

**San Bernardino Valley College**  
**Course Outline**  
**Social Science Division**

**I. Course Identification**

History 170: World Civilizations to 1500

Three hours lecture: three units

Prerequisite: None

History 170 explores the origin and development of civilizations in Europe, the Americas, Africa, the Near East and East Asia. Using a global perspective and a comparative approach between the world's major civilizations, students will examine social structure and daily life, evolution of complex political systems, cultural values and economic development to 1500.

**II.** Course can be taken only once for credit.

**III. Course Objectives**

Upon the completion of this course, students will be able to:

- Identify the major features of a civilization after examining the emergence of civilizations in different world cultures.
- Describe the dominant patterns of interactions between civilizations in trade, cultural exchange and dominance, technology transfer, travel, migration, colonization and military conflict.
- Demonstrate an understanding of fundamental cultural values as reflected in seminal religions and philosophies such as Judaism and Christianity, Islam, Confucianism, Buddhism, Hinduism, and other enduring value systems.
- Identify the relationships between modern cultural developments and ancient core philosophies and religions.
- Explain social relationships and structures in different cultural settings.
- Compare daily life in different cultural and geographic settings.
- Explain and describe economic development in specific settings.
- Recognize important connections between developments in past civilizations and events in the contemporary world.

**IV. Course Content.**

A. **Introduction:** The course will take a comparative studies approach to major civilizations, concentrating on cultural values and social, political and economic structures. Human communities before the development of civilization, especially early man in the Paleolithic and Neolithic periods, will be covered. In particular the transition from village to city. What is a civilization?

B. **Dawn of Civilization:**

1. Early civilization in the Near East : Mesopotamia. The Tigris/Euphrates and the importance of irrigation in civilization. Development of religious institutions- Priests and the Temple-Ziggurat complex. Writing and the Mesopotamian world-view.

2. Early Civilization in Africa: Egypt, Kush. The Pharaoh, Pyramids and the afterlife in early Egyptian culture. The Nile and the development of administrative structures.
3. Early Civilization in the River Valleys of India. Ancient India. Aryan ascendancy. Indian spiritual flowering: Hinduism, Jainism, Buddhism. Dharma and Karma. The Mauryan Empire.
4. Early Civilization in China. The Shang and Chou Dynasties. Social organization and core philosophies: Taoism, Legalism, I Ching and Yin/Yang. Confucianism.
5. Smaller Civilizations: the Hebrews, the Hittites, and the Persians. Study of political organization and the Persians, government of Hittites, and the legacy of Hebraic ethical monotheism and the prophetic traditions.

**C. Civilizations in the Classical Period:**

1. The Ancient Greeks. Sparta, Athens, and the Polis. Socrates, Plato and Aristotle. Hellenism and the spread of Greek culture.
2. The Roman Republic: Social, political, military, and agricultural basis of the early republic and expansion.
3. The Roman Republic and Christianity: Transition to empire. Stoicism, Christianity, and the decline of the Roman Empire.
4. India: The first Indian Empire. Ashoka and the Mauryans.
5. China: unification and Empire. The Ch'in and Han dynasties. Han Confucianism. Han Confucianism and the arrival of Buddhism. Decline of the Han.
6. East Africa, Swahili, and Indian Ocean Trade

**D. Consolidation, Interaction, and New Civilizations**

1. The Middle Ages in the West. The Church, the German Barbarians. Charlemagne and feudal society. Emergence of the national state and economic revival.
2. The new forces. Vikings and Magyars. The Byzantine Empire (Bureaucracy and cities in east). Islam. The Mongols. Axum, Prester John myth.
3. India in the Gupta Age. Hindu and Buddhist Religious Life. Muslim kingdoms in India.
4. China in the Imperial Age. The Sui, T'ang, Sung and Yuan. Ming China (to 1644).
5. Japan to 1467. Ancient Japan. T'ang influences. Samurai and courtiers. Aristocratic culture and Buddhism. Zen and Pure Land. No plays and art.
6. Africa and the Americas before European intrusion.

**E. International connections and world trade.**

1. Europe and Islam: struggle for control. Crusades. Spread of the sugar production and importance of slavery.
2. European Expansion and the Conquest of the New World.
3. Indian/ Chinese trade routes, Silk road.

**V. Methods of Instruction:**

- Lecture/In-class Discussion, including discussions of assigned readings
- Collaborative learning and small group exercises
- In-class student essays on broad questions raised by the subject matter
- Films covering subjects in World History
- Student presentations on student research projects

**VI. Example of Assignments (Sample assignments which demonstrate the level of difficulty expected)**

**1. Essay question (in-class).** Choose two of the following and compare and contrast the structure of their empire. First, discuss the social environment that made it possible for all three of these specific ethnic groups to gain power. Mongols, Aztecs, Inca

**Educational goals of assignment.** In essay examinations students will demonstrate an ability to synthesize information from the lecture-discussions and readings, organize evidence and specific information into a coherent response to a major question in history, and produce clear and logically argued analyses in a conclusion. Essay questions will require students to demonstrate analytical thinking rather than rote memory alone, answering “why” and “compare and contrast” questions.

