



BRIDGEWATER

STATE UNIVERSITY

**HIST 131 World History to 1500
Bridgewater State University
June 1 – June 28, SUMMER 2021**

Instructor: Randall S. Geller, Ph.D.

Location: Online

Course Credits:3

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Course Description:

Welcome! This course will examine the transformation of the world from the dawn of ancient Egyptian civilization, through the Greeks and Romans, the Middle Ages in Europe, the Middle East, and North Africa, and right up to Christopher Columbus's voyages across the Atlantic Ocean that led to the European discovery of the Americas. We will learn about the birth, growth, and development of Judaism, Christianity, and Islam while exploring the differences between such monotheistic religions and other world religions such as Buddhism and Hinduism. We will learn about early civilizations in the Americas and Africa. We will explore the foundation and development of civilization in East Asia, and take note of how deeply Chinese culture, thought, language, and technological innovations impacted what became Korea, Vietnam, Japan, and other cultures in east and southeast Asia. A fascinating and highly diverse civilization flowered in India, which gave birth to both Buddhism and Hinduism – the former indelibly impacting the civilizations of East Asia. We will study the astounding technological and engineering innovations all civilizations that we will explore produced.

Since the Roman Empire was a long-lasting empire that left indelible marks on modern western civilization in terms of language, law, the calendar, architecture, leisure – and left us with valuable lessons on the transition from a republic to an empire – a good portion of our course will focus on the Roman world.

The course will challenge you to think critically about historical events and use the methods of historians to interrogate the past in order to better understand the forces and events that helped shape the dawn of the modern era. In that way, the course also provides an introduction to the discipline of history as one method of understanding the past and the present. Considering, analyzing, and evaluating a multiplicity of historical perspectives is a cornerstone of the course. Primary source documents will form an integral part of class readings and discussions. When relevant and time permits, we will include selections from documentaries or from news sources

that reflect on how historic events impact our perception of the world today. Additional articles or book chapters will be assigned through Blackboard or will be linked in the syllabus.

Textbooks:

- 1). William J. Duiker and Jackson Spielvogel, *The Essential World History, Volume I: to 1800*, 8th Edition, 2016
- 2). Robert W. Strayer and Eric W. Nelson, *Thinking through Sources for Ways of the World, Volume 1*. 3rd ed. (ISBN 978-1319074647)

Course Requirements: Because this is an online class we will not have exams. Instead we'll have discussion board questions for weeks 1-3 and a final paper due at the end of week 4. You can read other students' answers which encourages class interaction and participation. Your answers should reflect the fact that you're reading assigned readings, reading and listening to class lectures, and that you are engaging with other members of the class based on their posts. However, I will respond to each of you individually through your Bridgewater email, so everyone feels comfortable reading their evaluations.

Your posts are due on Sunday by 7 pm at the end of each week. If you prefer not to work on weekends, I recommend completing your posts by Friday afternoon so you don't have to worry about completing the posts over the weekend. I will also have more time to look them over if you get them in early!

I will be posting and sending you power point presentations and some audio recorded lectures as well for each topic we cover. We will coordinate Zoom lectures once a week if that works for everybody. In some weeks, readings are extensive, but you will be directed to which parts of those readings you should focus on. I will always be available for assistance and advice by email or videoconferencing.

The final paper will be due Friday, June 25. Please send me your completed papers by email to rgeller@bridgew.edu

Also, when receiving your papers back, please be sure not to read them on your cell phone – your cell phone often will not capture the color-coordinated commentary I include in your graded papers and you may not even recognize what my comments are as a result. Therefore, please read your returned paper with my comments on a computer.

Grading will be calculated on the following basis:

- 1). Class participation (reflected in participating in the student blog) – 50%
- 2). Final paper, due on June 25th – 50%

Papers should be about 5-7 pages each, double-spaced, 10 or 12-point font. Please send them in an editable Word document format. Paper topics will be distributed at the start of the course, and you should reflect on the lectures, the textbook, the primary sources, and at least one of the recommended readings when writing your papers. I will post paper topics and expectations for each paper on the first day of class. If you wish to write about a different topic, please consult with me and we'll try to make it work.

Assignments may be subject to change via an announcement and discussion with the class in advance of an assignment due date.

Week 1 (Tuesday June 1 – Sunday June 6) - Ancient Egypt, Ancient Israel, Ancient Greece, China in Antiquity.

Read: 1). Duiker and Spielvogel, Chapter 1, “Egyptian Civilization: ‘The Gift of the Nile’” and “The Hebrews, Children of Israel”, pp. 15-24, and Chapter 4, “the Civilization of the Greeks,” pp. 91-107, and chapter 3 (China)

2). Strayer and Nelson Sourcebook, Documents Chapter 2:3 – 2:5, 3:2, 3:4, 3:5, 3:6, 4:1 – 4:4, 5:1-5:5 Historians’ Voices, Documents 3:1, 5:1, 5:2

Recommended:

1). Eric Cline, *Three Stones Make a Wall: The Story of Archaeology* (Princeton University Press, 2017), Chapter 3, “From Egypt to Eternity”

2). Eric Cline, *Three Stones Make a Wall: The Story of Archaeology* (Princeton University Press, 2017), Chapter 11, “From Discus-Throwing to Democracy”.

