



**History 114.1: World History To 1500**

**Instructor: Maziar Behrooz**

**Spring 2006: MWF 10:10-11, HSS 310**

**Office Hours: Wed. 3-5 PM, Science 223 or by appointment.**

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**Course Description:** This course is a survey of world history from pre-historic times up to the world around 1500s. By nature the course has to be selective in order to be able to present the subject in a general and yet effective manner. The main theme of the course is the view that world history is a process of increasing contact and interaction between societies leading to the modern period. Films will be shown as time permits.

**Course Outline:**

**Week 1:** January 30-February 3

Introduction: What is history? What is a primary source and what is a secondary source? Emergence of human communities to 500 B.C.E.; Nature, humanity and history: from food gatherers to agriculture; origins of agriculture; varieties of agriculture; life of food growers.

Reading: Bulliet, chapter 1

**Week 2:** Feb.6-10

First valley-civilizations (3500 B.C.E.-1500 B.C.E.) and the late Bronze Age: How civilization began; priests and warriors in early societies; Mesopotamia; Egypt; Indus valley.

Reading: Bulliet, chapter 2

**Week 3:** Feb.13-17

The Iron Age: formation of new cultural communities (1000-35 BCE); early China, Confucius, Confucian code and its place in Chinese history; early civilizations of the Americas; Celtic Europe.

Reading: Bulliet, chapter 3

**Week 4:** Feb.20-24

The Mediterranean and the Near East (2000-500 B.C.E.): Assyrian Empire; Israelites and Palestinians; Phoenicia and early Mediterranean world; the Aegean world early Greek civilization.

Reading: Bulliet, chapter 4

**Week 5:** Feb.27-March 3

Iran and Greece: The Achaemenid Persian empire; Zoroaster and his religion; rise of the Greeks; Homer and the heroic past; the development of the polis; Greece vs. Iran; Alexander and the Hellenistic synthesis.

Reading: Bulliet, chapter 5

**Mid-term Exam I: Friday March 3**

**Week 6:** March 6-10

An age of empire and expanding interaction: Rome: early Roman society; from republic to empire; rise of Christianity; Imperial China: dynastic cycles and change in China; the Han Empire and society.

Reading: Bulliet, chapter 6 & chapter 9, pp. 230-233

**Week 7:** March 13-17

The tradition of India: Ascendancy of the Aryans; emergence of caste system; India's spiritual flowering: Jainism; Buddhism; Hinduism.

Reading: Bulliet, chapter 7

**Week 8:** March 20-24

Emergence of Christian Europe: The Byzantine (or East Roman) Empire; Western church vs. Eastern Church; Byzantine civilization and the end of the ancient world; expanding network of communication and exchange.

Reading: Bulliet, chapter 8 & 10 (pp.253-274)

**Week 9:** March 27-29

Iran: Parthian and Sasanian Empires and society; consolidation of Zoroastrian religion; Islam the formative years: Islam under Prophet Muhammad; the age of Caliphs; the Abbasid revolution; the breakup of the Caliphate; heritage of medieval Islam.

Reading: Bulliet, chapter 9

**Week 10:** April 3-7 (**Spring Recess: No Classes**)

**Week 11:** April 10-14

Latin Europe: Rise and decline of feudalism; the Roman church; urban revival; rebirth of trade.

Reading: Bulliet, chapter 11 (pp.274-279)

**Mid-term exam II: Friday April 14**

**Week 12:** April 17-21

Renaissance in Chinese civilization: Sui and Tang dynasties: rebuilding the imperial edifice; the Song Empire and its achievements; Mongol rule in China (Yuan Empire); emergence of the Ming dynasty in China.

Reading: Bulliet, chapter 11

**Week 13:** April 24-28

Clash of Civilizations: nomadic invasions and its consequences; the Crusades; the Mongol invasion.

Reading: Bulliet, chapter 13

**Week 14:** May 1-5

Late middle ages 1200-1400: early modern world; Renaissance; new discoveries; emergence of Europe; the Ottoman Empire.

