

HIS 230 WORLD CIVILIZATIONS I

Kenneth J. Orosz
Spring 2026
Class Meetings:
TR 10:50-12:05 Tech 358

Office Hours: T 1:30-2:30
W 10:00-12:00
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COURSE DESCRIPTION

This course is a survey of global development from the dawn of civilization through the onset of the so-called Age of Discovery (circa 1500). Although we will of necessity be looking at regional political and social changes, emphasis will also be placed on global interactions in the arenas of culture, technological innovation, ecological change, and belief systems.¹

OFFICE HOURS

While I will be available in my office for face to face meetings during office hours, I am also available for virtual meetings. To take advantage of virtual office hours click on the appropriate menu button in Brightspace to reveal the Zoom link. Contact me via email if you cannot make regularly attended office hours so that we can set up an appointment.

TUTORING SERVICES

Buffalo State offers a wide variety of free tutoring services, including a Writing Center. For more information go to the [tutoring website](#).

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

Academic misconduct (including cheating, plagiarism, and the use of artificial intelligence (AI) to do your work for you) will not be tolerated. Buffalo State College policies on academic misconduct, including the possible use of textual similarity detection software, are outlined in the college catalog. **Please note that the minimum penalty for cases of academic misconduct will be an F on the assignment.**

Reading assignments are to be completed by the dates given. In addition to graded discussions, there will also be a midterm and a final examination. Please note that in order to earn more than a B on the essay portion of the exams you must make use of the relevant assigned readings and historical documents. In addition students will write two 5 page papers on assigned topics. All papers must conform to the [History Style Sheet](#). Detailed [instructions](#) on the writing assignments, including the style sheet, can be found in Brightspace or by clicking the syllabi and course materials links at <http://faculty.buffalostate.edu/oroszkj>. Help for Brightspace can be found at <https://documentation.brightspace.com/EN/learners/learners.htm>.

Please note that in order to pass this course you must make a good faith attempt to complete all components and requirements. **LATE WORK WILL NOT BE ACCEPTED WITHOUT PRIOR ARRANGEMENT**. Incompletes will be granted at the sole discretion of the instructor and

¹ Learning Outcomes: Students will demonstrate mastery of subject matter, knowledge of historiography, appreciation of cultural patterns/behaviors, understanding of cause and effect, and influence of ideas on human behavior. Students will also be able to identify/interpret primary sources, write clearly and effectively according to the standards of the historical profession. Students will demonstrate knowledge of at least one non-western region in one or more periods, including cultures, geography, institutions, societies, polities, and economies; students will demonstrate knowledge of ways of thought over time in at least two fields of thought, knowledge of continuities/discontinuities, understanding of interrelatedness of civilizations/regions; students will respond inquisitively and critically to information/ideas from at least one non-western civilization.

require a written application outlining the rationale behind granting the incomplete, a list of outstanding assignments and a timetable for their completion. This application must be signed and, if granted, will constitute a formal contract for the completion of the course.

While there is no formal attendance policy, students will be responsible for all material covered. How you learn that material is up to you. Experience has shown, however, that students who do not regularly attend class have gaps in their knowledge and tend to earn poor grades.

At the collegiate level grades are based on mastery of content, methodology, and presentation, regardless of how hard you feel you worked on an assignment. Grades will be computed as follows:

Midterm Exam	25%	Final Exam	25%
First Paper	15%	Discussion	20%
Second Paper	15%		

COURSE POLICIES

1. Students must complete all work on their own. There are no group projects other than the online discussions.
2. **The use of artificial intelligence (AI) is strictly forbidden and will be considered cheating since it is a computer, rather than the student, completing assignments. As with other cases of academic misconduct, the minimum penalty will be an F on the assignment.**
3. Except for cases of documented emergencies, I do not accept late work without prior arrangement. It is your responsibility to keep track of what is due each week by checking the syllabus.

SUBMITTING PAPERS

Submitting papers requires a 3 part process:

1. You must pass a quiz confirming that you have read and followed the directions before the Dropbox will appear. This quiz will become available the Course Activities tab 2 weeks before the assignment is due and can be retaken as needed.
2. If you have successfully completed the quiz, then the Dropbox will appear in the Assignments section of the Course Activities tab. You must upload your paper as a word document (.doc or .docx only) to the Turnitin dropbox by **11:00 AM** on the due date.
3. You must bring a printed and stapled copy and turn it in during class time on the due date. **I will not grade any papers that have not been submitted to the dropbox and for which I do not also have a paper copy.**

Note: You may submit revisions of your paper up until the due date. Among the things you should check is the Turnitin Originality Report to help guard against plagiarism. To see the report click on the colored rectangular icon next to your submission. If the icon is gray, your report is still being processed; check back within the next 24 hours.

