

HIST 105: THE EARLY MODERN WORLD

Prof. Ian F. McNeely – University of Oregon – Winter 2010 – CRN 22658

Meeting times: MWF 10:00-10:50 in 282 LIL *plus one-hour Thursday sections*

Office hours: M 11:00-12:00, R 10:00-11:00 and by appointment in 319 MCK

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Description

Christopher Columbus' journey to the Caribbean in 1492 inaugurated the first truly global historical age. For the first time in recorded written history, humans from both hemispheres began to interact on a sustained basis. By 1800 or so, the West, meaning Europe and its colonies abroad, had become the world's dominant civilization. Interaction between "the West" and "the Rest" structures what we call the "modern" epoch—a period in global history that may finally be coming to an end in our own times.

In retrospect, we can say that the single most important event in establishing Europe's global hegemony was the shift from land power to sea power that Columbus and his successors helped bring about. This is the transformation that occupies the first four weeks of class, in which we canvass the entire globe. But we don't want to assume that this outcome was inevitable, much less the product of Europe's inherent superiority. Columbus' "discovery" of America was, after all, an accidental one, an attempt to connect Europe to the riches of the East.

Arguably it was China, not Europe, that led the world until the very end of our period, with Islam and India not far behind. With this in mind, we spend the bulk of the course – six weeks in total – comparing Chinese and European societies between 1500 and 1800. Politics, war, religion, family, money, literacy, science, culture, and ecology provide the bases for our exploration. Only by the end of the course will we have what we need to explain Western dominance without assuming that it will – or should – continue.

Objectives

- Learn how historians ask and answer big questions about the past
- Learn four approaches to history: political, social, economic, and cultural
- Learn how to read primary and secondary sources conceptually and analytically
- Learn how to use maps to visualize historical interactions among world regions
- Learn how to take notes and study for exams without the aid of a textbook

Requirements

- Midterm exam on Mon. 2/1 in class (20%)
- Final exam on Wed. 3/17 from 10:15am-12:15pm in our classroom (30%)
- Section assignments due in class (50% total)
 - Three one-page papers, *single-spaced*, Thu. 1/14, 1/28, 2/18
 - Three quizzes during section, Thu. 1/21, 2/11, 2/2
 - Two role-playing exercises in class, Thu. 2/4, 3/4

Exam formats will be discussed in class. Section quizzes and papers are all equally weighted; as for the exercises, participation – or the lack thereof – may affect your course grade.

Policies

Section assignments require you to do the relevant reading well in advance. Section attendance is mandatory. *To receive credit for a given section assignment, whether a quiz, paper, or exercise, you must attend the section where it is discussed.* Once, and only once, you may turn in a make-up assignment for a missed section. (For a missed quiz or exercise, write a one-page paper on the topic mentioned on the syllabus.) Further absences will only be excused for *documented* medical or family emergencies.

Papers and quizzes are graded on a “check” system (\checkmark = B, $\checkmark+$ = A, $\checkmark-$ = C). Good participation in section (or lack thereof) may add a + or a – to your recorded *letter* grade for that section. For example, if your assignment receives a \checkmark (= B) but you perform well in section, your GTF will record a B+ (not an A) for that day’s section grade.

Cite, by page number in parentheses, any ideas or quotations not original to you and not common knowledge. Anything covered in lecture counts as common knowledge. Plagiarism and other forms of academic misconduct will be punished harshly. See <http://bit.ly/4B4mDC> for a handy guide on plagiarism written by a fellow historian.

Readings

- Coursepack (for items with a * below)
- *The Prentice Hall Atlas of World History* (Prentice Hall, 2004)
- *The Memoirs of Glückel of Hameln* (Schocken, 1977)
- *Celebrated Cases of Judge Dee* (Dover, 1976)

All the readings are available at UO Bookstore and on 2-hour reserve at Knight Library.

