

SYLLABUS: HISTORY 448-130: AN INTRODUCTION TO WORLD HISTORY, 4 credits

SPRING 2014-2015

4:00 -5:15 TR 1121 Mosse Humanities Building

Professor André Wink

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There are numerous approaches to world history, and none of them aims to cover everything. Rather than attempting to cover all major themes of world history (let alone history), this course will broadly focus on three large questions: 1. What are the origins of human civilization? 2. How did human civilization become diverse and differentiated in the various (sub) continents of the world? 3. How can we understand the emergence of the modern world?

The reading requirements are listed in the week-by-week program outlined below. We will read four books (two rather long ones, two very short ones) and a Reader which contains comments on specific subjects, articles and short extracts from books, as well as instructions.

Reading List (with numbers of pages)

[1] Michael Cook, *A Brief History of the Human Race* (New York, 2003). xix-xxiv + 385

This will be our principal textbook. Its purpose is to ‘convey an overall sense of human history and an idea of some of the ways in which it is interesting’ (p. xxi). In the week-by-week program below, it will be abbreviated as BH and we will read and discuss it in its entirety over the length of the course.

In addition to this textbook we will read one book each on the Roman empire, the Islamic world, and the British empire — these are arguably the three most important world-historical topics in respectively ancient, medieval and modern times.

[2] Christopher Kelly, *The Roman Empire: A Very Short Introduction* (Oxford, 2006). 153

[3] Adam J. Silverstein, *Islamic History: A Very Short Introduction* (Oxford, 2010). xiii-xviii+157

[4] Niall Ferguson, *Empire: The Rise and Demise of the British World Order and the Lessons for Global Power* (New York, 2002). ix-xxix + 392

The last item on the above list [4] will be our Big Read for the second part of the semester, and you are well advised to begin reading it as early as March 20. It is an illustrated account of the British empire that originally accompanied a British History Channel 4 television production. You must use the complete edition — with all the illustrations — not an abbreviated version of the book.

[5] Reader.

You can obtain a paper copy of the Reader from the Social Science Copy Center, 6120 Social Science Building.

Anyone and everyone is welcome to take this class. No previous course work in world history or any other field of history is necessary. The credit requirements are as follows: one mid-term exam (essay questions); a 6-8 page review of Reading List item # 4 (for instructions see Reader, p. 17); and a final exam on May 11, 12:25-2:25 PM — room pending (essay questions). The final grade will be based on participation in TA sessions (15%) and the above three requirements in equal measure. [Grading scale: 92-100% A; 88-91.9% AB; 82-87.9% B; 78-81.9% BC; 70-77.9% C; 50-69.9% D; 0-55% F]

syllabus and weekly schedule

January 20, 22: What is world history?

Readings:

Jerry H. Bentley, 'The New World History,' in: L. Kramer and S. Mazda (eds), *A Companion to Western Historical Thought* (Oxford, 2002), 393-416

January 27, 29: World environmental history

Readings:

David Christian, 'World Environmental History,' in: J. H. Bentley (ed.), *The Oxford Handbook of World History* (Oxford, 2011), 125-142 [Memorial Library e-book]

Reader, 1-10

February 3: The neolithic revolution and the emergence of civilization

Readings:

BH, xix-xxiv, 1-52

February 5: Australia and the Americas

Readings:

BH, 55-98

February 10: Africa

Readings:

BH, 99-121

February 12: The ancient Near East

Readings:

BH, 125-146

Reader, 11

February 17: India

Readings:

BH, 147-174

Reader, 12-14

February 19: China

Readings:

BH, 175-204

Reader, 15-16

February 24, 26: The ancient Mediterranean world

Readings:

BH, 205-233

Christopher Kelly, *The Roman Empire: A Very Short Introduction* (Oxford, 2006)

March 3: Western Europe

Readings:

BH, 234-264

March 5: Mid-term exam

(usual time and place)

March 10, 12, 17, 19: The Islamic world

Readings:

BH, 267-290

Adam J. Silverstein, *Islamic History: A Very Short Introduction* (Oxford, 2010)
(skip chapter 4)

March 24, 26, April 7, 9, 14, 16: European expansion and imperialism

Readings:

BH, 295-320

Niall Ferguson, *Empire: The Rise and Demise of the British World Order and the Lessons for Global Power* (New York, 2002)

Reader, p. 17

April 21, 23, 28: The modern world

Readings:

BH, 325-348

Reader, pp. 18-30

April 30, May 5: The world today

Readings:

Robert D. Kaplan, 'South Asia's Geography of Conflict,' *Center for a New American Security Working Paper*, August, 2010

Martin Jacques, *When China Rules the World: The End of the Western World and the Birth of a New Global Order* (New York, 2009), 1-16, 414-435

May 7: STUDY GUIDE