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# World Civilizations 1500 AD to the Present

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*CUNY City College*

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*World Civilizations  
1500 AD to the Present*

10200 HYBRID

SPRING 2018

CLASSES MEET ON TUESDAYS ONLY  
*(an electronics-free zone)*

*The City College of New York*



Dr. Barbara Syrrakos

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Welcome to the HYBRID version of World Civilizations. Our endeavor this semester is to find the past in the present and the present in the past – and to do it in a very untraditional way: partially electronically and partially in person. We will survey the peoples and places of the globe from our perch as 21<sup>st</sup>-century historians. We will begin with the 1500s and move toward the 20<sup>th</sup> century. A working knowledge of basic geography will take you far in beginning to make cross-cultural connections, following trade routes and patterns of human migration, tracing the transmission of ideas and religions, and understanding why perhaps geography is linked to health and wealth. Is the mosaic of human history repetitive, as is the design on the tile above, or do events leave us without comprehension, a myriad of unsolvable puzzles, disjointed and unrelated? Why do people leave their homes for the unknown? Is warfare inevitable? How does religion influence our circadian rhythms? Is the era of exploration over? Are certain artistic themes universal? Can we see yesterday in today?

**WHAT A "HYBRID" COURSE MEANS:** We will meet for lecture and discussion on Tuesdays only. All readings and preparation for discussion should be ready to go for class, as you will be called on to participate. Part of this course will be conducted online, using the BlackBoard platform. You need to look only **THREE** places on your BlackBoard interface: **CONTENT, DISCUSSION, AND QUIZZES**. Aside from the assigned textbooks, course materials have been uploaded for your use. Since we will meet in class once a week, you will be assigned work for the other class hours plus homework, so it is up to you to budget your time. There are weekly assignments (posting a discussion, quizzes, reading and taking notes), in which case it is suggested you devote **1-2 hours each day reading and preparing for due dates later in the week**.

**Teacher to student communication**, outside the general announcements and the like, can take place via email ([bsyrrakos@ccny.cuny.edu](mailto:bsyrrakos@ccny.cuny.edu)) or preferably in person during office hours or by appointment. Should a student run into any concerns whatsoever, contacting me is the best route to go, and the sooner the better. You can expect a response within 24 hours if by email, usually much sooner, unless it is the weekend. I would prefer to keep communication to Monday through Friday, as a traditional work week.

**Online decorum:** Since we are working digitally as well as in the classroom, it is important to keep in mind the virtues and value of thoughtful contributions to the Discussion Forums, keeping things positive but also critical, learned and interesting, and bearing in mind the communal nature of this enterprise, where we all can help each other.

If you are new to the hybrid (or online) course game, please be patient if there are kinks to be worked out, as there no doubt will be.

I have designed the course to be as **streamlined** as possible, with all materials in one place, and regular weekly assignments, so we can all strike a rhythm and keep to it. I have also built some breathing space into the syllabus, as most weeks will require intensive reading and concentration. If for any reason assignments need to be changed, or due dates modified, or other changes to the syllabus are necessary, you will be notified. By the same token, please feel free to let me know if something is just not working.

**Tech Support for Online Course Users:** <https://www.ccny.cuny.edu/it/help> Knowing tech support for the online user is readily available is important should you find you need a hand in figuring out BlackBoard, or making sure your email address is registered correctly, or whatnot. The IT help desk is located on the first floor of Cohen Library. This is the place to go for assistance.

### **Required Readings:**

**All books can be found at the City College bookstore.** Check online for inexpensive used copies. The Tignor textbook is also available on reserve in Cohen Library. Books should be in hand by the start of the course, or shortly thereafter.

