

World Civilization 101:

Human Social, Political and Economic Developments from 4 Million B.C.E. – 1450 C.E.

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Prof. Stevens

ECC Main Campus

Room 4135

Office Hours MWF 8:30am-9:30am

mstevens@essex.edu

Office 1154, Red Area

Course Requirements

Course Description

In this class we will learn about the early history of *Homo sapiens*—another term for humankind. The survival of the human race has been based on three things: family, work, and property. As history moved forward, people went from living in small, scattered groups to living in large, organized civilizations. However, many people unfortunately had to pay a heavy price for the so-called “progress” of civilizations. All civilizations have been based on the unequal treatment of a great majority of people in order to benefit the interests of a small minority of rulers. But once upon a time it was different. In this course we will examine how human societies have developed over time from the origins of hominids roughly 4 million years ago until “1492 when Columbus sailed the ocean blue.” More importantly we will ask ourselves *why* humans took certain historical paths and how things can change in the future.

Course Policies: *Grades*

Grading

Attendance AND Participation: 25%

Quizzes: 25%

Essays and Homework Assignments: 25%

Final Exam: 25%

****NO MIDTERM****

You will write several papers this semester for this course. Each essay must be at least 6 paragraphs, double-spaced and using Times New Roman. DO NOT TURN IN PAPERS LATE WITHOUT WRITTEN EXCUSE. DO NOT COPY YOUR IDEAS FROM THE BOOK. DO NOT COPY YOUR PAPERS FROM THE INTERNET. You will not receive any credit if you copy your essay from another source. However, you always need to discuss examples from the book in order to make your point. It is good to take short quotes from the class text or from another source such as videos or other books in order to give examples that support your argument.

Late Work Policy: Late work will only be accepted if it is accompanied by official excuse for absence

Grades of "Incomplete": Incompletes are allowed only if students have met college requirements for work completed in order to qualify for same

Revision Policy: Revisions for any essay are allowed and acceptable so long as submitted prior to the next essay assignment

Essay Commentary Policy: All essay grades are explained by comments noted on the essays themselves

Course Policies: *Technology and Media*

Email: any homework assignments for the class not given in class itself will be emailed within 24 hours of the previous class. Students who do not attend class are welcome to submit homework via email in lieu of attending class but the assignment MUST be submitted in time for the beginning of class.

Webcourses: You must be able to access Moodle to take this course. Homework assignments are updated via Moodle only. You must submit your assignments digitally on

Moodle if you are unable to attend a class, but you must ALWAYS submit the assignment upon arriving in class if you submit a hard copy.

Laptop / Smartphone Usage: Laptop and cell phone can be used for taking notes. But during exams all notes must be printed out and used on paper.

Classroom Devices: Smartboard

Class Schedule

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Session 1: What do YOU think it means to be Human? AND Session 2: Introduction to Human Evolution

Humans evolved after millions of years from a species of primate that was essentially “half man, half ape” in the eastern portion of Africa. We will discuss how humans and other primates lived as hunters and gatherers and evolved over time in the years before agriculture arose

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Session 3: From Hunting and Gathering to Agriculture

The development of agriculture marked a fundamental change in human history because even though humans had not developed writing, they began to produce food and other items in surplus amounts, and the creation of a surplus laid the basis for the origins of civilizations

Session 4: Civilization or Barbarism?

This week we discuss the rise of four river valley civilizations that in many ways became the central regions of human advancement in the realms of writing, science, mathematics, philosophy and religion. But also in these civilizations do we see signs of intense “barbarism” or suffering, exploitation and inequality.

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Session 5: History of the Potato

In the Americas or "New World" we see evidence of concentrated settlements in Central America near Mexico and Guatemala and in South America near present-day Peru, some of which date back as far as civilizations in the so-called "Old World." The potato, for example, was cultivated in Peru over 5,000 years ago.

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Session 6: The "Golden Age" of Philosophy

During this week students will investigate the importance of ideas and key thinkers in moving history forward. Important ideological movements among the Greeks and Chinese were foundational and at the same time the outcome of traditions that arose in earlier civilizations.

Session 7: Religion, again

While monotheistic Judaism and early Christianity was emerging around the Mediterranean, Buddhism was rising out of India. This week we compare and contrast the "great men" like Sun Tzu and Socrates to Ashoka of India and the Buddha himself.

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Session 8: Ancient Slave Revolts

Romans emerged as an important center of political and military control even though economically they suffered from an imbalance of trade—i.e. they did not produce enough goods to support the massive empire that they created. They also suffered from notable slave rebellions, like the one led by Spartacus. Take a journey with Prof. Stevens through present and ancient Italian history.

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Session 9: Racism in the Ancient World

This week we discuss the origins of the Hamitic Myth, or the "Sons of Ham" in the Old Testament, in order to trace how slavery in Hebrew society laid the basis for both Islam and Christianity to justify the enslavement of large groups of Africans on the basis of the story of Cane. That is, this week we trace the historical roots of anti-Black racism and slavery in the Abrahamic religions.

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Session 10: Looking East—Islam and the Origins of Modernity

Who was Muhammad and why did Islam become the predominant religion for hundreds of years, also referred to as the "Dark Ages"? Moreover, how did Islam contribute to the foundations of European states and even to the development of Chinese and Indian sciences and mathematics?

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Session 11: Major African Empires and the Age of Gold

Egypt was not the only region in Africa that developed advanced civilizations. West, South and East Africa also gave rise to kingdoms like the Zulu, Mali, and Ethiopia. This week we investigate several African kingdoms that eventually played a key role in the shaping of the modern world.

Session 12: Bubonic Plague and the Mongol Empire

How did the Mongol empire—the largest empire to span the Old World—in Eurasia fundamentally change the configuration of power and rule in the centuries before European nations became the most powerful force on the globe?

Session 13: Class Struggles in the Feudal World

What were the "Middle Ages" in Europe and how did they compare/contrast with human developments in the Americas during this same period?

