

World Civilization I-Online

Spring 2015

Syllabus for HIS 121

Professor: Richard Seckla

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The overall aim of this course is to develop an understanding of the history of the major world cultures by examining the major themes and movements that were occurring during this period. It is hoped that each student will gain a sense of where people have come from and what that could possibly mean for the future. As the world moves towards a deeply integrated globalization, it is even more important to understand how different people are, and how similar they are. Many historians and experts are still debating the ramifications of the most recent move towards globalization. All, however, are in agreement that the only way to be successful within its context, is to understand as much as possible what it is all about.

The study of history is an important component of a sound liberal arts education. Here is one answer to the question, [why study history?](#) Another purpose of this course, and one I feel is equally important as those above, is that everyone involved has an enjoyable time. For this to happen it is necessary that everyone participate in the class and interact with one another.

The question is always asked: [What can you do with history?](#) An objective of this class is not only a knowledge of history, but to help the student develop a methodology of examining evidence and learning to report on it in a clear and concise manner. In the future you may have a boss who will ask you for a three-page report on a project you are in the middle of. You will have to examine the files, going through the data and finding the significance. This is what a historian does. So in a way, just about everyone can use historical methodologies on their job.

Course Description

This course is a survey of world cultures that have contributed importantly to the development of Western and Eastern thought. Consideration is given to institutions and ideas from prehistoric times through the evolution of ancient civilizations to the formation of empires and modern nation states. Major economic, political, and social forces are examined for their influence upon modern society.

Course Objectives

The goals and objectives for this course are specific to the study of history and integrated with the college's general education goals.

At the end of the course, students will understand, articulate and synthesize the development of ancient and medieval world societies.

Learning Outcomes:

1. Explore the complexity of the human experience
2. Develop a body of historical knowledge explaining the dynamics of change over time
3. Interpret and contextualize the past on its own terms
4. Evaluate a variety of historical sources, primary and secondary, for their credibility and utility
5. Generate a historical argument that is reasoned and based on historical evidence
6. Combine argument and evidence into effective narrative that describes and analyzes the past

Learning Objectives: Actively engage in the learning process through demonstrated success on writing assignments

- Identify topics
- Read, assess, summarize and synthesize material
- Articulate central themes

Required Texts

The following book is available in the bookstore:

Bentley, Jerry and Herbert Ziegler. *Traditions and Encounters: A Global Perspective on the Past, Volume I: From the Beginning to 1500*. Sixth Edition, 2015.

Structure of the Course

The Bentley/Ziegler text we are using is divided into four units; each unit will comprise two modules on Blackboard. Each module will be of two weeks duration:

1. **The Early Complex Societies: Prehistory to 500 BCE**

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Module 1: Chapters 1-3 January 21 – February

Module 2: Chapters 4-6 February 2 – February
15

2. **The Classical Period: 500 BCE to 500 CE**

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Module 3: Chapters 7-9 February 16 – March

Module 4: Chapters 10-12 March 2 – March 15

Spring Break

3. **The Post-Classical Period: 500 CE to 1000 CE**

5

Module 5: Chapters 13-14 March 23 – April

Module 6: Chapters 15-16 April 6 – April 19

4. **The Acceleration of Cross-Cultural Interactions: 1000 CE to 1500 CE**

Module 7: Chapters 17-18 April 20 – May 3

Module 8: Chapters 19-21 May 4 – May 17

Method of Evaluation

1. **Exams**- An exam will be issued that covers each *unit* and will be due at the end of modules 2, 4, 6, 8. Your examinations will be in essay format. Material for examination purposes will come from a variety of sources: your readings, the websites assigned, any videos assigned, and the message board. Each exam will have 5-7 essay questions; you are required to answer *two* of them. Each essay should be 600-700 words in length. When citing sources, use of the [MLA format](#) is expected. Words of wisdom: "Every job is a self-portrait of the person who did it. Autograph your work with excellence." J. Guidobono. The average of the exams will constitute forty percent of your grade. **40%**
2. **Primary Source Papers (2)** - Primary sources, sources written by contemporaries or near-contemporaries are the testimony of the past and the building blocks of history. Historians work with these to develop interpretations of the past. Each chapter of the text contains up to two sources with an interpretive question

at the end. I will also provide additional sources. This will be your chance to work with historical evidence and do the work of a historian. You will be required to work with two sets of these sources, one in the first half of the course and one in the second half. Responses should be 400-500 words in length (2 pages). This component will constitute fifteen percent of your final grade. **15%**

