



History 103-56614  
World History to 1500 AD  
Winter 2016  
Mon-Wed, 8 AM to 12:35 PM  
54-212  
Paul Rittman, Instructor  
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### **Course Description:**

Course will focus on the beginnings of civilization some five to seven thousand years ago in Mesopotamia, Africa, Asia, the Americas, Classical Civilizations and the Axis Age with an understanding of the world in 1500. Social, cultural, geographical, political and economic history of the various world civilizations will be stressed. The course is designed to challenge erroneous assumptions about world history and contemporary realities.

### **Textbook:**

World Civilizations: their History and their Culture. Philip Lee Ralph. 9th edition, Volume 1. Norton. Optional.

### **Availability:**

I will be available to talk to students before and after the class meets. If you have a question that you would like feedback on during the week, feel free to email me at the above email address. **I usually don't respond to requests for information contained in the syllabus. If you would like to be included whenever I email something to the class, be sure to maintain a current email with our college's online registration system.**

### **Withdrawal Policy:**

January 10 is the last day to drop this class without receiving a W grade; January 20 is the last day to be dropped for excessive absences with a W grade. Excessive absences (at any time in the semester) will result in the student being dropped. **If you are going to be absent from class for two or more class periods in a row, please email me beforehand. Students who arrive tardy should confirm their attendance at the end of that class period with the instructor. BECAUSE OF ABUSES IN THE PAST, STUDENTS WHO ARE DROPPED FROM CLASS FOR EXCESSIVE ABSCENSES WILL NOT BE REINSTATED.**

**Student Learning Outcomes:**

Upon completion of the course the student can:

1. Define the reasons for the rise, maturation, decline and contributions of the great ancient civilizations of the world 4000 BCE-1000 BCE.
2. Categorize the rise and decline of classical world civilizations in Asia, Africa, Latin America and Europe in the period 1000 BCE to 500 CE.
3. Analyze and evaluate the period 500 CE to 1500 CE in terms of state development and the beginnings of the first global system of trade.

**Grading:**

Final grades will be allotted according to the following percentage scale:

|   |           |
|---|-----------|
| A | 90%       |
| B | 80%       |
| C | 70%       |
| D | 60%       |
| F | below 60% |

The different types of assignments are given below, with the percentage points assigned to each category. All assignments will be given a score, and then factored in according to the following ratios, to determine the final semester grade.

|               |   |
|---------------|---|
| Tests         | 40% (20% each for the midterm and final)            |
| Essays        | 40% (20% each for the first essay and second essay) |
| Participation | 15%   |
| Essay outline | 5%  |

**Tests**

The tests will call for short- and long-answer responses. Long-answer responses will be worth 80% of the test grade; short-answer questions will be worth 20% of the test grade. The final will cover only the material since the midterm. The tests will cover material primarily from lectures and class handouts. On the exams, I will not be grading your spelling, punctuation, or paragraph or essay structure, so much as the ideas you are expressing (obviously your spelling and writing has to be clear enough to be understood by me—I don't give credit for what I cannot understand).

On the exams, **if you answer more than the requested number of questions, be sure to cross out the ones you don't want me to grade**; if that isn't indicated, I will determine which responses are read and scored.

**When writing out the exam questions, write out the short answer terms and underline them; for the long responses, simply give the number of the question and circle it.** This will be made clear in the instructions for the exam. Any student that correctly does this for ALL short and long responses will be given one additional (percentage) point for that exam.

No electronic media are allowed at all during tests; all books and papers will need to be placed below the desk. If a student is caught looking at printed materials, or on another student's exam, their test will be given an automatic zero, regardless of whether they choose to continue taking that test or not.

**Once I pass out the midterm or final, students must remain in the room to take it. If or when they leave (to answer a cell phone, go to the bathroom, or for any other reason) the test is considered finished and must be turned in to the teacher.** Such students will not be allowed to make up the exam at a later point. **If a student feels that a medical (or other) condition might require a student to use the restroom during an exam, they can choose to do the midterm makeup—but once the exam has been given, they have to finish it (they can't look at the test and then decide to do the midterm makeup).**

### **Blue Books**

You need to bring Blue Books to class for both the midterm and final (large, 8.5 x 11 inch size recommended—some students fill up more than one of the small Blue Books). When you come to class the day of the exam, put the Blue Book on my desk with your name, class number, and date all written on the cover. I'd recommend coming to class a few minutes early, as I will have to inspect and approve of any Blue Book, before the exam is given to the student. After I have examined the Blue Book, I will give it back to that student, with the exam inserted into the Blue Book. **NO EXAM RESPONSES WRITTEN IN ANYTHING OTHER THAN A BLUE BOOK THAT HAS BEEN APPROVED BY ME PRIOR TO BEING WRITTEN IN, WILL BE ACCEPTED.** Even if you run out of space in the first Blue Book, and want to write in a second, that second Blue Book also has to be approved by me, before you write in it.