Staff

GTF	Email	Sections (<i>Thurs.</i>)	Office/phone	Office hours
Emily Gilkey	egilkey2@uoregon.edu	10am in 373 MCK 11am in 373 MCK	340L MCK 346-4818	TBA
Erik Glowark	erik@uoregon.edu	12pm in 471 MCK 1pm in 471 MCK	340C MCK 346-5909	TBA
Jon Holtgreffe	jonh@uoregon.edu	10am in 471 MCK 2pm in 123 LLCN	340H MCK 346-8016	TBA
Benjamin Schubert	bschuber@uoregon.edu	1pm in 240B MCK 2pm in 306 DEA	340H MCK 346-6171	MF 11-12:30
Matt Schweizer	schweize@uoregon.edu	11am in 471 MCK 12pm in 373 MCK	340H MCK 346-6172	TBA

Schedule

PART I: LAND POWER AND SEA POWER

Note that the unit numbers below do not correspond exactly to the weeks in the term.

Unit 1: Eurasia and the Americas

- Why did nomads threaten sedentary peoples in Eurasia but not in the Americas?
- How did Central Asian nomads come to rule most of the Islamic world?

(1/4) Introduction

(1/6) The Mongols, the Aztecs, and the Incas

(1/8) How to build a land empire: the Ottomans

Reading: atlas pages 62-3,70-71, 81

Section (1/7): world atlas review

Unit 2: The Indian Ocean

- Why did the Chinese mount, then abandon, their fifteenth-century maritime expeditions?
- How did Europeans displace Muslims as the ocean world's leading powers?
- How did the British manage to supplant the Mughals on their own turf?

(1/11) China retreats and Islam expands

(1/13) Europe sets sail, with guns

(1/15) From Taj to Raj

Reading: *Nicholas Kristof, “1492: The Prequel”; *Louise Levathes, “The Strange Kingdoms of Malacca and Ceylon”; atlas pages 74-5, 78, 82, 93

Section (1/14): paper due. Based on what you have learned about the inhabitants of Malacca and Ceylon, write a one-page, single-spaced letter to the Chinese emperor urging the continuation of Zheng He’s explorations. Be sure to describe (a) what life is like in at least one of these places, and (b) what China stands to gain from continued contact with them.

Unit 3: The Atlantic Ocean

- Why did Eurasians colonize the Americas and not the other way around?
- How did race become a dominant social category in the Americas?
- How did Africa become the source for the Atlantic slave trade?

(1/18) *Martin Luther King holiday*

(1/20) Seaborne invaders: *conquistadores* and disease

(1/22) Colonization and the Columbian exchange

(1/25) The slave trade

Reading: *Jared Diamond, “Collision at Cajamarca”; *Charles Mann, “1491”; atlas pages 84, 88-91

Section (1/21): quiz on Diamond and Mann articles.

Unit 4: The Pacific Ocean

- How did Oceania’s encounter with Europeans differ from that of the Caribbean?
- Why did Russia embrace Europe’s influence and Japan seal its borders against it?

(1/27) Oceania and the Enlightenment

(1/29) Tokugawa Japan and Petrine Russia

Reading: *Olaudah Equiano, *Equiano’s Travels: His Autobiography* (excerpts); *Paul Erdmann Isert, *Letters on West Africa and the Slave Trade* (excerpts); atlas pages 79, 77 and 85 (Russia only), 101

Section (1/28): paper due. Locate Benin on p. 90 of your atlas. Write one paragraph comparing agriculture in Eboe with that in the Americas *before* Columbus. Then locate the Danish Virgin Islands (which included St. Croix) on p. 91 of your atlas. Write another paragraph contrasting agriculture in the eighteenth-century Caribbean with that in eighteenth-century Africa.

(2/1) **Midterm exam in class – BRING AN UNMARKED GREEN EXAM BOOK!**

PART II: CHINA AND EUROPE COMPARED

Unit 5: The state

- Why did China's many ethnicities cohere so durably around a single state?
- Why did Europe's many states cohere so weakly around a single religion?
- Why was early modern Europe so much more intolerant than imperial China?

