

HI 103- sections 19-22

World History to 1500

Fall 2025

Course Description:

HIS 103 forms part of VMI's core curriculum, taught to all first-year students, which introduces students to the history of humanity and human endeavor on a global scale, beginning with pre-history and the rise of civilization. Together, we will study the world's major civilizations before 1500, concentrating on their primary values and institutions, and their cultural contacts with particular attention devoted to the Middle East, China, India, the Mediterranean world, and Western Europe.

We will focus on the social, cultural, economic, and political developments that allowed societies to develop and thrive throughout the world from prehistory to 1500. This semester, we will examine and compare a variety of political systems that arose globally in the ancient, medieval, and early modern world. The rise of major world religions, such as Buddhism and Hinduism in the East, and Judaism, Christianity, and Islam in the West, will be another primary focus.

Learning how to examine and interpret primary sources as a path towards a better understanding of human history will serve as a key focus. By engaging with these documents and seeking to understand global civilizations better, students will develop critical thinking skills and an enriched appreciation of global cultures. The goal here is to help you build your reading, writing, and analytical skills through discussions, lectures, readings, and written assignments this semester.

Course Objectives:

Students who complete HI 103 and 104 will:

Demonstrate an understanding of the role of the United States and other major powers in the process of globalization.

Demonstrate an understanding of how history influences the way societies define themselves geopolitically.

Demonstrate an understanding of the classical background and modern emergence of democratic principles, their incorporation into foundational documents such as the United States Constitution, and the establishment of governments based on those principles.

Demonstrate an understanding of the historical relationships between militaries and the states they are formed to protect, including the modern ideal of the "citizen soldier."

Demonstrate an understanding of world cultures and their distinguishing components and practices.

Required Readings:

Textbook: Jerry Bentley, et. al., Traditions & Encounters: A Global Perspective on the Past, McGraw Hill, 9781259912429. **Recommended not required**

Additional Readings:**

Ibn Fadl■n, Ibn Fadl■n and the Land of Darkness: Arab Travelers in the Far North, Penguin Classics, 9780140455076.

C.W.R.D. Moseley, The Travels of Sir John Mandeville, Penguin Classics, 9780141441436.

**Please get the exact version listed above. I have tried to find texts that have a clear translation and are as inexpensive as possible. Failure to get the required version will result in a deduction on your essays. **

Course Requirements:

This course relies on lecture and discussions. The tentative plan is to lecture on Mondays and Wednesdays, while Fridays will focus on discussing the reading assignments. I encourage questions and feedback as we learn best when we learn together. Each of us comes to the class with various backgrounds and interests, so I hope you will learn with me this semester.

Course Assignments:

Exams:

There will be two fifty-minute exams this semester worth 300 points. Each exam will have a multiple-choice section worth 60 points, and an essay portion worth 90 points. Each exam will also have a map component as part of the short answer section. Your essays should have a thesis statement, supported by evidence, and a conclusion. While I do not require a certain length, it would be impossible to cover the question in fewer than four paragraphs. The most important part is to answer the question(s) comprehensively, with as much specific evidence as possible.

Final Exam:

The final exam is a crucial element of this course, and this has a unique format. It has a non-comprehensive section and a comprehensive section for 200 points. The test has five parts:

50 points: multiple choice/fill-in-the-blank/true and false questions on material covered throughout the course.

25 points: multiple choice/fill-in-the-blank/true and false questions on material covered in the last third of the class.

25 points: essay on a topic from the last third of the class

100 points: essay on a comprehensive topic

Quizzes and Homework Assignments:

There will be fifteen quizzes or homework assignments this semester. These will take various forms, but they ensure you are following the material. Each assignment is worth 10 points for 150. Some of these may require work outside of class to prepare you for lectures or exams. Please check the modules page frequently for assignments.

