



History 9 - World History: Ancient World until 1500

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Introduction

Most of the modern world is built on the foundations of the ancient world. These ancient civilizations - in China, India, Egypt, Greece and Persia - as well as the development of major religious faiths (for example, Islam and Christianity) provided the major narrative of early world history. I am sure you have encountered some of these histories before in previous grades, so we will build upon this existing knowledge by enhancing your understanding of how ancient civilizations rose and fell over time, what factors contributed to these developments, how cultures cooperated and conflicted with each other, how economic and trade systems developed, how ancient societies managed growing populations, as well as analyze the role of warfare in the shaping of the ancient world.

Classroom Expectations

I have found that the best way for students to learn effectively is to talk, listen and study in an environment that is vibrant, intellectually stimulating and safe to express your ideas and opinions. To better facilitate this, you should **always** come to class prepared (which means having done the reading and homework), with the required materials for studying - this will help with the flow of the class, enhance discussions and improve your notes. To facilitate this further, please do not bring food with you into class (be proactive and snack **before** class, especially if class is right before lunch). However, water is always welcome.

You should always be considerate and respectful of others while in class - use these occasions to improve your skills as a listener and a respondent. My role is to navigate us through the historical narrative, facilitate discussions and create a welcoming environment from which we can all learn and enjoy. Although I have primarily taught at the college level for the last ten years, I have thoroughly enjoyed teaching at MPH and have been very impressed with the level of student achievement. As you are now high school students at MPH, I imagine you can easily meet my high expectations.

Readings

The assigned text book for the course is *World History: Patterns*. We will not use the text book directly in the classroom, so you do not need to bring the text book into school: keep it at home to do the homework readings. I have also put together a collection of readings that

will be posted onto my website (<http://mphmtshistory.weebly.com/history-9-documents--readings.html>). The homework will outline precisely what to read and by when, and you can either read from the text book, download the readings onto your computer, or print out a copy. On some occasions I will print out readings for you.

These assigned readings throughout the year - pages from the text book, historical articles, chapters from other books as well as primary documents - will help you will learn to critically read and analyze primary and secondary sources, as it is through these texts that we can get closer to the history we are studying.

Importance of Writing in History

Writing is a central component to this course and we will be doing a lot of it this semester. The art of history is the analysis of documents, the development of arguments for explaining what happened in historical episodes and why, as well as telling fascinating stories that happened throughout the ancient world. In order to produce an effective historical argument or create a historical story or narrative, we have to be good writers. Throughout this class we will work on your writing as a historian. We will learn how to be clear, effective communicators, learn how to use evidence effectively and how to develop a historical argument in a written essay. There will also be opportunities to be creative and enhance other skills. Writing is a very, very difficult skill to master. We will spend time practicing historical writing, producing drafts and improving our writing skills.

Assignments/Grading

So, as you would expect, there will be a lot of reading and writing in this class! However, along with the various writing assignments (both analytical and creative), there will be a number of larger projects. I prefer a projects-based approach to learning, as it targets different skills in the discipline, so for each quarter there will be a large project. Some of these projects will be individual, some will be collaborative. Each project is designed to help you learn different skills as a historian - such as analyzing historical materials, conducting research, empathizing with the social and cultural experiences of variety of peoples, writing a historical argument - and you produce a creative or written piece of work at the end of each quarter. The good news is there will be no formal examinations in this class!

Other activities and assignments in this class include: occasional map quizzes, formal debates and various simulations. There will also be a lot of discussion of the materials. To help prepare us for this, I will occasionally ask YOU to bring in a question into class related to the readings for that day. This reciprocal questioning exercise is designed to help you both read critically and come to class prepared to discuss these issues. Class discussion is a very important component of the class, complimenting the course readings by engaging us in an examination and critique of the various interpretations of ancient history. All homework will be posted on my website.

The course's final project (20% of the final grade!) is producing a biographical paper on an influential historical figure in the ancient or early modern world. Each student will be randomly assigned a subject of study (names drawn out of a hat!), and is expected to produce a extensive biographical research project. Everyone will write a biographical

narrative of the person, as well as produce an annotated bibliography of your research. This project is also partially creative - you will be expected to present your material in a creative way, expressing the historical significance of your subject through a medium other than writing. You are expected to conduct some library research, locate primary and secondary sources, and discuss in your progress. You are also expected to produce a presentation at the end of the semester. You will receive more information on how to conduct this assignment later in the school year, probably around January when the project will start.

Late papers cost a student a reduction of one-third of a letter grade for every day late. A paper that would have earned an A on Monday earns an A- on Tuesday. By the time of the next class, the paper has dropped to a B+. A paper late by more than a week will receive no grade. Late work will also result in me contacting your parents and assigning conditionals. I understand that students have emergencies and crises; we all experience those. If you know in advance of some problem, come see me. However, you are old enough to be responsible for managing your time and work.

Plagiarism

Plagiarism of any kind will not be tolerated in this class. Academic honesty is vital to any scholarly writing, and plagiarizing someone's work is the biggest academic crime. You must always correctly cite all materials that are not your own. You must always credit others for their work; any author's ideas or conclusions (even if they are not directly quoted) must be cited. Students caught plagiarizing in their assignments will receive serious penalties. Please refer to this web link for further information on plagiarism:

<http://students.sunyocc.edu/central.aspx?menu=768&id=24576>

If you have any questions or concerns regarding plagiarism and academic honesty, please come and see me. We will also discuss in class how to correctly cite a source, and further questions about plagiarism can be raised then.

I am very excited and thrilled to be working with you this year!