

# World History: Crossroads of Tradition and Change

Chris Su, Junction Summer 2008

## Course Description

"History is a search for light on the nature and destiny of man," historian Arnold Toynbee once wrote. In this fast-paced survey of world history, we'll begin from Mesopotamia and work our way towards the Cold War and the Nuclear Era. The focus of the class will not be geared towards memorizing dates, places, and names - but rather an ongoing discussion on change and continuity over the centuries. Emphasis will especially be placed on development of different continents and people groups and their interactions.

Taught with experience from taking all three history AP exams (with scores of 5 on all of them), this course would also prepare students for the AP World History exam to a significant extent. Vocabulary sheets and AP review material will be included in the handouts.

### Teacher

Chris Su, Class of 2011, MIT. You can reach me at [chrissu@mit.edu](mailto:chrissu@mit.edu).

AP History Experience - AP World History, 5, May 2005; AP European History, 5, May 2006; AP United States History, 5, May 2006.

### Textbooks/Recommended Reading

*Traditions and Encounters*, Bentley and Zeigler, McGraw-Hill, 4th ed., 2008. **ISBN: 978-0-07-340693-0 (required reading - see note below)**

*AP World History*, Barron's Test Prep, any ed. (**required**)

*SAT 2 World History*, Kaplan, any ed.

*Guns, Germs, and Steel*, Diamond, Jared. (global history overview)

*From Dawn to Decadence*, Barzun, Jacques. (european history)

*Things Fall Apart*, Achebe, Chinua. (african history)

*Cod*, Kurlansky, Mark. (american history)

*One Hundred Years of Solitude*, Marquez, Gabriel Garcia. (south american history)

*In The Time of Butterflies*, Alvarez, Julia. (central american history)

*Dreams of the Red Chamber*, Tsao, Hsueh Chin. (chinese ancient history)

*Soul Mountain*, Gao Xingjian. (chinese contemporary history)

*The Namesake*, Lahiri, Jhumpa. (indian-american history)

*Lies My Teacher Told Me*, Loewen, James W. (bias in history education)

You can purchase all of these books (used or new) from [Amazon.com](http://Amazon.com).

## Note on the Textbook:

For ease of assigning reading assignments and to make your learning experience as hassle-free as possible, the textbook will be **required** for this class. You can obtain the textbook through a variety of places (Amazon.com is recommended for reliability, although you can also utilize other sites such as Half.com).

The textbook retails \$127.50 on Amazon.com, but independent Amazon Marketplace sellers offer it beginning at \$75 on the same site. Prices begin approximately from \$80 on Half.com.

The textbook, *Traditions and Encounters*, is one of the most popular AP World History textbooks and first-year introductory world history textbooks across the nation. The narrative is highly readable compared to many other texts that I've come across. Either way, I think the textbook would be a good investment for you, as both a source of reference and even leisurely reading after you've finished the course (yes, it's *that* readable).

**If You Anticipate Financial Need:** please contact either me or the Junction directors immediately (**PRIOR to the first day of class**) so we can work out a plan regarding your textbook. We don't want textbook cost to be a significant issue in the course. Requests would be reviewed on a case-by-case basis.

## About AP and SAT 2

The AP World History exam is a 3-hour, essay-with-multiple-choice exam held during May. **This course is not intended to be the sole preparation for the AP World History exam or a replacement for an AP class.** Due to time constraints, this course provides a very rapid overview of the topics covered in AP World History. However, if the student successfully completes all the assigned reading from the textbook and all of the assignments, he/she should be adequately prepared for the exam, given that the student continues to practice writing essays, utilizes test prep books like Barron's AP World History, and retains the historical knowledge learned until next May.

The SAT 2 World History exam is a 95-question, one-hour exam administered by College Board during December and June. If the student completes all the reading assignments and all other assigned assignments successfully, the student should be very prepared for the SAT 2 World History exam, given that the student utilizes test prep books like Kaplan's SAT 2 World History and retains the historical knowledge learned until the next test date.

Vocabulary sheets, study questions, and other guides will be given regularly at the end of every week to aid students interested in AP World History and SAT 2 World History.

## Grading and Assignments

**Reading Assignments:** 30%

**Participation/Preparation for Class:** 20%

**Weekly Quizzes:** 20%

**Term Essay:** 30%

### **Reading Assignment:**

Please expect reading assignments daily. Just like you can't learn calculus without doing a bunch of integration exercises, you can't learn history without reading. No, we won't read through the entire textbook (though you're welcome to!). I will try to make reading assignments reasonable - you will not be spending more than 2 hours reading every night. (1 hour would probably be the average for most nights). Reading assignments for the day after will be clearly written on the top of each class session's outline/summary sheet (which would be passed out in class everyday).