3. **Discussion Board Postings**- One of the clear advantages and joys of learning is that it does not occur in a vacuum. Indeed, the socialization of learning can be an exciting experience as ideas and opinions can have a steamrolling effect. This is not, nor is it intended to be, a correspondence course. The challenge is to “come together” as a class. Hopefully the discussion boards will allow that to occur. Each student is expected to be a regular and frequent contributor to the message board (more on this later), making substantive postings. A “substantial posting” is one that brings a unique (comparative, analytical, critical) perspective to some aspect of the reading, websites, or another student’s perspective. The discussion board is also a place for you to ask questions and answer those questions that are asked by others. You may also use this space to bring in websites you have found on your own. This exercise will constitute fifteen percent of your final grade. **15%**
4. **Quizzes**- Also on Blackboard, there are objective tests, or quizzes, one for each chapter of the text. *These are date sensitive, and once the quiz deadline has passed the quiz will no longer be available.* The quizzes are also time sensitive: you have twenty minutes to take each test so you will need to set aside the necessary amount of time. The quizzes are in a multiple-choice format and are meant to be both a device to keep reading at a given pace, and thus facilitate discussion, as well as an assessment of knowledge. To paraphrase a former student: if you have read the material closely and taken good notes from the readings, they aren’t a problem; if you are sitting there with the book looking for the

answers, you could have great difficulty. This will constitute ten percent of your final grade. **15%**

5. **Historical Inquiry Paper** – In this 5-page paper, you will research and explain the dynamics of change over time in human society. Working with both primary and secondary sources, you will be required to follow the development of a society over time while analyzing and interpreting the events, people, and intellectual movements that resulted in societal change. This paper must also be uploaded into your digitization General Education e-portfolio. **15%**

Course Components

Exams	40%
Quizzes	15%
Discussion Board	15%
Primary Source Papers	15%
Historical Inquiry Paper	15%

Grading

Grade	Equivalent	Quality Points
A	93-100	4.0
A-	90-92	3.7
B+	87-89	3.3
B	83-86	3.0
B-	80-82	2.7
C+	77-79	2.3
C	73-76	2.0

C-	70-72	1.7
D+	67-69	1.3
D	63-66	1.0
F	0-62	0.0

Digication

All students are required to maintain an online learning portfolio in Digication that uses the college template. Through this electronic tool students will have the opportunity to monitor their own growth in college-wide learning. The student will keep his/her learning portfolio and may continue to use the Digication account after graduation. A Three Rivers General Education Assessment Team will select and review random works to improve the college experience for all. Student work reviewed for assessment purposes will not include names and all student work will remain private and anonymous for college improvement purposes. Students will have the ability to integrate learning from the classroom, college, and life in general, which will provide additional learning opportunities. If desired, students will have the option to create multiple portfolios.

College Withdrawal Policy

A student who finds it necessary to discontinue a course MUST complete an Add/drop form obtained from the Registrars Office.

Students may drop courses up to the final drop date as specified in the academic calendar. Courses dropped prior to or during the first two weeks

off classes in a standard semester will not appear on the students transcript. *Summer and winter sessions courses must be dropped prior to the beginning of the respective session.*

Students, who fail to properly withdraw, and discontinue signing into class, will be assigned an “F” grade.

Learning Disabilities Statement

If you have a disability that may affect your progress in this course, please meet with a Disability Service Provider (DSP) as soon as possible. Please note that accommodations cannot be provided until you provide written authorization from a DSP.

TRCC Disabilities Service Providers Counseling & Advising Office Room A-119	
Matt Liscum (860) 383-5240	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Physical Disabilities• Sensory Disabilities• Medical Disabilities• Mental Health Disabilities
Chris Scarborough	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Learning Disabilities• ADD/ADHD• Autism Spectrum

(860) 892- 5751	
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Academic Integrity

Academic integrity is essential to a useful education. Failure to act with academic integrity severely limits a person's ability to succeed in the classroom and beyond. Furthermore, academic dishonesty erodes the legitimacy of every degree awarded by the College. In this class and in the course of your academic career, present only your own best work; clearly document the sources of the material you use from others; and act at all times with honor.

[TRCC Homepage](#)