

# World History to 1500



Dr. Megan Moran  
Maybank Hall, Office # 214  
Office Hours: T/R 1pm-3pm  
And by appointment:  
[moranmc@cofc.edu](mailto:moranmc@cofc.edu)  
Office phone #: (843) 953-3033

History 103 010  
Fall 2009  
M/W 3:20-4:35pm  
Maybank 317

## **Purpose of the course:**

The purpose of this course is to introduce students to the beginnings of world history from the ancient world through 1500. The class focuses on the political, social, economic, cultural, gender, and religious history of early societies around the world in a thematic as well as chronological format. Specifically we will examine how interactions and cross-cultural exchanges worked to shape and form societies throughout the ancient world. Understanding how societies linked together through trade networks, communication, and the exchange of religious and cultural traditions demonstrate the truly global nature of history. Comparing the similarities and differences between cultures reveals both the uniqueness and commonalities found among societies throughout the world.

While this class focuses on large-scale comparisons and connections between cultures in world history, it also aims to look at the daily lives and personal experiences of men and women in their communities. We will therefore also focus on aspects of daily life such as gender roles, marriage, sexuality, family life, and the experiences of different social classes. To this end, the class concentrates on reading both primary and secondary sources to examine the perspectives of a variety of people and places throughout world history.

## **Course Objectives:**

1. Obtain a greater knowledge of the major people, places, cultures, themes, and events found in world history.
2. Compare/contrast the growth and development of societies in world history and particularly examine the cross-cultural exchange and interactions that occurred in the world to 1500.
3. Learn how to analyze and interpret primary and secondary sources in order to understand the historical past.
4. Engage in historical debates and use primary and secondary materials to form your own arguments and interpretations on issues found in world history.

**Required Reading:**

You may purchase the following books at the College of Charleston bookstore. If you decide to buy your books online be sure to buy the correct editions and to purchase them in a timely manner.

Robert Strayer, ed. Ways of the World: A Brief Global History, vol. 1 to 1500. Boston and New York: Bedford/St. Martin's, 2009. ISBN #: 9780312387488

Kevin Reilly, ed. Worlds of History: A Comparative Reader, vol. 1 to 1550, third edition. Boston and New York: Bedford/St. Martin's, 2007. ISBN #: 9780312446871

R.K. Narayan, trans. The Ramayana. New York: Penguin Books, 2006. ISBN #: 9780143039679

Susan Whitefield. Life Along the Silk Road. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1999. ISBN #: 9780520232143

Jack Weatherford. Ghenghis Khan and the Making of the Modern World. New York: Three Rivers Press, 2004. ISBN #: 9780609809648

**Assignments:**

Primary Source Analysis Paper (2 pages) – 5 %

Response Paper # 1 – (5 pages) – 15 %

Response Paper # 2 – (5 pages) – 15 %

Diary of a Silk Road Traveler (2-3 pages) and Silk Road Presentations – 10 %

Midterm Exam – 20 %

Final Exam – 25 %

Participation (including homework and quizzes) - 10 %

**Policies:**

Papers, Assignments, and Exams: Your papers and exams will be assessed according to your ability to demonstrate critical thinking, textual analysis, clear use of evidence, and an understanding of the course material. Your grades will be based on your ability to construct a clear thesis and support the argument with relevant evidence from the text. This also requires that each student produce his or her own individual and original work. Plagiarism, such as borrowing from Internet sources, scholarly writing, or other student's papers without citation, will not be tolerated. I will be happy to address any questions or concerns you might have about writing papers, citing sources, etc...both in class or in office hours. There is also a writing lab available on campus at the Center for Student Learning for any questions you have about citation or style, grammar, and how to craft an argument for papers.

**Grading Scale:**

A = 93-100	C = 73-77
A- = 90-92	C - = 70-72
B+ = 88-89	D + = 68-69
B = 83-87	D = 63-67
B- = 80-82	D - = 60-62
C+ = 78-79	F = 59 or less

Late Papers: Turn your papers into me on the day that they are due. Late papers are not tolerated and will result in the drop of a full letter grade for everyday that they are late. I will accept papers via email only under exceptional circumstances with prior approval.

Honor Code: There is an honor code at the College of Charleston that is taken very seriously. Any evidence of academic dishonesty, such as plagiarism or other forms of cheating will be reported to Academic Affairs. You will be given a failing grade and zero for the assignment and possibly an F for the course. If you have questions about proper behavior with class assignments please see me or check the student handbook website:

[http://www.cofc.edu/studentaffairs/general\\_info/studenthandbook.html](http://www.cofc.edu/studentaffairs/general_info/studenthandbook.html)

Absences: Since this class focuses heavily on discussion, you are expected to attend every class. You are allowed three unexcused absences before it counts against your grade. Excused absences due to illness, scheduled athletic events or other school sponsored trips require appropriate documentation (please visit the Absence Memo Office on 67 George Street next to the Stern Center). *If you are feeling sick or have any flu like symptoms (such as fever) please do not come to class and make sure to visit the student health center or your health care provider.* I will work with you to make up any work that is missed due to illness. You must make up all missed assignments in order to complete the requirements for passing the course.

