

History 151 – World Civilizations

Instructor: Cynthia Smith

CONTACT INFORMATION:

Office: Building 7/ Room 618

Phone: 845 - 9253 Email: smithcyn@hawaii.edu

Office Hours: (updated each semester)

REQUIRED TEXTS:

- A History of World Societies, Vol. I to 1700, McKay et al, 9th edition Additional readings (links on the internet) assigned during the semester

DESCRIPTION OF THE CLASS

This class is a **lecture-based** course presenting a substantial amount of information; the intent is to provide you a broad-based understanding of the intriguing patterns and differences between diverse human societies and experiences. There is also a strong emphasis on identifying historical roots of *current* issues and relations. Student participation is strongly encouraged however the structure of the class is based primarily on lecture presentations of stories, patterns and insights gained from an overview of human experiences from ancient times to the early modern era. The goal is **not** to exhaustively cover all cultures during this extensive period (an impossible goal) but rather to give a 'big picture' overview of key events, as well as an awareness of influential civilizations which dominated eras and impacted other societies. With this as a foundation, the hope is you continue to pursue learning about areas that interest you **for the rest of your life**, through independent reading, watching documentaries and taking other history classes as well as studies in areas such as religion, political science, geography, languages, and art.

COURSE GOALS: There are several important underlying goals and themes for this class.

I. Understand the importance of 'cradle' civilizations: By looking at some of the earliest and most influential civilizations, we better understand the important role these critical cultures had in helping to shape the world we live in today. We focus on the "cradle" civilizations - early societies which first struggled with challenges of a new 'urban' life. Because they were the first and/or were "successful", they dramatically influenced many later societies.

II. Identify roots of current events: In many regions, deeply-rooted historical events led to and continue to influence issues dominating the news and attention today. To participate in and contribute to the world as an informed global citizen, you **must be grounded** in historical foundations of contemporary beliefs, social and political systems and regional relations; for example we trace the development and spread of influential religious traditions and political ideas. Most of these models and ideologies **continue** to impact world societies today. History helps us understand historical roots of antagonisms and differences that resulted in and in some cases continue to fuel current hostilities and conflicts. For example historical examination of great empires of the past such as the empires built by Persia, Rome, Islam or the Mongols reveals how empires permanently changed, and were changed by, the people they ruled. Many empires produced creative interactions **and** tensions still evident today.

III. Identify patterns and lessons in history: An overview of world cultures, particularly ancient peoples, reveals *common* patterns in human development **as well as** a remarkable *diversity* of human experiences. We look at how human actions and beliefs reflect common themes throughout time and across the globe; we also explore fascinating differences between peoples and time periods. History provides us with the tools necessary to address the problems and possibilities that confront us today, using knowledge gained by past experiences to identify solutions to current challenges. From historical study and comparisons we learn... what worked? what didn't? why? History enables us to grasp necessary and often painfully acquired lessons from the past. Then we have the responsibility to apply this knowledge productively in our own century and millennium.

COURSE THEMES:

While it may seem we are hopping across the globe and across centuries at a frenetic pace, there are important organizing and structuring themes apparent when studying world civilizations. Throughout History 151, we continually refer to four recurring themes.

A) **GEOGRAPHY** - One obvious theme in human history is the fact that human cultures have been and still are deeply affected by their natural surroundings. In some cases geographic setting resulted in *benefits* for thriving cultures, as seen in ancient Egypt. In other instances, significant *burdens or obstacles* resulted from geographic conditions, for example in ancient Mesopotamia. A culture's geography often directly impacts religious views, political organizations and economic developments. The degree to which a civilization is connected to others (e.g. Greece) or isolated from them (e.g. Japan) had significant consequences on cultures and their historical experiences. Throughout this course, we look at connections between geography and the development of cultures.

B) **RELIGION** - It is particularly important in a History 151 course, which addresses the first great cultures and peoples, that time is spent understanding the different religious views evolving in societies. Religious beliefs and structures are at the core of MOST cultures we study. In some instances, religious beliefs were the very foundation of, the most important influence on, political structures, social systems and cultural developments. Religion was and continues to be a dramatically influential factor in human history. Understanding different religious views helps us appreciate and respect the tremendous diversity of human societies.

