

**The Dawn of Civilization**  
**History E-10a/W**  
Autumn 2009

Harvard University Extension School  
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**Discussion Sessions:**  
Mondays 6:00–7:00 (Wilson)  
51 Brattle, rm. 121  
Tuesdays 6:00–7:00 (Goggin)  
51 Brattle, rm. 721  
Thursdays 6:00–7:00 (Gardner)  
51 Brattle, rm. 721

**Course Website:**

<<http://hudce7.harvard.edu/~ostrowski/dawnciv>>

**Course Goals:** To investigate ideas about world history to ca. A.D. 200, while reading critically, thinking logically, and questioning intelligently. To provide a method with which one might continue to study the artifacts of the human past and to encourage that study. As the philosopher of science Sir Karl Popper has written: “all teaching on the University level (and if possible below) should be training and encouragement in critical thinking.” In this course every fact, assertion, and interpretation about history is open to reconsideration. Merely accepting authority, invoking political considerations, or agreeing with the instructor is neither necessary nor sufficient for determining one’s own views. Such uncritical accepting, invoking, and agreeing are corrupting influences that tend to hinder the development of independent thinking. Ideas and arguments in this class will be accepted or rejected on the basis of three criteria: (1) logical coherence (i.e., no internal contradictions); (2) correspondence to external source testimony (i.e., no suppressed evidence); and (3) conceptual elegance (no unnecessary abstractions). For a fuller explanation, see my “Three Criteria of Historical Study” on the course web site

**Undergraduate Student Grading and Deadlines:**

	<i>draft</i>	<i>for grade</i>	<i>TPQN</i>
10% First Writing Assignment (see p. 7)	Sep 16	Sep 30	Oct 21
10% Mid-Term Quiz		Oct 7	
20% Second Writing Assignment (see p. 8)	Oct 14	Oct 28	Dec 9
30% Third Writing Assignment (see pp. 9–10)	Nov 12	Dec 2	Dec 16
30% Final Examination		Dec 16	

In the writing assignments you have a chance to demonstrate your conceptual thinking ability. The questions for the writing assignments are on this syllabus. Prepare and write the essays outside of

class and hand them in on the designated due dates. The first date is when you should hand in the draft (for comments, no grade) of each assignment. The second date is when you should hand in the revised version (for grade). The third date is the *terminus post quem non*, the date after which we will not accept any work on that assignment. You must hand in two versions of each writing assignment (a “draft” and a “revised” version) to receive a grade on that assignment.

### Graduate Student Grading and Deadlines

	<i>draft</i>	<i>revised</i>	<i>TPQN</i>
10% First Writing Assignment (see p. 7)	Sep 16	Sep 30	Oct 21
10% Mid-Term Quiz		Oct 7	
5% Proposal for Research Paper (see p. 10)	Oct 14	Oct 28	—
45% Research Paper (see p. 11)	Nov 12	Dec 2	Dec 16
30% Final Examination		Dec 16	

In the research papers you have a chance to demonstrate your conceptual thinking ability and develop your research skills. It will be up to you to develop your own research topic with the approval of the course assistant and instructor (see recommended topics on page 11). First, consult with your course assistant and/or the instructor about focusing on a topic. Then follow the guidelines in *A Guide to the ALM Thesis*, 6<sup>th</sup> ed., pp. 12–41. Prepare and write the proposals (3 pages or 750 words) and research papers outside of class and hand them in on the designated due dates (see pages 10–11 of this syllabus for further details). A proposal must be approved before we will accept the research paper itself. The first date is when you should hand in the draft (for comments, no grade) of each assignment. The second date is when you should hand in the revised version. The third date is the *terminus post quem non*, the date after which we will not accept any work on that assignment. Each research paper should be around 6500 words (approximately 25 pages) long, and you should use 12-point font. You must hand in two versions (“draft” and “revised”) of a proposal and two versions (“draft” and “revised”) of the research paper to receive a grade on that research paper.

