

Istituto Lorenzo de' Medici

2019 Summer Program

HIS 120 Introduction to World History

Course Outline

Term: June 17-July 19, 2019

Class Hours: 10:00 - 11:50AM (Monday through Friday)

Course Code: HIS 120

Instructor: TBA

Office Hours: TBA

Email: TBA

Credit: 4

Class Hours: This course will have 72 class hours, including 40 lecture hours, professor 10 office hours, 10-hour TA discussion sessions, 2-hour review sessions, 10-hour extra classes.

Course Description:

This course traces the development of world civilizations from approximately 1500 to the present. It examines the creation of “modern” patterns of thought, culture, society, and politics. Its global approach offers the student an opportunity to learn about the diversity of human social life and understand the historical convergences, divergences, and interrelations among peoples. We are all products of this history, and, in this course, we will critically reflect on the meaning of our shared global heritage, both for us as individuals, as well as for the larger society and times in which we live.

In order to accomplish this, human actions must be situated, understood and analyzed in specific contexts. This lays the groundwork for an historical understanding of how the cultures and civilizations were created and developed in response to specific environments and needs. Topics include:

- Cultures and civilizations

- Forms of political organization
- Forms of resistance and revolution
- Worldviews and religions
- Structures of economic organization
- The arts and sciences

While this course provides an overview of world history since 1500, the purpose of the course is not to teach you all you need to know about the subject. The primary objective of the course is to learn how to think critically about historical events and trends. With everything you study you will be encouraged to ask, “what was the significance of this in its historical context?” and “what is its importance today?”

Required Texts:

- Kevin Reilly, Worlds of History: A Comparative Reader, Volume II, Bedford/St. Martin’s
- J.M. Blaut, The Colonizer’s Model of the World, Guilford
- Chinua Achebe, Things Fall Apart

Texts must be brought to class on the day they will be discussed.

General Information:

Class meetings will be grounded in discussion of the assigned texts. Readings must be completed before the class meeting in which they will be discussed. This enables students to get the most out of the lectures and to participate effectively in discussion.

Discussion: You will not be expected to have fully developed points of view about the course materials. However, you are expected to participate. No one will be penalized for being wrong or imprecise, for expressing uncertainty or frustration, or for changing their mind. But it should be clear that you are trying, that you have done the readings and are working toward a mastery of the material.

Availability: I expect that all of you, either alone or in groups, will contact me. I am almost always available to discuss the course material.

Cell Phones: Cell phones must be turned off and put away during class meetings.

Evaluation Criteria:

The value of our meetings will hinge on your advance preparation and on your willingness to engage the issues actively in class. When you are doing the readings, keep in mind that you will be expected to participate in the debates outlined in the readings, reject some positions, embrace others, and defend the choices you make.

Grades will be based on the following:

- Paper: 30%
- Midterm: 30%
- Final exam: 30%
- Attendance and participation: 10%

Exams: The midterm and the final will both be in-class exams. The midterm will pose a series of short-answer questions based on the course materials and lectures. The final will do the same and will also ask you to choose one of two essay questions. You will be asked to write an essay on one of the broad themes discussed in the course.

Attendance and Participation: This grade will be measured based on attendance and preparedness (i.e. whether students are prepared to discuss the reading).

Schedule of Meetings and Required Readings (Sources can be found in Worlds of History):

Session 1 Introduction

- Charles C. Mann, “1491” (<http://www.theatlantic.com/doc/200203/mann>)

Session 2 Overseas Expansion in the early Modern Period, China and Europe, 1400-1600

- Blaut, pp. 1-17
 - What is “Eurocentric diffusionism?”
 - How does Eurocentric diffusionism view colonialism?
 - Which came first, European colonialism or European development?
 - What are the main tenets of European diffusionism?
 - What is the “myth of emptiness?”

Session 3 Overseas Expansion in the early Modern Period, China and Europe, 1400-1600 (cont’d)

- Blaut, pp. 17-43
 - How have notions of European superiority evolved?
 - What is the ethnographic study of ideas?
 - What would a non-diffusionist theory be?

