

History 131: World History to 1500

Fall 2020

DRAFT SYLLABUS, 8/26/20

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Course Description:

In recent decades, the academic discipline of History has come to see the value in highlighting connections and comparisons to be seen across different geographical areas, cultural complexes, and timeperiods—rather than simply doing more History in the old way, in which our attention is focused on geographical areas or timeperiods as strictly siloed and cut off from one another. This new approach is often referred to as World History (or Global History).

This course employs the world historical approach to understanding human cultures, up to around the year 1500 (its counterpart, HIST 132: World History Since 1500, is offered each spring semester). Using ten chapters drawn from the leading textbook in the field, *A History of World Societies (Eleventh Edition)*, we will learn about the early histories of a number of societies and cultural complexes, while focusing on commonalities and points of comparison. Major themes to be emphasized include the class and social organization of societies, language, gender relations, and technology (in the broad sense of the term). Religion will be an especially prominent theme, as our purview for this course includes the origins and rise of all of the world's major religions.

While *learning about* history, we will also be *doing History*. Each week, students will participate in an online discussion forum devoted to the interpretation of primary-source documents drawn from *Sources of World Societies (Third Edition)*, thus practicing the critical skills of close reading, interpretation, and writing about texts.

This course counts as a General Education credit in the Humanities.

Grading:

The deadline we will be using for almost all work this semester is **Thursday night at 11:59pm**.

Final grades will be determined based on the following six measures:

- essay exam #1 (due Thurs, October 1 at 11:59pm) 15% of final grade

- essay exam #2 (due Thurs, October 29 at 11:59pm) 15% of final grade
- essay exam #3 (due Friday, November 27 at 11:59pm) 20% of final grade
- essay exam #4 (due Thurs, December 17 at 11:59pm) 20% of final grade

- chapter quizzes (ten total) 10% of final grade
- primary source discussion posts (ten total) 20% of final grade

For each **essay exam**, students will have 2.5 hours to plan and write two essays, covering material from the chapters covered in that unit. One essay will be thematic, while the other involves discussion of the primary sources we have addressed in that unit. (Examples of what kind of questions may be asked will be given before the first exam.) The first three exams are not cumulative, focusing only on material from within that unit; the final essay exam will include an essay question asking students to address a theme covered throughout the semester.

Quizzes consist of five questions and should be completed after reading the chapter and listening to the associated lectures. These are for the purpose of reviewing the material. Each quiz can be re-taken as many times as a student chooses.

Discussion posts, which are due **Thursday night at 11:59pm**, will focus on a primary source document contained in *Sources of World Societies*. These will be graded on the following scale: 0 points (not posting anything); 1 point (an adequate contribution); 2 points (an excellent contribution). Details on which source we will be addressing, and what prompt students should respond to, will be provided by the beginning of each week.

Two **lectures** (except for chapter ten, which has three) per chapter will be posted on Canvas for your viewing. You may find it preferable to read the chapter first, then watch the lectures for review; or to watch the lectures in order to have the most important material highlighted for you, then read the chapter with this in mind. Within each Unit, you will see these lectures available in Powerpoint (pptx) format. To view, download the file, click Slide Show, then “Play From Start.” Alternatively, you can scroll to the bottom of the course homepage, where you will find the lectures available in MP4 format. These you can view within Canvas, without having to download anything. Also at the bottom of the page you will find links to PDF versions of the lecture slides (missing the audio of the lecture), which may be useful when reviewing for exams. If you have trouble accessing these lectures, please contact the lead instructor (divaleri@uwm.edu).

Course Learning Goals:

As you learn the content of this course, you will also be developing historical thinking skills. Historical thinking requires understanding and evaluating change and continuity over time and making appropriate use of relevant historical evidence to answer questions and develop arguments about the past. It involves going beyond simply asking “what happened when” to evaluating why and how events occurred and processes unfolded. It involves finding and assessing historical sources of many different types to understand the contexts of given historical eras and the perspectives of different individuals and groups. Historical thinking is a process of

chronological reasoning, which means wrestling with issues of causality, connection, and context with the goal of developing credible explanations of historical events and processes based on reasoned interpretation of evidence. The tests and class discussions will provide you with opportunities to sharpen your historical thinking skills, and also to demonstrate increasingly sophisticated competence in these.

Specifically, in this course you will:

- Gain familiarity with world history over a broad sweep of time, including issues of periodization, key themes, world regions, and processes of continuity and change.
- Examine important written and visual primary sources on a variety of topics from many cultures.
- Analyze those sources to write intellectually engaged, coherent, well-organized, accurate, and clear analytical essays.
- Use information gained from lectures and readings in order to understand the varieties and complexities of the human experience throughout time and around the world.
- Synthesize information on world history from lectures, readings, and discussions into coherent and thoughtful written analyses in examinations.

Class Conduct and Policies:

- All students must check the course website on Canvas regularly. Changes to the course schedule may occur if circumstances demand.
- Students with disabilities should contact the Accessibility Resource Center (<https://uwm.edu/arc/>) at the beginning of the semester, to ensure that any necessary accommodations can be arranged for
- Students are expected to observe UWM's standards of academic honesty. The penalty for cheating or plagiarism on any paper, exam, or other assignment is an automatic "F" for that assignment. The penalties for such academic misconduct can also include failing the course and expulsion from the University. University policies on academic misconduct can be found here: <https://uwm.edu/deanofstudents/conduct/academic-misconduct/>
- UWM policy regarding students called to active military service can be found here: <http://uwm.edu/active-duty-military/>
- Title IX is a federal law that prohibits sex discrimination in education program or activities, and UWM policy prohibits such conduct (see Discriminatory Conduct, above). This includes sexual violence, which may include sexual harassment, sexual assault, relationship violence, and/or stalking in all educational programs and education-related areas. UWM strongly encourages its students to report any instance of sex discrimination to UWM's Title IX Coordinator (titleix@uwm.edu). Whether or not a student wishes to report an incident of sexual violence, the Title IX Coordinator can connect students to resources at UWM and/or in the community including, but not limited to, victim advocacy, medical and counseling services, and/or law enforcement. For more information, please visit: <https://uwm.edu/sexual-assault/>.