**2. Book review.** The Epic of Gilgamesh or Hsun Tzu. A successful paper will be well organized and contain a coherent argument about Ancient Mesopotamia or Ancient China. Carefully selected quotations from the text that strengthen your point will make your paper stronger; excessively long or irrelevant quotations will weaken it.

What do these documents tell you about the societies that we have studied. Both documents were written over 2000 years ago, yet they still have a certain amount of relevance for us today. Write an essay on points or topics that you find interesting and relate them to issues that confronted the building of each of these civilizations.

**Educational goals of assignment.** Book reviews should enable students to explore how prominent scholars tackle major problems. The assignment should also ask student to consider the following: what evidence was used to reach conclusions? What are the biases of the author? How does the author’s treatment of environmental history tell us more about traditional subjects?

**3. Collaborative learning and small group discussions.** Use reading notes and discussions among yourselves to identify the fundamental characteristics of a civilization. Report to the class on your discussion. Be sure to describe subjects on which members of your group agreed and subjects on which there was disagreement.

**Educational goals of assignment.** Collaborative learning encourages students to take responsibility for teaching and learning and asks them to work creatively and productively with peers. By asking for a group report, the instructor can make students aware of dissenting opinions and differing interpretations.

**4. On-line internet electronic discussions.** Similar to collaborative work in class, for this exercise, students will respond to a major historical issue on the world-wide-web.

**Educational Goals of assignment.** This majority of this exercise is done outside of the classroom and serves two major functions. It gets students to formally post a position paper on a question or document that is on the internet. Their peers will then be able to evaluate and respond to directly to the work. Secondly, it introduces students to computer skills needed in today's high tech workplace.

**5. Research Project.** Students will chose their own topics in World history and will use on-line internet resources an published materials to do research. The final product will be the result of individual effort.

**Educational Goals of assignment.** This project encourages students to pursue topics of interest on their own. Use of internet resources and published materials will be one skill gained in this project. Using these resources, students will be asked to develop skills of evaluation, syntheses, and analysis as they produce a coherent and analytical narrative that calls upon skills of critical thinking.

#### **VII. Methods of Evaluation:**

- In-class essays in response to key questions in World History
- Discussion participation, including leading of classroom discussion on assigned readings and topics
- On-line electronic discussions involving responses to problems and questions in World history
- Book reviews on major works on World history
- Research projects on problems and subjects in World history (at least 7-10 pages and at least 2 sources)

#### **VIII. Required Course Materials: (All suggested works are primarily college level)**

Bulliet, Richard, The Earth and Its Peoples: A Global History: Houghton Mifflin, New York, 1997

Graig, Albert M. The Heritage of World Civilizations: Prentice-Hall, Upper Saddle River NJ, 1997.

Kishlansky, Mark. Societies and Cultures in World History: Volume I to 1715: HarperCollins, New York, 1995.

Ralph, Philip L. World Civilizations, their history and their culture: W.W. Norton, New York, 1997.

Stearns, Peter N. World Civilizations: The Global Experience: HarperCollins, New York, 1996.

Stearns, Peter N. World History: patterns of change and continuity: HarperCollins, New York, 1995.

Strayer, Robert W. The Making of the Modern World: St. Martin's Press, New York, 1995.

Upsher, Jiu-Hwa. World History: West/Wadsworth, St Paul, MN, 1995.

### **Supplemental Readings:**

- Rouse, I. Migrations in Prehistory (1989)  
 Kemp C.B. Ancient Egypt: Anatomy of a Civilization (1988)  
 Liu, Z. Ancient India and Ancient China (1988)  
 Zhongshu, W. Han Civilization (1982)  
 Roebuck, C. Economy and Society in the Early Greek World (1984)  
 Lacey, W. K. The Family in Classical Greece (1984)  
 Barnes, T. Early Christianity and the Roman Empire (1984)  
 Hourani, A History of the Arab Peoples 1991.  
 Finucane, R.C., Soldiers of the Faith: Crusaders and Muslims at War (1983)  
 Herlihy, D. Medieval Households (1985)  
 Olaniyan, R. African History and Culture (1982)

\*\*Or other college level equivalents (text, Historical monographs, source readers, autobiographies, novels, or plays) that specifically deal with the topics related to World History.

### **IX. Other Supplies Required of Students:**

Floppy disk may be required.