

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

You will be producing something—usually short—for almost every class session. This means that you have to do the readings as scheduled (= by the class for which they are assigned). The syllabus describes each assignment. There is a good deal of variety in the assignments, but what is of paramount importance throughout the course is grasping the “Big Picture” before you do anything else. We practice this by doing Big Picture CTR (Chronology-Theme-Regions) assignments for almost every part and frequent Chapter CTR assignments. Mastering this process makes it possible to confront and make sense of what seems like an overwhelming amount of detail in the chapters themselves. (See last page of syllabus for fuller explanation of CTR assignments.)

Students are expected to attend all classes, participate in class discussion, and submit all assignments on time.

Grading

Daily assignments (starting with Part 3) 60%

Class Participation	15%
Final Exam	25%

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

8/23 *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?

8/25 *Textbooks and History* Reading this textbook and using primary sources S lvi-lxv, lii-lv. Look at *Brief Contents* (xxii-xxiv), then at *Contents* (xxvii). 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 (look at chapter titles)? On the basis of what you can infer from the whole set of Part and chapter titles, does Strayer seem to be telling any single overarching “story” of world history? If so, what is it?

Modeling the Process (These are all written but ungraded assignments which we will discuss in class. Bring each assignment to class in written [typed] form and turn it in after class. We are learning the process here)

Part 1. *Beginnings*

8/30 *BP CTR S 2-7* Read the Part 1 Big Picture Essay. Find the generalization which Strayer uses to characterize this whole part of world history; note the time frame (C) and the geographic scope (R) of the characteristic developments (T) of this part of world history

9/1 *Chapters CTR* Using Strayer’s introductions to Chapters 1 (pp. 11-12) and 2 (59-60), find the generalizations which Strayer uses to characterize the major developments in world history up to 4000 BC (Chapter 1) and from 3500-500 BC (Chapter 2). Along the way, Strayer provides definitions of a number of familiar terms: agriculture, city, state, civilization. Find and transcribe these definitions. Bring to class.

9/6 *Particulars S 12-47; 60-90* Pay attention to how in the body of each chapter Strayer organizes his exposition of the “themes” identified in his chapter introductions. Look at his red-colored section headings and using either his wording or your own or a combination of the two make an outline of each chapter. Bring to class and turn in.

9/8 *Explanations* History is about change and the big question is why change happens. Two of the biggest changes in world history are the transition to agriculture and the emergence of

civilization. Strayer reviews explanations for each of these. Based on Strayer's discussion, discuss the factors that may have been responsible for these changes. Bring to class and turn in.

9/13 *Primary Sources* S 92-107 Read (or look at) the written primary sources and ask yourself in what form and setting they were originally communicated—that is, what social and/or cultural role they played. What insights into the Mesopotamian and Egyptian worlds so they provide?

Practicing the Process (Doing again what we did in Part 1; again, bring a written version to class)

Part 2. "Second-Wave Civilizations"

9/15 *BP CTR* S 96-101 Read the Part 2 Big Picture Essay. What would you take out of this to make a succinct general characterization of the distinctive developments in world history during this period? Write your CTR down, submit via email attachment to me, and bring a copy to class in that order (do not use language like "Strayer says..." or "the textbook says..."; make your statements simply about world history)

9/20 Read Strayer's introductions to Chapters 3 (pp. 105-107), 4 (pp. 147-149), 5 (pp. 191-192), and 6 (pp. 229-230) and extract from these introductions statements that provide the best general characterization of the developments or situations under consideration in each chapter. Write these down (there should be one for each chapter for a total of four), submit them via email attachment to me and bring a copy to class

9/22 Read pp. 105-135 and pp. 191-218 What specific details about various empires illustrate the thesis or theme of the CTR for Chapter 3? What specific details from Chapter 5 illustrate the general characterization Strayer provides in his chapter introduction regarding society and inequality? Write these down, submit them via email attachment to me, and bring a copy to class (in that order)

9/27 Using material from Chapter 4 (pp. 147-181), put all the steps together in a "lecture" on "Culture and Religion in Eurasia/North Africa" = "Wisdom Traditions"

This means: a) start with reference to the Part 2 Big Picture CTR,

b) then employ a comprehensive generalization from Strayer's introduction to Chapter 3,

c) using the material from the body of the chapter provide illustrative examples of the points made in the generalization,

d) note the ways in which specific primary source material serves to illustrate those points in the case of Chinese, Indian, Greek, and Middle Eastern wisdom traditions

4-5 pages, typed, double-spaced. Submit this to me via email attachment and bring a copy to class

9/29 *Variations* Read Chapter 6 (pp. 229-271). In trying to understand world history as *world* history, we are always looking for developments that have occurred in more or less similar ways on a global basis. Sometimes there is much that doesn't quite fit the general characterizations we are able to formulate. This is true for Part 2 of World History where Strayer has emphasized the extended scope and scale of civilizations, the proliferation of empires, and the intensification of patterns of social inequality as broadly characteristic developments. But he has had to illustrate these by reference to Eurasia and North Africa rather than to all the world's regions, leaving discussion of developments in Africa and the Americas to a separate chapter (chapter 6). How does he still link developments/situations here to the big picture he has drawn for Eurasia/North Africa? Note what general comparisons and contrasts he makes that allow us still to make use of the general characterizations applied to Eurasia/North Africa. That is, identify what he notes as similar to Eurasian/North African developments and what he notes as different from them in the case of societies in Africa and the Americas. Write down your thoughts and bring to class for discussion (and submit to me after class).

