Course Description

AP® World History is a yearlong college-level course designed to prepare students for the Advanced Placement (AP) World History Exam. The goal of this course is to explore historical themes common to societies around the world and across time periods, from prehistory to the present day. Emphasis is placed on critical and evaluative thinking skills, essay-writing, interpretation of original documents, and historiography. Students will demonstrate their understanding and acquisition of skills through written work, document-based questions, project-based activities, and practice exams.

Historical Themes

Throughout this course, students will be exposed to five historical themes. These themes, which tap into the big ideas in world history, allow students to identify trends and make connections across six historical time periods.

Theme 1: Interaction between Humans and the Environment
- Demography and disease
- Migration
- Patterns of settlement
- Technology

Theme 2: Development and Interaction of Cultures
- Religions
- Belief systems, philosophies, and ideologies
- Science and technology
- The arts and architecture

Theme 3: State-Building, Expansion, and Conflict
- Political structures and forms of governance
- Empires
- Nations and nationalism
- Revolts and revolutions
- Regional, transregional, and global structures and organizations

Theme 4: Creation, Expansion, and Interaction of Economic Systems
- Agricultural and pastoral production
- Trade and commerce
- Labor systems
- Industrialization
- Capitalism and socialism

Theme 5: Development and Transformation of Social Structures
- Gender roles and relations
- Family and kinship
- Racial and ethnic constructions
- Social and economic classes
Key Concepts
Key concepts are used to organize the course by six time periods. This syllabus references the key concepts as identified by the College Board®. The key concepts help students understand, organize, and prioritize historical developments within each era.

Key Activities
Throughout the course, students will be asked to complete key activities that tap into the four major historical thinking skills—interpretation and synthesis, contextualization and comparison, argumentation, and chronological reasoning.

Essays and writing assignments: Throughout the course, students will have regular writing assignments as well as an exam-style comparative essay and an exam-style essay focused on continuity and change over time. Writing assignments will call for students to use writing to communicate their understanding and analysis of themes, societies, events, and people. The writing assignments will require students to draw comparisons; argue and support opinions; identify similarities and differences among events, peoples, and places; and identify causes and effects.

Primary and secondary source analysis: In these activities, students will examine primary and secondary sources, including maps, charts, speeches, diaries, letters, personal ideologies, official documents, traditional stories, and more. Students will analyze these sources to make connections across places and time periods and to identify common themes.

Document-based questions (DBQs): Students will also work through document-based questions (DBQs) as part of their writing and their historical analysis of primary and secondary sources. These questions will mimic the types of DBQs that students will experience on the AP World History Exam.

Projects: Students will complete two major research projects during the course.
In the first semester, students will create a multimedia presentation that compares and contrasts imperial governments from 600 CE to 1450 CE. Students will choose from a list of empires to analyze.
In the second semester, students will create a multimedia presentation that analyzes continuities and changes in gender roles across each of the six periods of AP World History. Students are expected to include evidence from societies and cultures from each region.
Course Materials

Textbook

Reader

Primary sources
Students will read and analyze selected primary sources included in Strayer and Reilly, as well as individual selections from a wide variety of other sources. See course outline below for specific selections.

Secondary sources
Kelly-Gadol, Joan. “Did Women have a Renaissance”, from *Women, History, and Theory: The Essays of Joan Kelly-Gadol*.
Other works of historical interpretation used in the course are taken from Reilly. See course outline below for specific selections.
Course Outline

Unit 1 - Technological and Environmental Transformations to 600 BCE

Key Concepts

• Key Concept 1.1. Big Geography and the Peopling of the Earth
• Key Concept 1.2. The Neolithic Revolution and Early Agricultural Societies
• Key Concept 1.3. The Development and Interactions of Early Agricultural, Pastoral, and Urban Societies

Topics for Overview

• Human origins and the Neolithic Revolution
• Early peoples and civilizations of the Fertile Crescent
• Egyptian and Nubian cultures

Textbook Reading

• Strayer 2013, ch. 1–2

Key Activities

Essays and writing assignments:

• Short writing assignment: “The Agricultural Revolution marked a decisive turning point in human history.” What evidence might you offer in support of this claim, and how might you argue against it?

