

SYLLABUS

History 86: Introduction to World Civilization I

Fall 2013

Class Hours: TTh 9:35-11:00 -a.m.

Room: CE 203

Section No. 1246

Instructor: Anthony A. Lee

Social Science Division

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Office Hours: By appointment. I have no office on campus.

CATALOG DESCRIPTION:

This course provides a broad historical study of the main cultural, economic, and political trends and events, from the rise of civilization in the Near East to the Age of Absolutism.

CREDIT: Three units.

PURPOSE:

History is not what has happened in the past. It is the stories that we tell each other about the past, and the meaning that we give to those stories. It is what we choose to remember about the past and--just as much--what we choose to forget. Through history, we convince ourselves of what is normal and natural, what is great and good and heroic, what should be celebrated, remembered, and protected. We also tell ourselves what is (more subtly, perhaps) what is base and evil, what is trivial, foreign, and unworthy, and so should be forgotten.

This course will discuss the meaning that our society has given to some 12,000 years of human history: beginning with the rise of "civilization" (as we call it) in the Near East until early-modern times. By giving meaning to these past peoples, cultures, and events, our society defines for us who we are, or who we should be.

The course will survey the history of world civilizations, with special emphasis on their political, cultural, and religious history. Students will be encouraged to apply critical standards to all presentations of the past (including the textbooks and class presentations) in order to recognize the obvious and subtle workings of our own cultural myths and assumptions on our imagined, shared history.

GENERAL RULES:

1. No food or beverage should be brought into class.
2. Tape recording of lectures is not permitted.
3. Reading newspapers or other materials during class is not permitted.
4. Pagers or cell telephones are to be **turned off** during class sessions.
Please do not let your phone disrupt the class.
5. **Texting** or using cell phones in any way during class is not allowed.
It also ticks me off. Turn cell phones off.
6. Each student is required to have an **e-mail address** where the instructor can remain in communication with him/her throughout the semester. Very important! The campus system of mass e-mails is clumsy, but workable. We can talk about using it.

ABSENCES:

Attendance will be taken at the beginning of each class session. Class attendance is essential to the course, since the lectures will supplement your textbook reading assignments. If you must be absent from class for some reason, you will still be responsible for material covered in the lecture. So have a class friend take notes and pick up handouts for you.

Perfect attendance (no absences at all—for any reason; you have been here all the time) will be rewarded with 20 bonus points at the end of the course. If you have only one hour of absence, you will receive 10 bonus points.

You are allowed only three absences. *You may be dropped from the class, at the instructor's discretion, after the third absence.* If you have some special problem, please see me or call me beforehand to explain. Please be on time for class!

WITHDRAWAL FROM CLASS;

If you wish to withdraw from the class, please talk to me first. You may have a problem that can **be resolved some other way**. Anytime you feel that you are behind in class, or that you are having serious problems with the assignments, **please see the instructor before taking any other action**. The last day to withdraw is November 15.

GRADING PROCEDURES:

Grades will be based on your performance on the following assignments:

Mid-term Exams: There will be two (2) mid-term exams as listed on the Assigned Reading Schedule (below). Each exam will consist of identification

questions and a longer essay question. The exams will focus on the readings, but will also include the textbook readings. The exams will be written in class, though the questions will be provided beforehand. Each mid-term exam will be worth a maximum of 100 points. **All students must write at least one research paper during the semester**, in lieu of at least one mid-term or the final exam.

Book Reviews: Instead of writing examinations in class, the student may choose to turn in book reviews for the mid-terms or final exam *at the time* of the exams. Each review must be typed, five to ten pages long, and answer the questions on the **Book Review Guidelines** (see below). Each review will be worth a maximum of 100 points. No late book reviews will be accepted.

Reviews may be written for any book concerned with the history of the world (during our time period) that is **approved by the instructor**. Each chapter of your text provides a bibliography of books to choose from. But, your choice **must be approved** by the instructor. The elective books assigned for the course are already approved, of course.

