

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

SPRING 2015-2016

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

Professor André Wink

Office hours: 3:00-4:00 TR

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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 18. 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 9, 2:45-4:45 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 19, 21 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 26, 28: 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 2: The neolithic revolution and the emergence of civilization**

Readings:

BH, xix-xxiv, 1-52

**February 4: Australia and the Americas**

Readings:

BH, 55-98

**February 9: Africa**

Readings:

BH, 99-121

Reader, 11

**February 11: The ancient Near East**

Readings:

BH, 125-146

Reader, 11

**February 16: India**

Readings:

BH, 147-174

Reader, 12-14

**February 18: China**

Readings:

BH, 175-204

Reader, 15-16

**February 23, 25: The ancient Mediterranean world**

Readings:

BH, 205-233

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

**March 1: Western Europe**

Readings:

BH, 234-264

**March 3: Mid-term exam**

(usual time and place)

**March 8, 10, 15, 17: The Islamic world**

Readings:

BH, 267-290

Adam J. Silverstein, *Islamic History: A Very Short Introduction* (Oxford, 2010)  
(skip chapters 4, 5, 6, 7)

**March 29, 31, April 5, 7, 12, 14: 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 19, 21, 26: The modern world**

Readings:

BH, 325-348

Reader, pp. 18-30

**April 28, May 3: 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 5: STUDY GUIDE**