



**HIST 131 World History to 1500  
Bridgewater State University  
Winter Intersession  
12/28/20-1/22/21**

Class meetings: Monday and Friday: Asynchronous (independent exercises)  
Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday: Zoom meetings, 7:00 – 9:15 PM, Eastern Standard Time

Course Credits: 3

Instructor: Dr. Nicholas Ganson

Contact: Email – [nganson@bridgew.edu](mailto:nganson@bridgew.edu)

Office hours: On Zoom by appointment/arrangement

**Course description:**

This course will survey major issues, events, and processes in politics, society, and economy across societies in the world's major regions, from the dawn of history to the fifteenth century. The course will provide an overview of world history that explores common challenges and experiences that unite the human past and identify key global patterns over time.

The course is also designed to help students acquire and sharpen basic skills, including:

- Reading critically, writing clearly, and synthesizing.
- Reading documents as historical texts.
- Articulating original arguments based on historical evidence.
- Identifying and evaluating authors' arguments.
- Identifying, locating, and productively using primary and scholarly secondary sources.

**Expectations:**

Much of this course is discussion-driven and the level of your success will depend largely on your ability to complete the assigned readings and exercises on time, participate actively in the Blackboard discussion forum, and pose productive questions to the instructor. My goal is to set clear expectations for all assignments and grading components. I expect you to make an honest effort to reach those expectations. All course documents, including the course syllabus, will be available on Blackboard ([bridgew.blackboard.com](http://bridgew.blackboard.com)). Students are responsible for thoroughly familiarizing themselves with the syllabus and course materials.

## Grades:

Class attendance and participation: 20%

Discussion forum participation: 40%

Research assignment: 15%

Research paper: 25%

The grading scale is as follows:

93-100	A	80-82	B-	67-69	D+
90-92	A-	77-79	C+	63-66	D
87-89	B+	73-76	C	60-62	D-
83-86	B	70-72	C-	Below 60	F

The attendance and participation grade will be a product of the frequency of your attendance and your level of in-class participation.

The discussion forum participation grade will be based on the frequency and quality of your responses to weekly forum questions, which will be posted on Blackboard. Strong participation in the forums will require consistently keeping up with your assigned readings and the lecture material.

Written assignments (research assignment and research paper) and the guidelines for these assignments will be posted on Blackboard. These will be submitted through Blackboard as well.

Late submissions will lose 10% for each day they are late. Be sure to plan well. In the event of extraordinary circumstances, contact the instructor as early as possible.

## Academic integrity, conduct, and other policies:

You are expected to be present and attentive for the class sessions with your video turned on. Rules of classroom behavior apply in the Zoom classroom: refrain from using your smart phones, laptops should be used during class only for class-related purposes (such as notetaking), raise your hand to ask a question, speak respectfully to classmates, don't speak over others, and so forth.

Please familiarize yourself with the University's Academic Integrity Policy and Student Code of Conduct at the following links no later than our second meeting.

Academic Integrity Policy:

<http://www.bridgew.edu/handbook/policiesprocedures/academicintegrity.cfm>

Student Code of Conduct:

<http://www.bridgew.edu/handbook/Code.cfm>

If you are ever unsure what constitutes plagiarism, see the professor before submitting any work. ALWAYS cite your sources. Plagiarism will, at the least, result in a "0" for the given assignment but potentially more far-reaching consequences.

The Academic Achievement Center (AAC) provides students with academic services and resources that propel them toward successful and timely degree completion. With all the services available in the center, the AAC is the largest hub of student academic services on campus. Ideally located on the ground floor of the Maxwell Library in the center of the BSU Campus, the AAC is comprised of four major support areas: Academic Advising (first-semester freshmen), the Disability Resources Office, Learning Assistance (tutoring and academic coaching), and Testing Services. Drop-in learning

support areas (Math Services, Accounting & Finance Lab, Writing Studio, Second Language Services), open study space, study rooms available for reserve, and computers are all available for student use. Stop by or call 508-531-1214 for more information about any of the services offered by the Academic Achievement Center.

Bridgewater State University is committed to providing equal access to students with documented disabilities. To ensure your access to this course and the BSU community, students with disabilities are encouraged to collaborate with the Disability Resources Office (DRO). Through the DRO, you may initiate the confidential process of requesting reasonable accommodations. The DRO can be reached at [Disability\\_Resources@bridgew.edu](mailto:Disability_Resources@bridgew.edu) or 508.531.2194. If you are granted accommodations, please meet with me confidentially to review how they will be applied in this course.

**Required Reading:** All readings will either be available online or will be posted on Blackboard.

## **CLASS SCHEDULE**

### **WEEK 1**

**Monday (independent activity): Read:** Michael Greshko, “This Mysterious Ape-Human Once Lived Alongside Our Ancestors” at <http://news.nationalgeographic.com/2017/05/homo-naledi-human-evolution-science/>

**Tuesday meeting:** Why do we study history? How do we study history?

**Wednesday meeting:** The African Origins of Humanity and the Neolithic Revolution. How to locate sources, conduct research, and write papers. **Read (before class):** “**Explanation of the Components of a History Paper**” (posted on Blackboard) and familiarize yourself with the **Research Assignment** and **Research Paper** (also posted on Blackboard)

**Thursday meeting:** Survey of ancient Mesopotamian civilization. **Read (before class):** “The Code of Hammurabi,” <https://avalon.law.yale.edu/ancient/hamframe.asp>

**Friday (independent activity): Read:** “The Cyrus Cylinder,” [https://www.britishmuseum.org/collection/object/W\\_1880-0617-1941](https://www.britishmuseum.org/collection/object/W_1880-0617-1941)

### **WEEK 2**

**Monday (independent activity): Read:** “Thucydides (c.460/455-c.399 BCE): Pericles' Funeral Oration from the Peloponnesian War (Book 2.34-46)” (from Fordham History Sourcebook) at <https://sourcebooks.fordham.edu/ancient/pericles-funeralspeech.asp>

**Tuesday (meeting):** Survey of Ancient Egypt. Survey of ancient China. Survey of ancient India.

**Wednesday (meeting):** Survey of ancient Persia. Survey of ancient Greece.

**Thursday (meeting):** Primary source analysis and discussion: Pericles' Funeral Oration and Golden Age Athens

**Friday (independent activity): Watch:** BBC, “The Lost Pyramids of Caral,” <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rYaTOJwUSYg>

### **WEEK 3**

**Monday (independent activity):** Work on research assignment

**Tuesday (meeting):** Ancient Rome. The fall of Rome and the Rise of Byzantium. **Due: Research Assignment (by the start of class)**

**Wednesday (meeting):** Survey of Ancient Americas. Stateless societies in the Americas.

**Thursday (meeting):** The Rise of Islam. The Crusades.

**Friday (independent activity): Read:** “Medieval Sourcebook: Urban II: Speech at Council of Clermont, 1095, according to Fulcher of Chartres,” <https://sourcebooks.fordham.edu/source/urban2-fulcher.asp>

### **WEEK 4**

**Monday (independent activity):** Work on research papers. Completed outline by Tuesday.

**Tuesday (class meeting):** The Mongols and Muscovy. State formation in Africa. Empires in the Americas.

**Wednesday (class meeting):** The Medieval Warm. The Little Ice Age. The Black Death.

**Thursday (class meeting):** The Creation of a Global Market. The Columbian Exchange.

**Friday (class meeting):** The Renaissance. Brief paper presentations. **Due: Research paper (by the start of class)**