Reading: Bulliet, chapter 15 & 16

**Week 15:** May 8-12

Peoples and civilizations of the Americas: Aztec civilization; the Northern Peoples. Islam in Africa: Mali and Sub-Saharan empires; East African coast; peoples and civilizations of the Americas.

Reading: Bulliet, chapter 12 and 14

**Week 16:** May 15-19

Class will finish the remaining lectures and reading; extra credit presentations; review for final exam.

**Books:**

Bulliet, Richard. *The Earth and Its People* (Volume 1-Third Edition)  
*The Epic of Gilgamesh* (Penguin Edition)

**Course Requirements:** Your final grade will be based two mid-term exams and a final (30% each) plus a book review (10%). Always have a Blue Book for your exams. Lectures and readings assignments cover different aspects of the period under study therefore, lecture attendance is essential for receiving the desired grade. Those who miss three or more lectures without valid explanation will lose points on their final grade.

**Book Review: Gilgamesh**

Your book review should be no more than 1000 words (four pages typed and double-space). Answer the following questions. Each answer should cover different points. Do not go over the same material. Integrate your answers in one single essay. You may present your own ideas and you may also consult scholars' work in the library. If you chose to use other people's work, you must give proper reference (author, name of the book, place of publication, publisher, date of publication, page number) in the form of endnotes or footnotes, but if you are directly quoting from the text just give a page number in parentheses. **Reviews are due on the final exam day.**

1. Compare and contrast the two journeys in the Epic of Gilgamesh. There is a search going on in both journeys: what search? Are they the same or different? What is found on each journey?
2. What did you learn about the society that produced this epic?
3. What are Enkidu's feelings on his deathbed? What did you learn from these feelings? Was there anything in this regard that moved you or that rang true for you? Explain your answer whether negative or positive.

4. What did you like about the story? What did you not like? Give reasons for your answer.

**Extra Credit:** You can also receive ten points credit toward your final grade by signing up to make an oral presentation to the class (seven to ten minutes) on a historical person of your choosing. State why the person is important historically, why you are interested in him, a little about his life and significance.

**Important:** Do not miss any exams unless you have a very good reason and have prearranged everything with me.

**Final Exam:** Friday May 26, 8:00-10:30

**Sample Questions for each exam:**

I) What distinguishes human beings from their closest relatives, the apes?

Discuss the Mesopotamian government structure. What could account for it? What are some of the advantages and disadvantages?

Why is the Assyrian Empire considered to be the first in the world? What were its attributes and legacies?

Compare and contrast Sparta and Athens. What differences and similarities can be seen in their histories, government systems, goals, and societies? How did they interact?

Compare and contrast two of the following four societies. Use your knowledge to give a brief historical background and describe each society in terms of its social, political, religious, and economic institutions.

A) Persian Empire (under the Achaemenids)

B) The Greek city-state of Athens

C) Assyrian empire: 911-612 BCE

D) Old Babylon

E) Sumer

II) Compare and contrast the empires of Rome and Han China. How were they structured? What methods did they use to keep order and gain prosperity? How successful were they? What weaknesses eventually led to their downfall?

Discuss and analyze the unique aspects (political, social, cultural, and economic) of China during the Han period.

Discuss and analyze and explain the unique aspects (political, social, cultural, and economic) of the Roman Empire at its height.

Describe the system of succession for leadership of Islam. How did it originate and why? How did the schism occur, and what was its impact on Islam?

How do you explain the rapid expansion and victories of Muslims during the seventh century?

III) Describe the transition from Roman society to medieval society. Pay special attention to social, economic, religious, and political issues.

The Crusades were a major event in Europe of the Middle Ages. Why were they conducted, who benefited from them, and how did they affect Christian-Muslim relations?

What were the main consequences of the thirteenth century Mongol invasion under Chengiz Khan? Use examples from Chinese, Islamic or European worlds.

Discuss and analyze the unique aspects (political, social, cultural, and economic) of the Chinese civilization during the Song state (est. 906).

Latin Christianity during the Middle Ages is identified with feudalism. Discuss, analyze and describe the unique aspects (political, social, cultural, and economic) of feudal Europe in this period.

Discuss the relationship between monarchs, nobles, and the Church during the feudal period.