JH002: World Civilizations to 1600

Course Description
This two-semester course introduces students to the history and literature of world civilizations from prehistory to the early modern period (c. 1600). It follows a chronological and geographical order while emphasizing certain themes (e.g. social and economic systems, government and politics, religious and philosophical beliefs, the environment and human interaction, science and technology, etc.). During the course, we shall analyze these themes comparing and contrasting them with different peoples, cultures, and civilizations and considering if they changed or continued over time and geographical space. Throughout the process, students will achieve a better understanding of world history and the world in which they live today.

Required Texts

World History: Patterns of Interaction

The Norton Anthology of World Literature, shorter second edition

Periodically I shall provide additional reading in class.

Course Objectives

• Developing a general narrative of world history and literature
• Developing analytical skills related to human and natural events
• Developing interpretative frameworks of the past and present
• Analyzing primary and secondary materials, including texts, images, and artifacts

Course Topics

• Peopling of the World: African Origins to Early Civilizations, Prehistory to 2500BCE
• The Emergence of Cities and States: River-Valley Civilizations, 3500BCE to 450BCE
• People and Ideas: Religion, Philosophy, and Culture, 3500BCE to 259BCE
• The Emergence of Empires: Egypt, Nubia, Assyria, Persia, and China, 1570BCE to 200BCE
• Ancient Greece: City-States to Hellenism, 2000BCE to 300BCE
• Ancient Rome and Early Christianity: Republic, Empire, the Rise of Christianity, and the Decline of the Roman Empire, 500BCE to 500ADE
• India and China: Emergence of Empires and the Development of Buddhism and Hinduism, 300BCE to 550ADE
• African Civilizations: Diverse Societies and Kingdoms, 1500BCE to 500ADE
• The Americas: Early Societies and Culture, 40,000BCE to 700ADE
• The Muslim World: Religion, Empire, Science and Technology, 600ADE to 1250 ADE
• World Religions: Buddhism, Christianity, Hinduism, Islam, Judaism, and Confucianism
• Byzantines, Russians and Turks: Societies, Empires and Interaction, 500ADE to 1500 ADE
• East Asia: Societies, Empires and Interaction, 600 ADE to 1350 ADE
• Europe during the Middle Ages: Kingdoms and the Church, 500 ADE to 1200 ADE
• Formation of Western Europe: Culture and Interaction, 800 ADE to 1500 ADE
• Africa: Societies, Empires, and Interaction, 800 ADE to 1500 ADE
• The Americas: Empires and Cultures, 900 ADE to 1500 ADE
• European Renaissance and Reformation: Italy, Northern Europe, and the Rise of Protestantism, 1300 ADE to 1600 ADE
• The Muslim World and Expansion: Ottomans and Mughals, 1300 ADE to 1700 ADE
• Age of Exploration and Isolationism: Europe, China, and Japan, 1400 ADE to 1800 ADE
• The Atlantic World: Europeans in the Americas and the Slave Trade, 1492 ADE to 1800 ADE

Sample Assignments

Essay Assignment:
• Discuss and explain the significance of art and/or language at the end of the Paleolithic (Old Stone) Age.

Research Paper or Project:
• You are required to write a research paper (about 5 pages) or do a research project (e.g., documentary or presentation about 10 to 15 minutes long) by the end of semester. You can choose any historical subject related to World History but you must discuss it with me first. Once we have agreed on the subject, you can move to the next stage of developing a thesis/argument/point of view and doing the research. I am available to assist you during this stage. We shall discuss organization or structure before you move to the final stage of writing your research paper or completing your research project.