

University of Louisville – Quality Leadership University

History 101

History of Civilizations

Professor: Rolando de la Guardia

e-mail: rdelaguardia@hotmail.com

CLASSES DESCRIPTION:

Lectures: Lectures will provide the students of information about relevant characters, major events and general characteristics of different civilizations (culture, society, economy) through the course of time. The course intends to develop their understanding the definition of concepts such as Global History, Civilization, Society, Culture, Pre-History, Ancient History, and Medieval History.

More specifically, the lectures will focus on the major events of the Stone Age, Early and Late Antiquity, the Middle Ages, and early Modernity. Within this context, students will learn about the politics, society, economy and cultural expressions and developments of some of the best-known civilizations of the period studied.

Lectures would be supported by powerpoint presentations and chosen videos. The former will point out important concepts and names, complementing them with maps and illustrations (portraits and scene paintings, tables, etc). The latter will help the students to perceive and place themselves among major aspects of daily life. In addition, it will help them to see the modern distortions of the past. They will be asked to write short reports on the videos as homework.

Moreover, students are required to do complementary readings. They will not only be questioned about the complementary readings in class and exams, but the information of the complementary readings should appear in their individual and group papers whenever relevant to the topic. In some occasions, the students will also have to write reports on the complementary readings as special homework.

Regarding group papers, students will have to get together with two other students that study their same major or a major similar to theirs. They will write a research paper that would help them not only to understand how their careers began to develop a long time ago, but would also show them how learning about older civilizations might be useful for their careers. The students will be required to hand in a progress report and give a presentation about it at the middle of the term; at the end of the term, they will have to hand in an 8,000-10,000 word paper. This should show conceptual and theoretical knowledge of history and of their own careers. Using the training from their majors, they will analyze a case study from an original perspective, reflecting the usefulness of history in their professional future.

Week 1: Introduction to the class on History of Civilizations

27 January 2015 – 29 January 2015

- Understanding general ideas:
 - a) Defining concepts: Global History, Civilization, Society, Culture, Pre-History, Ancient History, and Medieval History.
 - b) Presenting main questions to be answered during the course: What is a civilization? What is development? What is culture?
 - c) Presenting rules
 - d) Teaching how to present a history papers

Week 2: The Ice Age, Stone Age and the global spreading of the humankind

3 February 2015 – 5 February 2015

- Presentation on the development of human society during the Ice Age

Mandatory Reading and Work

- 1) Fernández-Armesto, Felipe. *The World. A Brief History*. (New Jersey: Tufts University – Pearson Prentice Hall – Darling Kindersley, 2008), pp. 4-23.
- 2) Watch: BBC's 'The Incredible Human Journey'
- 3) Short 250-500 words report

Week 3: Neolithic and Bronze Age

10 February 2015 – 12 February 2015

- Presentations on the Neolithic and the Bronze Age
- First settlements and cities
- Jericho
- Sumerians and Akkadians

Mandatory Reading:

- 1) Fernández-Armesto, pp. 26-46.

Week 4: The first major civilizations of the Bronze Age

17 February 2015 – 19 February 2015 (ONE DAY LOST DUE TO CARNIVAL HOLIDAY)

- Presentation on the Bronze age in Egypt, China, Mesopotamia, India
- Presentation on the Minoans (Cretan), the Myceneans and the Hittites
- The "People of the Sea"

Mandatory Reading:

- 1) Fernández-Armesto, pp. 50-88 and 92-94

Week 5: The Iron Age: New empires in Mesopotamia, the Phoenicians, Egypt and the Zhou Dynasty

24 February 2015 – 26 February 2015

- Presentations on the Assyrians and the new Babylonian empires. The situation of Egypt and the Phoenicians
- The emergence of the Chinese Zhou Dynasty and African civilizations

Mandatory reading:

- 1) Fernández-Armesto, pp. 96-103, 109-112, and 116-120

Week 6: Persia and Greece

3 March 2015 – 5 March 2015

- Presentation on Persia
- Presentation on Classic Greek
- Presentation on the Macedonians

Mandatory reading:

- 1) Fernández-Armesto, pp. 103-109, 124-147, and 150-166
- 2) Film: Alexander

Week 7: Mid-Term

10 March 2015 – 12 March 2015

- Presentations on Research Project (Mid-Term Project Due 10 March 2015)
- Mid-Term Exam (12 March 2015).