Research papers: History is not a matter of dates and places. It is concerned with arguments, interpretations, and issues. Instead of taking one of the mid-terms, every student **must do** at least one research paper examining one of these issues. The purpose of the paper will be to investigate the presentation of the same historical person, event, problem, or interpretation by **four different authors** (including your textbook). How has the same issue been seen differently in different texts?

Research papers must be typed, five to ten pages long, and follow the guidelines on the research guide. Papers must be turned in *on the day* of the exams, and **no late papers will be accepted**. Each paper will be worth a maximum of 100 points. You can turn in as many research papers as you want to, in lieu of in-class exams.

Group Projects: At some point during the first weeks of the semester the class will be divided into groups of three or four students. Groups will be centered around optional texts. Each group will give at least one presentation to the class as a whole and will participate in other cooperative projects.

Final Examination: There will be a final examination given on the last day of class as shown in the Schedule of Classes, between December 9-15. The exam will consist of essay questions and identification questions. The final exam (or a final paper) must be completed in order to obtain a passing grade in this class. It is worth a maximum of 100 points.

Students must complete one Research Paper during the semester and may turn in this paper in lieu of the final exam or any mid-term exam.

Additional Points: One hundred (100) additional points will be given at the instructor's discretion based on class attendance and participation in class. Class participation is centrally important. You are expected to ask questions in class and to respond to questions when they are asked in class. 20 bonus points are given for perfect class attendance; 10 bonus points for no more than one absence.

Make-up Exams: Make-up exams may be arranged with the consent of the instructor, but they must be taken within two weeks of the exam missed; and they will be marked down by 10 points (one full grade). However, book reviews and research papers *may not* be turned in late.

Extra Credit: In general, extra credit work will not be assigned or accepted. However, if you are concerned about raising the grade you are getting in the class, please consult with the instructor.

Extra points earned for perfect attendance (or only one absence) must be claimed by the student at the end of the course in writing on the final exam or final paper.

Total Points for Course (This is only approximate.):

Mid-Terms, Book Reviews, or Research Papers	200
Final Examination	100
Class presentations	50
Quizzes and misc. assignments	50
Class Participation	<u>100</u>
Total	500

General Grading Policy: In general, the following percentage points will determine your grade. However, the class curve will be taken into consideration:

100%-90%	= A
89%-80%	= B
79%-70%	= C
69%-60%	= D
Below 60%	= Fail

CHEATING: Plagiarism or cheating of any kind will not be tolerated and will result in severe penalties. Don't copy and paste from the Internet. That is not acceptable. It is also very easy to trace.

COURSE OBJECTIVES: The course is intended to meet these objectives, among others:

1. Discuss definitions of history, the role of the historian, the types of evidence historians use, and the kinds of questions historians ask
2. Explore how encounters with other societies, as well as the interactions of people with their environment, influenced and shaped their values, cultures and institutions;
3. Explore the rise and fall of major empires in various regions and their influence on their respective regions;
4. Explore competing political and economic interests as well as cultural ties among various countries and regions;
5. Compare and contrast various major world religions, ideologies, and philosophies, including some ancient religions.
6. Define major world civilizations, outline major developments in a historical time frame and map them in a geographical framework.

CRITICAL THINKING SKILLS: Among others, this course is intended to teach the following academic skills: (There are also lots more, but this is enough for now.)

1. Critical thinking about the past: the ability to understand how history is written and what influences there are on the construction of history;
2. The evaluation of texts: the ability to assess the strengths and weaknesses of a text in terms of date, author, language, audience, purpose, tone/style, provenance, and so forth.
3. The ability to recognize various forms of texts, including images, works of art, film, performance, the presentation of the body, etc.
4. The capacity to assess multiple points of view: the ability to understand, appreciate, and articulate multiple and differing opinions about the past.
5. An understanding of culture and the history of culture: the ability to study cultural influences on the past and the present.
6. Problemicizing the past: the ability to identify themes, issues, ideas, and historical problems as they are studied academically as part of history.
7. Writing skills: the ability to respond critically, and in writing, to an academic text.
8. Composing an essay: the ability to formulate an argument in writing and to support that argument with evidence gleaned from the course materials.
9. Discussion: the ability to engage verbally in a scholarly discussion of the past, to understand the arguments presented and to respond to those arguments critically.

