

POL 112
The Modern World
5 Credits

STUDY GUIDE

Distance Education Correspondence Courses

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DISTANCE EDUCATION
AND e-LEARNING

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About your instructor:

Richard Curtis received his PhD in Religion (Philosophy of Religion and Theology) from the School of Religion at Claremont Graduate University in 2006 and his MA in Religious Studies (Jewish Philosophy and Liberation Theology) from the University of Colorado at Boulder in 1991. His specialty, generally speaking, is Social Philosophy (politics, ethics, religion). Dr. Curtis has taught at The University of Colorado, Pasadena City College, Cornish College of the Arts, Seattle University, Shoreline Community College and Green River Community College. He currently teaches Philosophy and this one Political Science class at Seattle Central Community College.

Instructor Response Time:

Your instructor will respond to your inquiries as soon as he can, but please allow at least 3 business days for email comments/questions and 10 business days for grades.

Introduction and General Course Information

POL 112 — The Contemporary World — 5 Credits

Overview

This course is designed to provoke thinking about the world and its current state. To do this we start with the past and read a history book; then look to the present and immediate future and to do that we read about China as the rising power; then we look to the future via a discussion of some details and consequences of climate change. The goal is to give the student information with which to understand the world and to make decisions in the world.

The workload for the course is designed around an ideal time table that would reflect the pace of work in an ordinary academic quarter. One way to organize work would be to think of the lessons as plans for a week. There are 10 lessons and 10 weeks in an academic quarter. If a student takes this course and treats it (in terms of devoting time for reading and lessons) like a regular course that student should be able to finish in 10 weeks.

Required Texts

The Origins of the Modern World: A Global and Ecological Narrative from the Fifteenth to the Twenty-First Century, 2nd Edition, by Robert B. Marks (New York: Rowman & Littlefield, 2007).

Plus a collection of essays, journal articles and newspaper pieces archived at:
<http://www.richardcurtisphd.com/teaching/sccc/POLS112/index.html>

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Course Description

A great challenge in the post-Cold War era was balancing forces of integration and fragmentation in the search for security and prosperity. These forces appear to be dominating the international system. Integration can be seen in the efforts of the European nations to forge a strong regional

organization, the European Community (EC), in order to meet the problems inherent in the modern political economy. Fragmentation is all too evident in the nationalist driven ethnic conflict in the former Yugoslavia. This course will examine different regions of the world with a view toward understanding those forces that shape our modern world. By working with some of the major analytical concepts used by international relations theorists, students will be able to put major world issues into perspective. Emphasis will be placed on understanding both the diversity and the interconnectedness of our world.

From the Course Catalog

This course is an interdisciplinary course designed to give the student a better understanding of the world community. After taking this course the student should:

1. Have an understanding of the nation state system, elements of power, and how nations vie for power.

--This is accomplished through a review of the history of the modern world primarily.

2. Have a better cultural perspective. This perspective will be gained by studying 3 or 4 representative cultures of major and Third World nations.

-- This is accomplished through a very intentional focus on India and China as well as Europe and the Americas.

3. Be acquainted with some of the major problems facing nation-states today, i.e. overpopulation, hunger, energy, resources, pollution, nuclear proliferation and nationalism.

-- The third section of the course focuses specifically on one of these issues, while the others are covered more broadly in the first third of the course and its historical review.

4. Have a better understanding of North-South, East-West relations and the role of the United Nations in these relations.

-- This is accomplished by using texts that very intentionally avoid stereotypical analyses with a particular cultural bias. Less attention is paid to the role of the UN in the course today, as that issue was much more vital when the course was created 20 years ago. The first book includes some information on this issue, in particular its Cold War context. The course as a whole comes back to North-South dynamics over and over, and sees East-West issues in terms of China instead of the former Soviet Union (which was the prime issue when the course was created but now the "Rise of China" has put something new in focus).

Course Objectives

The fundamental objective of this course is to allow students to read and consider details about the world that are not right in front of them (details not visible to the popular culture), but may well significantly impact their lives in the future. In particular the student will learn to better appreciate the ways in which the world is diverse yet interconnected.

This will be accomplished in three steps: past, present and future. The Past is examined in the book

by Robert Marks, which is an impressive overview of world history in the last few hundred years. The Present is primarily an exploration of the future of China, as China is becoming the most influential factor in the world, or at least appears to be as of now. The Future is a discussion of the complexities of climate change and the implications this has for life on earth from here forward.

Students will learn details about the current configuration of the world came from, how the rise of one major power today will affect that configuration, and students will gain an understanding of the challenges, political and other, that humanity faces from climate change.

Overview of Assignments (10 of them)

This course is divided into ten (10) Lessons. Each lesson includes reading assignments and analysis questions. Students can expect to put in 10 hours to read and understand each lesson and complete the assignments for that lesson. It is a good idea to take reading notes that can be referred to later in doing the assignments and in completing the exams.