### Definitions of “Draft” and “Revised” Versions:

The “draft” of a paper is defined as the first version handed in. The “revised” version of a paper is defined as the next version handed in that addresses the TA’s or instructor’s comments made on the “draft”.

### Note on Use and Citation of Sources:

The responsibility for learning the rules governing the proper use of sources lies with the individual student. In registering for a course, students agree to abide by the policies printed in the Extension School catalogue (p. 262), which contains brief descriptions of plagiarism, cheating, and computer network abuse. Ignoring these policies may have unpleasant consequences. You will find an excellent introduction to proper citation in Gordon Harvey’s *Writing with Sources: A Guide for Harvard Students* (Indianapolis: Hackett, 1998), which is available at the Harvard Coop and online at <http://www.fas.harvard.edu/~expos/sources>.

### Examinations:

The questions on the mid-term quiz and final exam will test your knowledge and thinking ability. Both tests will be given in the classroom. The mid-term quiz will take up the first half-hour of the class period on October 7. The rest of that class period will be a lecture. You will handed a take-home exam on December 16. I will hand out sample questions for each exam.

## Required Reading:

These are the recommended editions for this class. I ordered these editions with two considerations in mind: (1) quality of the edition and (2) cost.

### Textbooks for Both Undergraduates and Graduate Students

(each of these textbooks will also be used in the spring 2010 course):

- \* Peter N. Stearns, Michael Adas, Stuart B. Schwartz, and Marc Jason Gilbert, *World Civilizations: The Global Experience*, vol. 1: *To 1700*, 5th ed. (New York: Longman, 2007).  
World history textbook for the course
- \* Alfred J. Andrea and James H. Overfield, *The Human Record: Sources of Global History*, vol. 1: *To 1700*, 6<sup>th</sup> ed. (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 2009).  
Selections from primary sources
- \* *Sources of the Western Tradition*, ed. Marvin Perry, Joseph R. Peden, Theodore H. Von Laue, 7<sup>th</sup> ed., Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 2008, vol. 1: *From Ancient Times to the Enlightenment*.  
Selections from primary sources
- # *Primary Sources Supplement*, vol. 1: *To 1750*, ed. Donald Ostrowski, Minneapolis/St. Paul, West Publishing, 1995 (PSS) <<http://hudce7.harvard.edu/~ostrowski/dawnciv/upshur1.pdf>>.

### In addition, graduates students will be using the following text in both the fall and spring semesters:

- \* *Discovering the Global Past: A Look at the Evidence*, vol. 1: *To 1650*, 3<sup>rd</sup> ed., edited by Merry E. Wiesner, William Bruce W. Wheeler, Franklin M. Doeringer, and Kenneth R. Curtis. Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 2006.

### Major Works for Both Undergraduates and Graduate Students

(these works are specific to the fall 2009 semester only):

- \* # *The Epic of Gilgamesh*, trans. Maureen Gallery Kovacs, Stanford University Press, 1989. ISBN 0-8047-1711-7 <<http://www.ancienttexts.org/library/mesopotamian/gilgamesh>>
- \* # *The Holy Bible: Revised Standard Version*, e-text available from the Electronic Texts Center, University of Virginia <<http://quod.lib.umich.edu/r/rsv/browse.html>>.
- \* Walpola Rahula, *What the Buddha Taught*, rev. ed., New York: Grove Weidenfeld, 1986.
- \* # *The Analects of Confucius*, trans. Arthur Waley, Vintage Books, 1989. ISBN 0-679-72296 <<http://www.confucius.org/lunyu/lange.htm>>
- \* # Plato, *The Republic*, 2nd ed., trans. Desmond Lee, Penguin, 1987. ISBN 0-14-044048-8 <<http://classics.mit.edu/Plato/republic.html>>
- \* # *The Bhagavad-Gita: Krishna's Counsel in Time of War*, trans. Barbara Stoler Miller. Bantam, 1986. ISBN 0-553-21365-2 <<http://www.theosociety.org/pasadena/gita/bg-eg-hp.htm>>
- \* # *The Edicts of King Asoka*, edited and translated by Ven S. Dhammika. Berkeley, CA: Buddhist Publication Society, 1993. <<http://www.cs.colostate.edu/~malaiya/ashoka.html#>>

