Syllabus

Note: The official (electronic) syllabus is located on the course website.

World History Since 1500
History 132, Sec 201
University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee
January 2, 2020--January 18, 2020

Instructor: Prof. Aims McGuinness
Email: smia@uwm.edu

Office Hours: This class is conducted entirely online. If you have a question, please e-mail the professor at smia@uwm.edu.

I. Course Description and Goals

Q: “What is this course about?”

At first glance, the prospect of a course about the last five centuries of world history may seem absurd. How could any class offer coverage of five hundred years? What or whom would the class include or exclude? Rather than brushing such questions aside, this class puts them front and center in a wide-ranging, eclectic exploration of the world’s history since roughly 1500.

A central theme in the course is contemporary global inequality. Students will develop a more critical perspective on the ways in which historians and scholars in other fields explain the origins of wealth and poverty in our world.

Throughout the term, students will analyze different approaches to narrating history and work on their own writing and storytelling skills. Students should be prepared to read critically, ask questions, and think independently. The habits of thought, skills, and historical knowledge that students gain in this class can enable them to participate more effectively in broader debates in our society not only about the past but also the present and future.

Q: “What are the goals of this course?”

Students who succeed in this course will gain an introductory-level grounding in the following areas of historical inquiry:

- Major events, issues, and concepts in modern world history such as the Columbian Exchange, Industrial Revolution, empire, nationalism, ecological change, contingency, and the Anthropocene.
- Debates concerning the origins of differences in wealth among contemporary societies.
- Global dimensions of topics in Wisconsin history.
- Analysis of primary and secondary sources.
- Analysis of historical narratives and paradigms.
- Storytelling and writing.
II. Required Work

Q: “What are the required assignments for this course and how are they weighted?”

3 Discussions (2 Posts per Discussion for a Total of 6 Posts)

The first post for each discussion must contain a minimum of 300 words. The second post must contain a minimum of 100 words. 30%

Unit 1 Quiz: 20 Multiple Choice/Short Answer Questions 5%

Unit 1 Essay: 500-word minimum 5%

Unit 2 Quiz: 20 Multiple Choice/Short Answer Questions 10%

Unit 2 Essay: 500-word minimum 10%

Unit 3 Quiz: 30 Multiple Choice/Short Answer Questions 20%

Unit 3 Essay: 500-word minimum 20%

Final Grade 100%

Q: “How do I learn about due dates?”

For an overview of due dates in the course, see “Schedule/Due Dates,” below.

Q: “Is this one of those online courses where I can do the work and turn it in whenever I want?”

No. This course is not “self-paced,” and it is only partially “asynchronous.”

Unlike a regular “bricks-and-mortar” class, which requires you to join with other students in the same place at the same time, there are no specific times/dates on which you must be logged into the course website.

But there are several hard-and-fast due dates in this course, and most of them fall well before the end of the term. I have done my best to enable flexibility by setting due dates at the end of “time slots” or windows of time. For a list of due dates and an explanation of time slots, see “Schedule/Due Dates,” below.

Q: "How much reading is required for this course?"

Like most history courses, this class requires a substantial amount of reading. The typical unit requires students to read at least 100 pages.
III. Required Materials

Q: “What are the required materials for this course?”

Required materials consist of 1) the required textbook and 2) media that may be accessed via the course website, including additional readings, the Professor’s Blog, and videos. (All videos are accompanied by transcripts.)

Required Book:

Author: Marks, Robert
Title: Origins of the Modern World: A Global and Environmental Narrative from the Fifteenth to the Twenty-First Century
Edition: Fourth (paperback or eBook)
Publisher: Rowman & Littlefield
Date: 2019

Make sure that you have the correct edition: fourth (paperback or eBook). Only the fourth edition will permit you to pass this course. A copy of the required book will also be made available for checkout (2-hour limit) at the Reserve Desk of UWM's Media and Reserve Library.

Q: "How do I gain access to the required book?"

There are three options for accessing the required book. Regardless of the option you choose, it is crucial that you secure regular access to the required book by the start of the course. A lack of access to the readings is not a valid excuse for failing to complete an assignment on time.

Option 1: Check out the required book at the UW-Milwaukee Libraries Reserve Desk.

