

World History to 1500 Section 01 HIST 1A

Fall 2025 Section 01 In Person 3 Unit(s) 08/20/2025 to 12/08/2025 Modified 06/16/2025

In this course, we will explore world history from its very beginnings to the eve of the modern era. Among questions we'll consider along the way: Why do humans come up with such a variety of ways of organizing themselves, and what patterns can we find across time and space? What have civilizations given us, and at what price? How do we interpret the very different ways and values of the distant past? What can we learn from the origins of the ties that bind us, and from old answers to eternal questions about how we should live our lives?

We will approach these questions by examining closely and comparing and contrasting how humans have shaped and been shaped by value systems, economic structures, political institutions, social groups and natural environments. We will be particularly attentive to what changes and what remains the same; what roles humans have played in changing or perpetuating the status quo; and what holds social groups together and what drives them apart.

The course will involve significant student involvement in every class meeting. Issues will often be framed by a brief lecture at the beginning of class, but class time will be primarily devoted to grappling with key historical questions, whether through in-depth analysis of primary sources, or weighing the evidence presented in the textbook and elsewhere.



Contact Information

Instructor:	Prof. Allison Katsev
Office Location:	DMH 140
Telephone:	408-924-5508
Email:	allison.katsev@sjsu.edu Please, feel free to e-mail me or come to office hours with any questions you have, big or small!
Office Hours:	Thursday, 1:30pm-2:30pm Also via email and by appointment
Class Days/Time:	TuTh, 3:00pm-4:15pm
Classroom:	Clark Building (CL) 224

Course Description and Requisites

Introduces students to the world's regions and civilizations as interconnected entities. HIST 1A examines the growth and development of traditional civilizations to 1500. HIST 1B surveys the transformation of civilizations since 1500. GE Area: D (formerly GE Area D2)

Letter Graded

* Classroom Protocols

You are expected to arrive to class on time. Do not use cellphones, texting, or email in class.

Course Format

This class will be taught in person. During class, I will introduce material and students will participate in active discussion and analysis of the material.

Class Communications

Course materials (the syllabus, guidelines for assignments) may be found on the course website on Canvas. I will communicate with students by email, through Canvas. You are responsible for regularly checking email for important messages about the class.

Program Information

Welcome to this General Education course.

SJSU's General Education Program establishes a strong foundation of versatile skills, fosters curiosity about the world, promotes ethical judgment, and prepares students to engage and contribute responsibly and cooperatively in a multicultural, information-rich society. General education classes integrate areas of study and encourage progressively more complex and creative analysis, expression, and problem solving.

The General Education Program has three goals:

Goal 1: To develop students' core competencies for academic, personal, creative, and professional pursuits.

Goal 2: To enact the university's commitment to diversity, inclusion, and justice by ensuring that students have the knowledge and skills to serve and contribute to the well-being of local and global communities and the environment.

Goal 3: To offer students integrated, multidisciplinary, and innovative study in which they pose challenging questions, address complex issues, and develop cooperative and creative responses.

More information about the General Education Program Learning Outcomes (PLOs) can be found on the <u>GE website (https://sjsu.edu/general-education/ge-requirements/overview/learning-outcomes.php)</u>.

Course Learning Outcomes (CLOs)

GE Area D: Social Sciences

Area D courses increase students' understanding of human behavior and social interaction in the context of value systems, economic structures, political institutions, social groups, and natural environments. Students develop an understanding of problems and issues from different disciplinary perspectives and examine issues in their contemporary as well as historical settings and in a variety of cultural contexts.

The CSU requires students to complete General Education courses in the Social Sciences in at least two different disciplines. Students may meet this requirement by either 1) taking two lower-division Area D courses in different disciplines, or 2) taking two lower-division Area D courses in the same discipline and an Area S upper-division GE course in a different discipline.

GE Area D Learning Outcomes (GE ALO's)

Upon successful completion of an Area D course, students should be able to:

- 1. Demonstrate understanding of the ways in which social institutions, culture, and environment shape and are shaped by the behavior of individuals, both past and present (assessed through passage analyses essays on the midterm examinations);
- 2. Compare and contrast the dynamics of two or more social groups or social systems in a variety of historical and/or cultural contexts (assessed through extended essays on the midterm examinations);
- 3. Place contemporary social developments in cultural, environmental, geographical, and/or historical contexts (assessed through the group project and the final exam);
- 4. Draw on social/behavioral science information from various perspectives to formulate applications appropriate to historical and/or contemporary social issues (assessed through the document investigations and the individual essay).