\* = Available for purchase from on-line bookstores

# = Downloadable text available on-line (URL provided)

Date	Lectures	Readings
<i>A. Introduction</i>		
Sept 2	1. Historical Methods and Approaches: The Historical Past and Virtual Pasts	<i>Website</i> : “Three Criteria of Historical Study”
	2. Big History, the Universe, and When It All Begin Video: Carl Sagan, “Cosmos,” no. 10: <i>The Edge of Forever</i>	none
<i>B. Origins of Civilization</i>		
Sept 9	1. “What Happened in History?” or Grand Theories in Search of Reality Video: James Burke, “The Day the Universe Changed,” no. 10: <i>World within Worlds</i>	Stearns 4–28 Andrea P-1–P-18
	2. From Egalitarian to Patriarchal Society: Agriculture and the Origins of Civilization Video: Jacob Bronowski, “The Ascent of Man,” no. 2: <i>The Harvest of the Seasons</i> (pt. 1)	Stearns 30–45 # <i>Gilgamesh</i> Perry 3–12, 19–25 Andrea 1–7, 13–17 <i>Website</i> : Hammurabi cf. Wiesner, chap. 1
Sept 16	3. The Two Lands of the Nile and the Origins of One God Video: Abba Ebban, “Heritage: Civilization and the Jews,” no. 1: <i>A People Is Born</i> <b>DRAFT OF FIRST WRITING ASSIGNMENT DUE</b> (undergrads) <b>DRAFT OF FIRST WRITING ASSIGNMENT DUE</b> (grad students)	Stearns 58–80 <i>Website</i> : Akhenaton # <i>Genesis</i> Perry 13–19 Andrea 17–23, 37–39 # <i>PSS</i> 7–9 cf. Wiesner, chap. 3
Sept 23	4. The Hebrews and Their Covenant with God Video: Abba Ebban, “Heritage: Civilization and the Jews,” no. 2: <i>The Power of the Word</i>	Stearns 45–57, 156–179 # <i>Exodus</i> <i>Website</i> : David Perry 26–28, 31–32, 35–36 38–44, 95–99 Andrea 51–53, 56–60, 76–83, 188–192 cf. Wiesner, chap. 2