The required book may be checked out for a 2-hour period from Reserve Desk (Course Reserve) of the UW-Milwaukee Libraries Media and Reserve Library, which is located in the Golda Meir Library Building. For more information, visit: http://uwm.edu/libraries/media/.

Option 2: Purchase a book at UW-Milwaukee’s Virtual Bookstore.

You can find the website for the virtual bookstore here: http://uwm.ecampus.com/. Look for our term and course number and follow the instructions. In some cases, it may also be possible to rent the book.

Option 3: Purchase the required book from a non-university vendor.

You may find the required book for sale online by entering the ISBN number into an Internet search engine. This procedure will produce a list of businesses that sell the book. Make sure that the seller sends you the correct edition in time for you to complete assignments in a timely manner.

As of 12/20/19, Rowman & Littlefield is offering e-books at a reduced price to students. For more information, visit: https://rowman.com/page/professors. See "Our e-textbooks are on sale!"
Q: “What happens if I buy the wrong edition of a book?”

Be careful that you do not purchase the wrong edition of a book. Only the edition of the book identified in the syllabus will enable you to pass this class. If you purchase the wrong book, you will have no choice but to secure access to the correct book.

Q: “What is ‘Guns, Germs & Steel’? How do I gain access to it?”

During the term, students will view a three-part documentary entitled “Guns, Germs & Steel” (PBS/National Geographic) and complete a number of readings available at a website associated with the same documentary. The documentary is based on a book by the same title by Jared Diamond. I encourage you to seek out the book and read it in its entirety. For the purposes of this course, however, I require only that you view the documentary and read portions of the related website, which together provide a good synopsis of Diamond’s argument.

The website for “Guns, Germs, and Steel” can be found at the following link: http://www.pbs.org/gunsgermssteel/ (http://www.pbs.org/gunsgermssteel/)

You have different options for viewing the documentary. All are equally useful and convey essentially the same information. Choose the option that best fits your preferences and technological capacity:

1) The documentary is available on YouTube. You can find it by searching for “Guns, Germs, and Steel.”

2) The “Guns, Germs & Steel” website offers a transcript of each of the three episodes. Although reading a transcript is not as entertaining as watching the actual episode, the transcripts contain all the information necessary for this course.

3) If you have access to Netflix, “Guns, Germs & Steel” is available to most subscribers.

IV. Grading Scale and Assessment

Q: “What is the grading scale? Are grades curved?”

A: 93-100  C: 73-76
A-: 90-92  C-: 70-72
B+: 87-89  D+: 67-69
B: 83-86  D: 63-66
B-: 80-82  D-: 60-62
C+: 77-79  F: 0-59

I do not curve the grades for the course.

Q: "How do you assess and grade students' written work?"

For an overview, consult “Writing for this Course: Assessment and Grading,” located on the course website under Course Materials.

V. Technology

Q: “What technology is required for this course? Where can I get help?”
This course requires use of a web-based LMS (Learning Management System) named “Canvas,” which is available to all enrolled students at UW-Milwaukee and fully supported by the UW System.

For more about Canvas, including help and information about other technical requirements, visit: https://uwm.edu/canvas/home/

Regular, daily access to a computer with a high-speed Internet connection is vital for use of Canvas and this course. Do not try to take this course using only a smartphone or a tablet.

I recommend that students take quizzes on a computer with a wired Internet connection, as any interruption in Internet service can result in loss of work. If students do not have a wired connection at home, they may use any computer in a UW-Milwaukee campus computer lab or visit a public library.

In addition, students must have access to the following:

- Microsoft Word. (Word is available at no additional charge to all enrolled UW-Milwaukee students via Office 365.)
- Adobe Acrobat Reader. (Reader can be downloaded for free at the Adobe website.)
- Access to a digital camera. (Any smartphone camera is fine.)
- If you wish to watch the documentary rather than read the transcript, you will need a computer with an audio speaker.

It is imperative that students have regular access to adequate, reliable, technology throughout the term. A computer glitch, lost file, interrupted wireless connection, or any other technical problem cannot serve as an excuse for failure to complete an assignment on time.

Q: “Where do I go for help with other technology questions?”


Q: “What will I find on the course website?”

The specific tools in Canvas that I use vary from course to course and may include the following: Home, Syllabus, Announcements, Assignments, and Grades.