WORLD CIVILIZATION I

Anthony A. Lee, Instructor
West Los Angeles College
Fall 2013

READING ASSIGNMENTS

Required Textbook:

Jerry H. Bentley, et al. *Traditions & Encounters: A Global Perspective on the Past*. Boston: McGraw-Hill, 2006.

Readings: Students will read three of these books, one required and two optional:

Required :

Stephen Mitchell, trans. *Gilgamesh*. New York: Free Press, 2004.

Two others:

Karen Armstrong. *A History of God: The 4,000-Year Quest of Judaism, Christianity and Islam*. New York: Balantine Books, 1993.

Basil Davidson. *The Lost Cities of Africa*. Boston: Little, Brown, and Company, 1987.

Basil Davidson. *The African Slave Trade*. Revised Edition. Boston: Little Brown and Company, 1980.

Michael Sells, ed. and trans. *Approaching the Qur'an: The Early Revelations*. Ashland, OR: White Cloud Press, 1999.

Reza Aslān. *No God But God: The Origins, Evolution, and Future of Islam*. New York: Random House, 2005).

Murasaki Shikibu, *The Tale of Genji*. Trans. by Edward G. Seidensticker. New York: Vintage Books, 1990.

I. F. Stone. *The Trial of Socrates*. New York: Anchor Books, 1989.

Antony Kamm. *Julius Caesar: A Life*. London: Routledge, 2006.

Miguel Leon-Portilla, ed. *The Broken Spears: The Aztec Account of the Conquest of Mexico*. Boston: Beacon Press, 1990.

Charles C. Mann. *1491: New Revelations of the Americas before Columbus*. New York: Knopf, 2005.

Or any other book on the history of the world before 1500 **approved by the instructor**. For example, Reza Aslan has a new book out on Jesus, which is now quite controversial. There are other books on African history that the instructor can recommend. Each chapter of the textbook has a list of recommended books, as well.

Reading assignments must be **COMPLETED by the beginning of class** on the day indicated.

Week of	Subject	Assignment
August 27	Orientation	Why study history? Myths and Stereotypes

September 3 What is history?
Critical thinking about World Civ *Handouts*
What is “civilization”? *Begin Gilgamesh*

10 Prehistory and early complex societies
Egypt and Mesopotamia *Traditions, Ch. 1-4*

Form book discussion groups this week.

17 Empires of Persia and China *Traditions, Ch. 5-6*

24 Salvation in India *Traditions, Ch. 7*

Thursday, September 26: Mid-Term Exam
Book Reviews and Research Papers Due.

October 1 Group Presentations and Book Reviews

8 Greek and Roman Civilizations *Traditions, Ch. 8*
Begin Second Book

15 Exchanges along the Silk Road *Traditions, Ch. 9*

22 Byzantium and Islam *Traditions, Ch. 10-11*

29 South and East Asia *Traditions, Ch. 12-13*

Thursday, October 31: Mid-Term Exam
Book Reviews and Research Papers Due

November 5 Group Presentations and Book Reviews *Begin Third Book*

12 Nomadic Empires/Sub-Saharan Africa *Traditions, Ch. 14-15*

Last day to drop the class with a grade of “W” is November 15.

19 The Middle Ages *Traditions, Ch. 16*

26 The Discovery of the Americas *Traditions, Ch. 17-18*

Thursday and Friday, November 28: Thanksgiving Holiday

December 3 Review for Exam *Catch-up*

Final Exam will be held December 10, 10:15 a.m.-12:15 p.m.
Or Final Papers are due, if you prefer.

GUIDELINES FOR BOOK REVIEWS

Students may turn in book reviews in lieu of taking mid-term exams. Reviews are due on the day of the exam, and **no late reviews will be accepted**. Any book about the past that deals with our time period (and that has been **approved by the instructor**) may be reviewed for credit. The books assigned for the class are already approved.