Sept 30	<p>5. Buddhism: Extinguishing the Flame of Desire  Video: Ronald Eyre, “The Long Search,”  no. 3: <i>Buddhism: Footprint of the Buddha—India</i>  <b>FIRST WRITING ASSIGNMENT DUE FOR GRADE</b> (undergrads)  <b>FIRST WRITING ASSIGNMENT DUE FOR GRADE</b> (grad students)</p>	<p>Stearns 219–224  <i>Website</i>: Buddha  Rahula 91–138  Andrea 70–76, 166–170  cf. Wiesner, chap. 5</p>
<b>Oct 7 5:30–6:00: Mid-Term Quiz</b> (20 multiple-choice questions)		
6:00–7:25:	<p>6. Nomads: Sophisticated Cultures on the Move  Video: Jacob Bronowski, “The Ascent of Man,”  no. 2: <i>The Harvest of the Seasons</i> (pt. 2)</p>	<p><i>Website</i>: Nomadic Challenges  # <i>Analects</i> (1st half)</p>
Oct 14	<p>7. Confucianism: The Leader as Role Model  Video: “Lost Civilizations,” no. 6: <i>China: Dynasties of Power</i> (cc)  <b>DRAFT OF SECOND WRITING ASSIGNMENT DUE</b> (undergrads)  <b>DRAFT OF RESEARCH PROPOSAL PAPER DUE</b> (grad students)</p>	<p>Stearns 108–131, 180–204  <i>Website</i>: Confucius  # <i>Analects</i> (2nd half)  Andrea 24–32, 84–90,  96–102, 139–149  cf. Wiesner, chap. 4</p>
<i>C. Indo-European Cultural Connections</i>		
Oct 21	<p>1. Ancient Athens: Intellectual, Artistic, and  Commercial Achievement  Video: “Great Cities of the Ancient World”: <i>Life, Times  and Wonder of Athens and Ancient Greece</i>  <b>Terminus post quem non for Revisions of First Essay</b> (undergrads)  <b>Terminus post quem non for Revisions of First Essay</b> (grad students)</p>	<p>Stearns 230–240, 245–256  <i>Website</i>: Sappho; Socrates  # <i>Republic</i> (1st half)  Andrea 46–50, 102–119  Perry 45–81, 87–95  cf. Wiesner, chap. 3</p>
Oct 28	<p>2. Alexander the Great and the Legacy of Hellenism  Video: “Archaeology,” no. 1: <i>Who Was Cleopatra?</i> (cc)  <b>SECOND WRITING ASSIGNMENT DUE FOR GRADE</b> (undergrads)  <b>REVISION OF RESEARCH PROPOSAL DUE</b> (grad students)</p>	<p>Stearns 240–245  <i>Website</i>: Alexander  # <i>Republic</i> (2nd half)  Perry 95–98  Andrea 119–130</p>
Nov 4	<p>3. God Dreaming: The Origins and Early  Development of Hindu Culture  Video: Ronald Eyre, “The Long Search,”  no. 2: <i>Hinduism: 330 Million Gods</i></p>	<p>Stearns 86–106, 206–218, 224–229  <i>Website</i>: Asoka  # <i>Bhagavad-Gita</i>  Andrea 34–37, 40–46,  61–67, 150–166, 185–187  # <i>PSS</i> 10–13</p>

# *Edicts of Asoka*  
cf. Wiesner, chap. 2

Nov 11 Veterans Day

Nov 12: **DRAFT OF THIRD WRITING ASSIGNMENT DUE** (undergrads)  
**DRAFT OF RESEARCH PAPER DUE** (grad students)

Nov 18 4. Bread and Circuses: The Rise and Fall of the Roman Republic  
Video: “Lost Civilizations,” no. 7: *Rome: The Ultimate Empire* (cc) Andrea 130–139  
Stearns 258–277  
*Website: Cleopatra Perry* 100–123  
cf. Wiesner, chap. 4

Nov 25 Thanksgiving Day Break

Dec 2 5. The Origins of Christianity and the Early Roman Empire  
Video: *The Synoptic Problem*  
**THIRD WRITING ASSIGNMENT DUE FOR GRADE** (undergrads)  
**REVISION OF RESEARCH PAPER DUE** (grad students)  
Stearns 277–284  
# *Gospel of Mark Perry* 124–140, 143–148, 159–168, 174–180  
Andrea 203–208, 224–228  
# *PSS* 31–35

Dec 9 6. The Dead Sea Scrolls in Relation to Judaism and Christianity  
Video: “Nova”: *Dead Sea Scrolls*  
**Terminus post quem non for Revisions of Second Essay** (undergrads)  
Stearns 286–302  
# *Gospels of Luke and Matthew*  
Andrea 200–203

#### D. *Core Cultures on Other Continents*

Dec 16 1. Africa: Kingdom of Kush and Civilization of the Bow  
Video: Basil Davidson, “Africa,” no. 2: *Mastering a Continent*  
Stearns 80–85  
Andrea 32–33

2. Core Cultures of the Pacific Rim: Japan and North and South America  
Stearns 132–137, 145–155  
**Terminus post quem non for Revision of Third Essay** (undergrads)  
**Terminus post quem non for Revision of Research Paper** (grad students)

**Final Examination** (take-home)

**First Writing Assignment**  
(2½ pages) (625 words) (10% of final grade)

On the course web site are three sets of readings: one on Hammurabi, one on Akhenaton and one on David. Each of these sets includes a primary source and two historians' interpretations on the topic. Pick one of the sets—either on Hammurabi or on Akhenaton or on David—then follow these instructions.