Home

“Home” is the page that welcomes you after you have logged into Canvas and selected our course. This home page offers an overview of the entire course and access to each of the areas described below. “Home” is the by far the most useful of all the pages/tools in Canvas. When in doubt, go to “Home”!

On “Home,” you will find most of the content you need for the course organized by kind or “module,” including links to instructions for required readings and assignments.

Syllabus

“Syllabus” is the place where you will find the course syllabus and links to specific assignments.
“Home” offers a much better overview of the work required for this course than “Syllabus.” The “Course Summary” feature of Canvas is poorly designed, in my opinion.

**Announcements**

“Announcements” is where I put course announcements and reminders.

**Assignments**

“Assignments” is where you will find a list of graded assignments for the course, including discussions, quizzes, and essays.

“Home” offers a much better overview of the work required for this course than Assignments.

**Grades**

“Grades” is where I will post your grades for the course as well as feedback in the form of completed rubrics. You will be able to access this section to see your extant grades throughout the term.

**Q: “When is Canvas not available to me?”**

Canvas may occasionally be taken down for scheduled maintenance. You can find information about any upcoming "outages" at the welcome screen that greets you after you log on.

**Q: “How often do I need to log in to Canvas?”**

You should expect to check the course website at least once per day to stay informed about any announcements, additions to the course website, posts to the Professor’s Blog, and the like. If religious observance prevents you from checking the website on any given day, please inform me at smia@uwm.edu.

**Q: “How should I contact the professor if I have a question? What e-mail account should I use?”**

All course-related e-mail communication should be conducted using UW-Milwaukee e-mail addresses. Your UW-Milwaukee e-mail address is your ePanther ID + @uwm.edu. Example: smia@uwm.edu.

Students who are new to UW-Milwaukee will receive an ePanther ID and a corresponding UW-Milwaukee e-mail address upon their enrollment.

I understand that it can feel like a nuisance to have to switch to a UW-Milwaukee e-mail account if you are not accustomed to using that account, especially if you are using the account only for the purposes of this course. Nevertheless, for technical reasons, I am only able to send messages to your UW-Milwaukee e-mail account. The good news is that you can easily forward e-mail received by your UW-Milwaukee account to your regular e-mail account if you wish. Consult the UW-Milwaukee Campus IT Support (Help Desk) for assistance: [http://www4.uwm.edu/technology/help/campus/](http://www4.uwm.edu/technology/help/campus/).

Although the most reliable way to reach the professor is via e-mail at smia@uwm.edu, you can also use the “Conversations” (“Inbox”) tool in Canvas to communicate with the professor.
Important: Please put our course number (132, 293, 600, etc.) in the subject line of all your e-mail messages to me. I receive many messages every day. By placing the course number in the subject line, you make it easier for me to locate and respond to your message.

VI. Course and University Policies

Q: “What is the course policy on late assignments?”

This course moves very quickly. To discourage students from falling behind, the course places severe limits on the submission of late assignments.

Any assignment that is turned in one day late will be subject to a grade reduction of 20%. Any assignment that is turned in two days late will be subject to a grade reduction of 30%. Any assignment that is turned in three or more days late will automatically receive a "0." In other words, any assignment that is not turned in within two days of the original due date will automatically receive a "0."

Q: “What are UW-Milwaukee’s policies regarding students with disabilities, religious observances, etc.?”


Q: “What are the university and course policies regarding plagiarism and other forms of academic misconduct?”

The University of Wisconsin System defines academic misconduct as follows:

"Academic misconduct is an act in which a student seeks to claim credit for the work or efforts of another without authorization or citation [plagiarism], uses unauthorized materials or fabricated data in any academic exercise, forges or falsifies academic documents or records, intentionally impedes or damages the academic work of others, engages in conduct aimed at making false representation of a student's academic performance, or assists other students in any of these acts."

Plagiarism is an instance of Academic Misconduct. According to the official policy of the University of Wisconsin System Board of Regents, plagiarism includes:

1. Directly quoting the words of others without using quotation marks or indented format to identify them; or,
2. Using sources of information (published or unpublished) without identifying them; or,
3. Paraphrasing materials or ideas of others without identifying the sources.

The UWM policy concerning plagiarism and other forms of academic misconduct is available here: [http://www4.uwm.edu/dos/conduct/academic-misconduct.cfm](http://www4.uwm.edu/dos/conduct/academic-misconduct.cfm).