GE Area D Content Requirements

- 1. Courses shall include fundamental skills necessary to the practice of social science (requirement will be met through assigned readings, material presented by the professor, student in-class activities, document investigations and essay questions on exams.)
- 2. Courses shall teach students how to practice social science, not just understand what social scientists have concluded (requirement will be met through pedagogy of class, which will focus on active learning and students as co-creators of knowledge, through mini-lectures to set up issues, followed by student activities to analyze evidence and synthesize conclusions and significance, as well as document investigations, exams essays, a final group project and individual essay.)

3. Course content shall develop students' analytical skills and understanding of social science in ways that develop the capacity for informed civic engagement (requirement will be met through in-class discussions, exam essays, the individual essay and the final exam).

Course Learning Outcomes (CLO's)

In addition to the above GE Area D Learning Outcomes, upon completion of this course, students will be able to:

CLO 1: identify major trends in World History until 1500 (assessed through chapter quizzes and the short essays on key terms on the midterm examinations).

CLO 2: assess critically the legacies that pre-modern civilizations have left in the modern world (assessed through the group project and extended exam essays).

CLO 3: analyze critically a range of sources, reflecting different time periods, cultures, genres, and motivations (assessed through the document investigations, passage analyses on exams and the individual essay).

Writing Practice: Students will write a minimum of 1500 words in a language and style appropriate to the discipline. Students will meet this requirement and receive feedback on their writing (both form and content) throughout the semester through writing substantive essays in three timed exams, as well as a paper of at least 1500 words. There will be a class devoted to feedback on writing from the professor before the individual essay is due. In addition, I encourage all students to email me with questions about their writing. I am happy to read students' drafts and meet with them in person or over Zoom to give extensive feedback.

Diversity Goals and Content: This course will include issues of diversity, equity and inclusion. In this course we will focus on the diverse experiences of people from different regions to the world at different times, attentive also to intersectionality (for example, comparing the experiences of women from privileged and non-privileged backgrounds). Throughout the course, we will be attentive to how narratives are constructed, who is privileged by these narratives, who is marginalized, and how to deconstruct narratives and systems of oppression. Class discussions will be conducted with a focus on open-mindedness and collaboration.



Required Texts/Readings

Ways of the World, Volume One: Through the Fifteenth Century

Author: Robert W. Strayer and Eric W. Nelson

Publisher: Bedford St. Martin's

Edition: Fifth Edition (looseleaf, Volume One)

ISBN: 9781319340650

Availability: Spartan Bookstore or their website

Earlier editions of the textbook have significant differences, so I recommend you get the 5th edition.

Primary Sources for Document Investigations.

Availability: Links provided to additional reading at Course Website on Canvas.

1) ONLINE CHAPTER QUIZZES

DUE BY 2:30 PM ON THE DAY OF THE ASSIGNED READING (10% of grade): 12 online quizzes, 10 questions each, covering each of the chapters assigned in *The Ways of The World*, available at our course website. These quizzes require you to identify major trends in World History until 1500 (CLO 1).

<u>The quizzes are open-book</u>. You may use your book and notes, but <u>you can't consult with other students</u>. <u>You'll have 20 minutes to complete the quiz</u>, thus I suggest you read the whole chapter carefully before starting the quiz. Each quiz will be available 10 days before the reading is due, and must be completed by 2:30 PM on the day it is due. If you have questions about the correct answers for individual questions, make note of them. I'll be happy to answer such questions after the quiz is due.

Note: You cannot make up a quiz; but the two lowest scores are dropped.

2) MIDTERM EXAMS

IN CLASS ON OCTOBER 7 (20% of grade) AND NOVEMBER 13 (20% of grade): Each midterm will consist of three sections: 1) quotes from primary sources, on which you will write short essays that analyze critically a range of sources, reflecting different time periods, cultures, genres, and motivations (CLO 3) and demonstrate understanding of the ways in which social institutions, culture, and environment shape and are shaped by the behavior of individuals, both past and present (GE ALO 1); 2) terms from the "Revisiting Specifics" section at the end of each chapter on which you will write short essays to identify major trends in World History until 1500 (CLO 1); and 3) a longer essay in which you

compare and contrast the dynamics of two or more social groups or social systems in a variety of historical and/or cultural contexts (GE ALO 2) and assess critically the legacies that pre-modern civilizations have left in the modern world (CLO 2).