You are to write two-and-one-half (2½) pages, which will contain a total of five (5) double-spaced paragraphs—two on the first page, two on the second, and one on the third. The first paragraph will be an introduction (which you may want to write last). This introductory paragraph provides some orientation to the reader for what follows and a statement of the main theme of your essay. The next three paragraphs are to be brief summaries of each major section within the set you have chosen. Thus, for the Hammurabi set of readings, you will write one paragraph summarizing the selection from the primary source, the *Code of Hammurabi*, one paragraph summarizing the selection from the historian James H. Breasted, and one paragraph summarizing the selection from the historian Sabatino Moscati. If you choose the Akhenaton set of readings, write one paragraph summarizing the primary source, *A Hymn to Aton*, one paragraph summarizing the selection from the historian James H. Breasted, and one paragraph summarizing the selection from the historian Donald B. Redford. If you choose the David set of readings, you will write one paragraph summarizing the selections from the Bible, one paragraph summarizing the selection from the historian Henri Frankfurt, and one paragraph summarizing the selection from the archaeologist Kathleen Kenyon. The wording in your summaries should be as neutral as you can make it—no editorializing and no value judgments either explicit or implicit. These paragraphs are your presentation of the evidence. Present the evidence fairly.

In your fifth paragraph, you will briefly recapitulate your main theme and point out evidence from the summary paragraphs that relate to this theme. Briefly give your own opinion about the set of readings you have just summarized. Ideally, whatever you mention in the fifth paragraph, you should have previously referred to in one of the first four paragraphs. Make sure there is some correlation between your first (introductory) paragraph and your fifth (concluding) paragraph.

This exercise is meant to fulfill two purposes: (1) to allow you to demonstrate that you know the difference between presentation of evidence, on the one hand, and analysis and interpretation, on the other; and (2) to give you practice in succinct summarizing and characterization of what you have read.

## Second Undergraduate Writing Assignment (5 pages) (1250 words) (20% of final grade)

Choose one (1) of the following major works that you are reading for this course.

*Gilgamesh*

*Genesis and Exodus*

*Buddha's Sermons*

*The Analects of Confucius*

Write a critique (**not** a book review) of the work or some aspect of the work. A critique involves analyzing the work or some part of the work in a logical manner. You can focus on the internal structure of the work either in terms of outlook, message, bias, or some other aspect of the work you consider significant. You can compare the various parts of the work to each other in this respect. Your analysis should involve the use of a logical argument (see below). You can then interpret your analysis of the evidence by stating what you think it means. Place your analysis in a historical context by relating your findings, whenever you can, to the lectures, videos, discussions, and other readings in the course. Thus, the framework of your essay will look something like this:

1. Introduction (describe the focus of your essay)
2. Presentation of evidence (summary of important points)
3. Your analysis of the evidence (logical argument)
4. Your interpretation (historical context)
5. Conclusion (recapitulation of theme)

You may modify this framework if you have a good reason to do so, but, for the most part, the general outline of your essay should follow it. This exercise is meant to focus on the development of a logical argument based on the evidence. **In contrast to the 1<sup>st</sup> assignment, straight summary should be kept to a minimum in this assignment.**

### *Formulating a Logical Argument*

A logical argument is a chain of reasoning, such that if the premises are accepted, then the conclusion must be accepted. An example of a chain of reasoning formulated in the early fifth century A.D. follows. It is from Augustine's *Confessions* and is an argument against astrology:

I turned my attention to the case of twins, who are generally born within a short time of each other. Whatever significance in the natural order the astrologers may attribute to this interval of time, it is too short to be appreciated by human observation and no allowance can be made for it in the charts what an astrologer has to consult in order to cast a true horoscope. His predictions, then, will not be true, because he would have consulted the same charts for both Esau and Jacob and would have made the same predictions for each of them, whereas it is a fact that the same things did not happen to them both. Therefore, either he would have been wrong in his predictions or, if his forecast was correct, then he would not have predicted the same future for each. And yet he would have consulted the same chart in each case. This proves that, if he had foretold the truth, then it would have been by luck, not by skill.

