

## **Course Syllabus**

### **World Civilizations I HIS K121**

Tuesdays / Thursdays 2:00 – 3:15 PM

Room 312

Three Rivers Community College

Norwich, CT 06360

Instructor: Richard Seckla

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Office: Adjunct Office

Office Hours:  
By appointment

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### **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. I look for students to be enthusiastically engaged with the subject matter.

*“Few learn from history who do not bring much with them to its study” - John Stuart Mill*

### **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 may be assigned on a week-to-week basis.

**Class Schedule:**

<b>Week</b>	<b>Class Content</b>	<b>Text Reading</b>
Week 1 September 2, 4	Introduction to the Course <b>Unit #1 The Foundation Societies</b> <b>4 Million B.C.E. – 500 B.C.E.</b> Pre-History: the Paleolithic and Neolithic Periods	Chapter 1
Week 2 September 9, 11	Ancient Mesopotamia, the Hebrews, the Phoenicians Ancient Egypt, Nubia, sub-Saharan Africa	Chapter 2 Chapter 3
Week 3 September 16, 18	Harappan India and the Aryan Invasions Ancient China	Chapter 4 Chapter 5
Week 4 September 23, 25	Early Societies in the Americas and Oceania <b>Exam # 1 9/25</b>	Chapter 6
Week 5 September 30, October 2	<b>Unit # 2 The Classical World: 500 B.C.E. – 500 C.E.</b> The Empires of Persia Classical China	Chapter 7 Chapter 8

Week 6 October 7, 9	<b>Library Session 10/7</b> Classical India	Chapter 9
Week 7 October 14, 16	Ancient Greece Ancient Rome <b>Term Paper Proposal w/Bibliography Due 10/16</b>	Chapter 10 Chapter 11
Week 8 October 21, 23	The Rise of Christianity, the Barbarian Invasions and the End of the Classical Era	Chapter 12
Week 9 October 28, 30	<b>Exam # 2 - 10/28</b> <b>Unit #3 The Post-Classical Societies: 500 C.E. – 1000 C.E.</b> The Byzantine Empire	Chapter 13
Week 10 November 4, 6	The Rise of Islam Medieval China, Japan, Korea, Vietnam	Chapter 14 Chapter 15
Week 11 November 11, 13	Post-Classical India and Southeast Asia Early Medieval Europe	Chapter 16 Chapter 17

Week 12 November 18, 20	<b>Exam # 3 11/18</b> <b>Unit #4 The Late Middle Ages: 1000 C.E. – 1500 C.E.</b> Nomadic Empires and Eurasian Integration <b>Term Paper Thesis Due 11/20</b>	Chapter 18
Week 13 <b>Thanksgiving No Class</b>		
Week 14 December 2, 4	States and Societies in Sub-Saharan Africa Western Europe During the High Middle ages	Chapter 19 Chapter 20
Week 15 December 9, 11	The Americas and Oceania The Recovery of Europe and China <b>Term Paper Portfolio Due 12/11</b>	Chapter 21 Chapter 22
Week 16 December 16	<b>Final Exam #4</b>	

**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 grasp of the material. 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? Do you demonstrate commitment by regular attendance and participation? This component is worth 10% of your final grade.

### **The Term Paper**

The term paper is a major part of your grade because the term paper represents what historians do. A musician doesn't just study music, a musician eventually must perform music. Similarly, a historian doesn't just study history, a historian must *write* history. This is your opportunity to demonstrate how well you practice this particular craft.

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!*

The paper assignment consists of three components and will constitute 30% of your final grade:

1. Paper proposal with bibliography *in MLA format*, minimum of four sources required. This is simply a statement of the topic you have chosen to research, for example: the introduction of Buddhism to China, the Punic wars, the Black Death in Europe. See below for specifics on sources. Due October 16. 5% of project.
2. Thesis statement: after you have begun researching your topic, you should be developing some opinions and taking a position based on your readings. The thesis statement is the argument that your paper will be based on supported by the evidence from your research. See below for more specifics. Due on November 20. 5% of project.

3. The paper portfolio: at the end of the session, you will submit your term paper with your *original* proposal and thesis statement *so hang on to these!* Due on the last day of class, December 11. 20% of project.

Papers must be typed and double-spaced. Use a 12-point font, preferably Times New Roman. Citations are to be in MLA format (parenthetical citations). The quality of your writing counts! Papers will be graded not only on the basis of your research and the development of your topic but also, I will be looking at clarity, structure, grammar, verb use, spelling, and punctuation. I can't stress this enough: *Proofread, Proofread, Proofread!* Hint: since you will be writing about the past, use the past tense for verbs and be consistent. If you have any trouble with writing, I urge you to visit the Writing Center and TASC at the Mohegan campus. 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/](http://www.trcc.comnet.edu/Ed_Resources/writing_center/)

### **The sources:**

Start with the college library. I want you to be reading books and articles written by reputable historians, not something posted on a website like *Wikipedia*. There is, of course, a great deal of information on the Internet, some good, most 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. Increasingly, I find students turning to the Internet first and the library second or giving up because an answer or information cannot be located in electronic media. For this course, break yourself of the habit.