More details are provided on Canvas. NO NOTES OR BOOKS, BUT YOU MAY BRING 1 PIECE OF NOTEBOOK PAPER (8 X 11) WITH HANDWRITTEN NOTES ON BOTH SIDES. YOU'LL TURN THE PIECE OF NOTEBOOK PAPER IN WITH YOUR EXAM.

3) FINAL EXAM

THURSDAY, DECEMBER 11, 1:00PM-3:00PM (5% of grade): One essay question in which you will synthesize the first and second halves of the semester in order to place contemporary social developments in cultural, environmental, geographical, and/or historical contexts (GE ALO 3).

Details will be provided before the final exam. NO NOTES OR BOOKS, BUT YOU MAY BRING 1 PIECE OF NOTEBOOK PAPER (8 X 11) WITH HANDWRITTEN NOTES ON BOTH SIDES. YOU'LL TURN THE PIECE OF NOTEBOOK PAPER IN WITH YOUR EXAM. Because you will be given the essay question ahead of time to prepare, you can include on your note paper notes and an outline, but you can't include a fully written out essay.

4) INDIVIDUAL ESSAY

<u>DUE THURSDAY, DECEMBER 11, AT 11:59PM, (minimum 1500 words) (20% of grade) (submit online through Canvas</u>): For this essay, students will explore one key issue in world history across various time periods and regions (the issue on which they did their group project). Students will analyze critically a range of sources, reflecting different time periods, cultures, genres, and motivations (CLO 3) in order to draw on social/behavioral science information from various perspectives to formulate applications appropriate to historical and/or contemporary social issues (GE ALO 4).

One class session will be devoted specifically to giving feedback to students as they write and rewrite their essay. I addition I will be available through office hours, email and Zoom appointments for support and feedback throughout the entire writing process.

Specific requirements for the essay will be posted on Canvas and discussed in advance.

5) CLASS PARTICIPATION

Includes class discussion, document investigations and group project (25% of grade):

- You should come to class having done the assigned reading. For the textbook: As you read, take note especially on the terms listed under "What's the Significance?" at the end of each chapter. For each term, note what you consider to be key defining features and the historical significance(s). Don't just transcribe the views of the textbook. Instead think about what you find to be the most interesting features and explore why you think it is important (in terms of patterns? short term effects? Long term repercussions?) We'll be discussing these in class, and you'll also share your views in your exams.
- <u>Document Investigations DUE ON CANVAS AT 2:30PM on days we read primary sources</u>, in which you will analyze critically a range of sources, reflecting different time periods, cultures, genres,

and motivations (CLO 3), in order to draw on social/behavioral science information from various perspectives to formulate applications appropriate to historical and/or contemporary social issues (GE ALO 4).

- Consists of typed, <u>for each document</u>: 1) author, title and date of document; 2) at least one paragraph responding to each assigned reading question. A thoughtful answer will contain evidence, analysis of the evidence and your own interpretation of the significance of what you've shown in relation to the questions being asked. I'll grade one document investigation early in the semester to give you feedback, and also at least once more during the semester (Think of this as being similar in function to an occasional "pop quiz."). Because the document investigations require you to interpret documents, you will be graded on thoughtfulness and effort, as well as accuracy. You can also make an appointment or come to office hours to get feedback on any of them. You can turn Document Investigations late (but not after the last day of class--December 4) for partial credit. At the end of the semester, I'll review all of your submissions as part of your participation grade. NOTE: While you can quote the document you are analyzing, the analysis itself must be in your own words.
- <u>Group Project</u>: In conjunction with your individual essay, you will prepare an oral presentation on the same topic. The project will require you to place contemporary social developments in cultural, environmental, geographical, and/or historical contexts (GE ALO 3) while you assess critically the legacies that pre-modern civilizations have left in the modern world (CLO 2).
 - The oral presentation will be a group project that will involve substantial work in preparation. You will be expected to work with the members of your group during class time and communicate with them outside of class to ensure that your group is prepared for your presentation on December 2. You will be assessed not only on the final product but also on the process by which you got there. Specific requirements will be made available and discussed well ahead of time.

