

Course Syllabus

World Civilizations I HIS K121

Tuesdays / Thursdays 10:30 – 11:50 AM

Room 211

Three Rivers Community College

Norwich, CT 06360

Instructor: Richard Seckla

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Office: Adjunct Office: Mohegan Campus

Office Hours:

Tuesdays / Thursdays 12:30 – 2:00 PM

Spring 2008

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*. Fourth Edition, 2006.

In addition to the text, additional readings will be assigned on a week-to-week basis.

Class Schedule:

Week	Class Content	Text Reading
Week 1 January 24	Introduction	
Week 2 January 29, 31	Before History Early Societies in Southwest Asia	Chapter 1 Chapter 2
Week 3 February 5, 7	Early African Societies and the Bantu Migrations Early Societies in South Asia	Chapter 3 Chapter 4
Week 4 February 12, 14	Early Societies in East Asia Early Societies in the Americas and Oceania	Chapter 5 Chapter 6
Week 5 February 19, 21	Library Research Instruction 2/19 Exam # 1 2/21	
Week 6 February 26, 28	The Empires of Persia The Unification of China	Chapter 7 Chapter 8
Week 7 March 4, 6	State, Society, and the Quest for Salvation in India Mediterranean Society: The Greek Phase	Chapter 9 Chapter 10
Week 8 March 11, 13	Mediterranean Society: The Roman Phase Cross-Cultural Exchanges on the Silk Roads Paper Proposal Due 3/13	Chapter 11 Chapter 12
Week 9 No Classes	Spring Break	

Week 10 March 25, 27	Exam # 2 - 3/25 The Commonwealth of Byzantium	Chapter 13
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Week 11 April 1, 3	The Expansive Realm of Islam The Resurgence of Empire in East Asia	Chapter 14 Chapter 15
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Week 12 April 8, 10	India and the Indian Ocean Basin The Foundation of Christian Society in Western Europe	Chapter 16 Chapter 17
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Week 13 April 15, 17	Exam # 3 4/15 Nomadic Empires and Eurasian Integration	Chapter 18
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Week 14 April 22, 24	States and Societies in Sub- Saharan Africa Western Europe During the High Middle ages	Chapter 19 Chapter 20
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Week 15 April 29, May 1	Worlds Apart: The Americas and Oceania	Chapter 21
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Week 16 May 6	Reaching Out: Cross- Cultural Interactions Papers Due 5/6	Chapter 22
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Week 17 May 13	Final Exam	
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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. Material from the text, lectures, and handouts will be included in the exams. 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%. I will issue a study guide prior to each exam so you can focus your studies on those items which will be on the test.

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-March 8. Your bibliography should have a minimum of 6 sources. The research paper will be due on the last day of class, May 2. 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-March 8. The book review paper will be due on the last day of class, May 2. 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. 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. In addition, 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.

Note: If you want your final exam and paper returned, bring a stamped, self-addressed envelope to class at the end of the semester. Figure on about \$1 for postage.

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. No extension will be given on the final research paper.

Missed exams must be made up within one week of the original exam date (before I hand back corrected exams). It is your responsibility to contact me to make arrangements for the make-up. Failure to complete the make-up within the one-week window will result in a grade of zero for the exam. Generally, I will use the TASC Center in the Library for make-ups.

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.

Class Lectures: We will generally cover a chapter in the text each class period.

Assuming the equipment in the classroom is operational, I utilize Power-point presentations for my lecture material. Before each class, I will upload the files to the home page for our course on WebCT. This is course # 10767.

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!