- a) **Tignor, Robert, et al.: *Worlds Together, Worlds Apart. Volume Two: From 1000 CE to the Present. Fourth Edition* New York: W. W. Norton & Company, 2014.**

This is the textbook used by most instructors at City College, and a text I have used many times. The authors aim to move through time chronologically, emphasizing interactions and comparisons among cultures during the time periods in question. You may find that some topics jump around a bit, but you will also see the merits of historical comparison. There are excellent guiding questions at

the beginning of each chapter and study questions along with key terms at the end of each chapter. The maps and color photos are excellent. You will be assigned roughly one chapter per week. Tignor should be read first, quickly, to provide context and the overall historical arc for the additional readings which should be read afterward. **I have also posted PowerPoint presentations for nearly all Tignor chapters**, some of them edited with additional illuminative material. You should find these very helpful.

- b) **Ferguson, Niall: *The Square and the Tower: Networks and Power, from the Freemasons to Facebook*. New York: Penguin Publishing Group, 2018. ISBN: 9780735222915**
- c) **Levitsky, Steve and Daniel Ziblatt: *How Democracies Die*. New York: Crown/Archetype, 2018.**
- d) Additional required readings are provided in a course packet and duplicated on BlackBoard.

### **Assignments:**

- a) **Exams:** Midterm and Final, essay form. 40 points each, **total 80 points**. A rubric will be provided.
- b) **Discussion Forum:** Discussion forum posts + comments on two other posts. There will be five or six of these throughout the semester. A rubric will be provided. **Total 60 points**.
- c) **Quizzes:** There will be three substantive multiple choice quizzes administered on the BB platform. They will count 20 points each. Complete instructions will be provided in due course. Check the syllabus for dates and chapters covered for each Quiz. **Total 60 points**.

**WEEKLY ATTENDANCE IS MANDATORY, AS IS PARTICIPATION. BE PREPARED TO DISCUSS, RAISE QUESTIONS AND ANSWER QUESTIONS.**

### **Grading:**

It is important that you keep track of your own grades, for the record. If you find your work is in the C-minus range early on, that should be taken as a signal to contact me to see where improvement can be made. Sometimes a reading or writing tutor is necessary. The Writing Center on campus is a good place to go for such assistance. It is located on the Amsterdam Ave. Plaza at the NAC building. **All work must be completed to pass the course.**

**TOTAL: 200 points.** Final grades will reflect the 100-point scale, with letter grades assigned according to the standard CCNY grade scale.

## **Objectives:**

This course investigates main topics in world events from the 16<sup>th</sup> century to the 21<sup>st</sup> century, taking into account historical processes through primary and secondary sources.

By the end of the semester students should be able to:

- Grasp the foundations of and become conversant in the main themes of world history;
- Have surveyed multi-disciplinary writings and textbook narratives on various aspects of our global experience as a way of introduction to the field;
- Think critically and ask questions, pose hypotheses, intellectualize the story of humanity, and exercise judicious and comparative methods while investigating the past;
- Be comfortable in the virtual setting to voice ideas, discuss and respond to questions when prompted, in a safe and respectful environment where debate and original thinking is encouraged;
- Master the writing of the concise essay – in terms of content and technique – as a measure of competency in academic writing at the university level.

## **Other Important Information:**

*Students with Disabilities:* In keeping with the University's policy of providing equal access for students with disabilities, any student with a disability who needs academic accommodations should contact the AccessAbility Center, Phone – 5913, Location - NA 1/218, and/or consult with your instructor.

*Plagiarism:* The City College adheres to a Zero Tolerance Policy regarding plagiarism. Plagiarism will result in an F in the course at the discretion of the instructor and in accordance with the University's policy on plagiarism. Self-plagiarism also will not be tolerated. Self-plagiarism entails using the same paper for more than one class without previous approval by instructors involved. If a student has any questions concerning what constitutes plagiarism, please feel free to consult the instructor.