Extra Credit Opportunity

Must be turned in by the last day of class, December 5 (can raise your final grade by up to 2%): 1) Write a 3-page essay connecting a current news article or item of art or entertainment to issues and events studied in our class. The essay could explore various ways that knowledge of these past eras illuminates your thinking about this current moment; OR 2) Visit the Asian Art Museum in San Francisco (closed Mondays). Choose one or two pieces in their collection and write a 2-page essay putting the piece in the context of its times in such a way that you illuminate the significance of the piece. You are limited to one extra credit project. If you're interested in either of these options, come see me to work out the details. The extra credit is due by the last day of class, December 4.

Writing Resources

Students will receive detailed feedback on their writing, and are encouraged to contact me to discuss their assignments at any point, from brainstorming ideas to writing final drafts. In addition, the Writing Center (https://www.sjsu.edu/writingcenter/) is an excellent resource for helping students at any stage in their writing. The Center provides group and one-on-one tutoring sessions, workshops on a wide array of writing topics, and online resources like videos and handouts for self-study.

✓ Grading Information

Assessment

Central to the study of World History is the ability to use methods of the historian to identify, analyze and compare different historical perspectives and systems. Students will be assessed on their mastery of basic information from the textbook through chapter quizzes. A portion of the class grade will be based on thoughtful analysis of a variety of historical sources, which will be assessed through in-class exercises and a long-term project. Students will also be expected to identify, synthesize and compare key phenomena in their essay and exams.

Grades on assignments will be regularly updated on Canvas. You can always email with questions about your current grade.

Weighting of Assignments

Assignment Activity	GE ALO's Assessed	CLO's Assessed	Percentage of Grade
Quizzes		1	10%
Midterm Exams	1, 2	1, 2, 3	40%
Final Exam	3		5%
Individual Essay	4	3	20%
Participation (including Document Investigations and Group Project)	3, 4	2, 3	25%

Policy on Late Work: Students will receive partial credit for Document Investigations turned in late, as long as they are submitted by the last day of class (December 4). In order to get grades in at the end of the semester, I will not accept any individual essays after the due date except in truly extraordinary, unforeseeable circumstances. If such circumstances arise, you must contact me immediately.

Policy on Use of AI Programs: This is a course that teaches critical thinking and developing arguments based on evidence. Therefore the use of AI programs (such as ChatGPT) is not allowed. Using an AI program to do the thinking for you is plagiarism. Using an AI program as a source that you cite is also unacceptable as AI programs are neither reliable nor do they accurately cite the sources of their information.

Because one way of honing critical thinking is developing one's skills at expressing arguments in writing, the use of Al writing programs such as Grammarly Pro is not allowed. Programs that check for basic issues in grammar and spelling (such as the free Grammarly program) are permitted.

"Success in this course is based on the expectation that students will spend, for each unit of credit, a minimum of 45 hours over the length of the course (normally three hours per unit per week) for instruction, preparation/studying, or course related activities, including but not limited to internships, labs, and clinical practica. Other course structures will have equivalent workload expectations as described in the syllabus."

Anonymized student work might be used in a regular cycle of General Education Program assessment. Students can request to exclude their work from the process by emailing the professor.

Breakdown

Grade	Range	Notes
A+	97% to 100%	
А	93% to 96.99%	
A-	90% to 92.99%	
B+	87% to 89.99%	
В	83% to 86.99%	
В-	80% to 82.99%	
C+	77% to 79.99%	
С	73% to 76.99%	
C-	70% to 72.99%	
D+	67% to 69.99%	
D	63% to 66.99%	
D-	60% to 62.99%	
F	Below 60%	

Per <u>University Policy S16-9 (PDF)</u> (http://www.sjsu.edu/senate/docs/S16-9.pdf), relevant university policy concerning all courses, such as student responsibilities, academic integrity, accommodations, dropping and adding, consent for recording of class, etc. and available student services (e.g. learning assistance, counseling, and other resources) are listed on the Syllabus Information (https://www.sjsu.edu/curriculum/courses/syllabus-info.php) web page. Make sure to visit this page to review and be aware of these university policies and resources.