C) **SEARCH FOR STABILITY** – An intriguing pattern in world civilization, particularly evident in ancient cultures but also manifest in today's world, is the desire of people to create stable lifestyles. In general, humans do NOT like turbulence, uncertainty and instability in their lives. The need to create structures or belief systems which provide some degree of stability or certainty is another important pattern in human cultures. Examining different solutions to the challenges of establishing social stability provide us with fascinating comparisons. Some cultures attempted to create a stable society by emphasizing political solutions. Others turned to rigid social structures and/or deeply traditional religious practices to achieve some degree of societal stability. And then there is the fascinating fact that a few cultures (the small minority) seemed to *de-emphasize* stability, favoring a greater degree of freedom and mobility. The trade-offs that cultures were and still are forced to make between stability and freedom is an important point of comparison, critical to understanding distinctions between societies. Evaluating these trade-offs helps us to better understand the choices we continue to face today.

D) **ROLE OF EMPIRES** - Empires have been a **constant** feature of human history. The impulse of societies/leaders to conquer and rule over other peoples - to extract wealth from them, learn from them or impose ideas on them (usually doing all three) - is a clear pattern in human history. Empires reflect differences and similarities we look at throughout the semester, including the methods of conquering and ruling and the experiences of those under these expansionary powers. Some empires were clearly more "successful" than others, resulting in markedly different experiences for those living under these regimes.

A crucial similarity underlying all empires – whether short-lived or long, brutal or more tolerant – is that all empires permanently changed those who came under their sway. Empires inflict damage and disruption and often devastating destruction. But empires also bring in new ideas, creating a fusion of ideas and cultures. Empires tie societies together into more tightly knit trading and communication networks, creating increased cross-fertilization between peoples and ideas. Many cause and effect investigations we pursue deal with the rise and fall of empires and their significant consequences.

COURSE OBJECTIVES:

The World Civilizations course provides students a sense of the stunning scope and diversity of human culture and historical experience. Through a brief overview of prominent civilizations and key events emerging during the early stages of human history, students will better understand the historical context of contemporary issues as well as gain an appreciation for the contributions and achievements of different cultures. The emphasis is on perceiving similarities in human experiences across time and space as well as understanding and respecting the diversity of human societies and traditions.

SPECIFIC COURSE LEARNING OUTCOMES: Upon completion of this course, students will be able to:

- * demonstrate the ability to analyze and explain cause and effect relationships in history.
- * summarize key ideas in history, including major world philosophies, religions, and political theories and systems.
- * demonstrate the ability to compare and contrast historical experiences across cultures and time.
- * describe and define major historical events, ideas, places, people, and other items of historical import.
- * demonstrate their understanding of the historical roots of current events.
- * synthesize complex written material
- * communicate in written form to present clearly argued and supported analysis
- * assess and evaluate historical material on the Internet

* continue investigating and analyzing historical information and issues as a life-long learner

Notes: Qualified students with disabilities will receive appropriate accommodations in this course. Students with disabilities may obtain information on available services online at honolulu.hawaii.edu/disability. Contact Student ACCESS at 844-2392, by e-mail at access@hcc.hawaii.edu, or stop by the office located in Building 5 / Room 107 B. This course transfers to all other UH System campuses.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

Reading: It is expected students complete assigned readings by the class period.

Attendance: Attendance is crucial in a course covering this amount of material. If you are not in class, you are not benefiting from nor contributing to the knowledge derived from discussions and lectures. **15 pts**

Discussion: There are 6 discussion questions posted on Lulima (bulletin board format) during the semester. These discussions postings require you to read and reflect on the key topics addressed in class. Students are to participate in **4 out of 6** of these discussions. 100% participation (4 posts) = **30 pts**

Plagiarism Assignment: In the first week of class, I assign short online tutorials and questions to be answered - to ensure you are aware of the meaning and consequences of **plagiarism**. **10 pts**

Map Exercises: There are two take home exercises requiring students to use online maps and practice skills in interpreting historical information from maps. **15 pts each**

Essays: There are two required essays. For both essays, you are asked to read *primary sources* (writings directly from past time periods). I will provide links online to primary source materials to read and ask questions requiring you to analyze these sources. You provide analysis in the form of essay responses. **30 pts each**

Internet Exercise: There is one Internet exercise intended to help develop skills in researching and evaluating historical information on the Internet. **20 pts**

Term/ Idea Summaries: There are four (4) historical identification assignments which require you to communicate your understanding of key terms and causal connections. These are intended to help you improve your ability to synthesize important concepts and help in preparation for the exams. **20 pts each**

Exams: There are two exams which require students to convey understanding of key topics and ideas through written responses. A study guide will be provided before each exam. **100 pts each**

Final Grade: Your final grade is based on accumulation of points.