(2/3) The Chinese imperial system and the Manchu Conquest

(2/5) The European state system and the wars of religion

(2/8) Official religion in China and Europe

Reading: *Judge Dee*, I-XXIII (skim), 1-87; atlas pages 80, 86, 87

Section (2/4): role-playing exercise. You will stage a mock trial of Judge Dee. In preparation, write a one-page defense of the Imperial Chinese justice system aimed at placating a modern American lawyer who thinks it is (1) abusive, (2) inefficient, and (3) superstitious. ***Be prepared to turn this in.***

Unit 6: Patriarchy

- If European families were nuclear and Chinese families were extended, what consequences did this have?
- If the Chinese worshipped their ancestors while the Europeans worshipped God the Father, what consequences did this have?
- Which type of family structure facilitated more upward mobility? More outward mobility?

(2/10) Family life in China and Europe

(2/12) Popular religion in China and Europe

(2/15) Migration and stratification in China and Europe

Reading: Glückel, vii-xviii (skim), 1-119; review *Judge Dee*, 61-87

Section (2/11): quiz on Glückel, with comparative attention to the status and roles of women in *Judge Dee*.

Unit 7: Money

- How did Chinese paper currency compare with European stocks and bonds as forms of nonmetallic wealth?
- Why did China shift to an economy based on silver and how did the Europeans end up supplying them with it?

(2/17) European high finance
(2/19) Chinese silver

Reading: *Judge Dee*, 88-136; Glückel, 146-184

Section (2/18): paper due. Locate Kaifeng and Nanjing, China on p. 78 of your atlas. (Kaifeng hosted a community of Jews from at least the twelfth century C.E. Isolated from virtually all other Jews, this community survived largely without religious persecution. Nanjing was the capital of Kiangsu province mentioned in *Judge Dee*.) Write a one-page, single-spaced paper speculating on how Glückel's life would have been different had she and her family lived as Kaifeng merchants in the late 1600s.

Unit 8: Literacy

- Why did Europe's universities decline while China's examination system grew?
- Why did Latin decline and written vernaculars emerge in Europe, while literary Chinese, despite its complex and elitist system of writing, remained vital?

(2/22) The Confucian examination system
(2/24) The European Republic of Letters
(2/26) Chinese opera and the European novel

Reading: *Judge Dee*, 137-223

Section (2/25): quiz. As you read, think about the difference between having status and having power.

PART III: WHY "WESTERN" DOMINANCE?

Unit 9: Science

- Why did Westerners come to objectify the natural world, whereas the Chinese emphasized harmony with nature?

(3/1) European mathematics
(3/3) Chinese medicine

Reading: *Gottfried Wilhelm Leibniz, Preface to *Novissima Sinica*; *Memorial from Xu Guangqi to the Wan-Li Emperor

Section (3/4): role-playing exercise. We will enact two hypothetical scenarios: Leibniz transplanted to China and Xu Guangqi transplanted to Europe. For each figure, we will explore the ways such a trip would both confirm and challenge images of the other culture.

Unit 10: Revolution

- Why were Europeans the first to stage revolutions given China's long history of social revolt and political rebellion?

(3/5) Refounding politics and society: Western revolutions

(3/8) Social revolt and political rebellion in China

Unit 11: Industry

- Why did Europe industrialize first given China's comparable economic resources and organizational skills?

(3/10) The Great Divergence

(3/12) Conclusion

Reading: *Jack Goldstone, "The Rise of the West or Not? A Revision to Socio-Economic History"; atlas pages 94-6, 102-3

Section (3/11): final exam review. Come prepared to provide an example of a way that Goldstone's argument converges with, or differs from, the account of Western dominance developed in this class.

(3/17) ***Final exam from 10:15am-12:15pm in our classroom - BRING TWO UNMARKED GREEN EXAM BOOKS!***