DISCUSSION

We will be holding several mandatory online discussions conducted through Brightspace. Discussions take place over a seven (7) day period. Each discussion will go live at 8:00 AM on a **Thursday** (dates are listed on the syllabus). You have until the following **Monday** at 5:00 PM to respond to the prompt; you must return to the discussion by the next **Thursday** at 8:00 AM to respond to at least one post by another member of your group. Once the discussion ends it will be locked; at this point you will still be able to read the various posts, but you will not be able to add any further comments.

- The online discussions require you to post your own initial response to the question(s) before you can see those of your classmates. Naturally, if you are the first person to post in a forum there will not be anything to see until others begin working on the assignment.
- In order to receive full credit, you must come back to the discussion forum to respond at least once in a thoughtful and meaningful way to a classmate's post. Simply stating that you agree is not enough; you must contribute to the ongoing conversation by adding additional detail or historical evidence, providing counterpoints as needed, or tackling untouched portions of the questions.
- Keep in mind that this is a discussion and as such requires active, thoughtful and detailed participation. You must remain respectful of others' opinions, comments and responses. Your comments must also be legible and understandable. This means full sentences, minimal abbreviations and no emoticons.

How to Post in Discussion Board: 1) While in Brightspace go to Activities and select Discussion; 2) Click on the appropriate discussion title to open it and then click Start a New Thread to enter and submit your initial reply. Click Post in the lower left corner when finished.

Posting Replies: 1. Click on a thread to read it and/or any existing replies. 2) Click on Reply to Thread and type in your response. Click post when finished.

BOOKS The following books are required reading and are available in the campus bookstore:

Smith et al, <u>World in the Making</u> , 2 nd ed, vol 1	ISBN 978-0-197-60828-9
Wiesner-Hanks, <u>Sources of World Societies</u> , 12 th ed vol 1	ISBN 978-1-319-29743-5
Xinru Liu, <u>The Silk Road</u>	ISBN 978-0-312-47551-2

SUPPLEMENTAL READINGS:

Any reading listed on the syllabus that does not come from a required textbook is either a website or has been posted to Brightspace. To further help you identify them, these supplemental readings are in italics. 1) If it is a website, there will be a link to it from the electronic version of the syllabus available in Brightspace or on my web page at <http://faculty.buffalostate.edu/oroszkj>. 2) Materials highlighted in blue have been uploaded to weekly folders in the Supplemental Readings section of Brightspace. If the item is a PDF, simply click on it to open and read. If it is a PowerPoint, click the down arrow next to the file name and select download from the drop down menu (files are large, so do on WiFi only). Navigate to your download folder and open the file. Follow the directions on the first slide to get it to play.

CLASS SCHEDULE

January 27	Introduction
Read:	<i>Nature of History</i> ; <i>How to Write History Papers</i>
January 29	Paleolithic and Origins of Agriculture
Read:	Smith Ch 1; Wiesner-Hanks pp. 1-9; <i>Creation Stories</i> <i>Ehrenberg, "Who Invented Farming?"</i>
February 3	Mesopotamian Civilization
Read:	Smith Ch 2; Wiesner-Hanks pp. 10-19; <i>Egyptian Documents</i>
February 5	Egypt
Read:	Smith pp. 121-131 <i>Funerary Equipment</i> pages 1-5 ; <i>Dayr al Madinah</i> ; Wiesner-Hanks pp. 19-26; <i>Lockard, "Egyptian Society, Economy, Culture</i> <i>Brightspace discussion begins</i>
February 10	Ancient Middle East
Read:	Smith pp. 131-146, 190-192; <i>Propaganda in Ancient Near East</i> <i>Bullough et al, "Formation of Western Attitudes"</i> <i>Mendelsohn, "Slavery in Ancient Near East"</i>
February 12	Indus River Valley and Aryan Migrations
Read:	Smith pp. 81-102; Wiesner-Hanks pp. 27-40; <i>Rig Veda</i> ; <i>Indus River Civilization</i> ; <i>Upanishads and Mahabarata</i> <i>Davids, "Psalms of Buddhist Nuns"</i>
February 17	Yellow River Valley Civilization
Read:	Smith pp. 102-116, Wiesner-Hanks pp. 41-52; Liu 84-99; <i>Shang</i> ; <i>Anecdotes from Warring States Period</i>
February 19	Early Civilizations in the Americas
Read:	Smith pp. 246-267, 353-389, 463-467; Wiesner-Hanks pp. 136-148 <i>Brightspace discussion begins</i>
February 24	The Greek Polis
Read:	Smith pp. 147-157, 179-186; <i>On the Murder of Eratosthenes</i> <i>Pericles Funeral Oration</i> ; <i>Davidson, "Women and Boys in Athens"</i>
February 26	Alexander the Great and the Spread of Hellenism
Read:	Smith pp. 186-190; Wiesner-Hanks pp. 53-64; <i>Aristotle and Herodotus</i>
March 3	Roman Republic
Read:	Smith pp. 197-223; Wiesner-Hanks pp. 65-69; <i>Defense of Marcus Caelius Rufus</i> ; <i>How to write history papers</i> <i>Livy, "Roman Women Protest Oppian Law"</i>
March 5	Imperial Rome
Read:	Smith pp. 223-231; Wiesner-Hanks pp. 69-79; Liu pp. 51-83; <i>Dixon, "Roman Marriage"</i> <i>Tacitus on Legacy of Augustus</i> ; <i>First paper due</i>

