

HIS 308: Navigating World History

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This course involves learning about World History, but even more it is about learning about how to learn World History: how to find information and interpretations, how to organize material in the clearest and most informative ways, how to connect particular stories to larger global stories, how to connect local and regional developments to global patterns, and how to find and exploit primary sources. World History is not the aggregate of the histories of all the worlds' peoples and societies. It is rather the story of developments that many or in some cases all of the world's peoples and societies have experienced over time. Thus, we will look first at those developments and only after that look at individual peoples and societies from the perspective of identified major world historical developments. That means, for example, that we look at the beginning of agriculture in general terms first; then we look at the agricultural revolution in China or Mesoamerica.

We will approach World History in a comprehensive fashion, starting with the macro stories characterizing successive periods of World History—with the Big Picture for each of these periods. We will cover the whole span of world history in terms of the Big Picture characteristics/developments that mark each successive period of World History. Then we'll look at the component stories within each of the Big Picture developments. Then we'll move downwards to the level of particulars, examining first the ways in which they share common features and then the ways in which they vary from each other. Finally, we'll connect primary sources with the most important developments in each period of world history.

We use one text, Robert W. Strayer and Eric W. Nelson, *Ways of the World. A Brief Global History with Sources*. 4th 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. **Bring the textbook to each class.**

Students will be producing a short, written assignment for every class session. Classes are organized around the topic or question of the written assignment, so students must be prepared to discuss these in each class. There are four graded paper assignments and a final exam, which students will write themselves.

Students are expected to attend all classes, participate in class discussion, and submit all assignments on time. More than two unexcused absences will result in grade reduction.

Grading:

Daily assignments	60%
Class Participation	25%
Final Exam	15%

8/20 Introduction and Overview

8/22-8/29 Parts 1-6 Big Pictures—Chronology, Themes, Regions

Read just the Big Picture Essay, extract from the text (ideally by copying verbatim) a statement which characterizes in general terms the major developments of that period. Should be concise—1 sentence is best, but may need 2 or more at times. Students will present their statements in class as part of class discussion. Prior to class, send me via email attachment the statement you have fashioned. These are not graded, but failure to submit on time will diminish your grade.

8/22 Big Pictures Parts 1 and 2

8/27 Big Pictures Parts 3 and 4

8/29 Big Pictures Parts 5 and 6

Paper #1 Due 9/3: Write a prose narrative identifying the major characteristic developments/stories of world history, period by period (= Strayer's 6 periods). Utilize previous work and discussion material. Aim for 500 words.

9/3- 9/19 Chapter CTRs—Chapters 1-23

Read the initial overviews at the beginning of each chapter, usually comprising 2 pages, and fashion a CTR statement for each chapter. Students will present their statements in class as part of class discussion. Prior to class, send me via email attachment the statement you have fashioned. These are not graded, but failure to submit on time will diminish your grade.

9/3 Chapter CTRs for Part 1 Chapters (= Chapters 1 and 2)

9/5 Chapter CTRs for Part 2 Chapters (= Chapters 3, 4, 5, 6)

9/10 Chapter CTRs for Part 3 Chapters (= Chapters 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12)

9/12 Chapter CTRs for Part 4 Chapters (= Chapters 13, 14, 15)

9/17 Chapter CTRs for Part 5 Chapters (= Chapters 16, 17, 18, 19)

9/19 Chapter CTRs for Part 6 Chapters (= Chapters 20, 21, 22, 23)

Paper #2 Due 9/26: Combine the Big Picture statements for each chapter with the corresponding Chapter CTRs for that chapter to produce a fuller (prose) overview of the characteristic developments for each part of world history. Use one paragraph for each part.

9/26-10/10 Commonalities and Variations. We turn now to particulars and to the problem of how to correlate the stories of particular societies and peoples with each other to provide illustrations of the patterns or developments previously described in general terms. Strayer starts

each part with a big picture without referencing specific peoples, societies, or civilization, then provides a similarly general overview at the beginning of each chapter. After that he turns finally to specific discussions of particular societies, peoples, and civilizations in connection with the specific patterns and developments he has identified. Our interest/question is what features different peoples, societies, or civilizations have that make them different versions of the same story (= the same T). That is, we will be asking at what level particular stories are simply versions of the same story. Then we will identify the variations in each case—that is, the ways in which generally similar societies and civilizations differ from one another. This time we will not be working with all the chapters but with select chapters from each of the six parts. Read each chapter in question. Students will present their answers in class as part of class discussion. Prior to class, send me via email attachment your answers to each assigned question. These are not graded, but failure to submit on time will diminish your grade.