Attendance = 15 pts

Discussion Participation = 30 pts

Plagiarism Assignment = 10 pts

Map Exercise = 30 pts

Essays = 60 pts

Term/Idea Summaries = 80 pts

Internet Exercise = 20 pts

Exams = 200 pts

TOTAL POINTS – 445

400 - 445 = A

356 - 399 = B

312 – 355 = C

267 - 311 = D

under 267 = F

((Sample)) Lecture and Assignment Schedule

DATE TOPIC PAGE NUMBERS:

August 21	Introduction	
Aug 23	The Agricultural Revolution	Class Handout <u>3 - 29</u>
Aug 28	Early Agr. Civilizations: Mesopotamia	<u>33 - 43</u>
Aug 30	Early Agr. Civilizations: Egypt	<u>43 - 47</u>
	Map Assignment # 1 Assigned	
	Essays Assignments Given Out	
Sept 4	Ancient Egypt/ Ancient Near East	
Sept 6	Early Empires/Small Kingdoms	<u>47- 62</u>
Sept 11	Ancient India	<u>65 - 81</u>
Sept 13	Ancient India	
	Map Assignment # 1 Due	
Sept 18	Ancient India	<u>81 – 88; 347 - 348</u>
Sept 20	Ancient India/ China	<u>91 - 103</u>
	Internet Assignment Given Out	
Sept 25	Ancient China	<u>103 - 111</u>
Sept 27	Ancient China	
Oct 2	Ancient China	<u>175 - 196</u>
Oct 4	Ancient Greece	<u>115 - 131</u>
Oct 9	Ancient Greece	
Oct 11	Ancient Greece	<u>131 - 140</u>
	Essay # 1 Due	
Oct 16	<u>MIDTERM EXAM</u>	
Oct 18	Ancient Rome	<u>143 - 153</u>
Oct 23	Ancient Rome	<u>153 - 165</u>
Oct 25	Ancient Rome	<u>166 – 171</u>
Oct 30	European Middle Ages	<u>205 – 230</u>
	Map Assignment # 2 Assigned	
Nov 1	European Middle Ages	<u>393 – 421</u>
		<i>Skim</i> <u>425 - 456</u>
Nov 6	<u>No Class – Election Day</u>	
Nov 8	Ancient Japan	<u>196 - 202</u>
Nov 13	Japan	<u>382 - 389</u>
Nov 15	Islamic Religion and Culture	<u>233 – 237; 245 - 263</u>
	Map Assignment # 2 Due	
Nov 20	Spread of Islam	<u>237 - 244</u>
	Internet Assignment Due	
Nov 22	<u>No Class – Thanksgiving Day</u>	
Nov 27	Islamic Empires	<u>347 – 360</u>
	Essay # 2 Due	

Nov 29	The Mongol Empire	<u>244- 245; 331 – 347; 365 - 380</u>
Dec 4	Influential African Civilizations	<u>267 - 294</u>
Dec 6	Influential American Civilizations	<u>299 - 327</u>

FINAL EXAM SCHEDULED: Thursday, December 13

Explanation of Assignments

To enhance student awareness of *why* assignments are given, the intellectual benefits to be gained and the relationship of the work to achieving course outcomes, I have outlined intended learning benefits to be achieved through these assignments.

Definition of Terms: There are four definition/identification assignments.

- The assignments asking you to define key terms are intended to ensure that students keep up with class readings, and are attending lectures and not falling behind.
- By requiring students to synthesize information in the form of definitions which include discussion of *significance* of the topic, student and instructor can identify areas of confusion and incomplete understanding early on (and hopefully clarify things) rather than having confusion or lack of understanding only become apparent during an exam.
- Students can use their written work and instructor feedback to help study for the exams.
- Weekly questions require students to write and the more writing done, the faster and more significant the improvement in a student's written communication skills and ability to think.
- These assignments make it possible for students to build up points, contributing to a higher course grade through diligent and earnest performance of weekly assignments.

Class Discussions: There are five required discussion questions.