a Course Schedule

When	Topic	Notes
Aug. 21	Introduction: Why World History?	
THEME 1: FROM STONE AGE TO CIVILIZATION		
Aug. 26	Being Human: Piecing together the clues	
Aug. 28	From Hunter/Gatherers to Civilization	Reading: Ways of the World, Intro to Part 1: The Big Picture, AND Chs. 1 and 2 DUE BY 2:30PM: Online Quizzes on Ch. 1 and 2 at Canvas Note: For all textbook readings, use the terms from the "Revisiting Specifics" section at the end of each chapter to guide your reading. You should take note of what you consider to be key features and the immediate and long-term significance of each phenomenon. [NOTE: Some of the terms are different in the 2 nd , 3 rd and 4th editions of the textbook. I will have the 5th edition in class and you can take a picture of the terms, listed at the end of each chapter.]

When	Topic	Notes
Sept. 2	Considering the Evidence: What can/can't we know about life in the Stone Age?	Reading: Document 1.1 (on Canvas). DUE BY 2:30 PM ON CANVAS: Document Investigation (Document 1.1) _NOTE: Document investigations consist of typed for each document: 1) author, title and date of document; 2) at least one paragraph responding to each pink squared question. A thoughtful answer will contain evidence, analysis of the evidence and your own interpretation of the significance of what you've shown in relation to the questions being asked.
Cont 4	Considering the Evidence:	NOTE: It's fine to quote the document you are analyzing, but your analysis MUST BE IN YOUR OWN WORDS. Deading: Decuments 2.1 and 2.2 (on Convey)
Sept. 4	Obligations to Humans and Gods in Mesopotamia	Reading: Documents 2.1 and 2.2 (on Canvas) DUE BY 2:30 PM ON CANVAS: Document Investigations (Documents 2.1 and 2.2)
THEME 2: SECOND WAVE CIVILIZATIONS: THE CLASSICAL ERA (500 B.C.E. TO 500 C.E.)		
Sept. 9	Civilizations Clash: The Ways of Persia and Greece	Reading: Ways of the World, Intro to Part 2: The Big Picture, AND Ch. 3 DUE BY 2:30 PM: Online Quiz on Ch. 3 at Canvas
Sept. 11	Considering the Evidence: Power and Authority in China and India	Reading: <i>Documents 3.3 and 3.4 (on Canvas)</i> DUE BY 2:30 PM ON CANVAS: Document Investigations (Documents 3.3 and 3.4)
Sept. 16	New Visions in Ancient Civilizations	Reading: Ways of the World, Ch. 4 DUE BY 2:30 PM: Online Quiz on Ch. 4 at Canvas
Sept. 18	Considering the Evidence: What is a Good Life?	Reading: <i>Documents 4.1-4.4 (on Canvas).</i> DUE BY 2:30 PM ON CANVAS: Document Investigations: Last Name A-N: Documents 4.1, 4.2, Last Name O-Z: Documents 4.3 and 4.4

When	Topic	Notes
Sept. 23	The More "Civilized" the More Unequal?	Reading: Ways of the World, Ch. 5 DUE BY 2:30 PM: Online Quiz on Ch. 5 at Canvas
Sept. 25	Considering the Evidence: Women's Roles in Patriarchal Societies	Reading: <i>Documents 5.1-5.3 (on Canvas)</i> . DUE BY 2:30 PM ON CANVAS: Document Investigations (Documents 5.1, 5.2, and 5.3)
Sept. 30	Could Civilization Look Different? America and Africa	Reading: Ways of the World, Ch. 6 DUE BY 2:30 PM: Online Quiz on Ch. 6 at Canvas
Oct. 2	Exam Study Day—Time for Consultation with Professor	I will be available to answer questions about material as well as help students prepare for writing short and long essays for the midterm exam.
Oct. 7	Midterm Examination (covering themes 1 and 2)	*analysis of quotes *short essays on terms from the "Revisiting Specifics" section at the end of each textbook chapter. *Longer essay analyzing multiple societies. NO NOTES OR BOOKS, BUT YOU MAY BRING 1 PIECE OF NOTEBOOK PAPER (8 X 11) WITH HANDWRITTEN NOTES ON BOTH SIDES. YOU'LL TURN THE PIECE OF NOTEBOOK PAPER IN WITH YOUR EXAM.
THEME 3: THIRD WAVE CIVILIZATIONS: AGE OF ACCELERATING CONNECTIONS (500- 1500)		
Oct. 9	World Webs	Reading: Ways of the World, Part Three Introduction: The Big Picture, AND Ch. 7 DUE BY 2:30 PM: Online Quiz on Ch. 7 at Canvas
Oct. 14	Considering the Evidence: Encountering the Other	Reading: <i>Documents 7.2 and 7.3 (on Canvas).</i> DUE AT 2:30 PM ON CANVAS: Document Investigations (Documents 7.2, and 7.3)
Oct. 16	China in the World	Reading: Ways of the World, Ch. 8 DUE BY 2:30 PM: Online Quiz on Ch. 8 at Canvas