Primary and secondary source analysis (such as but not limited to):

• Life and Afterlife in Mesopotamia and Egypt (Strayer 2013, 92–107). Students will read this selection, which includes readings from The Epic of Gilgamesh, Hammurabi’s Code, and the Book of the Dead. Then, they will respond to the following prompt.

• What similarities and differences between ancient Mesopotamian and Egyptian civilizations can you infer from these documents? How might one account for these differences?

• Read Women in the First Urban Communities by Catherine Clay, Chandrika Paul, and Christine Senecal (Reilly ).

Other Activities

• Explore how archeologists have contributed to our understanding of either the Harappan civilization or the Shang dynasty.
Unit 2: Organization and Reorganization of Human Societies, 600 BCE to 600 CE

Key Concepts

- Key Concept 2.1. The Development and Codification of Religious and Cultural Traditions
- Key Concept 2.2. The Development of States and Empires
- Key Concept 2.3. Emergence of Transregional Networks of Communication and Exchange

Topics for Overview

- Early civilizations: the Middle East, South Asia, East Asia, the Americas, Oceania, and Africa
- Government and society in Greece and Rome
- Major belief systems, religions, and philosophies

Textbook Reading

- Strayer 2013, ch. 3–6

Key Activities

Essays and writing assignments:

Essay: document-based question

This assignment includes selections from Herodotus, Pericles’s “Funeral Oration,” Han Fei’s discussion on legalism, Emperor Ashoka’s Rock Edicts, and Confucius’s Analects. After analyzing the documents, students will respond to the following prompt.

*Using the following documents, analyze the methods employed by ancient empires to exert political power before 600 CE.*

*Identify an additional type of document, and explain how it would help your analysis of these empires.*

Short writing assignment: “The particular cultures and societies of Africa and of the Americas discussed in this chapter developed largely in isolation.” What evidence would support this statement, and what might challenge it?

Short writing assignment: What common features can you identify in the empires described in Chapter 3? In what ways did they differ from one another? What accounts for those differences?

Primary and secondary source analysis (such as but not limited to):

The Good Life in Eurasian Civilizations (Strayer 2013, 198–207). Students will read this selection, which includes readings from Confucius’s Analects, reflections from the Hindu scripture the Bhagavad Gita, and an excerpt from Plato’s Apology. Then, they will respond to the following prompt.

*In describing the “good life” or the “good society,” what commonalities do you see among these four documents? What differences are apparent? How might the authors of each text respond to the ideas of the others?*
Patriarchy and Women’s Voices (Strayer 2013, 243–51). Students will read this selection, which includes readings from Ban Zhao’s Lessons for Women, a selection of Buddhist scriptures from Psalms of the Sisters, and an excerpt from Livy’s history of Rome. Then, they will respond to the following prompt.

Based on these documents, how might you compare the gender systems of China, India, and the Roman Empire? What common features of patriarchy did they share? In what ways did they differ?

- Analyze excerpts from the writings of Confucius, including The Analects, and Han Fei to assess the influence of Confucianism and legalism on Chinese culture and government.
- Read and compare The Epic of Gilgamesh, the Indian story “Manu and the Magic Carp,” and the story of Noah from the Torah.
- Compare the funeral oration given by Pericles following the Peloponnesian War to Abraham Lincoln’s Gettysburg Address.
- Interpret maps and secondary sources to identify the importance of trade to the Kingdom of Axum.
- Read The Olmec: Mother Culture, or Only a Sister? by John Noble Wilford (Reilly).
- Read Greek and Indian Civilization by William H. McNeill (Reilly).
Unit 3: Regional and Transregional Interactions, c. 600 CE to 1450 CE

Key Concepts
- Key Concept 3.1. Expansion and Intensification of Communication and Exchange Networks
- Key Concept 3.2. Continuity and Innovation of State Forms and Their Interactions
- Key Concept 3.3. Increased Economic Productive Capacity and Its Consequences

Topics for Overview
- The ancient global economy and the impact of expanding trade networks
- Civilizations in East and West Africa
- Imperial China
- The spread of Islam
- The Byzantine Empire
- The Early Middle Ages, including church authority in Europe
- Feudalism in Europe and Japan
- The impact of the Crusades
- Russia and Eastern Europe
- The Ottoman and Mughal Empires
- The Ming Dynasty