March 10	Religion and Trade in the Ancient World
Read:	Smith 160-171; Liu pp. 1-33; <i>McLaughlin, "Silk Ties"</i> <i>Religion in Ancient World</i> ; <i>Trade in Ancient World</i>
March 12	Midterm Exam
March 17	Early African Empires: Kush, Meroe and Axum
Read:	Smith 128-133; <i>Piye, "Nubian Conquest of Egypt;"</i> <i>Stele of Azana</i> <i>Accounts of Meroe, Kush & Axum</i>
March 19	Byzantine Empire
Read:	Smith pp. 275-288, 294-295, 333-349; Wiesner-Hanks pp. 94-104; Liu pp. 120-132; <i>Egeria and St Augustine</i> ; <i>Justinian's Deeds</i> ; <i>Zacariah of Mitylene</i> ; <i>Gupta Empire</i> ;
March 24	No Class
March 26	No Class
March 31	China from Feudalism to Empire: Qin and Han Dynasties
Read:	Smith pp. 171-179; Wiesner-Hanks pp. 80-93; Liu pp. 37-50; <i>Fa-Hsien and Prince Toneri</i> ; <i>Pan Ku, "Regency of Empress Lu;"</i> <i>Lessons for Women</i> ; <i>Pei-Yi Wu, "Childhood Remembered"</i> <i>Family Instructions of Yan Clan</i> ;
April 2	Imperial China: Sui, Tang and Song Dynasties
Read:	Smith 315-333, 457-463; Wiesner-Hanks pp. 149-161; Liu pp. 133-143; <i>Widows Loyal Unto Death</i> ; <i>Early Vietnam and Korea</i> ; <i>Heian and Kamakura Japan</i> Brightspace discussion begins
April 7	Rise of Islam
Read:	Smith pp. 296-307, 443-457, 501-505; Wiesner-Hanks pp. 109-122; <i>Abraham bin Yiju</i> <i>Lockard, "Cultural Hallmarks of Islam"</i> ; <i>Delhi Sultanate</i>
April 9	The Mongols
Read:	Smith pp. 487-497; Wiesner-Hanks pp. 162-176; Liu pp. 100-119 <i>Mongol Contributions</i> ; <i>Mongol Trade part 1</i> ; <i>part 2</i> <i>Broadbridge, "Women, Children, Inheritance"</i> ; <i>Secret History of Mongols</i> ;
April 14	Ming China and Ottoman Empire
Read:	Smith 292-293, 497-501, 518-529, 534-536, 540-544, 464; Liu 144-151; <i>Keddie, "Past and Present"</i> <i>Chosun Korea and Ashikaga Sultanate</i>
April 16	Aztecs and Incas
Read:	Smith Ch 15; <i>Aztec Child Rearing</i> ; <i>On the Inca</i> Brightspace discussion begins

April 21	Medieval Africa
Read:	Smith pp. 235-245, 418-422; <i>Lockard, "Expanding Horizons in Africa"</i> ; <i>Ibn Batuta Travels</i> ; <i>Ibn Batuta on Mali</i> ;
April 23	Christian Ethiopia and the Swahili States
Read:	Wiesner-Hanks pp. 123-135; <i>Great Zimbabwe</i>
April 28	Carolingian Europe
Read:	Smith 288-292, 307-310; Wiesner-Hanks pp. 104-108, 177-180
April 30	Medieval Europe and the Crusades
Read:	Smith pp. 422-443, 471-486; Wiesner-Hanks pp. 177-186 <i>Crusades Documents</i> ; <i>McKay, "Europe in the Middle Ages"</i> ; <i>Herlihy, "Medieval Children"</i>
May 5	The European Renaissance
Read:	Smith pp. 509-517, 536-540; Wiesner-Hanks pp. 187-195; <i>Machiavelli Tuscan Peasant Memoir</i> ; <i>McKay, "The Renaissance"</i> ; <i>Rocke, "Gender and Sexual Culture"</i> ;
May 7	Trade and Exchange in the Medieval World
Read:	Smith 529-534; 394-418; Liu 152-169; <i>Zheng He Steele</i> Second paper due
May 14	Final Exam 9:40-11:30 AM