- Discussion participation provides the opportunity for students to post up ideas that are more personal, opinionated and reflective rather than composing right or wrong graded comments. It enables students who take this requirement seriously to ponder challenging issues and dilemmas, explore causal connections, and make enlightening comparisons between human experiences **on their own** (rather than merely relying on instructor analysis.)
- Discussion participation provides an opportunity for students to know what other students are thinking, providing the opportunity for interaction between students.
- Discussion participation enables students to share personal experiences or insights relevant to the topics. Given the varied backgrounds, life stories, cultural affiliations of HCC's student body, there are fascinating personal insights and observations offered by students related to topics discussed.

Map Assignments: The two map assignments assigned.

- Working with maps promotes better understanding of geographic locations and also how borders of states and empires have changed over time, knowledge **clearly** critical to understanding historical events and influences. Map exercise work increases student awareness of geographic locations and relations – past and present.
- The assignments hone a student's skill in reading maps, enhancing the ability to learn and interpret information from visual sources. Interpretation is not just of the maps themselves but also the ability to interpret information presented through historical maps and their keys.

Essays: There are two essays assigned based on additional readings.

- There is a clear consensus among faculty that students need to write more. One cannot become a better writer just by taking a few English classes or by just fulfilling the minimum WI requirement. Writing is a *skill* - it requires constant or at least periodic practice to sustain or improve. Ideally, students are doing formal writing every semester in at least one class. Requiring two essays is intended to help students improve in their ability to structure and organize arguments and write clearly, persuasively and directly in response to a question.
- Writing also is a proven tool which dramatically helps in thinking. The act of writing out ideas and concepts helps the brain to make connections and retain information. It is important for students to realize through experience how writing out arguments and ideas in a formal structure helps in the act of analyzing and making connections.
- Essays provide students the chance to explore and convey their thinking about an historical topic in greater depth than weekly work or exam questions allow.

Internet Evaluation Assignment: There is one internet evaluation assignment.

- Students must know how to evaluate information presented on the web. Too many students simply trust the web as a source without fully realizing that using information on the internet requires **them** to be the 'editors', to decide what is relevant, reliable or legitimate information. Evaluating whether factual and especially opinion-based information is something to trust, to rely on is an essential skill for the 21st century student and the lifelong learner.
- Students can explore topics they have an interest in as they demonstrate their ability to evaluate historical sites. As a result, students become more aware of the kinds of material (a vast amount) available on the web related to cultures and historical topics/experiences.

Exams: There are two exams given.

- While exams are not fun (for students or instructors), the fact is that without the pressure, the demand of preparing for an exam, most students will not take the time to go back and review, assimilate and think about material covered. Exams prompt re-thinking past material, making the connections to information learned later clearer and more comprehensive. Reviewing past material leads to new insights and understanding as well as leading to greater assimilation of material.
- Studying for the exam requires the student to identify areas that were not very clear, this (hopefully!) prompts questions to the instructor and/or leads the student to do closer reading of course.

Discussion Question Assignments and Deadlines

There will be 6 discussion questions posted throughout the semester. You are required to participate in 4 discussions to receive all of the class points for discussion participation. You are graded at the end of the semester based on *degree of participation*: 30 points for 100% participation. You are not evaluated on the content of the comments since these comments are personal reflections *however* you need to clearly put some time into your posts. A one sentence cursory comment or simply saying 'I agree' **will not** suffice. If you do all 6 posts – you will receive 5 points extra credit.

DISCUSSION TOPICS AND DEADLINES

- **Question 1** Topic: Agricultural Revolution – Early Civilizations
Participate no later than: **Friday, Sept. 7**
- **Question 2** Topic: India/China – Traditional Societies
Participate no later than: **Friday, Sept. 28**
- **Question 3** Topic: Ancient Greece
Participate no later than: **Friday, Oct. 12**
- **Question 4** Topic: Medieval Society
Participate no later than: **Friday, Nov. 16**
- **Question 5** Topic: Islamic Religion and Cultures
Participate no later than: **Friday, Nov. 30**
- **Question 6** Topic: African and American Civilizations
Participate no later than: **Friday, Dec. 7**

Laulima Discussion Program - Instructions

How to post comments:

1. Log into Laulima using your MyUH user name and password - <https://laulima.hawaii.edu/portal>
2. Click on the Course tab for this class : [History 151](#)
3. Click on 'Discussions and Private Messages' button; you should see the 'Discussion List' of questions.
4. Click on the Question (Forum) you are responding to. The discussion page will show posted responses to that particular question.
5. Click on the topic title (titles of the posted comments). You can **either** respond to posted comments of your classmates by hitting "post reply" or start a new line of discussion by adding your individual response to the class discussion question by hitting "new topic".