Textbook Reading
- Strayer 2013, ch. 7–12

Key Activities

Essays and writing assignments:
- Short writing assignment: What were the causes and consequences of the Crusades?
- Short writing assignment: How can you explain the changing fortunes of Buddhism in China?
- Short writing assignment: What were the causes and consequences of Islam’s substantial religious and political/military success in its early centuries?
- Short writing assignment: What accounts for the different historical trajectories of the Byzantine and West European expressions of Christendom?
- Short writing assignment: In what ways do the civilizations of China, Europe, and the Islamic world in the fifteenth century seem to be moving in the same direction, and in what respects were they diverging from one another?

Primary and secondary source analysis (such as but not limited to):
- Travelers’ Tales and Observations (Strayer 2013, 344–63). Students will read this selection, which includes excerpts from Huili’s Biography of the Tripitaka Master, Xuanzang’s Record of the Western Region, Ibn Battuta’s Travels in Asia and Africa, and The Travels of Marco Polo. Then, they will respond to the following prompt.
Each of these documents was written by an outsider to the people or society he is describing. What different postures toward these foreign cultures are evident in the sources? How did the travelers’ various religions shape their perception of places they visited? How did they view women of their host societies?

• **Perspectives on the Mongols** (Strayer 2013, 542–57). Students will read this selection, which includes excerpts from The Secret History of the Mongols, Chinggis Khan’s letter to Changchun, and The Chronicle of Novgorod. Then, they will respond to the following prompt.

  *What are the strengths and limitations of these documents for understanding the Mongols? Taking positions of the authors into account, what exaggerations, biases, or misunderstandings can you identify in these sources? What information seems credible and what should be viewed more skeptically?*

• Analyze passages written during the Tang and Song Dynasties by accomplished people, including Emperor Tang Taizong, Song Ruozhao, and Yuan Cai.

• Compare opposing accounts of the siege of Jerusalem—one from a Christian crusader who was an eyewitness, and one from a Muslim historian.

• Read excerpts from William of Rubruck’s *Account of the Mongols*.

• Read *Were the Barbarians a Negative or a Positive Factor in Ancient and Medieval History?* by Gregory Guzman (Reilly).

• Read *The Comparative Communal Responses to the Black Death in Muslim and Christian Societies* by Michael W. Dols (Reilly).

• Read *Southernization* by Lynda Norene Shaffer (Reilly).

• Read *Rethinking the Fall of Easter* by Terry L. Hunt (Reilly).

**Projects**

Students will create a multimedia presentation that compares two societies. They will respond to the following prompt.

*Compare and contrast similarities and differences in the structure and authority of imperial governments between 600 CE and 1450 CE.*

Choose two of the following four governments to analyze.

• The Aztec Empire

• The Byzantine Empire

• The Mongol Empire

• The Song Dynasty
Unit 4: Global Interactions, 1450 CE to 1750 CE

Key Concepts

- Key Concept 4.1. Globalizing Networks of Communication and Exchange
- Key Concept 4.2. New Forms of Social Organization and Modes of Production
- Key Concept 4.3. State Consolidation and Imperial Expansion

Topics for Overview

- The impact of global exchange and growing trade networks: voyages of exploration, the conquest of the Americas, and the meeting of three worlds
- The Atlantic slave trade
- The influence of cultural revolutions, including the Renaissance, the Protestant Reformation, the Counter-Reformation, the Scientific Revolution, and the Enlightenment

Textbook Reading

Strayer 2013, ch. 13–15

Key Activities

**Essays and writing assignments:**

- Essay: continuity and change over time

  Analyze the continuities and changes in labor systems between 1450 and 1750.

- Short writing assignment: In what ways did European empires in the Americas resemble their Russian, Chinese, Mongol, and Ottoman counterparts, and in what respects were they different?

- Short writing assignment: To what extent did the cultural changes of the early modern world derive from cross-cultural interaction? To what extent did they grow from within particular societies or civilizations?

**Primary and secondary source analysis** (such as but not limited to):

- Voices from the Slave Trade (Strayer 2013, 700–717). Students will read this selection, which includes excerpts from The Interesting Narrative of the Life of Olaudah Equiano, King Affonso I’s letters to King Jao of Portugal, and Thomas Phillips’s Journal of a Voyage Made in the Hannibal of London. Then, they will respond to the following prompt.