I strongly suggest for the exams, that students bring **pens to write with.**

### **Essays**

There will be two essays assigned during the semester. Both essays need to be 1600 words (roughly five pages) long. This number includes only the text of the essay itself, not the heading or the works cited page. A recommended division of the essay is a half-page introduction, a four-page body, and a half-page conclusion. Essays need to be typed in 12-point type and double-spaced (so that they are easy to read); don't use decorative or script fonts.

Essays are an excellent way to learn more about a topic that you are personally interested in. Additionally, essay writing develops your critical thinking skills—you learn to discern what points and issues will support your main thesis, as well as (possibly) examine different explanations, and decide which is most valid. Finally, the reading and writing involved in these essays will help develop these same skills, which the vast majority of you will put to use as you advance in college and work, as well as in becoming an informed citizen.

The essays are **research** essays—assignments whereby you research your topic, and combine the information you have gleaned, with your own opinions and conclusions. As such, essays written essentially of your own opinions or beliefs will be severely downgraded. The idea here is to develop research skills, including not only reading, but also the assimilating different bits of information and viewpoints. If you simply write five pages on everything you already know about your topic, you don't develop those skills.

### What to write about

The essays need to cover a person that lived, or a specific event that occurred, within the content area and time frame of this class: **world history from the Agricultural Revolution to 1500. Keep in mind that even though we might go outside of these boundaries in class lectures and readings, you will still need to observe these parameters for your two essays.**

The subject of the essay has to be either a person, or a specific event. When students write on broader topics, they typically lose focus and the essay wanders all over the place. The emphasis on specific people and events eliminates myths and legendary characters as subjects of your essays.

**If you are in any way unsure as to whether your topic fits these parameters, ask the instructor.**

If you choose to write an essay on a topic covered in class, make sure that your essay goes well beyond what was covered in class; essays that simply repeat classroom lectures or readings will be downgraded to the degree that this happens.

### Format

I do require both 5-page essays to be turned in digitally via Blackboard (see link at top of first page). For the purposes of keeping everything organized, I will NOT accept a hard copy of the essay. The day it is submitted digitally to me is the day it is turned in.

Both 5-page essays will be given one additional percentage point if they: (1) are uploaded to Blackboard on time; (2) do not need to be re-uploaded because of improper subject matter or for any other reason; and (3) have the same arrangement as the essay template on my website: name *only* on cover page, and a works cited page in back of essay.

If you are uncertain how to upload a file on Blackboard, go to the Blackboard web address given in the top of the first page. Click on the link to this class. Then click on the Announcements section on the left side of that page. That will show you a link to a PDF file that explains how to upload a document. **Upload the files by attaching them into the Blackboard interface; do NOT paste the file into a text field.** Please see the instructions on how to upload the file if you are not sure how to do this.

One of the reasons for insisting on a digital copy is for catching plagiarism. **I will accept digital copies in one of the following formats: Word (.doc or .docx), Rich Text Format (.rtf), OpenOffice (.odt), or Word Perfect (.wpd).** Essays not in one of those formats will be returned to the student, to be resubmitted in a proper format, and will be penalized.

As research essays, they need to reference in the text at least 3 books or articles, in MLA format. Place your full citations on their own page, at the end of your essay (in the same document)—do not create a new document for your works cited. **Essays that place the works cited on a separate document will be penalized.** These three sources are not to include class handouts, notes, the textbook, or Wikipedia (or any of its derivative websites).

If students are unaware of the MLA format, they can go to a page on my history site, and scroll down to a section that is entitled “Classroom Handouts.” You can visit two links listed there, both of which explain the MLA format. One is the Purdue OWL site, the other is maintained by Victor Valley College. Both of those pages have sample essays written in MLA format, so you can see exactly what you are being asked to do.

Essays written before this semester started, or submitted to other classes, are not acceptable.

### **Essay Outline**

Fill out the Essay Outline form with the subject matter of your first essay. I would strongly encourage you to fill it out first, before starting the essay itself. That form would then serve as a rough draft for that essay. After completing it, you can simply expand that outline form, to become a 5 page essay.

**The essay outline form cannot be submitted after the first essay has been uploaded.**

### **Plagiarism**

Plagiarism and other forms of cheating are not permitted, and can result in receiving a 0 on the assignment, without the option to submit the assignment again, and additionally, any allowable penalty as explained in the student handbook or in accordance with VVC policy.

