

HIS 308: Navigating World History

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This is a comprehensive, one-semester World History course. It is designed to prepare Social Science Licensure majors to teach the required High School World History course in North Carolina. It aims to provide students with an understanding of World History as a distinct field of History, to familiarize them with historical explanation, and to acquaint them with major developments in and patterns of World History. While it is expected that students will learn a lot, the course is not intended as means of delivering huge quantities of factual information. The title of the course—“Navigating World History”—indicates that the course aims at helping students find their way through World History and at gaining skills that will enable them to continue global journeys as learners and teachers. Assignments will sometimes ask students to think as students, sometimes as teachers.

We use one text, Robert W. Strayer, *Ways of the World. A Brief Global History with Sources*. 2nd edition. It is a textbook but also a compendium of primary sources, illustrations, maps, and charts. It serves also to illustrate how to analyze and discuss historical matters, particularly world historical matters—what things to look at, what kinds of questions to ask, what kinds of answers to anticipate

There are 3 kinds of assignments—biweekly, periodic (“World History Stories”), and final (“Final Exam”). They are explained in the Writing Assignments section at the end of the syllabus. We will be working with the biweekly assignments in class at the beginning of each unit (the six parts of the text constitute six units) to make sure we have our bearings. Then in the remaining classes of each unit we will be considering select topics and issues connected with each part of World History. Students are expected to have completed by class time the assigned readings for each class and to be able to discuss just how the chronology, theme, and region characterizations (see Writing Assignments) are illustrated by the particular information provided in each chapter. We will be considering also many of the primary sources contained in the *Ways of the World*. Students are expected to be able to discuss just how specific primary sources furnish evidence for the leading themes identified for various chapters.

Grading is: Biweekly summaries 30%; World History Stories 30%; Final Exam 30%; Attendance and Participation 10%. Students will be writing 19 pieces, some very short, others longer.

Class Schedule/Reading and Writing Assignments (S = Strayer, *Ways of the World*)

8/20 *Introduction.* Course objectives, content, procedures, terms, concepts, assumptions.

What is history about? What is World History about? How do we know what happened? How do we know what it means? Why do things happen? Who cares? (lviii-lix)

8/22 *Textbooks and History* Reading this textbook and using primary sources S li-lix, 3-9, 132-141, 324-331, 618-623, 770-777, 968-973; xlv-xlix. What is the problem of world history according to Strayer? How does Strayer propose to deal with this? How does he organize world history? What kinds of developments does he think most important? Is there any single overarching story of world history?

1. Beginnings

8/27 BP CTR S 3-59

8/29 Chapters CTR Definitions: civilization, cities, and states S 61-91

9/3 Particulars: Mesopotamia, Egypt, India

9/5 Primary Sources S 92-107

2. "Second-Wave Civilizations"

9/10 BP CTR S 109-145

9/12 Chapters CTR. Primary Sources S 146-163

9/17 Cultural and Social Traditions S 165-242

9/19 Africa and Americas S 261-291

3. 500-1500

9/24 BP CTR China and East Asia S 307-313

9/26 Chapters CTR Islam and the Islamic World S 411-461

10/1 Christendom S 463-511

10/3 Early Global Networks S 315-363/The Mongol Moment S 513-557

4. Early Modern

10/8 Toward a Global World 1000-1500 (this chapter is actually from Part 3, but it is most usefully read in conjunction with the Big Picture Essay for Part 4); S 559-609, BP CTR 611-615

10/10 Chapters CTR Eurasia and Transoceanic Exploration S 617-717

10/17 Cultural Transformations 719-771

5. European Moment

10/22 BP CTR S 773-777; Atlantic Revolutions S 781-825

10/24 Chapters BTR; Industrial Revolution S 827-877

10/29 European Impact S 879-929

10/31 Colonizers and Colonized S 931-971

6. 1914-2010

11/5 BP CTR ; Toward World War S 973-977; 981-990

11/7 Chapters CTR; Socialism S 1035-1085

11/12 More War S 990-1012

11/14 End of Empire S 1087-1135

11/19 Post-1945 S 1137-1185; Clash of Civilizations? Huntington, *Foreign Affairs* 1993

12/10 Final Exam Papers due

Writing Assignments

A. *Biweekly Summaries* (= CTRs)

On p. xiii of the Preface, Strayer states that the text employs three principles of organization—**chronology**, **theme**, and **region**. **Chronology** refers to time frame, sometimes as broad as millennia, other times as narrow as decades, but mostly centuries long. **Theme** refers to the major pattern or kinds of developments marking time periods and shared by many peoples or societies. It is simply “what happened” in the broadest sense. **Region** refers to the different broad geographic areas involved in World History.

These might be continents (e.g., Africa, Asia), combinations of continents (Eurasia, even Afro-Eurasia), or areas within continents (Mesoamerica, Sub-Saharan Africa). These point to what, essentially, we want to know: What (happened)? Where? And when? Part by part and chapter by chapter, Strayer consistently and explicitly provides answers to these questions. In a broad fashion he does so in each of the six Big Picture Essays that begin each of the Parts into which the text is divided. In more focused fashion, he does so in each of the chapters within the six Parts of the text. We want to find and understand these answers before we read any in depth narrative. To that end you have two written assignments to complete and turn in for each of the six parts of *Ways of the World*. Bring these to class for use in class discussion, then submit them to me.

1. For each Big Picture Essay, find and transcribe Strayer's information about the chronology, theme (sometimes themes), and regions (meaning regions involved) that mark the part of world history under consideration. This will fit on one page. These assignments appear as "BP CTR".
2. Go through the introduction to each chapter of the part of world history under consideration. Find and transcribe what Strayer has to say about the chronology, theme, and region treated in each chapter. Depending on the number of chapters in each part, this will mean from 2 to 6 separate chapters and thus 2-6 transcriptions in the same assignment. This may take 2-3 pages. These assignments appear as "Chapters CTR". Note the Chapters CTR assignments mean that you will have to look at the introductory part of all the chapters of a particular part before readings in some of the chapters are actually assigned. Think of this and the BP CTR assignments as finding the map before you take the trip.

B. *World History Stories*

For each of the parts (1-6) into which the text and course is divided, you are to write up a lecture in which you discuss developments in that part of world history. Your discussion should deal with the following points, but consider the CTR work you have already done as the starting point for these assignments:

- What is the "story line" or "plot" (essentially, what is this part of world history about?) = theme(s)
- Who are the main "players" = regions, peoples, societies
- What are the chronological boundaries of this part of world history and why? = chronology
- What are representative (illustrative) particular events or developments?
- Is there a particular event/episode that encapsulates important features of the story?

- What are some primary sources that illustrate important aspects of this story and what exactly do they illustrate?

Submit these to me on the assigned dates as email attachments. I will return them with comments and grades the same way.

C. Final Exam

You are to write your own final exam and explain it. Imagine that you have been teaching this course and using the Strayer textbook. As a demanding teacher you are going to give your students a demanding final exam which will test their understanding of World History. You need to develop 10 essay questions which in your opinion get to the heart of the most important developments and issues in World History. Your assumption is that if students know the answers to these 10 questions they will have acquired a sound understanding of the major features and issues of world history (in your opinion).

Fashion your questions (make sure there is at least one which addresses each part of this course) and explain why you chose each of them and what kind of answer you expect.

Submit this to me as an email attachment. I will return it with comments and grade the same way.