Students are encouraged to supplement their reading with outside sources. The nature of international politics is such that any text becomes outdated quickly. Recommended international news sources include the Christian Science Monitor or the International Herald Tribune. Further, this is college, so if there are unfamiliar words in this overview or in the text, the student should look them up. This is basic to every class the student will take.

More specifically, the written assignments ask both specific and theoretical questions. The lessons should consist of a list of answers. Each lesson has 10 questions and some will require a short answer like a date or description of something; other questions ask the student's opinion on what the reading or it asks the student to synthesis (combine and analyze) a few important and the write up their thoughts. In short, just answer each question as directly as possible.

For example, below are the questions from Lesson One with some comments about how the students should think about answering them.

1. What is a Eurocentric version of the origins of the modern world?
(Provide a brief description of what the author means by these terms and try to summarize the sort of story he is calling Eurocentric.)
2. Why does the author of this book choose a non-Eurocentric narrative?
(Summarize the basic argument he offers in the text for this approach.)
3. How were famine and peasant revolt connected to population changes and social class differences?
(This question gets at more complex details so the student will want to think about how the author presented this information, and try to summarize it in a couple of paragraphs.)
4. Describe the trading circuits of the world around 1300. In what sense was this world polycentric?

(This is more straight-forward, the student is asked to summarize some basic facts about the world, trade in 1300, and then offer a couple of sentences to describe why that pattern of trade was polycentric.)

5. What is the story of the rise of the West?

(The question is not asking the student to tell this story, but rather to define it.)

6. What does the “gap” refer to, and what explanations have been offered to explain it?

(This term is defined in the text, what does it mean?)

7. When does the period of modern history typically begin? What events usually are taken as markers of the beginning of the modern period?

(The first is asking for a date, the second question asks the student to recount some details from the text about why that date is used.)

8. How does a view of history that is contingent differ from one that sees what happened as inevitable?

(This is asking a more theoretical question. The student should start with getting clear about the terms and then reflect on how the author distinguished them, and recount that as an answer.)

9. Why do China and India have large roles to play in this history?

(The author spent significant time on both of these cultures. Why? What is important about them?)

10. What does it mean to say that the world prior to about 1800 was polycentric?

(What does polycentric mean? How does that concept apply to the history you are reading?)

Other lessons follow similar patterns. The questions are generally short answer and ask the student to reflect on and summarize information from the reading; and in some cases to compare different readings.

Examinations (2 of them)

As is common with Correspondence Courses there are proctored exams the student takes as well. This course has two exams, functionally a mid-term and a final exam. These exams must be taken according to standard distance learning procedures (remember the necessary forms for Lessons and Exams). These exams will focus on issues from the lessons and ask students to combine ideas, critique them, and offer their own thoughts on important issues. The material in the course does not lend itself to three evenly spaced tests and so the first exam covers roughly half of the reading material and lessons, but that said, the density of what is raised in the second and third parts of the class makes those tests equally demanding.

Each of the ten textbook assignments will be worth 20 points. Therefore, all of the textbook assignment points will add up to 200. Each of the two examinations will be worth 100 points. The total possible points for both is 200. Thus, the total number of points possible for this course is 400.

Grades are determined by the thoroughness of the answer. Some questions are straight-forward details from the readings, others ask the student to think about some issue and discuss it.

Note that this means that all of the combined textbook assignments equal 50% of the course grade. From this, it follows that these assignments, taken as a whole, constitute the single largest determination of the course grade. Therefore, take each one seriously. In order to determine your grade, the number of point accumulated out of 400 possible will be added up. This number will then be divided by four to yield some number 100 or smaller. This number will then provide the percentage basis for the course according to the following scale:

<u>Percent</u>	<u>Decimal Grade</u>	<u>Letter Grade</u>
95-100	4.0	A
94	3.9	A
93	3.8	A-
92	3.7	A-
91	3.6	A-
90	3.5	A-
87-89	3.4	B+
85-86	3.3	B+
83-84	3.2	B+
81-84	3.1	B
80	3.0	B
79	2.9	B
78	2.8	B-
77	2.7	B-
76	2.6	B-
75	2.5	B-
74	2.4	C+
73	2.3	C+
72	2.2	C+
71	2.1	C
70	2.0	C
69	1.9	C
68	1.8	C-
67	1.7	C-
66	1.6	C-
65	1.5	C-
64	1.4	D+
63	1.3	D+
62	1.2	D+
61	1.1	D
60	1.0	D
59	0.9	D
58	0.8	D-
55-57	0.7	D-
54	0.6	F

REMINDER:

Be sure to attach a Lesson Identification form to the front of each lesson.

Lesson 1

Introduction / The Rise of the West?

Reading:

Origins of the Modern World: Preface, Preface to the Second Edition, Introduction and Chapter One

Objective:

The primary objective of Lesson 1 is to grasp the concept of competing historical narratives. Armed with that understanding the student will be able to distinguish a modern and rationally defensible narrative from unjustified ones.