Reviews must be typed (double-spaced), and from five to ten pages long. (Yes, 5 pages, not 4 ½ pages, and not including photos or illustrations, cover page, bibliography, etc. Five pages minimum.) The purpose of the book review is to discuss the relevance of the book read to the study of world *history*. **You will also compare your book to at least one other book of history and cite one book review.**

All reviews must contain the following elements:

1. State clearly on your first page: Name of the author. *Name of the book*. City of publication: Publisher, Date of publication, any other publishing details.
2. State clearly in the first paragraph of your review whether or not you think your book is useful for the study of world history, and explain why or why not.
3. Explain the time and place in history that is covered by your book. Which specific places and groups are discussed? Is this a history, an essay, a novel, or what?
4. What are the themes, problems, or issues of world history that the book addresses? Identify two or three. What point of view does the author take towards these issues? What are the arguments put forth and how are they put forth? What is the author trying to convince you of? Do you agree with the author? Explain why or why not.
5. Evaluate your book in some critical fashion. Discuss the importance of: date, author, language, purpose, audience, style, tone, bias, political perspective, etc. (At least three.) How do these issues affect the way the book is written? Which do you think are the most important?
6. What themes, problems, or issues of this history (in the same time and place) are *not* addressed by the author? Why not? What are the author's biases? (*Yes, all authors have biases. Your job is to figure out what they are.*) Explain fully.
7. Cite at least **one other book** on the past that deals with the same issues dealt with in your book. How do these books differ? Which arguments are more

convincing? How does your textbook handle this history? **Please note that this will require additional reading, beyond your chosen book.**

8. **Cite at least one academic review of your book.** You can cite more than one. This will require library research and the use of the library databases. How does this review evaluate your book? What does it say are the strengths and weaknesses of the book? What objections does the review raise? Do you agree with the review? Explain why or why not.
9. Explain what you learned from your book and what more you would like to learn about the themes, problems, or issues raised.

GUIDELINES FOR RESEARCH PAPERS

Research papers may be turned in by students in lieu of taking mid-term exams or the final exam. The papers are due on the day of the exam, and no late papers will be accepted. All students must complete one research paper during the course.

The papers must be typed (double-spaced), and from five to ten pages long. The purpose of the research paper is to compare and discuss the treatment of a single historical issue by four different sources, including the textbook. The student will summarize and evaluate four different points of view, and offer his own.

All papers must contain the following elements:

1. The choice of a single discreet historical person, issue, argument, or event that is discussed at some length in the textbook or in the book of readings. This is important. The paper will discuss this issue as it is treated in four different texts.

The topic can be a single individual—such as Socrates, Michelangelo, or the prophet Isaiah; an historical event—such as the fall of Constantinople; an historical problem—such as the causes for the Reformation or the spread of Islam; or the interpretation of a text—such as the Book of Job or the Epic of Gilgamesh.

2. A discussion of the matter chosen from the point of view of the textbook. The student must demonstrate an understanding of the material as it is presented in the text. Fully explain what the text is saying and what interpretation it offers--either explicitly or implicitly.
3. Three primary or secondary sources (other than the texts) that discuss the same problem. These sources may NOT be other textbooks, encyclopedias, timelines, or general histories. They must be either primary sources (that is, eyewitness accounts, contemporary documents, etc.), monographs (whole volumes dealing with a single issue), or academic articles. (Consult the instructor if you are not sure about this.)
4. A full summary of the treatment of the issue or problem you have chosen from the points of view of each of the four sources. The student must show an understanding of the arguments and positions that each source takes. Discuss the sources one by one.
5. A complete discussion of the agreements and disagreements among the various sources. Do your books agree on the facts? Do they agree on their interpretations of these facts? Where do they have different interpretations and ideas. Why? How can you explain these disagreements?

6. An explanation of the student's point of view. After reading these sources, which argument convinces you most? Why? Do you have an independent interpretation of this issue? What is it? Explain the issue as you see it.
7. Discuss what you have learned from this exercise. What more would you like to learn about this issue? What other sources are there that you might consult? If you were to continue research on this topic, how would you go about it?