

UNIVERSITY OF MASSACHUSETTS  
DEPARTMENT OF HISTORY  
SPRING 2005

HISTORY 605: APPROACHES TO WORLD HISTORY

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**COURSE DESCRIPTION** The aim of this course is to explore conceptualizations of world history. We will read about how others have conceptualized world history and we will work on developing our own notions of what constitutes world history as a basis for teaching and for research and writing.

**REQUIREMENTS** Attendance is required. Class will be based on discussion rather than on lectures, therefore you must come to class prepared to discuss the assigned reading. Writing assignments include two 3-5 page book reviews chosen out of three possibilities, three short assignments, a world history syllabus, and a 15-20 page world history paper. This paper may either be written from scratch or may develop a previously written paper, or a paper you are currently writing for another class, into a world history paper.

SYLLABUS

JAN 27 Introduction to Course

FEB 3 Time and Space

Read Peter N. Stearns, "Periodization in World History," in Ross Dunn, ed., The New World History (Boston: 2000), 364-376; Martin W. Lewis and Karen E. Wigen, The Myth of Continents: A Critique of Metageography (Berkeley: 1997), 47-72

FEB 10 Dominant Approaches

Read: Craig A. Lockard, "Global History, Modernization, the World-system Approach," Immanuel Wallerstein, "World Systems Analysis," Fernand Braudel, "Economies in Space," and Andre Gunder Franck, "A Plea for World Systems History," in Ross Dunn, ed., The New World History (Boston: 2000), 230-276; Martin W. Lewis and Karen E. Wigen, The Myth of Continents: A Critique of Metageography (Berkeley: 1997), 72-103.

Assignment: What constitutes "world history" according to professional historians? 3-page analysis of the Journal of World History or the American Historical Review.

FEB 17 Before 1500

Read: Jerry H. Bentley, Old World Encounters, entire.

Assignment: On the basis of this book, choose 5 pivotal points in world history before 1500 that would constitute lecture/reading/discussion topics in a world history course before 1500. Add 5 more of your own choosing. Bring copies of your lists to class and be prepared to discuss the book and your choices.

FEB 24 The Big Problem

Read: Robert B. Marks, The Origins of the Modern World, entire; Marc Ferguson, "Why the West?" *Historia Actual On-Line*, 5 (2004), [journal on line] <<http://www.hapress.com/abst.php?a=n05a09>>

Assignment: Write a 3-5 page review of Marks. Bring copies of your review to class to give to your classmates and be prepared to discuss the book.

MAR 3 Animating World History

Read: Kenneth Pomerantz and Steven Topik, The World That Trade Created: Culture, Society and the World Economy, 1400 to the Present

Assignment: From this book, choose 5 articles that you would assign in a post 1500 world history course. Add 5 more from elsewhere (journals, chapters in books, primary sources) of your own choosing to provide examples, context, or links. Bring copies of your lists to class and be prepared to discuss the book and your choices.

MAR 10 Connecting Places to World Changes

Read: Donald R. Wright, The World and a Very Small Place in Africa, entire.

Assignment: Write a 3-5 page review of Wright. Bring copies of your review to class to give to your classmates and be prepared to discuss the book.

MAR 17 PHEW, SPRING BREAK

MAR 24 Products and Pests in World History

Read: Jared Diamond, Guns, Germs, and Steel, entire.

Assignment: Write a 3-5 page review of Diamond. Bring copies of your review to class to give to your classmates and be prepared to discuss the book.

MAR 31 Teaching World History

Writing assignment due: World history syllabus for any level course, covering any span of

time. Make copies to distribute in class. Be prepared to explain your approach in class.

APR 7        What makes a paper a world history paper?

Presentation: Be prepared to present the paper topic you are working on. You may develop a paper you have already written or are writing for another class to have a world history dimension. Or you may write a paper from scratch.

APR 14       Introduction to library sources: printed and electronic.

APR 21       MONDAY CLASS SCHEDULE

APR 28

MAY 5        Paper presentations in class

MAY 12       Paper presentations in class

FINAL PAPERS ARE DUE MONDAY MAY 16.