

Fall 2009

HISTORY 110A: WORLD CIVILIZATION
California State University, Los Angeles
PROFESSOR S. BURSTEIN

Office Hours: KH B4024: MW 9:00-9:30, 12:30-1:20

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Classroom: KH C4016; MW 9:50-11:30 PM

Final Examination: December 9: 8:00-10:30 AM

History 110A deals with the Ancient Civilizations of Eurasia and Africa from their origins until the end of antiquity. During the period covered by this course all but one of the civilized traditions and major religions of the contemporary world originated. In studying the origins of these civilizations we will be studying the roots of our world as a whole. Ancient History involves the use of many types of sources including archaeological, linguistic, and literary evidence. Examples of each type of source will be examined in the lectures and class discussions.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS:

Grading: The class will be conducted through a combination of lectures and class discussions. Grading will be based on: class discussion (10%), the mid-term examination (20%), the final examination (50%), and a 4-6 page term paper (20%). Grading will be on a Plus/Minus basis in accordance with the information in the Fall Class Schedule.

Papers: The papers will be based on the assigned reading. The paper is due at the end of the eighth week of the class.

Examinations: The mid-term will take place on the last day of the sixth week of the course and will consist of a short answer identification examination drawn from the first half of the course. The final examination will consist of two parts: (1) a set of identifications drawn from the second half of the course and (2) one essay question. The Essay questions will be distributed at the mid-term. During the period between the mid-term and the final examination, you will choose the question on which you wish to write. Before each examination you will receive a term list from which the identifications will be drawn. If you wish, you may

bring to the final examination one notebook size sheet of paper with notes for the essay question.

Withdrawal From Class: Withdrawal from class will be in accordance with the guidelines in the Fall Class Schedule.

TEXTBOOKS:

Valerie Hansen & Kenneth R. Curtis, *Voyages in World History*, Volume A (Cengage)

Homer, *The Essential Odyssey* (Hackett)

N. Sandars, *The Epic of Gilgamesh* (Penguin)

Virgil, *The Essential Aeneid* (Hackett)

R. K. Narayan, *The Ramayana* (Penguin)

There is a website for the textbook with review aids. The URL for the website is:

http://college.cengage.com/history/world/hansen/voyages_world/1e/site_index.html

I. COURSE OUTLINE:

1. Introduction: Origins of Civilization: Primary Civilizations of Western Asia and Africa—Mesopotamia, Egypt, Indus Valley

Reading:

Voyages, Chs. 1-2

The Epic of Gilgamesh.

2. Frontiers of Civilization: The Indo-Europeans in Eurasia

Reading:

The World, Ch. 3

3. Small Peoples of the West: Jews, Phoenicians, and Greeks

Reading:
The World: Ch. 4

4. Greek Civilization: Classical Period

Reading:
Voyages, Ch. 6
The Essential Odyssey

5. West Meets East: Alexander the Great and the Hellenistic World

MIDTERM

6. Classical Indian Civilization: Vedism and the Origins of Buddhism

Reading:
Voyages, Ch. 3
The Ramayana

7. Unification in East Asia: Chinese Civilization and its Values:
Confucianism, Taoism, and Legalism

Reading:
Voyages, Ch. 4

8. Unification in the West I: Rise of Rome

Reading:
Voyages, Ch. 7

9. Unification in the West: II: Roman Empire

Reading:
Virgil, *The Essential Aeneid*

10. Crisis of Late Antiquity: Transformation in the West, Renaissance in
the East

II. PAPER

Your Speech 150 teacher has told you that you must prepare a talk concerning some aspect of the beliefs and values of one of the major civilizations of the ancient world. You are to base your paper on one of the required readings (*Gilgamesh*, *The Odyssey*, *The Aeneid*, or *The Ramayana*). In doing this, you should focus your discussion on one theme such as: the place of women in society, what makes a good man, the role of war, attitudes toward foreign peoples, the character of the gods and how people relate to them, attitudes toward death, relations between men and women, etc. Your paper SHOULD BE BASED on selected quotations from the literary work itself.

Guidelines:

1. Your paper should be typed or done on a computer.
2. 5-6 pages double spaced.
3. Direct quotes or paraphrases should be footnoted (notes may be placed at the end of the paper, in the paper or at the foot of the page). Lectures and class discussion need not be footnoted.
4. Papers should have a proper title page and be securely fastened together.
5. Papers are due at the end of the eighth week.

IMPORTANT:

All good papers have a thesis that the author wishes to prove such as "The *Odyssey* indicates that Greeks believed their gods to be arbitrary" or "From *Gilgamesh* one can see that relations between men were more important than relations with women in Mesopotamia", etc. Without a clear thesis, a paper is nothing more than a collection of unrelated information.

III. Hints on Reading an Historical Document

Reading an historical document and understanding its implications requires that the reader complete a step-by-step analysis of the document and its contents. The steps involved in the analysis can be thought of as a set of questions that the reader has to answer. The possible questions that can be asked of any document are endless, but most can be reduced to the following three groups.:

Group One: Basic Facts

- A. Who wrote this document?
- B. When and where was written?
- C. What kind of document is this?

Group Two: Contents

- A. What is this document about? What is its story?
- B. Who was it written for?
- C. Why was it written?
- D. What are its author's underlying assumptions?

Group Three: Evaluation

- A. Is this document credible?
- B. What does this document tell me about the topic I am studying (for example, the society that produced it, a war, law, etc.)?
- C. What impression does this document make on me? Does it persuade me to adopt its point of view or not? In either case, why does it have this effect on me?