### **Participation/Preparation:**

Another vital component in learning history is communication. History class is often cited as a boring class because it's often presented as a strict lecture-based class. I want you to walk away from this course with a better **understanding** of the way societies and cultures had collaborated throughout the centuries, rather than coming out with a list of memorized names and dates! Thus, you will be expected to participate on a day to day basis through our discussions (which would generally be focused on the reading for the night before - so please come to class having read the reading assignment!). You will be assessed through this system:

- 5:** - Obviously read reading assignment, contributes opinion, demonstrates clarity of thought.
- 4:** - Obviously read reading assignment, passively participates, demonstrates clarity of thought - if participates.
- 3:** - Probably skimmed reading assignment, contributes opinion, but may demonstrate confusion because didn't read reading assignment thoroughly.
- 2:** - Probably skimmed reading assignment, passively participates or does not participate.
- 1:** - Probably didn't read reading assignment, comes to class and zones out.

### **Weekly Quizzes:**

There would be six weekly quizzes (one at the end of every week). The quiz would always be given on Thursday, when you come to class. All of the quizzes will be factually/conceptually based. This is good practice for the multiple-choice portion of the AP and SAT 2 World History tests.

The quizzes would most probably be based on reading assignments and classroom discussion and will be quite short (no more than 25 minutes).

### **Term Essay:**

You will be expected to write a 6-8 paged (double-space) or 3-4-paged (single-space) essay synthesizing facts and discussing an issue of global history. A list of potential essay topics will be passed out by the beginning of the second week, but you are welcome to come up with your own topic (pending my approval).

You will not be expected to do research for this paper (ie. you don't have to check out books from the library or have a bibliography). Your textbook and the Internet would probably be sufficient as your sources. **HOWEVER**, all facts/statements that are not your own opinion or inference must be factually correct and verifiable. The essay is intended to be more analysis than just a restatement of facts, so I expect the bulk of your essay to be a discussion, rather than just summarizing the textbook.

More information on this during class.

## **Overview Schedule**

(detailed schedule will be handed out separately)

**Week One:** - Civilization and Foundations (prehistory - 600 AD)

Foundations - Geography - Religion - Government - Culture - Agriculture - Warfare

**Week Two:** - Development and Discovery (600 - 1450 AD)

Middle Ages - Crusades - Renaissance - Islamic Caliphates - Sui/Tang/Song/Yuan Dynasties - Indian Sultanates - Rise of Mongols - African Kingdoms - American Civilizations

**Week Three:** - Exploration and Interaction (1450-1750 AD)

Protestant Reformation - Exploration and Colonization - Ottoman Empire - Ming/Qing Dynasties - Tokugawa Shogunate - Mughals - African Slave Trade - Pre-Colonial American History - Enlightenment

**Week Four:** - Modernization and Industrialization (1750 - 1914 AD)

French Revolution - Industrialization - European Thinkers - American Revolution - American Civil War - Africa and Imperialism - Meiji Restoration - Decline of Chinese Dynasties - Latin American Revolutions - Indian Colonialism

**Week Five:** - Independence and Interdependence (1914 - current)

World War I - World War II - Chinese Revolution - Communism - Gulf Wars - African Revolutions and Declarations of Independence - Vietnam War - Rise of United States - Cold War - Korean War - Nuclear Era - War on Terrorism

**Week Six:** Synthesis and Integration (overview, review)

Historical Ideas - Common Trends - Future of Humanity - Open Discussions - Mini-Debates - Faces of Technology - Internet - AP Exam Tips

## **Course Objectives**

(roughly in the order of my perceived importance, from basic to advanced)

Skills Learned	Applications
Understanding of basic historical events, figures, and dates.	Having a conversation with a friend, watching a documentary on TV. ( <b>example:</b> what was the Kyoto Protocol?)
Awareness of basic historical trends and implications.	Writing papers in school or being able to glean ideas from scholarly papers, newspaper columns, or magazine articles that require "basic" historical knowledge. ( <b>example:</b> how did the tension between India and Pakistan come to be?)
Active application of historical knowledge.	Participating in a history seminar class, having a debate with a friend, or being able to explain historical causes and effects comfortably. ( <b>example:</b> was the isolationist policy imposed by the Tokugawa Shogunates an effective foreign policy for Japan, at that time? Explain your answer.)
Recognition of inherent historical bias. ("History is the story of the Victor.")	Identifying bias and slanted reporting in textbooks, newspapers, TV reports, and other forms of media. Being able to draw your own, independent conclusions.

I hope you will be able to walk away with a bit (or a lot!) of all four skills at the end of the course. :)