

Course Syllabus

World Civilizations I HIS K121

Tuesdays / Thursdays 2:00 – 3:20 PM

Room 312

Three Rivers Community College

Norwich, CT 06360

Instructor: Richard Seckla

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Office: Adjunct Office

Office Hours:
By appointment

Fall 2007

Course Description:

This course is a survey of the evolution of world societies from prehistory to around 1500, with emphasis given to the following: technological developments; the formation of societies and religions; the development of intellectual currents; the formation of empires, and the overall political, social, and economic framework that existed in these societies during this period. The course will particularly focus on the issues that still have an immediate relevancy on the modern world.

Course Objectives:

The overall purpose of this course is to help students gain a solid foundation in understanding the evolution of ancient and medieval societies. A secondary, yet equally important, goal is the development of a methodology in order to examine evidence in order to convey information in a clear and concise manner (this is more commonly known as critical thinking). Finally, I want students to be active participants in the course and in class discussions. I encourage you to ask questions and take the initiative to delve deeper into topics. Learning is a two-way process and I can learn as much from you as you can from me; I look for students to be enthusiastically engaged with the subject matter.

Required Text:

Bentley, Jerry and Herbert Ziegler. *Traditions and Encounters: A Global Perspective on the Past, Volume I: From The Beginning to 1500*. Third Edition, 2006.

Class Schedule:

Week	Class Content	Text Reading
Week 1 August 28, 30	Introduction Before History	Chapter 1
Week 2 September 4, 6	Early Societies in Southwest Asia Early African Societies and the Bantu Migrations	Chapter 2 Chapter 3
Week 3 September 11,13	Early Societies in South Asia Early Societies in East Asia	Chapter 4 Chapter 5
Week 4 September 18, 20	Early Societies in the Americas and Oceania Exam # 1 9/20	Chapter 6
Week 5 September 25, 27	The Empires of Persia The Unification of China	Chapter 7 Chapter 8
Week 6 October 2, 4	State, Society, and the Quest for Salvation in India Mediterranean Society: The Greek Phase	Chapter 9 Chapter 10
Week 7 October 9, 11	Mediterranean Society: The Roman Phase Paper Proposal Due 10/11	Chapter 11
Week 8 October 16, 18	Cross-Cultural Exchanges on the Silk Roads Exam # 2 - 10/18	Chapter 12
Week 9 October 23, 25	The Commonwealth of Byzantium The Expansive Realm of Islam	Chapter 13 Chapter 14

Week 10 October 30, November 1	The Resurgence of Empire in East Asia India and the Indian Ocean Basin	Chapter 15 Chapter 16
Week 11 November 6, 8	The Foundation of Christian Society in Western Europe	Chapter 17
Week 12 November 13, 15	Exam # 3 11/13 Nomadic Empires and Eurasian Integration	Chapter 18
Week 13 Thanksgiving No Class		
Week 14 November 27, 29	States and Societies in Sub- Saharan Africa Western Europe During the High Middle ages	Chapter 19 Chapter 20
Week 15 December 4, 6	Worlds Apart: The Americas and Oceania Reaching Out: Cross- Cultural Interactions Research Papers or Book Reviews Due 12/6	Chapter 21 Chapter 22
Week 16 December 11	Final Exam #4	

Method of Evaluation:

This course will focus heavily on reading, writing, and research, and the assignments will be reflective of that.

Exams—Roughly at the end of the four units of material, an in-class exam will be given that will test your critical thinking skills. The exams will consist of identification questions, multiple choice, matching, and essays. Each exam will be worth 15% of your grade for an overall total of 60%.

Classroom Participation and Preparation – This consists of how much your presence in the class enriches the learning environment. Are you involved in discussions about readings and material? Do you ask questions in order to get a deeper understanding of the subject matter? This component is worth 10% of your final grade.

Option # 1 Research Paper – By the end of the semester, you will be required to complete a 10-12 page research paper about an important topic, person or event covered during this course. The topic of the paper will be of your choosing, however, all topics need to be approved by me first. Start thinking about this early in the semester! In order to keep you on track, I will require that a proposal with bibliography for your paper be submitted for approval no later than the 7th week of class-October 11. Your bibliography should have a minimum of 6 sources. The research paper will be due on the last day of class, December 6. This component will be worth 30% of your final grade (5% for the proposal and 25% for the paper).

Option # 2 Comparative Book Review – Pick a person of interest, within the bounds of the course, and read two biographies of that person (at least 150 pages each). After reading each biography, write a critical review of the two books in which you evaluate each book and, also, compare and contrast the two books.

These are to be CRITICAL book reviews, meaning that you will need to analyze each book carefully and then weigh them against each other. Among the questions you should consider are:

Why did the author of each book choose to write a biography of this person?

What was the purpose of each book? Does the author state a purpose?

What are the main arguments of each book?

What is the thesis?

Would you characterize each biography as sympathetic to the subject or critical?

Are you convinced by the arguments/thesis of each author?

What are the strengths and weaknesses of each book?

Can you discern a bias in the author's work?

Which author does a better job of explaining the life of the subject?

How do the author's arguments compare?

Does it seem that the authors are purposely seeking to undermine the argument of the other?