Essays:

You will have two essays this semester based on the two supplemental books listed above. Each paper should be between 1,000-1,500 words. Make sure you include the word count. I will provide topics on which you should concentrate while reading the book and answer in your paper. The content is the most significant aspect of the essay, but I will also grade based on grammar and structure. Please see the late paper policy below and submit these essays on time.

You must remain aware of and avoid plagiarism, which is the use of someone else's words, ideas, or research as your own. This represents a first-degree academic offense. Any plagiarized paper will cause the failure of the assignment, and I will report such cases for academic discipline.

Please do NOT use outside sources (including anything from the internet) to aid you in drafting your essay. You should have enough material between the book and our class discussions to write these papers. This assignment has you form your conclusions about the questions posed. Anything else lessens the educational experience of the assignment. I will refuse to grade anything that uses outside sources in any form.

All material taken from an assigned book, whether you use a direct quote or paraphrase, must have citations. You must, at a minimum, show the page numbers next to the material you took directly out of the assigned book or the textbook, whether in quotes. Citations without page numbers are invalid. As historians, plagiarism is one of the greatest sins of our profession, and a paper without citations represents nothing more than opinion, and I will not accept that essay.

****Please also note that when you are using a direct quote from the source material, you must copy it exactly as it appears. Any deviation from this violates the basic tenants of academic honesty. I will deduct ten points if I notice this issue in your paper. Watch out for autocorrect!****

Please note the information below on the departmental policy concerning citations and World History:

CITATIONS IN HISTORICAL WRITING

Historical writing almost always includes citations—that is, references to the specific pages of books, articles, documents, etc. to which the author is referring. In World History HI 103/104, YOU are the author in question and we, the teaching faculty take very seriously our responsibility to help you develop the habit of citing materials properly. Here at VMI, there are two reasons for this. First, it is simply a standard part of the discipline. Historians routinely support their summaries and interpretations by referring their readers to specific evidence, in specific locations. Failure to do so is, at a minimum, sloppy, unpersuasive writing. A far more serious situation arises when authors try to pass off someone else's words or ideas as their own. This is usually done by using words or phrases or ideas from a source without citing the source. This is called plagiarism. It is dishonest and violates the VMI Honor Code.

We take this issue so seriously that the following rules will be applied to all papers assigned in HI 103/104:

Unless your faculty member specifically informs you otherwise in writing, any paper submitted without citations, or with grossly inadequate citations, will be deemed as not meeting minimal standards of completion.

At your teacher's discretion, you may receive a zero as your grade for such a submission, or the paper may be returned to you with guidance for rectifying the problem.

If a paper is returned to you to provide satisfactory citations, the paper will be considered late and penalized in accordance with course guidelines until the matter is rectified and a satisfactory paper is submitted.

The format for citations is your teacher's choice. Only your teacher will determine if you have made an adequate attempt at providing appropriate citations.

Bear in mind these last two points:

At the end of the semester, it is highly unlikely that there will be time to redo papers. Do not assume you will have such an opportunity unless your teacher tells you otherwise.

Most of the above is designed to deal with sloppy, academically negligent production of papers. If, on the other hand, your teacher feels that you are engaging in academic dishonesty, the matter will be dealt with in accordance with the VMI Honor Code and the "Work For Grade" Policy found in Academic Regulations

Preparation and Engagement

I understand being shy as I am very introverted, and I had to struggle to overcome my fear of speaking in public. You will notice that when I get nervous, I use "um" or "sort of" way more than I should. This semester, I am looking for evidence that you are prepared to discuss the readings, that you ask questions when you are confused, and that you seek meetings with me to discuss your progress. This is my promise to you: I will never criticize you for the ideas you share, but I will challenge you to think critically about what you believe and why you believe it. Throughout the semester, I will give in-class assignments to ensure that you have completed the assigned reading. If you do not demonstrate that you have done the weekly reading, I reserve the right to ask you to leave class for the day, forfeiting all points for that week's

assignments. You should make one thoughtful contribution per discussion session.