Instructions for Writing Assignments

Students in this course are required to do their own original work, hence **the use of artificial intelligence (AI) constitutes cheating and is strictly forbidden** because it is a computer, rather than the student, doing the assignment. **The minimum penalty for violating this policy is an F for the assignment, but in most cases students will also receive a failing grade for the course and will be reported to the Academic Misconduct Committee for possible additional penalties.**

While your papers will be graded primarily on content and the strength of your arguments, grammatical accuracy, style, presentation and organization will also be taken into account. As with a medical diagnosis, your arguments will be stronger if you can offer second opinions, hence your papers should, wherever possible, include supporting evidence drawn from more than one source. **All papers are required to adhere to the History Style Sheet** which is available in Brightspace and on my web site. Failure to follow the style sheet will result in significant penalties; these consist of at least the loss of a full letter grade for each category of violation (i.e. use of contractions will cost you a letter grade, reducing an A paper to a B). This includes paper length, non-standard fonts, margins and line spacing. Please note that a short paper is not necessarily a bad paper; I am primarily interested in what you have to say, how well you say it and if you have developed your thesis and argument sufficiently.

As you write your papers, you may paraphrase or quote suitable passages that illustrate your points. **However, if you do quote or paraphrase, you must cite the relevant passage. You must**

also cite detailed information (i.e. statistics or items that are not common knowledge). Proper citation formats can be found in the History Style Sheet. Please note that in addition to enforcing Buffalo State College's policies on academic misconduct, including the possible use of textual similarity detection software, **the minimum penalty for plagiarism is an F on the assignment.**² For more information on plagiarism, how to footnote, or how to write a research paper consult the relevant sections of Benjamin's *A Student's Guide to History*. If you are still unclear about when or how to cite please come see me during my office hours. That is why I am there.

For this class, **papers must be based solely on assigned readings.** If you wish to use outside materials, you must first obtain permission from me in advance. Since much of what is out on the internet is of dubious quality, **the use of web pages as source material is strictly forbidden** unless authorized by me in writing. The only exceptions to this rule are the individual web sites that I have assigned as required reading material. **Use of Wikipedia in particular is expressly forbidden.** On a similar note, **the use of encyclopedias is also forbidden.** While they may be useful reference tools or for providing an overview of a particular topic, encyclopedias have no place in college level work. Articles in historical encyclopedias (i.e. *The Encyclopedia of European Social History*) may be acceptable, but must first be cleared by me in writing.

I am obviously a firm believer in written assignments since they help develop your organizational, analytical and communication skills, all of which are things you will need in the workplace. Consequently, I expect you to treat all graded assignments (in this or any other class) as preparations for your future career. Turning in business reports that are filled with grammatical errors, failures in logic, poor argumentation and lack of evidence portrays a degree of incompetence, even if it is undeserved, and will probably get you fired. Get in the habit now of proofreading your work to catch typos, misspellings and nonsensical statements. Read your papers aloud to see how they sound. Better still, have a friend or roommate read your work since they are more likely to notice any problems. Most of you will be writing your papers on wordprocessors. No matter what program you use, they all have spell checkers. It is silly and self-defeating not to make use of them.

While I do not allow rewrites once papers have been graded, I will read and comment on rough drafts if I am given enough time. Alternatively, you may want to consult either the campus writing center or some of the history tutors for help or advice. Keep your notes and copies of your paper to facilitate rewrites and to safeguard against loss, computer errors, random destruction by pets and similar catastrophes. Finally, and most importantly, if you are having any problems in this course come see me.

Paper Instructions

All students will write two 5 page (1500 words) papers on topics to be assigned. As you will discover, 5 pages provides barely enough room to introduce a topic, let alone go into much detail. Hence, your papers should have a narrowly defined thesis and must be very selective in their use and presentation of supporting evidence or examples. Since these papers are so short, keep quotations to a minimum so that you have enough room to develop your own thoughts and arguments. To strengthen your argument(s) your papers should draw upon and cite specific historical examples as well as corroborating evidence drawn from more than one source. **In a bid to police the use of AI,**

²Buffalo State College, *Undergraduate Catalog 2025-2026*, [Academic Misconduct](#).

papers must be based exclusively on assigned course materials (lectures and readings); if you wish to use outside materials, you must first obtain written permission from me.

First Paper Topic (due March 5 at 11:00 AM)

Compare the institution of slavery in Mesopotamia, Ancient Israel and Egypt. How were slaves acquired and how were they treated? What protections, if any, did they have? How important were they to the economic development of each of these societies?

Second Paper Topic (due May 7 at 11:00 AM)

What political and social roles did monasteries play in medieval Asia and Europe? How does this compare to the madrasas of Islamic world? Why did local rulers sponsor monasteries, madrasas, and universities?