### **Participation**

The participation grade will consist of some short readings (sometimes primary source), and a one-page response by the students that are done in class, referred to me as reflections. These are rather unstructured, and the idea here is simply to expose you to historical documents and ideas, and get you to think about them. At the end of the semester, I will average the grade for each reflection assignment, and that will constitute the participation portion of the final semester grade. The lowest reflection grade will be dropped and will not count against the grade. Most of the reflections that are turned in are given full credit.

### **Quizzes**

**I reserve the right to give short quizzes throughout the semester.** These quizzes, if and when they are given, would be given at the beginning of class. Quizzes must be turned in when the instructor asks for them; they cannot be made up later on in that class period, nor on any other day. Once I am done passing out quizzes I will not pass any out later on in the class period, even if students come in late to that class. Any quizzes that are given out will be averaged in to the participation grade (as if they were reflections).

### **Late Work and Makeup Work Policy**

The only assignments that can be turned in late are the essay outline, and the two five-page essays. Late work has to be turned in no later than seven days after the original due date and will be given 80 percent credit. This 80 percent credit policy will be implemented regardless of the reason for the assignment being late. The only exceptions to this one-week extension are any assignments that fall due the last week of class—no work can be turned later than the day of the final exam; nor can the essay outline be turned in later than the essay itself.

If a student is not present to take the midterm as scheduled, the midterm can be taken at a future date. I commit myself to administering midterm makeups (or the final exam, for those who cannot be there in class for that purpose) on two separate occasions (to be determined by the instructor, based on how many students can meet on a given time). If a student misses the scheduled midterm, and is unable to make either of the two occasions that I determine to administer the makeup, **it will be the responsibility of the student to arrange to take the midterm while being proctored for the duration of the makeup exam, by an employee of VVC.** The instructor needs to be given the name and contact information for the VVC employee who will be proctoring the exam; the midterm makeup will not be administered before the instructor has communicated with the proctor and verified their ability to proctor the exam. The midterm makeup will be different from the midterm administered to the class as scheduled, but will still be based on the midterm study guide.

Reflections (and quizzes) are based on class lectures and discussions and cannot be made up (or turned in before or after the assignment is done in class).

A word to the wise: this isn't deliberate at all, but I typically return late work very slowly.

**The essay outline will be collected at the beginning of the class period of the day it is due. Any essay outlines turned in from that point onward (including later on in that class period) will be assessed the late penalty.**

#### **Extra Credit or Re-doing Assignments**

Apart from the special instructions for emailing essays and writing out your exams (which can combine to give you a 0.8 percent overall increase to the grade), there is no extra credit offered; the only assignments that can be re-done are essays that are returned because of unacceptable subject choice, improper file format, or some other condition, **at the discretion of the instructor.** Sorry, but plagiarism or otherwise improper use of sources or other people's work doesn't constitute a reason for making up the assignment. Any such essays that are re-submitted may be assessed a late penalty, of anywhere from a full letter grade to a one-third credit penalty.

***Out of consideration for the rest of the class, if you do come in late, please walk in and find a seat along the row of chairs along the wall on the west side of the classroom, so as to not disturb the instructor and the rest of the students. DO NOT WALK IN BETWEEN THE INSTRUCTOR AND THE STUDENTS.***

#### **Classroom Behavior**

Being mean or inconsiderate (as defined by instructor) in class will make you liable to any penalty allowable under VVC policy and the Penal Code of the State of California, including but not limited to: academic penalties, imprisonment, fines, citations, and torture (up to but not including violations of the Eighth Amendment) to the fullest extent permitted by law.

**All Major Assignments due on Wednesday**

|        |   |
|--------|---|
| Jan 4  | Class introduction; Agricultural Revolution   |
| Jan 6  | Ch. 2: Mesopotamian Civilization  |
| Jan 11 | Ch. 3: Egyptian Civilization  |
| Jan 13 | Ch. 6: Ancient Chinese Civilization; <b>essay outline &amp; first essay</b>                               |
| Jan 18 | Martin Luther King holiday  |
| Jan 20 | <b>Midterm</b>  |
| Jan 25 | Ch. 7: Greek Civilization   |
| Jan 27 | Chs 7 & 8: Greek and Hellenistic Civilization   |
| Feb 1  | Ch. 9: Roman civilization   |
| Feb 3  | Ch. 12: Rome's Three Heirs: the Byzantine, Islamic, and early-medieval Western Worlds <b>second essay</b> |
| Feb 8  | Ch. 13: High Middle Ages (1050-1300): Economic, Social, and Political Institutions                        |
| Feb 10 | <b>Final Exam</b>   |