Classroom conduct: Please turn off your cell phones and iPods during class. I understand that everyone forgets to turn things off at some point, but please make every effort to have it turned off as you arrive in class. This class is discussion oriented where everyone's opinions and ideas are valued so please respect your fellow students. Late arrival is discouraged as it is disruptive to the class. More than three late arrivals will result in one unexcused absence. Also, since this course is based heavily on discussion, it is essential that you bring your sourcebook (The Worlds of History: A Comparative Reader) to class every day with you as well as the books on the days they are assigned for discussion on the syllabus

SNAP services: The College has accommodations in place for students with documented disabilities from the Center for Disability Services/SNAP in the Lightsey Center. Please talk to me after class or in office hours as soon as possible to make any arrangements needed.

I encourage you to use office hours throughout the semester to discuss any questions, comments, or concerns you might have about the class. Feel free to stop by with questions, drafts of papers, and any ideas, issues, or concerns that you want to talk about. The most effective way to reach me is through email and I will usually respond within 24 hours although sometimes over the weekend I check email less frequently. I am willing to meet outside office hours either after class or at another time by appointment. I look forward to working with you throughout the semester!

### **Course Schedule:**

Students should be prepared to discuss the readings on the day that they are assigned in the syllabus. While the syllabus sets out a plan for the semester, all dates are subject to change.

### ***Early Complex Societies***

#### **Week One**

**Wed. Aug. 26** – Course introduction

How to approach the study of world history?

**Week Two** – Agricultural Revolution, Origins of Patriarchy and Early River Valley Civilizations

**Mon. Aug. 31** – Mesopotamia and Egypt

Read Strayer: Ch. 1 and 2, Read Reilly: Ch.1  
**Wed. Sept. 2** – Indus River Valley, China, and the Americas  
Read Strayer: Ch. 3, Read Reilly: Ch. 2  
WebCT reading: How to read a primary source.

### *Classical Era Societies*

**Week Three** – Caste and Citizenship in India and Greece  
**Mon. Sept. 7** – Read Strayer: p.119-122 and Ch. 5, p. 133-134, Read Reilly: Ch.3, p.66-87  
**Wed. Sept. 9** – *Primary Source Analysis Paper Due*  
Read Strayer: Ch. 4, p. 97-108, Read Reilly: Ch. 3, p.87-107

**Week Four** – Rise of Roman and Chinese Empires  
**Mon. Sept. 14** – Read Strayer: Ch. 4, p.108-119  
**Wed. Sept. 16** – Read Reilly: Ch. 4

**Week Five** – Women, Family, and Social Life in the Classical World  
**Mon. Sept. 21** – Read and Discuss The Ramayana  
Read Strayer: Ch. 6  
**Wed. Sept. 23** – Read Reilly: Ch. 5

**Week Six** – New Religious and Cultural Traditions in the Classical Period  
**Mon. Sept. 28** – Read Strayer: Ch. 5  
**Wed. Sept. 30** – *Response Paper # 1 Due*  
Read Reilly: Ch. 6 and WebCT reading (TBA)

**Week Seven** – Classical Era Variations: Africa and the Americas  
**Mon. Oct. 5** – Read Strayer: Ch. 7  
WebCT reading: Selection from The True History of Chocolate  
**Wed. Oct. 7** – *Midterm Exam (Weeks 1-6)*

### *Postclassical Societies*

**Week Eight** – Cross-Cultural Exchange, Commerce, and Connections  
**Mon. Oct. 12** - **Fall Break**  
**Wed. Oct. 14** – Read and Discuss Life Along the Silk Road: Introduction, The Merchant's Tale and The Monk's Tale  
Read Strayer: Ch. 8, Read Reilly: Ch. 7 p. 222-250

**Week Nine** – Life Along the Silk Road  
**Mon. Oct. 19** – Read and Discuss Life Along the Silk Road (finish rest of the book)  
Begin Silk Road Presentations  
**Wed. Oct. 21** – Silk Road Presentations

**Week Ten** – Medieval Worlds: Byzantium, Europe, and the Rise of Islam  
**Mon. Oct. 26** – Read Strayer Ch. 10 and 11  
**Wed. Oct. 28** – Read Reilly, Ch. 7, p. 250-266 and Ch. 8, p. 268-287

**Week Eleven** – High Middle Ages, Clashing Cultures, and the Crusades  
**Mon. Nov. 2** - *Diary of a Silk Road Traveler Due*

Watch Crusades video

**Wed. Nov. 4** - Read Reilly: Ch. 10

**Week Twelve** – China and East Asian Societies in the Postclassical World

**Mon. Nov. 9** – Read Strayer: Ch. 9, Read Reilly: Ch. 8, p.287-300

**Wed. Nov. 11** - Love and Marriage in Medieval Life

Read Reilly: Ch. 9

**Week Thirteen** – Nomadic Groups and the Connection of Cultures

**Mon. Nov. 16** – The Mongols

Read Strayer: Ch. 12, Read Reilly: Ch. 11, p.375-386, p.405-421

**Wed. Nov. 18** – Read and Discuss Ghenghis Khan and the Making of the Modern World

**Week Fourteen** – Global Movements: Plagues and Peoples

**Mon. Nov. 23** – The Black Death and Its Effects

Read Reilly: Ch. 12

**Wed. Nov. 25** – **Thanksgiving Holiday**

**Week Fifteen** – The Americas and the Atlantic World

**Mon. Nov. 30** – *Response Paper # 2 Due*

**Wed. Dec. 2** – Read Strayer: Ch. 13, Read Reilly: Ch. 13, p.483-492

**Week Sixteen**

**Mon. Dec. 7** – The World in 1500

**Final Exam, Wednesday, December 9<sup>th</sup>, 4pm-7pm**