

Premodern World History

Christian Raffensperger
History 105H/C – 1W
Spring Semester 2009
MWF 8:00–9:00 AM
Hollenbeck 318

Premodern world history is fundamentally about the interconnectivity of the global system. In this class we will discuss kings, emperors, and philosophers from Asia, Africa, Europe, and the Americas in addition to how the kingdoms and empires of the world interacted during this period. Key topics include the development of empire from Persia to China to Rome, the migrations of steppe peoples from Mongolia into Europe over the course of a thousand years, and the religious interactions (and their sometimes violent conflicts) in Eurasia and Africa that resulted in the spread of Buddhism, Islam, and Christianity. In addition to discussing happenings within various kingdoms and fledgling states of the world, this class, specifically in lecture and discussion, is designed to look at how those kingdoms interacted with one another and what the consequences were—culturally, religiously, and economically. What was gained, and what lost?

Writing Intensive – No Prerequisites

Professor: Christian Raffensperger
Office: Hollenbeck 311
Office Phone: 937-327-7843
Office Hours: MW 1:00–3:00 or by appointment
Email: craffensperger@wittenberg.edu

Supplemental Instructor: Ruby Daily
Phone: (937) 244-7822
Email: s11.rdaily@wittenberg.edu

Assignments and Deadlines

The format for this class is largely lecture, and thus attendance is a main requirement of the course (see Attendance Policy below), as is participation when we have discussion. Discussions will be of special importance around the time of our four papers for this class.

There will be three exams which will divide up the material of the course. These exams will not be cumulative, with the exception of one overarching essay question on the final exam. That question will expect you to demonstrate a comprehensive knowledge of what has been covered over the course of the semester.

You will also be required to write four papers over the course of the semester. These papers will help you learn about historical method, and chiefly about learning how to ask and answer the question – “How do we know what we know?” The first two will be on small readings (Xenophon and Suetonius) and will be 2-3 page papers designed to begin this learning process. The second two will be slightly longer, 4-5 pages, and will deal with the two additional books for this course (*Two Lives of Charlemagne* and *Sundiata*). For each paper you will need to focus on a few main themes, such as what information does the author provide? How does the author know what he or she knows?

How does that information coincide with what you've learned in class and from the textbook? Your analysis should grow and improve over the course of these four papers, as should your understanding of history and historical method. For each of the papers, I also expect you to use footnotes to cite your evidence (per Chicago Manual of Style guidelines).

There will also be a number of quizzes spread out (unannounced) over the course of the semester. These quizzes will be on both lecture and reading, and will require you to keep current with both. Focus in particular on the maps in the book, as there will often be a map component to these quizzes.

If you have any questions about any of these assignments, please come see me during my office hours or make an appointment. Finally, this syllabus is subject to change by the instructor, if changed, the students will be informed with sufficient notice to complete assignments.

The grades will be weighted as follows:

Attendance: 4%

Participation: 4%

Exam 1: 12%

Exam 2: 12%

Response Paper 1 (Xenophon): 5%

Response Paper 2 (Suetonius): 7%

Response Paper 3 (*Two Lives of Charlemagne*): 9%

Response Paper 4 (*Sundiata*): 12%

Quizzes: 20%

Final Exam: 15%

Expectations

By the conclusion of this class, you will be expected to demonstrate an understanding of world history, specifically, an ability to locate and name cities, bodies of water, continents, and geographic features on a world map; the ability to explain the importance of figures and concepts such as Akhenaten, Constantine I, Hammurabi, monotheism, and castes; the ability to discuss historical change such as the development of agriculture, migration of various peoples, the growth of kingdoms and empires, etc. Through attendance at lecture and reading of the assigned texts, each student should be able to accomplish these objectives, which will give you a basis for further learning in every discipline.

Required Books

Traditions and Encounters: A Global Perspective on the Past. Jerry H. Bentley and Herbert F. Ziegler. (2003)

Two Lives of Charlemagne. Einhard.

Sundiata: An Epic of Old Mali. D. T. Niane.