If one of the biographies is written many years before the other, can you identify how historical events have shaped/changed the interpretation of the subject's life as reflected in the other biography?

These are just some of the questions to consider in your papers. The bottom line is that you are expected to engage the materials and ask why each author presents the life of the subject the way they do. All authors have an agenda. It is your job to discern it.

The comparative review should be 8-10 pages. The subject for the biography will be of your choosing, however, all topics need to be approved by me first. Start thinking about this early in the program! In order to keep you on track, I will require that a proposal with bibliography (2 sources) for your paper be submitted for approval no later than the 7th week of class-October 11. The book review paper will be due on the last day of class, December 6. This component will be worth 30% of your final grade (5% for the proposal and 25% for the paper).

All assigned papers must be typed and double-spaced. Use a 12-point font, preferably Times New Roman. Citations are to be in MLA format. If you have any trouble with writing, I urge you to visit the writing center in room 106 at Mohegan and TASC at the library at both campuses. They are resources that you should use. Furthermore, the following web site will help answer many, if not all of your questions on writing:

http://www.trcc.comnet.edu/Ed_Resources/writing_center/

A note on sources: There is, of course, a great deal of information on the internet, some good and some not. The internet is a good tool for tracking down books, publications, and articles in scholarly journals. It is NOT an acceptable source for the material in your papers. I want you to be reading books and articles written by reputable historians, not something posted on a website like Wikipedia. Your bibliographies and papers are to reflect this. Do not quote from websites; do not include websites in your list of sources. I will lower the grade of your paper by a letter grade if I see a citation for a website.

Clarification: this does not, of course, apply to academic databases located on the web and accessible through our library. Examples would include peer-reviewed articles from academic journals such as JSTOR or EBSCO.

Use your own words and thoughts in your papers. I can get a pretty good feel for your command of the English language by reading your tests so, it is relatively easy to detect if a student has ‘cut and pasted’ a block of text from a website into a paper. Without citation, this is plagiarism and will result in an F for the paper and, possibly, for the course.

Helpful Sources For Writing History Papers

Mathews-Lamb, Sandra K. *Everything You Need To Know About Your History Course*. Longman, New York, 2000.

Marius, Richard and Melvin E. Page. *A Short Guide To Writing About History*. Longman, New York, 2001.

Rampolla, Mary Lynn. *A Pocket Guide To Writing In History*. 5th Ed. Bedford/ St. Martin's, Boston, 2007.

Grading System:

A = 94-100	C = 74-77
A- = 90-93	C- = 70-73
B+ = 88-89	D+ = 68-69
B = 84-87	D = 64-67
B- = 80-83	D- = 60-63
C+ = 78-79	F = Below 60

Late Assignments/Make-Up Exams:

If papers are not turned in on the due date, your grade will be lowered for each day in which it is not turned in. Late papers must be emailed.

A first missed exam must be made up prior to the **following class**. Since I am here on Tuesdays and Thursdays, that means that a missed exam must be made up on one of these days prior to class. It is your responsibility to contact me and make arrangements. A second missed exam will be penalized severely.

Attendance:

Regular attendance is essential for success in the course and is expected. Within the College's guidelines and with permission, occasional absences for compelling reasons will be granted. I take attendance at the beginning of each class, and it goes without saying that habitual absences or lateness will negatively affect your individual contribution grade.

College Withdrawal Policy:

A student who finds it necessary to discontinue a course **MUST** complete a withdrawal form obtained from the Registrar's Office. Students may withdraw from class anytime

during the first ten weeks of the semester without being in good standing or obtaining prior permission of the instructor. After that period, a student wishing to withdraw must obtain written authorization of the instructor to receive a “W” grade for the course. Students who fail to properly withdraw and cease coming to class, will be assigned an “F” for the course. Eligibility for refund of tuition is based upon date of withdrawal when received by the registrar. Verbal withdrawals will not be accepted.

Learning Disabilities Statement:

If you are a student with a disability and believe you will need accommodations for this class, it is your responsibility to contact the Disabilities Counseling Services at 383-5240. To avoid any delay in the receipt of accommodations, you should contact the counselor as soon as possible. Please note that I cannot provide accommodations based upon disability until I have received an accommodation letter from the Disabilities Counselor. Your cooperation is appreciated.

Cell Phones / Pagers:

Students are notified that cellular phones and beepers are allowed in class or in the Learning Resource Center only if they turned off or in the silent mode. Under no circumstances are phones to be answered in class. When there are extenuating circumstances that require that a student be available by phone or beeper, the student should speak to the instructor prior to class, so that together they can arrive at an agreement.

Academic Dishonesty:

Plagiarism in any form is a major breach of academic standards. Any form of cheating or plagiarism will be reported to the college immediately and may result in an “F” for the assignment or an “F” for the entire course. Remember, you can cite other sources or use quotations from other writers in your papers as long as you use the proper citation – in other words, a footnote.

Civility in the Classroom:

The classroom is a place of learning. In this setting, all ideas and opinions are to be heard and respected, even if you disagree with what is said. Anyone who upsets this environment, or who disrespects anyone in the class, will not be tolerated. Lively, insightful, and considerate interaction is encouraged – so let's enjoy!