**Intellectual honesty should be our guiding principle at all times.**

## World Civilizations Hybrid CALENDAR

### WEEK ONE **Tues JANUARY 30**

**DUE:** Introductions. please introduce yourself on the **Discussion Forum**, by telling us what you would like the rest of the class to know about yourself. You can also post a photo of yourself. Second, include in your post the following:

- Choose an article from *The NY Times* from any day this week that captures your attention. CITE the article, and provide a one-paragraph SUMMARY of the article + a one-paragraph COMMENTARY on the article, justifying why you chose it to share with your classmates. Also, include the LINK for the article.
- So: CHOOSE, CITE, LINK, SUMMARIZE AND COMMENT.
- **No two students should use the same article**; the earlier posters get first pick.
- You will see the prompt under the "Discussion" section of your BlackBoard interface.

### WEEK TWO **Tues FEBRUARY 6**

Short Lecture + In-class discussion on the following:

Read the letter of Pedro Vas de Caminha, dated 1500, which details Portuguese landfall on the coast of Brazil and which scholars refer to as the discovery of Brazil. The letter is posted on BlackBoard.

Q: This is a remarkable letter, for its length, candor and eye for detail. Study the adjectives and vocabulary Caminha chooses to describe the people he encounters. What does his language tell us about his attitude toward them? **Make sure to read the entire letter before you consider your answer (because things are not what they seem)**, and try to avoid the section on nudity (not for prudish reasons but rather because it is an oft quoted section, and very clichéd!)

Q: What evidence is there in the letter that Caminha's objectives might be mixed? Who is Caminha and why is he writing this letter? What does the letter tell us about social hierarchy in Portugal and among outsiders? Make sure you read the entire letter before you answer, as there are keys to the intentions of the writer late in the letter.

**WEEK THREE Tues FEBRUARY 13**

- Read: Tignor, Chapter 12: Contact, Commerce and Colonization 1450-1600  
Dias: "Brazil's Birth Certificate: The Letter of Pero Vaz de Caminha" (on Blackboard)  
Marcondes de Souza: "A Supposed Discovery of Brazil before 1448" (on BlackBoard)

Q: Think about the methodologies that come into play in the Dias and de Souza articles and whether their findings should be included in the Tignor section discussing the Portuguese voyages (Tignor, pages 444 ff). Also, check the accuracy of the quotation in Tignor on page 450 regarding *Cabral's* writing that the people of Brazil had all "the innocence of Adam". Is the source for this quotation correct?

Q: Never mind the changes happening in the New World with the arrival of the Europeans. How is Europe changed by this process – in terms of religion, economy, global competition, and more? Use Tignor to answer this question.

- Read Tignor Chapter 13: Worlds Entangled, 1600-1750

**WEEK OF TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 20, NO CLASSES (MONDAY SCHEDULE)**

WEEK FOUR Tues FEBRUARY 27: **BLACKBOARD QUIZ, TIGNOR CHAPS 12, 13, 14**

Read: Tignor Chapter 14: Cultures of Splendor and Power, 1500-1780

Jean-Jacques Rousseau: *The Social Contract* (chapters 1-7 only) (on BlackBoard)

Immanuel Kant: "What is Enlightenment?" (on BlackBoard)

Spence, Jonathan: "The Woman Who Ran Away" from *The Death of Woman Wang* (on Blackboard)

Q: How can we begin to explain, or understand, the conditions which create such different societies in France and China in the late 18<sup>th</sup> and early 19<sup>th</sup> centuries? You can draw from the philosophical, political, social, aesthetic, or economic (or otherwise) material in the readings.

Read Tignor Chapter 15: Reordering the World, 1750-1850, and

Lizzie Collingham: "Madras Curry: The British Invention of Curry" from her book *Curry, A Tale of Cooks and Conquerors* (on BlackBoard)

Q: One thing to think about related to Lizzie Collingham's work is how culture gets appropriated from one place to another, i.e., what happened to the integrity of Indian culinary arts once they arrived in England? What is "curry", exactly? Can you think of other kinds of similar examples of cultural appropriation?

Q: The term "Enlightenment" seems a bit pretentious to describe a mindset in one part of the world and not others. What exactly is meant by this and what exactly do Kant and Rousseau prescribe for society along these lines?