9/26 Part 1, Chapter 2: In what ways are the first civilizations similar to each other? In what ways are they different from one another?

9/28 Part 2, Chapter 4: In what ways are the philosophical/religious systems embodied in Confucianism, Daoism, Hinduism, Buddhism, Greek rationalism, Judaism, Zoroastrianism, Christianity, and Islam similar to each other and in what ways do they differ?

10/1 Part 3, Chapter 8: In what ways are Korea's, Vietnam's, and Japan's relationships to China similar to each other in the Third Wave Era? In what ways are they different from each other?

10/3 Part 4, Chapter 13: In what ways are the empires of the Early Modern World (1450-1750) similar to one another? In what ways are they different?

10/8 Part 5, Chapter 19: In what ways are the impacts of European power on China, the Ottoman Empire, and Japan in the 19th century similar? In what ways are they different?

10/10 Part 6, Chapter 20: In what ways are the stories of communism in Russia and China in the 20th century similar? In what ways are they different?

Paper #3 Due 10/19: Pick another, different chapter than those used in previous assignments. Pose the questions about sameness and difference in connection with the particulars treated in the chapter. Answer the questions.

10/17 Fall Break

10/19-11/7 Big Questions/Big Issues. The following questions address major changes, turning points, or important features of world history. Students will present their answers in class as part of class discussion. Prior to class, send me via email attachment the statement your answers. These are not graded, but failure to submit on time will diminish your grade.

10/19 Beginnings—Read pages 23-33 and discuss how Strayer explains the beginnings of agriculture. Read pages 54-65 and 69-74 and discuss possible explanations of the beginning of civilization.

10/24 What is an “empire”? See the definition Strayer provides on p. 100. Describe one empire discussed in Part 2, one in Part 3, one in Part 4, and one in Part 5 in terms of the features of “empire” that Strayer cites in his definition—1) large state, 2) rule and extraction of resources from other states and peoples, 3) variety of peoples encompassed within a single political system.

10/26 What are basic contrasts between 1) Eurasia and 2) sub-Saharan Africa and the Americas. Use Strayer Chapter 6, noting especially his general characterizations on pp. 228-229.

10/29 Rise and Spread of Islam. What are the distinctive features of Islamic belief and practice? How did Islam move from Arabia to various other parts of Afro-Eurasia? Use Chapter 9.

10/31 Pre-Modern and Modern What are the distinctive features of modern society? Use Strayer pp. 522-524. At what points in time do these various individual features appear? Make use of Parts 4 and 5.

11/5 European Dominance. In what ways did various European states come to dominate various peoples and societies across the globe in the 19th century? Use Chapters 18 and 19.

11/7 Globalization. What are the distinctive features of economic globalization? What are the controversial issues connected with it?

Paper #4. Due 11/12. Go to the Big Picture section of Part 4. Strayer characterizes 1450-1750 as “the Early Modern World” because, he writes, “during this time we can find some initial signs, markers, or sprouts of what became the modern world. Such indicators of a new era in human history include the beginnings of genuine globalization; new democratic, economic, and intellectual patterns; and growing European presence in world affairs” (p. 539). Discuss in specific terms just what these markers of the modern world involve.

11/12-12/3 Primary Sources. Read pp. lxi-lxiv first. Students will present their responses in class as part of class discussion. Prior to class, send me via email attachment the response you have fashioned. These are not graded, but failure to submit on time will diminish your grade.

11/12 Indus. Since written materials from the Indus River Valley civilization remain unreadable, we have to use material remains to discover features of this society. How do the remains presented or described on pp. 88-89 suggest that this Indus River Valley society was a civilization?

11/14 Commerce and Culture. How do the sources presented in pp.305-311 illustrate aspects of the Big Picture characterization regarding “transregional interaction in the Third-Wave Era” on pp. 269-271.

11/19 Atlantic Revolutions. What specific revolutionary developments or ideologies do the writers of the documents on pp. 725-723 criticize?

11/21 What are the problems of industrial society cited by the socialist writers presented on pp. 769-777? What solutions do they propose?

11/26 If, as Strayer writes (p. 911), the ideologies of the Axis powers (Italy, Germany, and Japan) may be described variously as fascist, authoritarian, right-wing, or radically nationalist, fascism, what would you use from the primary sources on pp. 912-916 to illustrate those characterizations?

12/3 Read Strayer's discussion of fundamentalism and the Muslim world on pp. 1037-1042, and describe how the various sources presented on pp. 1054-1064 could be used to illustrate different ideas about the nature and role of Islam in the contemporary world.

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 world history as periodized by Strayer) 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.

Due 12/10

