

Premodern World History

Christian Raffensperger
History 105H/C - 1
Spring Semester 2017
MWF 8:00–9:05 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?

No Prerequisites

This course counts toward the PAST minor

Professor: Christian Raffensperger

Office: Hollenbeck 311

Office Phone: 937-327-7843

Office Hours: MW 9:10–10:10 A.M., or by appointment

Email: craffensperger@wittenberg.edu

Supplemental Instruction Leader: Emily Sarver

Email: sarvere@exchange.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.

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.

There will be a quiz each week (usually on Friday), that will cover the material of the week, as well as the primary source for that week. These quizzes will require you to keep up with the reading and be prepared for the presentation and discussion of the primary sources on Fridays. There will also be a map component to many of the quizzes, so be sure to study your maps regularly.

In addition to the exams and quizzes, you will have to complete a group presentation during the semester. I will assign you groups and topics early in the semester. You will prepare a 7-10 minute presentation on the assigned primary source, focusing in particular on who wrote it, why did they write it, what does it say (both specifically and

about the society that it comes from), how does it correspond with the rest of the information we learned in class and in the other readings on similar subjects, and finally why is it important for premodern history (i.e., why am I assigning it?). I encourage you to use the Oral Communication Center in the library, as well as meeting with me to discuss any questions you might have. Following your presentation, you should be prepared for at least 5 minutes of questions from your classmates. Handouts and/or powerpoints are acceptable, but not required. These presentations will often take place on Friday, following the quiz.

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: 5%
- Participation: 5%
- Exam 1: 20%
- Exam 2: 20%
- Quizzes: 15%
- Group Presentation: 10%
- Final Exam: 25%
- Exam 3: 20%
- Cumulative Question: 5%

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)

Course Packet with Primary Source Readings (These readings will also be on Moodle)

Schedule of Meetings and Assignments

Week 1 (January 9, 11, 13): Introduction and Early Southwest Asia

(*Traditions* chaps. 1, 2; Code of Hammurabi)

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

Week 2 (January 16, 18, 20): Early Society in South Asia

(*Traditions* chap. 4; Laws of Manu)
Harappan society; Aryan “Invasion”; Caste system, Rig Veda, and religion;

Week 3 (January 23, 25, 27): Early Africa
(*Traditions* chap. 3; Herodotus on Egypt)
Egypt and Nubia; Archeology of Egypt

Week 4 (January 30, February 1, 3): Early Society in East Asia
(*Traditions* chap. 5)
Early east Asia (Xia, Shang, Zhou dynasties); Writing, culture, and social stratification

Week 5 (February 6, 8, 10): Religion and Politics in South Asia
(*Traditions* chap. 9; Jain Doctrines; Siddhartha encounters old age, sickness, and death)
Classical India; Unification and disunification of India; Development of Buddhism

Week 6 (February 13, 15, 17): The Creation of Empire—Persia and Qin/Han (Exam 1 on Monday, 2/13)
(*Traditions* chaps. 7, 8; Sima Qian on Legalism; Xenophon – Cyrus the Great as a Boy)
Persian empire-building (Achaemenid, Seleucid, Parthian, and Sasanid); Zarathustra and religion; Confucius, Daoism, and society; Qing and Han dynasties

Week 7 (February 20, 22, 24): The Majesty of Greece and Rome
(*Traditions* chaps. 10, 11; Pericles’ Funeral Oration; Cicero – On the Republic)
Ancient Greece; Alexander the Great; Greek thought; Establishment of Rome; Republic to Empire; Empire on three continents; Early Christianity

Week 8 (February 27, March 1, 3): Byzantium
(*Traditions* chap. 16 [Focus on Byzantine Readings]; Procopius – On Justinian; Liudprand of Cremona)
Eastern Roman Empire; Between Islam and Western Europe; Religion, trade, and their exports

Week 9 (March 13, 15, 17): The Rise of Islam
(*Traditions* chaps. 13; Sunnah – Excerpts; Pact of Umar)
Muhammad’s life, times, and message; Expansion of Islam; Abbasid dynasty; Islamic values and community; Islam and the wider world

Week 10 (March 20, 22, 24): The Early Middle Ages
(*Traditions* chap. 16 [Focus on Western European Readings]; Conversion of Clovis; Einhard – Life of Charlemagne)
Succeeding the Roman Empire; Franks, Germans, and Carolingians; Feudalism?; Creation of a Christian Europe

Week 11 (March 27, 29, 31): Imperial and Technological revolutions in East Asia (Exam 2 on Monday, March 27)
(*Traditions* chap. 14; Peasant Life in Tang China)

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

Week 12 (April 3, 5, 7): Eurasian Empires

(*Traditions* chap. 17; Secret History of the Mongols)

Turkish expansion; The rise of the Mongols; Mongol Eurasia

Week 13 (April 10, 12, No Class April 14): Sub-Saharan Africa

(*Traditions* chaps. 18; Ibn Battuta; Al Bakri)

Importance of trade and interconnectivity; Islam in Sub-Saharan Africa; Sub-Saharan Africa in the world

Week 14 (April 17, 19, 24, 26, No Class April 21): The High Middle Ages and the Crusades

(*Traditions* chap. 19; Urban II at Clermont; Robert de Clari)

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

Week 15 (April 28, May 1, 3): New South Asian Kingdoms and Interaction

(*Traditions* chap. 15)

Islam and South Asia; Religious Interaction; Indian Ocean Trade

Final Exam – Saturday, May 6: 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 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.

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 5% 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 3 unexcused absences over the course of the semester, you will receive a grade of F for your attendance. If you miss 7 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.

Communication with Faculty

If you have questions about class, would like to know your grade, would like to set up a time to meet, or need to let me know that you will not be in class, please email me. When you email me, please put the topic in the subject line so I know what you would like to discuss. Your email should begin with a salutation such as “Dear Professor Raffensperger”. It should not begin with “hey” or “I need”. Your email should close with something polite as well. “Best wishes” “have a good day,” or something similar is just fine, followed by your name. I would emphasize that they are not fussy, outdated conventions, but things that you will need to know to live in the world. Employers will not appreciate the casual informality with which you might be most comfortable.

Special Needs

Your learning in this course is important to me. I invite you to talk with me about ways to ensure your full participation in this course. Please be aware that Wittenberg is committed to providing reasonable accommodations for students with documented disabilities. If you are eligible for course accommodations because of a disability, you need to register with the Academic Services Office, COMPASS Center located in Thomas Library. After you register, give me your accommodation letter from Academic Services and arrange to talk with me about your learning needs privately in a timely manner. Early identification at the start of the term is essential to ensure timely provision of services. If you have questions or would like more information about services for students with disabilities, please contact Grace Whiteley, Disability Services Coordinator/Student Success Coach, whiteleyg@wittenberg.edu

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.