The outward signs of a logical argument can include “if..., then...” phrases, and words like “therefore” and “thus.” Sometimes these words and phrases are only implicit. Other times, these words and phrases are used even when there is no logical argument. In the passage above, Augustine uses two “if..., then...” constructions and one “[t]herefore.” The point is, unless the argument is a fallacious one and, therefore, not logical, the only way to avoid acceptance of the conclusion is to attack the premises or dispute the evidence used.



### Third Undergraduate Writing Assignment (8 pages) (2000 words) (30% of final grade)

Since the Second Writing Assignment, you have read the four following major works:

*The Republic of Plato*  
*Bhagavad-Gita*

*The Edicts of King Asoka*  
*Synoptic Gospels*

That makes a total of eight that you have read since the beginning of the course. Choose two (2) of the eight major works that you have read for this class, **excluding** the one that you wrote about in your Second Writing Assignment. Compare and analyze them in terms of outlook, focus, message, biases, or some other aspect you consider significant. In your comparison of the two works, you will want to make a point-by-point analysis rather than presenting the evidence of one, then the evidence of the other. This means you will have to think about which points you consider most important for comparison purposes. The next step is to interpret what you have just analyzed by saying what you think it means. Then, as with the Second Writing Assignment, place your analysis and interpretation in a historical context by relating your findings, whenever you can, to the lectures, videos, discussions, and other readings in the course. Thus, the framework of your essay will look something like this:

1. Introduction (describe the focus of your essay)
2. Point-by-point presentation of aspects of the two major works (summary of important points)
3. Your analysis of the evidence (logical argument)
4. Your interpretation (historical context)
5. Conclusion (recapitulation of theme)

You may modify this framework if you have a good reason to do so, but, for the most part, the general outline of your essay should follow it. This exercise is meant to focus on the construction of an interpretation based on a logical argument of the evidence.

#### *Constructing an Interpretation*

Your assignment is to construct an interpretation to explain a set of primary source evidence. You might, for example, begin your essay by analyzing the points of view of the authors of the chosen books. You could then present your own point of view on an aspect or aspects of world history. An interpretation is an explanation of something. While it can involve use of, and be based on, logical argument, it goes beyond the argument itself to try to elucidate why something is the way it is. An interpretation in historical study can take the form of a narrative or analysis, but it should, in any case, fulfill the requirements of a hypothesis that can be tested against the evidence, with more research.

An example of an analytical interpretation follows. It is taken from Garrett Mattingly, *The Armada* (p. 397), in which Mattingly explains what is and what is not significant about the defeat of the Spanish Armada in 1588 at the hands of the English:

Historians agree that the defeat of the Spanish Armada was a decisive battle, in fact one of the Decisive Battles of the World, but there is much less agreement as to what it decided. It certainly did not decide the issue of the war between England and Spain. Though no fleet opposed Drake, ... the war dragged itself out for nearly fourteen years more ... and ended in no better than a draw. Some

historians say that the defeat of the Armada “marked the decline of the Spanish colonial empire and the rise of the British.” It is hard to see why they think so. By 1603, Spain had not lost to the English a single overseas outpost, while the English colonization of Virginia had been postponed for the duration. Nor did the Armada campaign “transfer the command of the sea from Spain to England.” English sea power in the Atlantic had usually been superior to the combined strengths of Castile and Portugal, and so it continued to be, but after 1588 the margin of superiority diminished. The defeat of the Armada was not so much the end as the beginning of the Spanish navy.