- Students may direct complaints to the Chair of the Department of History, in accordance with the UWM policy outlined here: <https://apps.uwm.edu/secu-policies/storage/other/SAAP%205-1.%20Discriminatory%20Conduct%20Policy.pdf>
- UWM policy regarding the grade of Incomplete can be found here: <https://apps.uwm.edu/secu-policies/storage/other/SAAP%201-13.%20Incomplete%20Grades.pdf>
- UWM policy regarding the procedure for appealing a grade can be found here: <https://apps.uwm.edu/secu-policies/storage/other/SAAP%201-10.%20Grade%20Appeals%20by%20Students.pdf>
- Discriminatory conduct will not be tolerated by the University. It poisons the work and learning environment of the University and threatens the careers, educational experience, and well-being of students, faculty, and staff. Learn more here: <https://apps.uwm.edu/secu-policies/storage/other/SAAP%205-1.%20Discriminatory%20Conduct%20Policy.pdf>

Required Materials:

For reading materials, this course uses two sources. These must be purchased as a package, from ecampus, UWM's virtual bookstore. The price is shown as **\$29.57**. This link should take you to the page:

<https://bit.ly/31IZmnk>

When you purchase the package, you should receive:

1) A custom-printed textbook, which includes ten chapters drawn from *A History of World Societies (Eleventh Edition)*, by Wiesner-Hanks, Ebrey, Beck, Dávila, Crowston and McKay. Bedford/St. Martin's Press, 2018. The pages of the textbook will arrive unbound, and hole-punched. I recommend you buy a binder to put the textbook in.

2) *Sources of World Societies, Volume 1, to 1600 (Third Edition)*. By Wiesner-Hanks, Ebrey, Beck, Dávila, Crowston and McKay. Bedford/St. Martin's Press, 2018.

Course Schedule:

September 2-4: Introduction to the Course

To do:

- watch course intro videos from David and Madelyn
- read course syllabus
- familiarize yourself with the Canvas course website
- complete syllabus quiz
- introduce yourself to your discussion group

UNIT I

September 7-10: **Chapter 1: The Earliest Human Societies, to 2500 BCE**, pages 1-26

To do:

- read chapter 1
- watch chapter 1 lectures
- complete chapter 1 quiz
- do first primary source discussion post

September 14-17: **Chapter 2: Complex Societies in Southwest Asia and the Nile Valley**, pages 27-52

To do:

- read chapter 2
- watch chapter 2 lectures
- complete chapter 2 quiz
- do second primary source discussion post

September 21-24: **Chapter 3: The Foundation of Indian Society, to 300 CE**, pages 53-73

To do:

- read chapter 3
- watch chapter 3 lectures
- complete chapter 3 quiz
- do third primary source discussion post

September 28-October 1: **Unit 1 exam week**

To do:

- review material from chapters 1, 2, and 3
- review first three primary sources
- set aside 2.5 hours and take essay exam #1

UNIT 2

October 5-8: **Chapter 4: China's Classical Age, to 221 BCE**, pages 75-95

To do:

- read chapter 4
- watch chapter 4 lectures
- complete chapter 4 quiz
- do fourth primary source discussion post

October 12-15: **Chapter 5: The Greek Experience, 3500-30 BCE**, pages 97-120

To do:

- read chapter 5
- watch chapter 5 lectures
- complete chapter 5 quiz
- do fifth primary source discussion post

October 19-22: **Chapter 6: The World of Rome, ca. 1000 BCE-400CE**, pages 121-146

To do:

- read chapter 6
- watch chapter 6 lectures
- complete chapter 6 quiz
- do sixth primary source discussion post

October 26-29: **Unit 2 exam week**

To do:

- review material from chapters 4, 5, and 6
- review fourth, fifth, and sixth primary sources
- set aside 2.5 hours and take essay exam #2

UNIT 3

November 2-5: **Chapter 7: Continuity and Change in Europe and Western Asia, 250-850**, pages 147-171

To do:

- read chapter 7
- watch chapter 7 lectures
- complete chapter 7 quiz
- do seventh primary source discussion post

November 9-12: **Chapter 8: The Islamic World, 600-1400**, pages 173-200

To do:

- read chapter 8
- watch chapter 8 lectures
- complete chapter 8 quiz
- do eighth primary source discussion post

November 16-19: **Chapter 9: African Societies and Kingdoms, 1000 BCE-1500 CE**, pages 201-227

To do:

- read chapter 9
- watch chapter 9 lectures
- complete chapter 9 quiz
- do ninth primary source discussion post

November 23-27: **Unit 3 exam week**

To do:

- review material from chapters 7, 8, and 9
- review seventh, eighth, and ninth primary sources
- set aside 2.5 hours and take essay exam #3

- **NOTE: because this is the week of Thanksgiving, students have until Friday at 11:59pm to complete the exam**

UNIT 4

November 30-December 10: **Chapter 10: The Americas, 3200 BCE-1500 CE**, pages 229-256

To do:

- read chapter 10
- watch chapter 10 lectures (there are three)
- complete chapter 10 quiz
- do tenth primary source discussion post
- begin reviewing material from previous chapters for final essay exam
- **NOTE: students have two weeks to complete the work for Chapter 10**

December 14-17: **Unit 4 exam week**

To do:

- review material from entire semester
- review all primary sources
- set aside 2.5 hours and take essay exam #4