  What different experiences of the slave trade are reflected in these documents? How can one account for these differences? What perspectives are missing that might add other dimensions to one’s understanding of this commerce in people?

- The Conquest of Mexico through Aztec Eyes (Strayer 2013, 660–67).

  Based on the information in this section, write a brief description of the conquest from the Aztec point of view.

- Read an excerpt from Cervantes’s Don Quixote to identify elements of humanism.

- Analyze the works of philosophers of the Enlightenment, including John Locke’s Two Treatises of Government and Thomas Hobbes’s Leviathan.

- Read The Conquest of Paradise by Kirkpatrick Sale (Reilly ).
• Read “Vikings and Polynesians” by Merry Weisner from Discovering the Global Past: A Look at the Evidence, Vol.I.
• Read Women and Marriage in Europe and China by Mary Jo Maynes and Ann Waltner (Reilly).
• Compare and contrast two readings on women and the Renaissance by analyzing Did Women have a Renaissance? by Joan Kelly-Gadol and Women as a Force in History: A Study in Traditions and Realities by Mary R. Beard. Reflect by answering the following questions: Think about the term “Renaissance”, used by historians to describe the late medieval period. What are the limitations of the term “Renaissance Era” to describe this time period? Is this term appropriate for areas outside of Europe? Does it apply to members of the lower classes? What about women?
Unit 5: Industrialization and Global Integration, 1750 CE to 1900 CE

Key Concepts
- Key Concept 5.1. Industrialization and Global Capitalism
- Key Concept 5.2. Imperialism and Nation-State Formation
- Key Concept 5.3. Nationalism, Revolution, and Reform
- Key Concept 5.4. Global Migration

Topics for Overview
- The Age of Revolutions, including the influence of the Enlightenment; the American, French, and Haitian Revolutions; and Latin American independence movements
- The abolition of slavery
- Industrialization and global economic systems
- Imperialism and its effects around the world
- The creation of the nation-state
- Early Japanese and Korean civilizations and the rise of modern Japan

Readings
Strayer 2013, ch. 16–19

Key Activities

**Essays and writing assignments:**

- Essay: document-based question

In this assignment, students will analyze a selection of documents that includes excerpts from Emperor Qianlong’s message to King George III, a chart showing Chinese-British trade at Canton, a political cartoon from the 1890s, Lin Zexu’s “A Moral Appeal to Queen Victoria,” and the Treaty of Nanjing. After analyzing the documents, students will respond to the following prompt.

*Using the following documents, analyze Chinese imperial government responses to British trade and the long-term effects of British trade on Qing-dynasty China from 1750 CE to 1900 CE.*

*Identify an additional type of document and explain how it would help your analysis of Chinese government responses to and long-term effects of British trade.*

- Short writing assignment: *What did humankind gain from the Industrial Revolution, and what did it lose?*
- Short writing assignment: *In what different ways did the colonial experience reshape the economic lives of Asian and African societies? How were the lives of women affected?*
- Short writing assignment: *Compare and contrast industrialization in Japan, Russia, and the United States.*
Primary and secondary source analysis (such as but not limited to):

- **Claiming Rights** (Strayer 2013, 812–25). Students will read this selection, which includes excerpts from The Declaration of the Rights of Man and Citizen, Simón Bolívar’s Jamaica Letter, Frederick Douglass’s “What to the Slave Is the Fourth of July?,” and Elizabeth Cady Stanton’s *The Solitude of Self*. Then, they will respond to the following prompt.

  In what different ways does the idea of “rights” find expression in these four documents? Which documents speak more about individual rights and which focus on collective rights? What common understandings can you identify?

- **Changing China** (Strayer 2013, 958–71). Students will read this selection, which includes excerpts from Sun Yat-Sen’s “The Three People’s Principles and the Future of the Chinese People,” Qiu Jin’s Address to Two Hundred Million Fellow Countrywomen, and Emperor Guangxu’s Edict on Education. Then, they will respond to the following prompt.

  To what extent do these proposals represent plans to “Westernize” China? Or, might they rather be considered “modernizing” efforts? What is the difference between the two concepts?

