WORLD CIVILIZATIONS TO 1500
History 201, Sec. 3, Winter 2010
2107 JKB, 9:30-10:45 TTh

The Roman historian Livy said, “The study of history is the best medicine for a sick mind.” Even if your mind isn’t sick (I hope not), the study of history will do much to improve you. This course, which is part of the university’s General Education, is designed to widen your horizons, improve your skills, and help you understand and appreciate our diverse and rich heritage as human beings. It will introduce you to the broad tapestry of human history from earliest times to about 1500. We will use a survey-style textbook, as well as readings in primary sources and other texts. The format will be lecture and discussion. The lecture and the textbook will provide the broad background, but discussion will focus on primary sources and other texts for a significant portion of the course. I hope you will learn many new and interesting things, but above all I hope you will emerge from this course with a greater love for learning and better prepared to be a more appreciative and capable citizen of the world.

Required texts


Other readings as assigned during the semester.

Grading

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Component</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Essays</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Midterms</td>
<td>40%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Final (comprehensive)</td>
<td>30%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Quizzes and possible extra assignments</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

I grade on a curve, which I have found to be a benefit to students in large classes. I do not often give high raw scores, 90 being about the highest and 70 or 75 being average, but the final curve is usually fairly generous. I reserve the right to change your grade up or down based on your regular attendance and participation. I give quizzes fairly often to test whether you are keeping up. In a typical semester, the quizzes may add up to as much as 10% of your grade.

Tentative schedule

Prepare and read the materials indicated for class on the day indicated. On any given day, you could have a quiz to test whether you are keeping up. You may be surprised how much of the information you will need on the exams will come from the lectures and is not in your books, so plan to attend class, listen, participate, and take notes. Computers are welcome for note-taking, though using other
electronic devices during class, or even using computers for other purposes during class, is not tolerated. Computers and other devices are not allowed in the classroom on exam days.

CLASS SCHEDULE

Part I: Introducing the subject and thinking about the Big Questions

(T) Aug. 31 Explanation of class and class policies. Introduction to history, civilization, and myths.
(Th) Sep. 2 Beginning with the end in mind: Periodization and the ancients and the moderns. Read Anglin Ch. 16 and the document on Blackboard entitled “Sepulveda vs. de las Casas.” The developments covered in the readings are thought by many to represent the early days of the modern world and a break with the pre-modern past. Address in your mind as you read what might make the modern world “modern” and what might make earlier times “ancient,” “medieval,” or “pre-modern.”

(T) Sep. 7 Origins: Creation myths. Read examples of creation myths on Blackboard; also review Genesis 1-2, Moses 2-3, Abraham 4-5. Don’t worry about memorizing all the details of these stories. Look for common elements and important differences.
(Th) Sep. 9 Origins continued. Skim Anglin Ch. 1. Read “Summary of Guns, Germs, and Steel” on Blackboard. Be prepared to discuss archeology, anthropology, and prehistory. Discuss first essay assignment.

Part II: Early Civilizations in the Ancient World

Sep. 16 Egypt: Anglin, pp. 22-30.
Sep. 21 More on the ancient near east. Anglin, Ch. 2, rest of chapter. 1 Kings Chapters 11-12; 2 Kings Chapter 17.
Sep. 23 Ancient India: Anglin Ch. 3.
Sep. 28 Ancient China: Anglin Ch. 4.
Sep. 30 Eastern religion: The heritage of ancient Asia.

Oct. 5 Attend a session of the International Symposium of Law and Religion and write a paragraph explaining your attendance (counts as full credit for two quizzes).

Oct. 7 Eastern religion continued. Review for first midterm.

***Take first midterm in Testing Center any time after 11:00 a.m. on Thursday, October 7, through Monday, October 11.

Part III: The Classical World and Late Antiquity

Oct. 12 Greece and the Hellenistic world: Anglin Ch. 5.
Oct. 26  Rome’s “fall,” and the heirs to Rome: Byzantium, Germanic kingdoms, and Islam: Late Antiquity and the early Middle Ages. Read Anglin, Ch. 8 for background, but the majority of the information will come from class.

Oct. 28  Islam: Anglin Ch. 9; excerpts from the life of Mohammad by ibn Ishaq; sura on Mary. Review for second midterm.

***Take second midterm in Testing Center any time after 11:00 a.m. on Thursday, October 28, through Monday, November 1.

Part IV: The Middle Ages and the Intersection of Europe, Asia, and Africa

Nov. 2  Medieval Europe: Anglin Ch. 10.
Nov. 4  Middle Ages continued. Gregorian Reform, popular religion, and the crusades.
Nov. 9  Japan and “Medieval” Asia: Anglin, Ch. 14, especially the portion on Japan.
Nov. 16  Discuss Shaihu Umar. Start reading Sundiata.
Nov. 18  Discuss Sundiata.
Nov. 23  No class. Friday instruction.
Nov. 25  Thanksgiving Holiday.
Nov. 30  Essay #2 due at beginning of class. Central Eurasia: Anglin Ch. 15, especially pages 421-432.
Dec. 2  A new vision of the world: The medieval expansion of Europe. Most of this will be visual presentation in class. Take notes.
Dec. 7  America before the Europeans: Anglin Ch. 13.
Dec. 9  We end where we began, with the Big Questions. The lessons of history. In preparation, briefly review your notes and the readings from the September 2 class session, asking the same questions as before and seeing if your perspective has changed. **Review session for final.**

Monday, Dec. 13  Final exam in classroom at 8:00-10:00 a.m.