The nature of publishing and copyright is such that scholarly journals and monographs will not appear on the Net, nor is this likely to change anytime soon. Therefore, no research even begins to be complete unless you have read books and journals. Start with books, continue with books, and end with books. That's where scholarly research is published.

Use the Internet only as a supplement, an additional place to look after you have done some serious research. Not only is there very little scholarly publishing on-line (there is *some*), but a great deal of what you find is either shoddy work, is trivial, or is outright

nonsense. You will be able to pick your way through this rubbish heap and recognize the genuine treasures buried there only if you have already done your research and have a basic understanding of the topic you are researching. Internet sources may be cited but do not count toward the minimum requirements.

In addition, and I'll state this plainly: *do not use encyclopedias for your papers*. You're free to read them as they can be a helpful way to get started. Encyclopedias contain very basic information and are useful primarily for their bibliographical information.

Encyclopedias will not be accepted as a source and will not count toward your minimum requirements.

### **Source Requirement:**

Minimum: *Four sources* which can be any combination of books (monographs) and/or peer-reviewed journal articles, but I certainly expect more. There is no maximum, but I'm not looking for bulk. I am looking for evidence that you have chosen academically-suitable sources and that you actually read the works you cite. Academically-suitable sources include books published by university presses, for example: Cambridge, Oxford, University of California or other academic publishers such as Routledge and Wiley-Blackwell to name but a few. Juvenile or grammar school-level publications are not suitable and inclusion will result in a lowering of your grade for the assignment. When you submit your bibliographies, I will check your sources.

Note: Peer-reviewed journal articles are easily accessed via academic databases such as JSTOR and EBSCO located on the web and accessible through our library. Examples of scholarly journals include *The American Historical Review*, *The Journal of Asian Studies*, *The Journal of Military History*, and *The Historical Journal*.

### **The Thesis**

A thesis is *not* a description of your paper topic, a question, statement of fact, or a statement of opinion:

“This paper is about the role of nonviolent resistance in the Indian independence movement.” (Description of topic)



“The purpose of this paper is to describe the methods Mohandas Gandhi used to gain Indian independence from Great Britain.” (Description of topic)

“Why were Mohandas Gandhi’s methods successful in the movement to achieve Indian independence from Great Britain?” (Question)

“Mohandas Gandhi led the movement by which India achieved independence from Britain.” (Statement of fact)

“Mohandas Gandhi is my favorite political leader of the twentieth century.” (Statement of opinion)

The thesis *is* a statement which reflects what you have concluded about the topic of your paper, based on a critical analysis and interpretation of the source materials you have examined:

“From the moment that Mohandas Gandhi decided to respond to force with acts of civil disobedience, British rule of India was doomed; his indictment of British colonial policy in the court of public opinion did far more damage to the British military than any weapon could.” \*\*

### **The Paper: Supporting your thesis**

In history, historical issues are rarely clear-cut. Historians working with the same information often disagree with one another and form very different conclusions. The above thesis statement about Gandhi is open to debate. That’s O.K! There is no right or wrong answer. What I expect you to do is to support your thesis with evidence from your readings. You do not have to convince your reader that your argument or thesis is the *only* possible interpretation of the evidence; however, you do need to convince your reader that your interpretation is a *valid* one. \*\*

\*\* Source: Rampolla, Mary Lynn. *A Pocket Guide to Writing in History*. 5<sup>th</sup> Ed. Bedford/St. Martin’s, Boston, 2007.

Paper structure:

1. Title Page
2. Introduction: usually thesis is included here
3. Body of paper: evidence supporting thesis
4. Conclusion
5. Bibliography

**Be sure your writing is your own.**

Use your own words and thoughts in your papers. Doing your own work is not only at the heart of your education, it's also at the heart of the academic community. It's of the same importance as ethics for a doctor: without it, the entire profession is brought into disrepute.

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 a 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*. 5<sup>th</sup> 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

Exams	60%
Attendance/Participation	10%
Term Paper Proposal	5%
Term Paper Thesis	5%
Term Paper Portfolio	20%

**Late Assignments/Make-Up Exams:**

If assignments 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.

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. *No make up will be offered on the final.*

**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 one 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 *Blackboard Vista*. This is course # 30358.

**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!

*“History is the witness of time, the lamp of truth, the embodied soul of memory, the instructress of life, and the messenger of antiquity” – Marcus Tullius Cicero*