Attendance is crucial for your success, and it will also factor into your grade. Cadets absenting themselves from a scheduled test because of athletic events, scheduled guard duty, or other VMI mandated reasons must discuss their expected absence with me in advance to arrange an alternative test date. This also applies to deadlines for all written work. The 30% rule is in effect for this course, so if you miss thirteen classes (excused or unexcused), you cannot pass this course. I will give you a warning at 20%.

**If you miss a Friday class for guard or athletic events, you should email three questions and five observations regarding the reading before class. This will count as your participation credit for the day. You must schedule your quiz makeup before the CAD on the next class day (so Monday by 1600). **

Student Behavioral Standards:

You may not eat in the classroom. However, drinks are okay.

Please do not leave to go to the restroom unless it is an absolute emergency. If you are gone for longer than fifteen minutes, I will ask the section marcher to recall roll.

You may use laptops in class. You should only use your laptops to take notes.

We will treat each other with respect and professionalism in all interactions.

For upperclassmen, no cell phones visible during class. Your phones should be off and put away. You will lose participation points if they ring during class, or if I see you using a phone.

Grading:

Late Submissions:

The late penalty for all assignments is ten points per twenty-four-hour period. You can find the due dates on Canvas. I cannot accept any work after 1600 on the last day of class.

Extra Credit:

I will allow you to do two extra credit assignments this semester for ten points. We are lucky enough to bring in several speakers every semester, discussing a variety of topics. If you attend one of these speakers (please clear it with me first), and then share your notes and a 200-word analytical summary of the presentation, I will give you five points. You can do this twice. If you cannot attend these events for a valid reason, please talk to me about an alternative.

Meetings with me:

This might be the most vital component of your success this semester. You can reach me at almost any time via email. I respond to these within 24 hours M-F, and 48 hours on weekends. I will also hold office hours as listed above. I treat office hours as an informal drop-by rather than scheduled times. My plan is to be on Post MWF. I will work from home on T/Th, and I will be happy to chat via Zoom on those days if you cannot make the formal office hours.

VMI History Department Statement on Generative AI and Outside Resources

Language regarding outside sources and resources

The following statements apply to ALL assignments, assessments, and activities contained within the entirety of our course and listed in this syllabus:

All student work should ONLY draw on the resources, readings, and materials specifically listed and/or referenced within the prompt specific to each assignment.

Students should NOT access any resources beyond those explicitly designated within the assignment prompts provided.

Students should NOT use any outside readings, summaries, explanations, software, applications, or other instruments not explicitly approved by the instructor for a specific assignment (including but not limited to artificial intelligence-generated summaries or descriptions of the works, papers or assignments created by generative platforms, reviews or other summaries of scholarship taken from human or computer authors without instructor approval).

You are NOT to use ANY platforms to assist your writing of ANY assignments, including Grammarly, ChatGPT, or any other software (generative, predictive or otherwise) that is not Microsoft Word, Google Docs, or another instructor-approved word processing platform. When using any word processing platform, you may NOT use ANY of its generative or predictive capabilities.

Work for Grade statements should reflect compliance with ALL of the items on this list.

It is your responsibility to discuss ANY clarifying questions or concerns you may have about these policies with the professor before submitting your work.

ANY violations of this policy will earn the offending assignment and/or assessment 0 points.

Appendix A: Institute Work for Grade Policy

Development of the spirit as well as the skills of academic inquiry is central to the mission of VMI's Academic Program. As a community of scholars, posing questions and seeking answers, we invariably consult and build upon the ideas, discoveries, and products of others who have wrestled with related issues and problems before us. We are obligated ethically and in many instances legally to acknowledge the sources of all borrowed material that we use in

our own work. This is the case whether we find that material in conventional resources, such as the library or cyberspace, or discover it in other places like conversations with our peers.