Q: Spence, in his stories drawn from archives of 18<sup>th</sup> century China, narrates a number of different stories about relations between men and women. What strategies does he describe women as employing to protect themselves in a harsh environment? The story of Woman Wang, at the end of the chapter, is particularly illuminating, is it the exception that proves the rule or simply another sad story of injustice?

WEEK FIVE Tues MARCH 6

Short in-class write (EXAM PREP: Outline essay + first paragraph)

Continuing material from previous week.



**WEEK SIX Tues MARCH 13**

Read Tignor Chapter 16: Alternative Visions of the Nineteenth Century, and

Marx and Engels: *The Communist Manifesto* (Introduction, Chapters 1 and 2 only) (on Blackboard)

Michael Sadler: Committee testimony of children laborers in the English mills (on Blackboard)

Q: It is interesting to note the immediate effects of industrialization on a society. First of all, what are the merits of industrialization? Secondly, what did Pandora's Box unleash upon society? How were some of the problems ameliorated, or were they?

Q: We are in a perfect position at this point in the course to contemplate the "core" and "periphery": peoples or states that are at the center of innovation and technology, and those that for whatever reason do not take that route. Which regions of the world, during the timeframe covered in this Tignor chapter, would you consider to be "core" regions and which "periphery" regions? Make sure to spell out your rationale for judging.

**WEEK SEVEN Tues MARCH 20: BLACKBOARD QUIZ #2 on CHAPTERS 16, 17, 18**

- Read Tignor Chapter 17: Nations and Empires 1850-1914,  
Look at: "Adrift at Shimoda", created by prior World Civ students,  
[www.adriftatshimoda.weebly.com](http://www.adriftatshimoda.weebly.com)

AND

Have a look at Prof. John Dower's visualizing culture website dealing with "Black Ships and Samurai". You might want to check out the website before you begin reading.

[http://ocw.mit.edu/ans7870/21f/21f.027/black\\_ships\\_and\\_samurai/bss\\_essay01.html](http://ocw.mit.edu/ans7870/21f/21f.027/black_ships_and_samurai/bss_essay01.html)

Q: What forms does imperialism take in this period? Consider the global context and ask yourself what is going on in the Muslim world during this period. Are parts of it immune to imperialist interests? Are there new imperialist powers entering the scene?

Read Tignor Chapter 18: An Unsettled World, 1890-1914

Learning to Look: Comparing the art of James Whistler and Hokusai (PowerPoint on BlackBoard)

WEEK EIGHT Tues MARCH 27

MIDTERM EXAM COVERING CHAPTERS 12 THROUGH 18 + ALL AUXILIARY READINGS

SPRING BREAK WEEK OF APRIL 3

WEEK NINE Tues APRIL 10

Read Tignor Chapter 19: Of Masses and Visions of the Modern, 1910-1939

And, Balfour Agreement (on Blackboard)

Treaty of Versailles concluding World War I vis-à-vis Germany (on BlackBoard)

League of Nations charter (on BlackBoard)

And, Enjoy the classic film, Charlie Chaplin's film *Modern Times* (1936) (on Blackboard)

Q: Artistic expression in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century seems to burst the bounds of traditionalism, regardless of the society, east or west, north or south. What is happening on the ground to *loosen up the bounds of art*? Select a few key artists or pieces to discuss. The choice is yours.

Q: How would you characterize the Mexican Revolution of 1910 within the longer historical era of earlier revolutions we have covered? Is it in line with, say, the demands made by the French in the 18<sup>th</sup> century? Is it comparable to what is happening in China around the same time? Is it a *very modern thing* for a people to wage revolution? Why or why not?

Q: The many references to the notion of "mass"... "mass movements", "mass culture", "mass consumption"... leads one to believe that people are acting in concert for the first time in human history. What exactly is going on here, and does it have anything to do with the First World War, and its aftermath?