Mattingly characterizes his interpretation in the last line and presents this explanation as a way of understanding the evidence and the logical surmises we make from that evidence. The statement that the Armada represented the beginning of the Spanish navy is also a hypothesis that can be tested against the evidence.

### **Graduate Research Proposal**

(3 pages) (750 words) (5% of final grade)

In your proposal, which should be 3 pages long, you need to indicate a tentative title for your research paper. Then devote a paragraph to each of the following points:

1. General introduction to the topic
2. Description of research question(s)
3. Description of tentative answer (hypothesis)
4. Types of sources you plan to use to test your hypothesis
5. Broader implications of your research

Include a working bibliography with works cited, works consulted (with a one-line annotation), and works to be consulted.

For format style, use either the *Chicago Manual of Style* or the *MLA Handbook for Writers of Research Papers*. You may also find *A Guide to the ALM Thesis*, 6<sup>th</sup> ed. (available on-line at <http://www.extension.harvard.edu/2004-05/libarts/alm/reqs/thesis.jsp#resources>) useful.

**Graduate Research Paper**  
(25 pages) (6500 words) (45% of final grade)

In your research paper, follow the standard format for an expository essay. State your hypothesis up front. Provide a roadmap for the reader to show how you will present the results of your research. Then close with a conclusion that recapitulates your hypothesis and any modifications that you have made in it along the way. You may choose to research further an aspect of one of the following controversies that will be discussed in the lectures:

- The nature of historical study
- Piltdown hoax: who did it?
- The Bible as historical source
- Diffusion and development of material culture in ancient China
- Harappan civilization: the Aryan vs. Dravidian controversy
- Buddhist scholarship: is Enlightenment gradual or does it occur suddenly?
- Origins of Greek thought: the Bernal theory
- Dead Sea Scrolls issues

Or you may choose one of the topics from *Discovering the Global Past* to develop further:

- “The Need for Water in Ancient Societies”
- “Writing and Power: Defining World-Views”
- “Representing the Human Form”
- “Han and Rome: Asserting Imperial Authority”

Another possible topic concerns Big History and the various attempts to encompass it:

- Chaisson, Eric J. *Cosmic Evolution: The Rise of Complexity in Nature*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University, 2001.
- Christian, David. *Maps of Time: An Introduction to Big History*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 2004.
- McNeill, J. R. and William H. McNeill. *The Human Web: A Bird's-Eye View of World History*. New York: W. W. Norton, 2003.
- Spier, Fred. *The Structure of Big History: From the Big Bang until Today*. Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 1996.
- Spier Fred. “How Big History Works: Energy Flows and the Rise and Demise of Complexity,” *Social Evolution and History* 4, no. 1 (2005): 87–135.

For a description of what Big History is and for further bibliography, check the University of Amsterdam's web site: <<http://www.iis.uva.nl/english/object.cfm?objectID=21E38086-9EAF-4BB2-A3327D5C1011F7CC>>.

Or you may pick a topic or topics of your own with the approval of your course assistant or the instructor.

## *Ground Rules*

This syllabus is a statement of intent and not a legal contract. As such, I reserve the right to change or modify it, but changes or modifications will be done only with fair warning.

At the Extension School, Harvard University standards apply across the board for courses, including amount of reading assigned and in the grading of papers and exams. This course is no exception and is meant to be challenging. We will do what we can to accommodate individual needs, but on no account will we allow standards to be compromised.

The course is writing intensive, which means you will have a chance to practice your writing skills and receive comments on your essays more than in the usual history course. It does not mean that we guarantee to make you a better writer, nor will you be evaluated on your writing skills, except insofar as lack of such skills negatively affects the articulation of your ideas. Becoming a better writer, just like learning in general, is up to you. The world of learning is open to you and the process is never ending. One of the aims of this course is to provide you a means to continue studying history on your own after the course is over. We will do our best to assist you in the learning process, but in the end what you get out of the course is mainly up to you.

