

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 and Eric W. Nelson *Ways of the World. A Brief Global History with Sources*. 3rd 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 60%

Class Participation	15%
Final Exam	25%

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

8/15 *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?

8/17 *Textbooks and History* Reading this textbook and using primary sources S xii-xvi, lvi-lxiv, lii-lv. Look at *Brief Contents* (xxiii-xxiv), then at *Contents* (xxv-xlii). 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 ungrade assignments which we will discuss in class. Send me each assignment as an email attachment (sqruzick@uncg.edu) before class time and bring each assignment to class in written form. We are learning the process here)

Part 1. Beginnings

8/22 *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. Think of T as the general answer to the question “What happened in this particular time frame?” Do not use language like “Strayer says...” or “the textbook says...”; make your statements simply about world history (“In the time period x, such and such took place...”)

8/24 *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). Again, you are looking for his general answer to the question “What happened?” But you can expect the answer for each chapter to involve one or more of the parts of the Big Picture answer and perhaps to say a bit more about each part. Along the way, Strayer provides definitions of several familiar terms: agriculture, city, state, civilization. Find and transcribe these definitions. Email me the Chapter CTR and the definitions before class time and bring a copy to class.

8/29 *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. Email this to me before class time and bring a copy to class.

8/31 *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 possible explanations for each of these (pages 24-32 and 68-69). Based on Strayer’s discussions, identify the factors that may have been responsible for these changes. Email this to me before class and bring a copy to class.

9/5 *Primary Sources* S 91-95 Read this section on “Working with Evidence”. Consider all the questions Strayer poses (in his red square bullet points) about the three depicted items. Answer one further question: Based on what you have said about these items, what kind of characterization of social, economic, and political features of the Indus Valley civilization could you make. Write down your answers and bring to class for discussion.

Practicing the Process (Doing again what we did in Part 1; again, email your assignment to me before class time and bring a written version to class)

Part 2. “Second-Wave Civilizations”

9/7 *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 before class, and bring a copy to class in that order

9/12 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 before class and bring a copy to class

9/14 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 before class, and bring a copy to class.

9/19 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 Buddhism

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

9/19 *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. Submit this to me via email attachment before class time and bring a copy to class.

Part 3. *Third Wave Civilizations, Age of Accelerating Connections 500-1500* (Email all assignments to me before class time and bring a copy to class)

9/21 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 set of characteristic developments. Produce a succinct CTR statement which includes both themes.

9/26 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. Long-distance trade, the topic of Chapter 7, is one kind of connector and Strayer discusses (pp. 282-283) the kinds of changes long-distance trade brought about in different places during this time period. Start with Strayer's general overview to Chapter 7 (pp. 281-283); fashion from this a CTR; then using the CTR as a first paragraph, go on to sketch with specific details the economic, social, political, and cultural changes that occurred in different regions as a result of long-distance trade (not every region experienced all these changes; sometimes Strayer discusses only one particular change in connection with a region). 500 words. 9/28 S 323-354 How can the story of the rise of a "China-centered set of relationships encompassing most of eastern Asia" be told in terms of

various kinds of connections (between China and Vietnam, Korea, and Japan). How was China connected to each of these countries and what did each borrow or adapt from China?

10/3 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? What kinds of connections brought Islam to Spain, Anatolia (that is, Turkey before the Turks came), India, and West Africa?

10/5 S 463-511 How can the stories of eastern and western Christendom be told in terms of connections (to the Orthodox and Roman Churches respectively). More specifically, what peoples ended up connected to Constantinople through conversion to Christianity? And in what way were the peoples of western Europe connected to a single, Rome-centered Church?

10/10 FALL BREAK

10/12 S 457-497 How did the Mongols produce an interconnected world of unprecedented scope? Conquest started this but what policies and practices contributed to intensified interconnections?

10/17 S 498-535 Strayer pauses here to survey developments up to the beginning of the Modern Era (typically dated from 1500). Read the chapter and answer these 3 questions: What are the dominant forms of political organization across the globe by this time? What other forms are present? How does the situation in Europe differ from the general, dominant pattern?

4. Early Modern

10/19 “*Toward a Global World 1000-1500*” (Chapter 12, from which the first reading is taken, is actually from Part 3, but it is usefully read in conjunction with the Big Picture Essay for Part 4); S 531-533, 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” and correlate these with the specific details that Strayer provides on pp. 547-548 (he does not here illustrate each of the features listed on pp. 531-533)

10/24 S 553-641 “*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)

10/26 *Cultural Transformations* 643-687. Identify and briefly describe these “transformations” and note their significance

Part 5. European Moment 1750-1914

11/2 S 688-693 Fashion a BP CTR from Strayer's Big Picture Essay, using just what he says on pp. 688-690, not his discussion of Eurocentrism on pp.690-693.

11/4 S 697-785 Go back to what you wrote about Strayer's preview of the modern age at the end of Chapter 12 (pp. 588-591) 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."

11/9 S 787-870 Using the material from Chapters 18 (pp. 879-912) and 19 (pp. 931-971), 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 and identify the kinds of impact European dominance of one kind or another had on different global societies.

Part 6. 1914-2015

Strayer structures his discussions in Chapters 20, 21, and 23 around sets of basic patterns or stages (just 2 or 3) or themes he identifies, discusses briefly in his introductory sections, and uses as section headings in the body of the chapter (which means that they are right there on the page). This enables him to treat the 20th-century histories of a diverse populations and regions from a few simple perspectives or organizing ideas. For each of the next three assignments, identify the patterns or stages or themes and sketch the way in which these serve to provide common stories joining together the experiences of numerous peoples.

11/14 *Collapse, Recovery, and Rebalancing* Start with the Big Picture Essay, S 872-877, then S 881-927. What's involved in each of these developments?

11/16 *The Rise and Fall of World Communism* S 929-973. What is involved in the stages in this century-long process for 1) Russia and 2) China—i.e., how did each undergo revolution, the process of building a socialist society, and end up abandoning communism in practice?

11/21 *End of Empire* S 975-1022 Strayer uses a two-stage pattern here. What is it and what's involved in each stage in various countries?

11/28 Chapter 23: *Contemporary Issues—globalization, human rights, modernism vs. tradition, environmental degradation* S 1023-1072 Using the first part of Chapter 23 (pp. 1023-1036) describe the characteristic practices of economic globalization.

12/7 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.

CTR's 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.

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