How to post individual responses directly to discussion question

To post your comment in response to a specific Forum/question, click on "**New Topic**". On that page, fill in: **Subject** - a title for your comment. Type your comments in **Message body** text box. Hit the submit button. (Your name will automatically be added since you are logged in to Laulima.)

How to respond to another student. There are two ways to do this.

1. On the page with the comment(s) you want to respond to, you hit "**Post Reply**". This adds your comment at the bottom of the list of comments which are all linked to the original comment. So, threaded discussions emerge where a student's comment generates several related responses. To repeat - if you do not want to be linked to and responding to another student's comment, you DO NOT hit "Post Reply" - hit "New Topic".
2. The other way to respond to another student is to go to the page with their comment and hit the "quote" button which is in the actual text box with that student's comments. Then you add your own comments, which show up as a part of the comment text box. This allows you to respond in a *direct* and clear way to one person's comments and follow up on that idea or thread.

I have posted up one 'Sample Discussion Question' for practice before participating in the first assigned question.

CLASS POLICIES - Smith/Fall 2012

LATE ASSIGNMENTS You may turn in assignments late for partial credit, however you lose points - the later the work, the more points lost.

MISSED EXAMS If an emergency occurs on the day of an exam and you must miss an exam, you need to get in touch with me **as soon as possible** - either through voice mail message or email. You will have the option of a retake if you have legitimate reasons for missing an exam and get in touch promptly.

PLAGIARISM Plagiarism is when you take the words or specific thinking and arguments from another source and present it as your words or your analysis. This is cheating and if you have plagiarized your written work from another student, from the textbook, from the web (which is quite easy to spot and prove) or from other sources with citation, **you will receive a 0** for that assignment and the possibility of failing the course. All written work must be your work, reflecting your thinking, interpretation and understanding of terms and ideas, and expressed in your words. On essays, homework assignments or exams, even if you are restating knowledge gained from other sources such as the textbook or my lectures, you **must** put that understanding into **your** words (and not cut and paste or just change a few words). You learn nothing. I am understanding about most things but not about cheating.

I Grade A student can receive the 'I' grade if s/he does **most** of the class work but due to personal circumstances cannot finish all class work by the end of the semester. The student *must* contact me and request this option. The Incomplete grade gives the student the option of completing the work before the middle of the next semester. If work is not completed, the student receives the grade earned up to that point.

N Grade In situations where major disruption prevents the student from completing the class and where a substantial amount of work is still owed, or when student performance has suffered due to extreme and unavoidable circumstances, I will give the student an 'N' grade. This grade shows up on a transcript as *no credit* for a course taken. Although this is not calculated in your HonCC grade point average, you should be aware that transfer institutions interpret the N grade in different ways. N grades are given to those students who specifically request this and make their case.

LATE TO CLASS There are often legitimate reasons why students come late or have to step out early. However, please try to keep this to a minimum and if you do come in or leave while class is in session, please **minimize** the disruption to me and to your fellow students.

TALKING IN CLASS Students who talk in class to each other are showing a lack of courtesy to fellow students who are trying to concentrate on the class. I am not talking about a brief question to your neighbor, I am talking about extended audible conversations that need to wait until you are out of the class. PLEASE be a mature and responsible student by paying attention in class and not disrupting the lecture/discussion taking place with distracting conversations. If you would rather talk to your friend than listen to the lecture, do that outside the class.

BEEPERS AND CELL PHONES There has been an **explosion** of cell phones and beepers brought into classrooms. It is very disruptive and disconcerting to have a phone go off in class during a lecture and especially during an exam. You need to turn off/turn to silent mode all electronic devices when in class; this is particularly important during exams. This is a necessary courtesy to your fellow students.

EMAIL SUBMISSION OF WORK If you send me email questions, updates, explanations for absences etc. PLEASE make sure you include your name in the email and write in a courteous, formal manner. There is a troubling decline in basic correspondence protocol in email students send. For your college work and for all your instructors, you should be practicing necessary professional communication skills when using email for formal correspondence. I **will not** open attachments if there is no message accompanying which explains who is submitting the work and why. In terms of homework, students may submit homework via email **ONLY** if there is a legitimate reason why they did not bring the hard copy to class. I will print out and grade your assignment only in special circumstances.