**WEEK TEN Tues APRIL 17: BLACKBOARD QUIZ #3, TIGNOR CHAPTERS 21 + EPILOGUE**

Read Tignor Chapter 20: The Three-World Order, 1940-1975

Read Tignor Chapter 21: Globalization, 1970-2000

And, Tignor Epilogue: 2001-Present

And, Thomas Piketty: "Global Inequality of Wealth in the Twenty-First Century" from his book *Capital in the Twenty-First Century* (on BlackBoard)

Q: Explain how globalization transformed world demography. What patterns emerged in terms of international migration (Tignor question, p. 823).

Q: What led to the end of the Cold War?

Q: Analyze the various forms decolonization took after the Second World War.

Q: Globalization certainly is at the center of Thomas Piketty's chapter about inequality. Foreign investments around the world in part fuels this inequality. What is the larger point Piketty is trying to make. How do the billionaires become billionaires, and why is the inequality gap growing?

**WEEK ELEVEN Tues APRIL 24**

DIGGING DEEP, BOOK-LENGTH READING:

Begin discussion on Niall Ferguson's *The Square and the Tower*.

**WEEK TWELVE Tues MAY 1 (May Day)**

Continue

**WEEK THIRTEEN Tues MAY 8**

DIGGING DEEP, BOOK-LENGTH READING:

Discussion on Levitsky and Ziblatt's *How Democracies Die*.

**WEEK FOURTEEN Tues MAY 15:**

**Final Exam REVIEW**

## RUBRIC FOR DISCUSSION POSTS

For **Technique** and for **Substance**, each is assigned a numerical grade from 10 to 1 (and the average taken). Earlier assignments will receive more comments than later papers, assuming a strong learning curve.

- **Technique** refers to writing technique. It includes grammar, punctuation, sentence structure, citation and title formatting, spelling, and paragraphing. When necessary, inclusion of citations for any material cited should be included in the correct format. Consult style guides on BlackBoard, where your course materials are.
- **Substance** refers to your expression of ideas, demonstration of knowledge gleaned from course readings and material; accuracy in representation of the historical record; accuracy in representation of the source material; powers of analysis, and originality.

Here is what the numbers will mean:

	<b>Technique</b>	<b>Substance</b>
<b>10/9</b> <b>(superior)</b> <b>(grade approximation: A)</b>	Demonstration of mastery of all rules of grammar, punctuation, sentence structure, citation, paragraphing and formatting. Also shows great style in expression.  <b>Diagnosis:</b> Full steam ahead!	Demonstration of accuracy in representing the historical record and/or source material; original voice; interesting/original analysis or ideas. Also shows great style in expression.  <b>Diagnosis:</b> Full steam ahead!
<b>8/7</b> <b>(good)</b> <b>(grade approximation: B)</b>	Less accuracy in the above. There may be a handful of errors on any level, but still shows competency.  <b>Diagnosis:</b> Student may wish to work a little harder and review the rules of grammar. See Strunk and White: <i>Elements of Style</i>	Same as above, but with less accuracy or commitment to the source material. Demonstrates average presentation of material, without strong voice or analysis.  <b>Diagnosis:</b> Student may wish to work a little harder and take more time to read and digest material and visit professor during office hours.
<b>6/5</b> <b>(below average)</b> <b>(grade approximation: C-/D)</b>	Numerous errors indicate that some additional work must be done to meet academic standards. The basic rules of grammar are not understood clearly. Inaccuracies in understanding of the assigned material. Failure to provide citations for source material.	Numerous inaccuracies or absence of demonstration of course material indicate that some additional work must be done to meet academic standards. This includes reading more carefully and taking notes, and becoming "history minded".

	<b>Diagnosis:</b> Seek outside assistance, such as from the Writing Center.	<b>Diagnosis:</b> Seek outside assistance, such as from the Writing Center (3 <sup>rd</sup> floor NAC building)
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