There are fourteen 2-hour classes in this course. Even if I wanted to I could not possibly cover all of world history during class time. What I can do is select certain topics and go into a little more depth than the readings provide. One of the aims of this course is to inspire you to investigate aspects of world history on your own. I will try to provide you some indication of what to look for and how to orient yourself when undertaking that further investigation. I firmly believe that every person benefits from learning to be their own historian. As a result, the human community benefits as well. For that to happen, however, you must not uncritically and unquestioningly adopt someone else's interpretations, but instead you must think things through for yourself and come to your own conclusions. That is why I place so much emphasis on method, as opposed to so-called "facts." Facts as such are not given but are frequently the result of some historian's (biased) interpretation and (faulty) argument. It is up to you to spot the biases and fallacies and to ascertain the evidence for yourself.

Since the time is limited, I cannot engage in extended class discussions while giving the lecture. I do encourage you to ask questions in terms of points of clarification and contributing to general understanding. If you have a point or points of dispute with something in the lecture (that is, you understand what I am saying but you do not agree with it), I am more than willing to discuss the issues with you outside class. But class time is short and we should all try to use it efficiently. Besides, you can always bring these questions up in discussion section.

Give us *one week* to grade your assignment. We would prefer that you not ask special favors in terms of getting your paper back in less time. You may, however, hand in your assignments earlier than the deadlines. We will mark the drafts with a ✓-, ✓, or ✓+. The ✓- means a total rewrite is necessary and you should talk with your teaching assistant about it. A ✓ means you are headed in the right direction but substantial changes are required. A ✓+ means your essay is almost there in terms of getting a good grade. It does not, however, guarantee an A on the next version. If you choose not to hand in a revised version after you have done the draft, we will count the assignment as incomplete and will enter the following equivalent grades for computation of your final course grade: ✓- = E; ✓ = D; ✓+ = C. Please consider this as an incentive to complete the assignments.

**Movie Schedule Fall 2009**  
**The Dawn of Civilization**  
 (All films showings begin at 7:50 p.m. in Science Center E)

<i>Date</i>	<i>Film</i>	<i>Lecture</i>
September 2	<i>Jurassic Park</i> (1993) [127 min.]	Early Life
September 9	<i>Quest for Fire</i> (1981) [100 min]	Early Man
September 16	<i>The Egyptian</i> (1954) [139 min.]	Ancient Egypt
September 23	<i>David and Bathsheba</i> (1951) [116 min.]	The Hebrews
September 30	<i>Little Buddha</i> (1993) [121 min.]	Origins of Buddhism
October 7	<i>Grass: A Nation's Battle for Life</i> (1925) [71 min]	Nomads
October 14	<i>The Emperor's Shadow</i> (1996) [116 min.]	Ancient China
October 21	<i>Helen of Troy</i> (1956) [118 min.]	Ancient Greece
October 28	<i>Alexander the Great</i> (1956) [141 min.]	Hellenic Greece
November 4	<i>Asoka</i> (2001) [155 min.]	India
November 18	<i>Cleopatra</i> (1934) [100 min.]	Roman Republic
December 2	<i>Quo Vadis?</i> (1951) [171 min.]	Early Roman Empire
December 9	<i>Gospel according to Matthew</i> (1964) [136 min.]	Relation of Christianity to Judaism
December 16	<i>Whale Rider</i> (2002) [101 min]	Other Continents

\*All showings begin at 7:50 p.m. in Science Center E. I selected films on the basis of three criteria: relevance for that week's lecture; quality of treatment of the historical topic; and length of running time (the longest film is 2 hours 51 minutes, but most are around 2 hours long). Viewing the films is entirely optional, and you need not attend the showing after class. Almost all of these are available on video tapes or DVDs that can be rented or bought.