3). Borja Pelegero Alcaide, “The Great Wall of China’s Long Legacy,” *National Geographic History Magazine*, Dec. 31, 2018

<https://www.nationalgeographic.com/archaeology-and-history/magazine/2016/03-04/the-great-wall-of-china/>

4). “Emperor Qin’s Tomb,” *National Geographic* (undated)

https://www.nationalgeographic.com/archaeology-and-history/archaeology/emperor-qin/?cjevent=3f7f04a120d111e982d201820a24060c&utm_source=8160613&utm_medium=affiliates&utm_campaign=CJ

Week 2 (Monday June 7 – Sunday June 13) - the Roman Republic and Roman Empire through Augustus, 509 BCE – 14 CE

Read: 1). Duiker and Spielvogel, Chapter 5, pp. 114-121

2). Mary Boatwright, Ch. 8, “End of the Republic: Caesar’s Dictatorship”, pp. 239-241, 251-266

3). Eric Cline, *Three Stones Make a Wall: The Story of Archaeology* (Princeton University Press, 2017), Chapter 12, “What Have the Romans Ever Done for Us?”

Recommended:

3). Fernando Lillo Redonet, “Spartacus: The Slave Who Rocked Rome”, *National Geographic*, Nov. 26, 2017 4).

<https://scrapsfromtheloft.com/2017/11/26/spartacus-the-slave-who-rocked-rome/>

4). Fernando Lillo Redonet, “How Julius Caesar Started a Big War by Crossing a Small Stream,” *National Geographic History Magazine*, March/April 2017

<https://www.nationalgeographic.com/archaeology-and-history/magazine/2017/03-04/julius-caesar-crossing-rubicon-rome/>

3). Fergus M. Bordewich, “The Ambush that Changed History,” *Smithsonian Magazine*, Sept. 2006

<https://www.smithsonianmag.com/history/the-ambush-that-changed-history-72636736/>

Week 3 (Monday June 14 – Sunday June 20) – The Roman Empire from Augustus to the Fall of Rome, 14 CE – 476 CE; Christianity, Judaism, and the Establishment of the Byzantine Empire

Read:

1). Mary Boatwright, pp. 301-392, 431-458

2). Strayer and Nelson Sourcebook, Documents Chapter 3:3, 4:5, Historians’ Voices, Documents 3:2, 4:2, 4:3

Recommended:

2). Erin Wayman, “The Secrets of Ancient Rome’s Buildings,” *The Smithsonian*, Nov. 16, 2011

<https://www.smithsonianmag.com/history/the-secrets-of-ancient-romes-buildings-234992/>

3). Tom Mueller, “Secrets of the Colosseum,” *The Smithsonian*, Jan. 2011

<https://www.smithsonianmag.com/history/secrets-of-the-colosseum-75827047/>

4). Andrew Curry, "A War Diary Soars Over Rome," National Geographic

<https://www.nationalgeographic.com/trajan-column/article.html>

Week 4 (Monday June 21 – Monday June 28) – Islam and the Arab Conquests, East Asia in the Middle Ages, Europe and the Age of Kings

Read: 1). Duiker and Spielvogel, Chapters 7, 10-13

2). Strayer and Nelson, Documents 7:1–7:6, 8:1-8:6, 9:1-9:6 Historians' Voices, Documents 7:1, 7:2, 8:1-8:2, 10:1 – 10:6, Historians' Voices, Documents 10:1 – 10:2, 11:4-11:7

Recommended:

1). W. Montgomery Watt, "Muhammad," in P.M. Holt, Ann Lambton, and Bernard Lewis, Editors, *The Cambridge History of Islam, Volume 1A: The Central Islamic Lands from Pre-Islamic Times to the First World War* (Cambridge University Press, 1977, 2008)

2). Beatrice Manz, "The Rule of the Infidels: The Mongols and the Islamic World," in David O. Morgan and Anthony Reid, Editors, *The New Cambridge History of Islam, Volume 3: The Eastern Islamic World, Eleventh to Eighteenth Centuries* (Cambridge University Press, 2011)

3). Ora Limor, "Christians and Jews," in Miri Rubin and Walter Simons, Editors, *The Cambridge History of Christianity* (Cambridge University Press, 2009)

4). David Nirenberg, "Christendom and Islam," in Miri Rubin and Walter Simons, Editors, *The Cambridge History of Christianity* (Cambridge University Press, 2009)

5). Jonathan Riley-Smith, "The Crusades, 1095-1198," in David Luscombe and Jonathan Riley-Smith, Editors, *The New Cambridge Medieval History, Volume 4: 1024-1198, Part 1* (Cambridge University Press, 2008).