Academic integrity requires the full and proper documentation of any material that is not original with us. It is therefore a matter of honor. To misrepresent someone else's words, ideas, images, data, or other intellectual property as one's own is stealing, lying, and cheating all at once.

Because the offense of improper or incomplete documentation is so serious, and the consequences so potentially grave, the following policies regarding work for grade have been adopted as a guide to cadets and faculty in upholding the Honor Code under which all VMI cadets live:

Cadets' responsibilities

"Work for grade" is defined as any work presented to an instructor for a formal grade or undertaken in satisfaction of a requirement for successful completion of a course or degree requirement. All work submitted for grade is considered the cadet's own work. "Cadet's own work" means that he or she has composed the work from his or her general accumulation of knowledge and skill except as clearly and fully documented and that it has been composed especially for the current assignment. No work previously submitted in any course at VMI or elsewhere will be resubmitted or reformatted for submission in a current course without the specific approval of the instructor.

In all work for grade, failure to distinguish between the cadet's own work and ideas and the work and ideas of others is known as plagiarism. Proper documentation clearly and fully identifies the sources of all borrowed ideas, quotations, or other assistance. The cadet is referred to the VMI-authorized handbook for rules concerning quotations, paraphrases, and documentation.

In all written work for grade, the cadet must include the words "HELP RECEIVED" conspicuously on the document, and he or she must then do one of two things: (1) state "none," meaning that no help was received except as documented in the work; or (2) explain in detail the nature of the help received. In oral work for grade, the cadet must make the same declaration before beginning the presentation. Admission of help received may result in a lower grade but will not result in prosecution for an honor violation.

Cadets are prohibited from discussing the contents of a quiz/exam until it is returned to them, or final course grades are posted. This enjoinder does not imply that any inadvertent expression or behavior that might indicate one's feeling about the test should be considered a breach of honor. The real issue is whether cadets received information, not available to everyone else in the class, which would give them an unfair advantage. If a cadet inadvertently gives or receives information, the incident must be reported to the professor and the Honor Court.

Each cadet bears the responsibility for familiarizing himself or herself thoroughly with the policies stated in this section, with any supplementary statement regarding work for grade expressed by the academic department in which he or she is taking a course, and with any

special conditions provided in writing by the professor for a given assignment. If there is any doubt or uncertainty about the correct interpretation of a policy, the cadet should consult the instructor of the course. There should be no confusion, however, on the basic principle that it is never acceptable to submit someone else's work, written or otherwise, formally graded or not, as one's own.

The violation by a cadet of any of these policies will, if he or she is found guilty by the Honor Court, result in his or her being dismissed from VMI. Neither ignorance nor professed confusion about the correct interpretation of these policies is an excuse.

History Departmental Statement Concerning VMI's Policies Regarding Work for Grade

The Department of History's policies regarding work for grade apply to three types of written work.

1. In the case of written quizzes, tests, or examinations, cadets are to do their own work without help from any source.
2. In the case of written book reviews or reading reports, cadets are supposed to have read every page indicated and must write the report without assistance.
3. In the case of research papers, such as those required in HI 460 or other research projects in other courses, the research and writing must be done by the cadet alone under conditions specified by the instructor.

When employing a word processor in the preparation of written work for grade, a cadet is allowed the use of computing aids including translators, spelling, style, and grammar checkers, but must acknowledge the use of these aids in the help received statement submitted with the written work. Cadets may not submit work for grade containing material that has been composed in whole or in part by artificial intelligence (AI). Cadets may use AI-assisted technologies for checking spelling, style, and grammar, but may not use AI-assisted technologies in editing or proofreading work for grade—e.g. the addition, deletion, or reordering of words, sentences, phrases and/or paragraphs and/or correcting errors in grammar and/or punctuation.