Week 8: Rome and Asia

17 March 2015 – 19 March 2015

- The Rise of Rome
- The Republic
- The Empire until Constantine
- India and China

Mandatory reading:

- 1) Fernández-Armesto, pp. 162-178, 184-189, and

Week 9: Rome II and Persians, Byzantines and Arabs

24 March 2015 – 26 March 2015

- The Western and the Eastern Roman Empire
- Germanic Invaders
- The Byzantines and Justinian
- The re-emergence of the Persians
- The Arabs and Islam
- The Franks and Charlemagne

Mandatory reading:

- 1) Fernández-Armesto, pp., 194-200 and 202-233

Week 10: Medieval Europe, Middle East and Asia

31 March 2015 – 2 April 2015 (ONE DAY OF CLASS LOST DUE TO EASTER)

- Abbassids, Seljuk, Turks and Mongols
- Normans and Britain
- China
- The Crusades
- Byzantium II
- Film: The Kingdom of Heaven

Mandatory reading

- 1) Fernández-Armesto, pp. 286-342

Week 11: Medieval Europe, Middle East and Asia

7 April 2015 – 9 April 2015

-

Week 12: The Renaissance

14 April 2015 – 16 April 2015

- The Fall of Byzantium in 1453
- The creation of the “modern states”: Ottomans, England, France and Spain
- Renaissance: Art, philosophy, and Machiavelli.
- The discovery of the Americas
- Film: The Messenger

Mandatory Reading:

- 1) Fernández-Armesto, pp. 343-358, 369-372, 375-380, 385-406, and 424-426

Week 13: PRESENTATION WEEK

21 April 2015 – 23 April 2015

- Presentations on Final Projects 21-23 April 2015.

Week 14: FINALS WEEK

28 April 2015 – 30 April 2015

- Final Exam 30 April 2015
- Projects due 30 April 2015

MOVIES:

According to many Historians movies and historical novels can portrait life in the past and make it more perceptible than historical textbooks. This would allow students appreciate movies as another possible source for (mis)understanding history.

During the term 2 or 3 movies would be shown in order to understand daily life in the periods of time explained in class. Students are required to stay in class during the movie session.

Exams: Structure and grading:

The exams would include questions from presentations, movies, special readings and textbook readings. Students are expected to use the knowledge acquired in class (concepts, eras, movements, persons, facts and dates) and be able to construct a coherent argument that explain the cause/consequence relation between concepts and how they affected the evolution of history in time and territory.

2 exams: Mid-Term and Final (15% of the grade each) = 30%

- Multiple choice answers
- Pick 2 out of 3 essay questions
- Define concepts, events, or names in 2 sentences
- Locate in a map
- Bonus question
- Chronological organisation of events

PAPERS:

1 research paper in groups of 2 or 3 (50% of the grade) – Students should try to find partners within the same programme of studies.

- Part I. 4,000 – 5,000 words (10%) + Presentation (10%) = 20%

CONTENT: Introduction, objectives, literature review and a description of sources and archives.

- Part II. 4,000 – 5,000 words (20%) + Presentation (10%) = 30%

CONTENT: Analysis of the sources and conclusions.

1 Individual paper of 1,000 – 2,000 words or 4 individual papers of 250-500 words (10%)

CONTENT: Analysis of films and/or complementary readings

PERFORMANCE IN CLASS:

Another 10% of the final grade would be your in-class behavior and performance. The professor expects you to read all the assigned readings and encourages you to participate vividly during debates. Presentations are important to successfully obtain a good grade in this aspect.

Involvement in class (10%)

- Questions in class.
- Debates
- Leadership in research groups

ASSESSMENT OF GENERAL EDUCATION GOALS:

Students will demonstrate competency in the three University of Louisville General Education History content areas by showing their ability to:

a) Communicate an understanding of the process of historical change and the significance of place and time. Through examinations and map exercises, students will demonstrate that they possess a sense of change and continuity over historical time and demonstrate that they possess the ability to place historical events within a relevant historical context.

b) Communicate an understanding of the creation, development, and changing nature of historical knowledge and the importance of historical documentation. Through examinations and map exercises, students will demonstrate their understanding of historical arguments and evidence and demonstrate that they possess the necessary skills to document historical events and phenomena.

c) Construct and communicate a historical argument employing historical facts. Through examinations and assignments, students will demonstrate their ability to construct and defend an argument interpreting the human past based on appropriate historical evidence.

RULES AND HONOR CODE:

You must arrive to class on time.

In this class you are not allowed to have your Cellular phones on, nor are you allowed to bring into the classroom laptop computers or multimedia instrument. Students that do this might be asked to leave the classroom. This will affect your final grade.

Cheating in exams (copying from classmates or using notes/books), copying from classmates' papers, committing plagiarism are seriously prohibited and are the violation of the HONOR CODE.

Remember that you are under the University's HONOR CODE. You must understand that the HONOR CODE is not a set of flexible rules created to enhance positive competition between students. Consequences of breaking the HONOR CODE might be failing the class or even expulsion from the University. Therefore you are encouraged to comply with it.