Center of the Age of Revolution.”
 - Assigned Reading (C): “How Slaveholders in the Caribbean maintained Control.”
 - Assigned Reading (D): “Chinese Civil Service Exam.”

- Lecture: Japan, China, Islam, and Russia.
- Primary Source Analysis: Matteo Ricci, Akbar, Peter the Great.

Week 7 Monday October 2nd: Mid-term.

Module 4: Modern Era (1750-1900)

Week 8: Tuesday October 10th (Monday is a Holiday): Enlightenment and Revolution

➤ **No Reading This Week**

- Lecture: Modern Era Overview.
- Primary Source Analysis: Immanuel Kant, *On Enlightenment*, Condorcet, *On the Progress of the Human Mind*, Smith, *Wealth of Nations*, American Declaration of Independence, Mary Wollstonecraft, *A Vindication of the Rights of Women*

Week 9: Monday October 16th: Capitalism, Liberalism, and Industrialization

➤ **Answer and submit the Assignment Questions on Blackboard by 7pm.**

- Assigned Reading (A): African Enlightenment
- Assigned Reading (B): “How did Europe Become the Richest Part of the World?”
- Supplemental Reading: “What We Can Learn from the French Revolution Today.”
- Lecture: Revolution and Reform.
- Primary Source Analysis: “Communist Manifesto,” Karl Marx; “On Liberalism,” John Stuart Mill.

Week 10: Monday October 23rd: Colonization, Westernization, and Nationalism

➤ **Answer and submit the Assignment Questions on Blackboard by 7pm.**

- Assigned Reading (A): “Belgium Wakes Up to its Bloody Colonial Past.”
- Assigned Reading (B): “Europeans Came to Asia not as Conquerors but as Customers.”
- Lecture: Imperialism in Asia and Africa.
- Primary Source Analysis: Pears Soap, Mohandas K. Gandhi, from *Hind Swaraj*.

Module 5: Contemporary Era (1914-Now)

Week 11: Monday October 30th: World War I and its Consequences

➤ **No Reading This Week**

- Lecture: Contemporary Era Overview, World War I.
- Primary Source Analysis: Wilfred Owen, *Dulce et Decorum Est*, V. I. Lenin, *War and Revolution*.

Week 12: Monday November 6th: Economic Depression and World War II

➤ **Answer and submit the Assignment Questions on Blackboard by 7pm.**

- Assigned Reading (A): “The Russian Revolution.”
- Assigned Reading (B): “Balfour Declaration: The Divisive Legacy of 67 Words.”
- Lecture: Economic Depression and the Rise of Dictators, WWII.
- Primary Source Analysis: Mussolini, “What is Fascism?” and *Triumph of the Will*
- Website: Holocaust Museum, Washington DC.

Week 13: Monday November 13th: Decolonization and the “Cold War”

➤ **Answer and submit the Assignment Questions on Blackboard by 7pm.**

- Assigned Reading (A): “The Lure of Fascism.”
- Assigned Reading (B): “Rape of Nanking.”
- Assigned Reading (C): “The Atomic Bomb.”
- Lecture: The “Cold War” and Decolonization.
- Primary Source Analysis: Coca Cola Advertisement.

Week 14: Monday November 20th: NO CLASS – Week of Thanksgiving Break

Week 15: Monday November 27th: Globalization and the New Silk Roads + Review

- **Final Exam instructions made available.**

Week 16: Monday December 4th: Reading Day (No Class)

- **Answer and submit the Assignment Questions on Blackboard by 7pm.**
- Assigned Reading (A): “The Silk Road is Once More the Center of the World.”
- Assigned Reading (B): “Globalization is Over.”
- Assigned Reading (C): “Empires, Pandemics and the Economic Future of the West.”
- Supplemental Reading: “History Didn’t End with the Fall of the Berlin Wall.”
- Supplemental Reading: “The End of the World of Nation-States May Be Upon Us.”

Week 17: Monday December 11th: Final Exam (7.30pm – 10.15pm).