When undertaking work for grade for history courses, Cadets may seek tutoring assistance from recognized Institute sources such as the Writing Center, Miller Academic Center and tutors authorized by the Institute. This assistance may include critical comments. Such comments are defined in the Institute's Work for Grade Policy as "general advice on such matters as organization, thesis development, support for assertions, and patterns of errors. It does not include proofreading or editing." The cadet must acknowledge the use of this assistance in the help received statement submitted with the written work.

If specifically directed by the instructor of a history course, cadets may avail themselves of peer collaboration on written work. Similar to tutoring assistance, peer collaboration may involve the provision of critical comments. Such comments are defined in the Institute's Work for Grade Policy as "general advice on such matters as organization, thesis development, support for assertions, and patterns of errors. It does not include proofreading or editing." The

cadet must acknowledge the use of peer collaboration in the help received statement submitted with the written work.

Unlike critical comments, proofreading and editing are expressly forbidden by the Institute's Work for Grade Policy, to wit: "Proofreading means correcting errors (e.g., in spelling, grammar, punctuation). It is the last step taken by the writer in the editing process. In addition to the corrections made in proofreading, editing includes making such changes as the addition, deletion, or reordering of paragraphs, sentences, phrases, or words. A cadet may not have his or her work proofread or edited by someone other than the instructor." Instructors in the Department of History who wish to employ proofreading and editing as pedagogical tools may be granted exceptions to this rule only if they have received written permission from the department head for a particular assignment.

In all cases, individual course assignments that deviate from the departmental work for grade policies must be approved by the department head in advance and must be explained to cadets in writing.

Cadets should consult the History Department web site, "Guidelines for Referencing Papers" for a fuller discussion of how to conduct written work in History.

Any non-written work for grade, such as oral reports, must be undertaken under specific conditions established by the instructor and will conform to the same spirit of the rules as pertain to written work.

If you have any doubts as to the application of these rules to any of your work for grade in History courses, consult your instructor.

Do not leave anything to chance.

EXCEPTIONS TO VMI WORK-FOR-GRADE POLICY

The Head of the History Department has granted permission for the following exception to VMI's Work-For-Grade policy:

Cadets enrolled in HI 103/104 are encouraged to seek assistance in preparing out-of-class writing assignments from the following sources, consistent with the governing policies of these sources: the VMI Writing Center, professional or cadet personnel under the auspices of the Academic Center, and tutors assigned by the Athletic Department. Additionally, cadets are allowed to engage in any level of peer review or collaboration authorized by their instructor with other members of their section or members of other sections taught by the same instructor. Cadets are encouraged to work with History GSS peer tutors, where they are authorized to receive additional levels of editorial or proofreading assistance designed to help them learn how to spot and address editorial or proofreading issues in their written work. Any type of assistance from any of the sources listed above must be explicitly authorized by the instructor and must be specifically acknowledged in "Help Received" statements.

ESL students are permitted two additional sources of critical commentary, editing, or proofreading as they prepare out-of-class written assignments: 1) any VMI professor; and 2) any cadet who speaks the native language of the person seeking help. For our purposes, an ESL student would be identified as any cadet who has taken the TOEFL, or cadets for whom English is not the first or native language and whose oral communication skills or written work demonstrates difficulties with the English language. As always, students who obtain help must specify clearly the nature of the Help Received.

Accessibility Statement:

VMI abides by Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 and the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 which mandates that reasonable accommodations are provided for all students with documented disabilities. If you anticipate or experience academic barriers that may be due to a disability, including but not limited to chronic medical conditions, learning disability, mental health, or other impairment, please contact Disability Services in the Miller Academic Center. The Disability Services office is located at 202 Carroll Hall in the Miller Academic Center. Please call, write, or stop by the office of LTC Allyson Pierce, Director of the Miller Academic Center, for more information (540-464-7661 or piercesa@vmi.edu). If you have a DS accommodation letter, please contact LTC Pierce and me (your instructor) early in the semester so that we can provide or facilitate provision of the accommodations you may need.

Course Schedule