It is the policy of this course that academic misconduct, including plagiarism, cheating, and unauthorized sharing of answers to quizzes will result in the failure not only of the assignment in which the misconduct
occurs but also of the entire course.

**Q: "How much time do I need to devote to this course?"**

This is a 3-credit course. In conformance with a mandate from the U.S. Department of Education, students may expect to devote as many as 135 hours to this class during the term in order to achieve the learning goals of this course. Work in this context includes completing the required readings, writing discussion posts and essays, and preparing for and taking quizzes.

**Q: "How do I become a history major?"**

Consider majoring in history! The process of declaring is easy. For instructions, visit:

http://www4.uwm.edu/letsci/history/undergrad/

Remember that all students in the College of Letters & Science need to declare and complete an academic major to graduate. If you have not yet declared a major, the College encourages you to do so as soon as possible, even if you're just starting your college career.

For more about the value of majoring in history, including information about careers, visit: https://www.historians.org/teaching-and-learning/why-study-history

**VII. Schedule/Due Dates**

**Q: “How does a ‘time slot’ work”?**

A “time slot” is a window of time during which an assignment is available. Instructions, requirements, and other basic information about an assignment become visible to students at the start of the time slot. The deadline (due date) of any given assignment is at 11:59 p.m. (one minute before midnight) on the last day of the time slot.

All times/dates in this class are in Central Time (Wisconsin).

For example, let's say that “Unit 1 Quiz” has a time limit of 60 minutes and is located in the following time slot: 1/10-1/12. This means that the quiz becomes visible to students at 12 a.m. on 1/10. Students may start the 60-minute quiz at any point during the time slot. Once they start the quiz, however, they only have 60 minutes to complete it. The quiz must be submitted or completed no later than 11:59 p.m. on 1/12.

My advice is to pick a 60-minute window of time to take the quiz at some point during the time slot. Do not wait too long to start the quiz. You can still start the 60-minute quiz on the last day of the time slot, but don’t stress yourself by starting to close to the final deadline, which is always 11:59 p.m. on the last day of the time slot.

**Note:** The information below is subject to change. Always refer to the course website for official due dates as well as specific instructions for readings, discussion posts, quizzes, and essays.

**Prelude: History, Narrative, and the World before 1500 (1/2-1/5)**
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time Slot</th>
<th>Assignments</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1/2-1/5</td>
<td>Readings (see course website for details)</td>
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</tbody>
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**Unit 1: Worlds Apart (1/2-1/12)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time Slot</th>
<th>Assignments</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1/2-1/7</td>
<td>Readings</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1/2-1/7</td>
<td>Discussion 1—First Post</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1/8-1/9</td>
<td>Discussion 1—Second Post</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1/10-1/12</td>
<td>Unit 1 Quiz</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1/10-1/12</td>
<td>Unit 1 Essay</td>
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</table>

**Unit 2: Worlds Collide (1/5-1/16)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time Slot</th>
<th>Assignments</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1/5 -1/11</td>
<td>Readings</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1/5 -1/11</td>
<td>Discussion 2—First Post</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1/12-1/13</td>
<td>Discussion 2—Second Post</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1/14-1/16</td>
<td>Unit 2 Quiz</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1/14-1/16</td>
<td>Unit 2 Essay</td>
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**Unit 3: One World? (1/12-1/19)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time Slot</th>
<th>Assignments</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1/12-1/15</td>
<td>Readings</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
1/12-1/15  First post to Discussion 3

1/16-1/17  Second post to Discussion 3

1/17-1/19  Unit 3 Quiz

1/17-1/19  Unit 3 Essay

Summary of Due Dates for Assignments:

(Note that units overlap!)

1/5  Readings—Prelude
1/7  Readings—Unit 1
1/7  Discussion 1—First Post
1/9  Discussion 1—Second Post
1/11  Discussion 2—First Post
1/11  Readings—Unit 2
1/12  Unit 1 Quiz
1/12  Unit 1 Essay
1/13  Discussion 2—Second Post
1/15  Unit 3 Readings
1/15  Discussion 3—First Post
1/16  Unit 2 Quiz
1/16  Unit 2 Essay
1/17  Discussion 3—Second Post
1/19  Unit 3 Quiz
1/19  Unit 3 Essay