- Read Simón Bolívar’s message to the 1819 Congress of Angostura to determine his purpose.
- Read an excerpt from *King Leopold’s Ghost*, by Adam Hochschild.
- Analyze writings of Napoleon to identify both his support for and his rejection of Enlightenment ideals.
- Analyze Rudyard Kipling’s “The White Man’s Burden” as an explanation of new imperialism.
- Read *The Industrial Revolution outside the West* by Peter Sterns (Reilly) and *Asia and the Industrial Revolution* by Arnold Pacey (Reilly) to compare and contrast these interpretations.
Unit 6: Accelerating Global Change and Realignments, 1900–Present

Key Concepts
- Key Concept 6.1. Science and the Environment
- Key Concept 6.2. Global Conflicts and Their Consequences
- Key Concept 6.3. New Conceptualizations of Global Economy, Society, and Culture

Topics for Overview
- World War I, World War II, and the Holocaust
- The Cold War
- The legacy of imperialism
- Decolonization in Africa and Asia
- Indian independence
- Nationalism in the Middle East
- Globalization and its effects
- Challenges and changes in the modern world, including genocide, development, poverty, and disease
- The impact of science and technology, including the Green Revolution and its effects
- Demographic change, urbanization, and migration
- Environmental issues

Textbook Reading
Strayer 2013, ch. 20–23

Key Activities

Essays and writing assignments:
- Essay: comparative

Compare the economic transformations of China and Russia during the twentieth century.
- Short writing assignment: What explains the disasters that befell Europe in the first half of the twentieth century?
- Short writing assignment: Why did the communist experiment, which was committed to equality, abundance, and a humane socialism, generate such oppressive, brutal, and totalitarian regimes and failed economies?

Primary and secondary source analysis (such as but not limited to):
- Contending for Islam (Strayer 2013, 1120–35). Students will read this selection, which includes excerpts from Mustafa Kemal Atatürk’s speech to the General Congress of the Republican Party (1927), Sayings of the Ayatollah Khomeini, and Kabir Helminski’s “Islam and Human Values.” Then, they will respond to the following prompt.
What historical circumstances might help to account for the different understandings of Islam that are reflected in these documents?

- **Voices of Global Feminism** (Strayer 2013, 1173–87). Students will read this selection, which includes excerpts from Alexandra Kollontai’s “Communism and the Family,” the Indigenous Women’s Petition of the Maya women of Mexico, and Benazir Bhutto’s “Politics and the Muslim Woman.” Then, they will respond to the following prompt.

  What aspects of global feminism were most revolutionary, liberating, or threatening to established authorities and ways of living? To what extent do you think the goals of these varying feminist efforts have been realized?

- Read Mussolini’s speech about the invasion of Ethiopia.
- Analyze excerpts from Viscount Bryce’s *Treatment of Armenians in the Ottoman Empire, 1915–1916*.
- Analyze excerpts from *The Gulag Archipelago* to identify how life changed in the Soviet Union under Stalin.
- Read Jomo Kenyatta’s 1952 speech “The Kenya Africa Union Is Not the Mau Mau.”
- Watch a documentary about globalization and cultural challenges in China.
- Analyze a variety of sources, including maps, charts, and graphs, to draw conclusions about the impact of coltan mining on the habitat of the eastern lowland gorilla.
- Analyze a secondary source to evaluate the impact of the Green Revolution on India.
- Read *Dollarization* by Sherif Hetata (Reilly) and *Cultural Globalization Is Not Americanization* by Philippe Legrain (Reilly) to compare and contrast the different views on globalization presented.

**Project**

In this second-semester research project, students will create a multimedia presentation that analyzes continuity and change in response to the following prompt.

*Analyze continuities and changes in gender roles across each of the six periods of AP World History. Be sure to address societies and cultures from each of the following regions: Africa, the Americas, Asia, Europe, and Oceania.*
Unit 7: Exam Prep and Review

This unit will help students prepare for the AP World History Exam. Students will learn exam strategies for success, practice test-taking techniques on exam-like questions, and review content covered in the six units.

- Exam Strategies
- Unit 1 Review
- Unit 2 Review
- Unit 3 Review
- Unit 4 Review
- Unit 5 Review
- Unit 6 Review