When	Topic	Notes
Oct. 21	The Worlds of Islam	Reading: Ways of the World, Ch. 9
		DUE BY 2:30 PM: Online Quiz on Ch. 9 at Canvas
Oct. 23	Considering the Evidence: Voices of Islam	Reading: <i>Documents 9.1-9.4 (on Canvas)</i> . DUE BY 2:30 PM ON CANVAS: Document Investigations <u>Last Name A-N: Documents 9.1, 9.2</u> ,
		Last Name O-Z: Documents 9.3 and 9.4 I will also go over the group project and individual essay
		guidelines.
Oct. 28	At the World's Edge: Christendom	Reading: Ways of the World, Ch. 10 DUE BY 2:30 PM: Online Quiz on Ch. 10 at Canvas
Oct. 30	The Mongols and the World	Reading: Ways of the World, Ch. 11 DUE BY 2:30 PM: Online Quiz on Ch. 11 at Canvas Toward the end of class, groups will meet to begin planning
Nov. 4	Considering the Evidence: Getting to know the Barbarians?	Projects. DO NOT MISS! Reading: Documents 11.1-11.4 (on Canvas) DUE BY 2:30 PM ON CANVAS: Document Investigations Last Name A-N: Documents 11.1, 11.2, Last Name 0-Z: Documents 11.3 and 11.4
Nov. 6	The Worlds of the 15th century	Reading: Ways of the World, Ch. 12 DUE BY 2:30 PM: Online Quiz on Ch. 12 at Canvas
Nov. 11	NO CLASSVETERANS DAY	

When	Topic	Notes
Nov. 13	Midterm Examination (covering theme 3)	*analysis of quotes *short essays on terms from the "Revisiting Specifics" section at the end of each textbook chapter. *Longer essay analyzing multiple societies NO NOTES OR BOOKS, BUT YOU MAY BRING 1 PIECE OF NOTEBOOK PAPER (8 X 11) WITH HANDWRITTEN NOTES ON BOTH SIDES. YOU'LL TURN THE PIECE OF NOTEBOOK PAPER IN WITH YOUR EXAM.
Nov. 18	Student Group Project Preparation Day	Do not miss class This is a day to meet and plan with the students in your group
Nov. 20	Student Group Project Preparation Day	Do not miss class This is a day to meet and plan with the students in your group. The group's proposed thesis statement will be due at the beginning of class.
Nov. 25	Writing Consultations with Professor	I will be available to discuss student drafts for individual essays, as well as any other questions about assignments via Zoom.
Nov. 27	NO CLASSES TODAY THANKSGIVING	
Dec. 2	Student Group Presentations	DO NOT MISS CLASS!
Dec. 4	Student Group Presentations and Wrap- Up of Class	DO NOT MISS CLASS!
FINAL EXAM THURSDAY, DEC. 11, 1:00PM-3:00PM CL 224		Essay question tying together all parts of the course. Bring 1 large green book. You can have an 8 X 11 piece of notebook paper with handwritten notes on both sides. Because you will be given the exam essay question ahead of time to prepare, you can include on your note paper notes and an outline, but you can't include a fully written out essay.

When	Topic	Notes
INDIVIDUAL ESSAY Thursday, Dec. 11, 11:59 pm		INDIVIDUAL ESSAY (minimum 1500 words, exploring one key issue in world history across various time periods and regions (the same issue on which you did your group project). Guidelines posted on Canvas.