Schedule of Meetings and Assignments

Week 1 (January 12, 14, 16): Introduction and Early Southwest Asia
(*Traditions* chaps. 1, 2)

Prehistory; Mesopotamian society; The development of writing and alphabets; Indo-European origins and migrations

Week 2 (January 21, 23, No Class 1/19): Early Society in South Asia
(Traditions chap. 4)

Harappan society; Aryan India; Caste system, Rig Veda, and religion;

Week 3 (January 26, 28, 30): Early Society in East Asia
(Traditions chap. 5)

Early China (Xia, Shang, Zhou dynasties); Writing, culture, and social stratification

Week 4 (February 2, 4, 6): The Creation of Empire—Persia and China (Response Paper 1 Due Wednesday 2/4)

(Traditions chaps. 7, 8)

Persian empire-building (Achaemenid, Seleucid, Parthian, and Sasanid); Zarathustra and religion; Confucius, Daoism, and society; Qing and Han dynasties

Week 5 (February 9, 11, 13): Early Africa and the Americas
(Traditions chaps. 3, 6)

Egypt and Nubia; Writing and religion; Bantu expansion; Early America and her peoples (Olmecs and Maya); Oceania

Week 6 (February 16, 18, 20): India (Exam 1 on 2/16)
(Traditions chaps. 9)

Classical India; Unification and disunification of India; Development of Buddhism

Week 7 (February 23, 25, 27): The Majesty of Greece and Rome (Response Paper 2 Due Wednesday 2/27)

(Traditions chaps. 10, 11)

Ancient Greece; Alexander the Great; Greek thought; Establishment of Rome; Republic to Empire; Empire on three continents; Early Christianity

Week 8 (March 2, 4, 6): Byzantium
(Traditions chap. 13)

Eastern Roman Empire; Between Islam and Western Europe; Religion, trade, and their exports

Week 9 (March 16, 18, 20): The Silk Road and the Rise of Islam
(Traditions chaps. 12, 14)

Silk Road and Eurasian contacts (trade, religion, disease); Muhammad's life, times, and message; Expansion of Islam; Abbasid dynasty; Islamic values and community; Islam and the wider world

Week 10 (March 23, 25, 27): The Early Middle Ages (Response Paper 3 Due Friday 3/27)

(Traditions chap. 17)

Succeeding the Roman Empire; Franks, Germans, and Carolingians; Feudalism?;
Creation of a Christian Europe

Week 11 (March 30, April 1, 3): Eurasian Empires (Exam 2 on 4/3)

(*Traditions* chaps. 18)

Turkish expansion; The rise of the Mongols; Mongol Eurasia

Week 12 (April 6, 8, No Class 4/10): Imperial and Technological revolutions in Asia

(*Traditions* chap. 15)

Centralized rule in China (Sui, Tang, and Song dynasties); Long distance and local trade;
Technological innovations

Week 13 (April 13, 15, 17): New Indian kingdoms

(*Traditions* chap. 16)

Cultural influence on the region; Islam and Hinduism in India; Importance of trade and
interconnectivity

Week 14 (April 20, 22, 24): The High Middle Ages and the Crusades

(*Traditions* chap. 20)

Kingdoms of Europe; Growth of towns and trade; Changing Christianity; The university;
European expansionism

Week 15 (April 27, 29, May 1): A Different World—Sub-Saharan Africa and the Americas (Response Paper 4 Due Friday 5/1)

(*Traditions* chaps. 19, 21)

Toltec and Mexica society and culture; Religion in the Americas; Arrival of the Incas;
Pacific Island societies; Islam in Africa; Indian Ocean trade routes and cultural
contact; African society and culture

Week 16 (May 4, 6) Cross-Cultural Interactions and the Idea of World History

(*Traditions* chap. 22)

Long-distance trade and travel; religious interaction and diffusion; unification and
disunification of kingdoms and empires

Final Exam – Friday May 8, 8:00-11:00 A.M.

For More Information:

Traditions and Encounters has an excellent collection of suggested sources at the end of each chapter. Find a chapter that contains what you are looking for, and search that list; it contains the classics, as well as the most modern scholarship.