Session 4 Atlantic World Encounters: Europeans, Americans, and Africans, 1500-1850

Sept. 11 Atlantic World Encounters: Europeans, Americans, and Africans, 1500-1850 (cont'd)

State and Religion: Asian, Islamic, and Christian States, 1500-1800

- Blaut, pp. 50-52, 94-102
 - What is the European miracle?
 - Does European superiority explain colonialism or is it a consequence of colonialism?
 - How does the myth of rationality persist?

State and Religion: Asian, Islamic, and Christian States, 1500-1800 (cont'd)

Gender and Family: China, Southeast Asia, Europe, and “New Spain,” 1600-1750

- Blaut, pp. 108-119
 - When did technological superiority begin in Europe?
 - How does China’s technology problematize the doctrine of European superiority?

Gender and Family: China, Southeast Asia, Europe, and “New Spain,” 1600-1750 (cont'd)

- Blaut, ch. 152-73
 - Why did non-European regions decline after 1492?
 - What was feudalism? Why does Samir Amin prefer the term “tributary?”

The Scientific Revolution: Europe, the Ottoman Empire, China, Japan, and the Americas, 1600-1800

The Scientific Revolution: Europe, the Ottoman Empire, China, Japan, and the Americas, 1600-1800 (cont'd)

Enlightenment and Revolution: Europe, the Americas, and India, 1650-1850

Enlightenment and Revolution: Europe, the Americas, and India, 1650-1850 (cont'd)

Capitalism and the Industrial Revolution: Europe and the World, 1750-1900

- Blaut, pp. 179-187

Capitalism and the Industrial Revolution: Europe and the World, 1750-1900 (cont'd)

- Blaut, pp. 187-206, 214-15

MIDTERM

Colonized and Colonizers: Europeans in Africa and Asia, 1850-1930

- Achebe, chs. 1-6

Colonized and Colonizers: Europeans in Africa and Asia, 1850-1930 (cont'd)

- Achebe, chs. 7-13

Westernization and Nationalism: Japan, India, Turkey, and Egypt, 1860-1950

- Achebe, chs. 14-19

Westernization and Nationalism: Japan, India, Turkey, and Egypt, 1860-1950

- Achebe, chs. 20-25

World War I and Its Consequences: Europe and the Soviet Union, 1914-1920

World War I and Its Consequences: Europe and the Soviet Union, 1914-1920 (cont'd)

World War II and Mass Killing: Germany, the Soviet Union, Japan, and the United States, 1931-1945

World War II and Mass Killing: Germany, the Soviet Union, Japan, and the United States, 1931-1945

The Cold War and the Third World: China, Vietnam, Cuba, and Afghanistan, 1945-1989

The Cold War and the Third World: China, Vietnam, Cuba, and Afghanistan, 1945-

1989 (cont'd)

Resources and Environment: The Case of Water, 1945 to the Present

Globalization, 1960 to the Present

FINAL EXAM.

Grading:

Your work will be evaluated according to the following criteria:

A— designates work of extraordinarily high quality; reflects unusually thorough and comprehensive understanding of issues at hand; presents a clearly identifiable thesis and argument that demonstrates cogent and creative development and support of ideas.

B— designates work of high quality; reflects clearly organized and comprehensive understanding of issues and hand; presents substantive thesis and argument with evident development and support of ideas.

C— designates work which minimally meets requirements set forward in assignment; reflects some organization and development of ideas, but develops argument in superficial or simplistic manner; may only address part of the assignment or be otherwise incomplete.

D— designates work of poor quality which does not meet minimum requirements set forward in assignment; demonstrates poor organization of ideas and/or inattention to development of ideas, grammar, and spelling; treatment of material is superficial and/or simplistic; may indicate that student has not done reading assignments thoroughly.

F— designates work that does not meet ANY of the standards set above or which is not handed in.