On Your Own (This means, write the assignment, submit to me via email, and bring a copy to class for discussion)

Part 3. *Third Wave Civilizations, Age of Accelerating Connections 500-1500*

10/4 BP CTR S 272-277 Strayer's use of blue for the two section heading titles in the Part 3 Big Picture Essay suggests coordinate themes or a pair of characteristic developments. Produce a succinct CTR statement which includes both themes

10/6 S 281-321 Only two of the chapter titles in Part 3 have the word "Connections" in them, but they are all about connections of one kind or another, or to put it another way, they are all about developments which produced the connections which created the distinct worlds of East Asia, Islam, and the West and for a time joined large parts of these together in a single, Mongol-dominated world. Start with Chapter 7, make use of a generalization drawn from Strayer's introduction (pp.281-283) to this chapter and produce a 250-word sketch which deals with connections from the perspective of commerce and culture

10/11 S 323-354 How can the story of the rise of a China-centered "world order" encompassing most of eastern Asia be told in terms of various kinds of connections (between China and Vietnam, Korea, and Japan)?

10/13 S 363-397 How can we tell the story of the rise and spread of Islam in Eurasia and Africa in terms of different kind of connections?

10/18 FALL BREAK

10/20 S 409-447 How can the stories of eastern and western Christendom be told in terms of connections (to the Orthodox and Roman Churches respectively)?

10/25 S 457-487 How did the Mongols produce an interconnected world of unprecedented scope?

4. Early Modern

10/27 *“Toward a Global World 1000-1500”* (Chapter 12 is actually from Part 3, but it is most usefully read in conjunction with the Big Picture Essay for Part 4); S 499-535; Part 4 Big Picture, 546-549; using Strayer’s discussion in the “Preview of Coming Attractions” section (pp. 531-533), list the changes occurring between 1500 and 2012 and the characteristic features of “modern societies”

11/1 S 553-631 *“Emergence of Globalization in Context of Empires.”* Using the introductory sections of Chapters 13 (pp. 553-554) and 14 (pp. 601-602) come up with a single Big Picture statement which links together empire-building and the development of global commerce (it will be helpful to read the body of each of these chapters quickly or at least to survey them to familiarize yourself with the specific topics that are part of this story)

11/3 *Cultural Transformations* S 643-677 Identify these and note their significance

Part 5. European Moment 1750-1914

11/8 S 688-693 Fashion a BP CTR from Strayer’s Big Picture Essay, using just what he says on pp. 689-690, *not* his discussion of Eurocentrism on pp. 690-693;

11/10 S 697-728 Go back to what you wrote about Strayer’s preview of the modern age at the end of Chapter 12 (pp. 531-533) and to your BP CTR for Part 5 to remind yourself of the specific characteristic features of “modern societies” and discuss how the Atlantic Revolutions (Chapter 16) and the Revolutions of Industrialization (Chapter 17) served to produce specific distinct features of “modern societies”

11/15 S 879-971 Using the material from Chapters 18 and 19, starting with Strayer’s introductory sections for each chapter, fashion a general statement that explains what was involved in the growth and assertion of European global dominance in the 19th century

Part 6. 1914-2010

11/17 BP CTR Using S 873-877 Produce a characterization of the period from 1914-2015

You will see that at least since WWI, much of recent history has been the story of ideological causes centered ostensibly on ideas about transforming society and/or people. For each of the chapters in Part 6, identify and be able to describe the ideologies in play and where possible illustrate them by reference to primary source selections at the end of each chapter

11/17 *Collapse and Recovery* Start with the Big Picture Essay, S 881-882 , then S 882-927

11/22 *Communism and Cold War* S 929-973

11/24 THANKSGIVING BREAK

11/29 *Nation-States Everywhere* S 975-1021

12/1 *Contemporary Issues—globalization, human rights, modernism vs. tradition, environmental degradation* S 1023-1072

Strayer does not provide a useful title for this part of world history, just calling it “The Most Recent Century”. However, one of the features of this period that he notes is the disintegration of empires. Empires have been a constant through almost all of world history, so their disappearance during the course of the 20th century is a fundamentally important development in world history, and we might well use “The End of Empires” as a title for this most recent part of world history. With that in mind, use the material in Chapters 20 through 23 to sketch the story of the distintegration of various empires during the 20th century and describe the post-imperial world of the 21st century (3-4 pages, double-spaced; due via email 12/1).

12/13 Final Exam Papers due

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.

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.