Missed Examinations, Papers, and Class Sessions

A good rule of thumb is do not miss anything. However, if you are ill or have a conflict and cannot make a class, notify me in advance or as soon after the class as is possible. *Do not miss examinations!* If you have a conflict, notify me a minimum of one week in advance and we can schedule an exam as close to the normal time as possible. If you miss

an examination for reasons that are not discussed with me ahead of time or are not catastrophic you will receive a zero, which is much worse than an F in your overall grade. Late papers are accepted, but the grade will drop one full grade when turned in after class the day it is due. For each additional day thereafter (weekend day or weekday) that it is late, it will drop a fraction of a grade, for example—an A paper handed in after class will be a B paper, handed in the next day will be a B- paper, the next day a C+ paper.

Attendance Policy

As part of your grade for this class, and to get the most out of the class, you are required to attend on a regular basis. Attendance in this class is worth 4% of your grade, and attendance will be taken on a regular basis. If you are going to miss class, let me know in advance. If you accumulate 5 absences over the course of the semester, you will receive a grade of F for your attendance. If you miss 10 or more classes over the course of the semester you will receive a grade of zero for your attendance, much worse than an F when calculating your final grade. You are solely responsible for signing the attendance sheet, or notifying me of your absence, as proof of your presence in class.

Supplemental Instruction

For this class, we will have supplemental instructions provided by Ruby Daily. She will hold regular study and review sessions which will help you keep current with your course work, as well as advising you on study strategies for the class. These sessions are voluntary, but are designed to help you succeed in the course.

Special Needs

Wittenberg University is committed to providing reasonable accommodations for eligible students with disabilities. In keeping with this policy, if you are eligible for course accommodation due to a disability, please provide me with your self-identification letter from the academic services office, 208 Recitation Hall, during the first few weeks of the semester so that we may discuss appropriate arrangements.

If you have significant responsibilities outside of class that will impact your performance, e.g., an infant or young child, care for an aging parent, or a job that requires you to be on-call, please speak to the instructor as soon as possible, and we can discuss arrangements to make your classroom experience the same as everyone else's.

Weather-Related Concerns

Whenever weather becomes a problem, I shall do my best to adhere to the university guidelines. If the university cancels classes, there will be no class. If the university has not cancelled class, but I am unable or unwilling to risk traveling, I will do my best to post a notice to this effect on Moodle as early as possible. I will do my best not to cancel class if at all possible.

If there is an exam scheduled or a deadline for a written assignment on a day when class is cancelled, you may assume that the exam or assignment will be due on the following class session.

Academic Honesty

Students in this course are expected to uphold the standards of Wittenberg's Code of Academic Integrity. At its most basic level, this means that you will not turn in someone else's writing as your own, quote from a source without proper acknowledgment, or provide a classmate with inappropriate help. You will be asked to submit papers and exams with the following statement followed by your signature: "I affirm that my work upholds the highest standards of honesty and academic integrity at Wittenberg, and that I have neither given nor received any unauthorized assistance." Sanctions for violating these rules range from receiving no credit for a particular assignment to failing the course for a significant act of academic dishonesty. If you are in doubt about any of these rules, please talk to me before submitting your work.

Paper Rewrite Policy

Quantity:

You will be allowed to rewrite two of the four papers that you are required to submit this semester. You do not have to rewrite any, this is entirely optional.

Any paper from a B downward is eligible to be rewritten. No B+ or higher papers may be rewritten, you did well.

Timing:

Rewritten papers must be turned in, no later than, one week after the original paper has been handed back in class. Any paper turned in after that time period will not be accepted.

Substance:

To gain credit for a rewritten paper the paper must actually be rewritten. Correcting grammar, spelling, footnotes, or adding a paragraph are not considered adequate. You must rethink your paper, and rewrite your paper. When you turn the rewritten paper in, it must be accompanied by your original paper, the one marked and graded by me. Rewrites turned in without the originals will not be accepted.

Grades:

A rewritten paper can raise your grade a maximum of one full letter grade (for example, C+ to B+), but that is a maximum. Your rewrite may actually not improve your grade at all, though it will not lower your grade.