Description:

In the introduction, the author discusses the topic of the book, and how others have approached it. The book addresses the large question: How did the modern world—the one that we live in—come into being? The modern world, according to the author, consists of many things, but he is especially interested in how the world became an industrial one, organized politically into nation-states with a substantial history of warfare, and marked by a large and growing gap between the wealthiest and poorest parts of the world.

Most previous explanations of the origins of the modern world have focused on Europe and the storyline of the “rise of the West,” because for the last 150–200 years, Europeans have, in fact, dominated the world. That led historians and others to search within Europe for the reasons for European dominance, giving rise to various theories about the extent to which Europe was a special, unique case in world history. These are “Eurocentric” explanations of the origins of the modern world.

Recent scholarship on East Asia, India, Africa, and the Middle East, however, has raised significant doubts about Eurocentric explanations. Rather, the new scholarship suggests a different storyline, in which most of the Old World, from Asia to Europe, was broadly comparable until 1750 or 1800, without one part being any more likely than another to break through to an industrial revolution. That it was ultimately Great Britain rather than China or Japan that did so had to do more with luck and the outcomes of other historical forces.

The purpose of Chapter One is to describe, in very general terms, what the world was like around 1400 C.E. The author analyzes that world in two terms: the material world and the trading world. By the “material world,” the author means the circumstances under which nearly all of the 350 million people alive on Earth in 1400 sustained their lives, while the “trading world” refers to the long-distance trade that linked much of the premodern world into trading circuits. A concluding section on the Black Death describes how those two “worlds” interacted in the mid-1300s, affecting tens of millions of people across the Eurasian continent.

The key concept in the section on the material world is “the biological old regime,” or “biological ancien regime” (“ancien regime” being French for “old regime”). Since about 90 percent of the

people in the world in 1400 gained their livelihood directly from agriculture, and even what industry there was also was based on materials from agriculture or the forest, the entire world was dependent on annual flows of solar energy (food and industrial plants grow by sunlight). Until about 1800, virtually everyone in the world lived within this biological old regime, that is, the one dependent on capturing annual flows of solar energy.

Even though the world in 1400 was quite limited by the available sources of energy, there was a surprising amount of trade among the various regions of the world (with the exception of the New World and Oceania). Indeed, two striking aspects of the premodern trading world were how extensive it was and how important Asia was in it. In fact, the engines pumping the trading world ca. 1400 were China, India, and the Muslim Middle East.

Key Terms/Vocabulary (Introduction)

Adam Smith	polycentric world	nomads
agrarian empire	progress	peasant revolt
Asia	rise of the West	peasants
conjuncture	smallpox	periphery
contingency	Thomas Malthus	population dynamics
David Ricardo	unit of analysis	rent
diffusionism	WTO (World Trade Organization)	ruling elite
ethnocentrism		species extinction
Eurasia		steppe
Eurocentrism		structures
Europe	Key Terms/Vocabulary (Chapter One)	subsistence level
European exceptionalism	agricultural revolution	taxes
European miracle	agricultural surplus	the first globalization
G7 (or G8)	bacterium	trading networks
globalization	biological ancien regime	virus
historical accident	biological old regime	wildlife
historical narrative	Black Death	world system
IMF (International Monetary Fund)	bubonic plague	
industry	cities	
inevitability	civilizations	
Karl Marx	core	
master narrative	dearth	
Max Weber	desiccated	
Middle Ages	epidemic disease	
modernization theory	Eurasia	
monocausal explanation	famine	
myth	global climate change	
nation state	life expectancy	
NATO (North Atlantic Treaty Organization)	macroparasites	
Orient	material world	
paradigm	microparasites	
	Mongolian empire	

Written Assignment:

1. What is a Eurocentric version of the origins of the modern world?
2. Why does the author of this book choose a non-Eurocentric narrative?
3. How were famine and peasant revolt connected to population changes and social class differences?
4. Describe the trading circuits of the world around 1300. In what sense was this world polycentric?
5. What is the story of the rise of the West?
6. What does the “gap” refer to, and what explanations have been offered to explain it?
7. When does the period of modern history typically begin? What events usually are taken as markers of the beginning of the modern period?
8. How does a view of history that is contingent differ from one that sees what happened as inevitable?
9. Why do China and India have large roles to play in this history?
10. What does it mean to say that the world prior to about 1800 was polycentric?

Lesson 2

STARTING WITH CHINA / EMPIRES, STATES, AND THE NEW WORLD, 1500–1775

Reading:

Origins of the Modern World: Chapter Two and Chapter Three

Objective:

The primary objective of Lesson 2 is to understand the significance of China for any narrative about world history; and to develop an understanding sufficient to compare different types of political organization that we see in history. The secondary objective is to be able to critique those options as they relate to a globalizing world..

Description:

Chapter 2 analyzes how Chinese, Indians, and Arabs interacted in the Indian Ocean both before and after Europeans made their appearance there beginning about 1500. Indian Ocean trade was a major generator of wealth in the world, and gaining access to it was important to many societies. Also very important in setting into motion dynamics that would have a huge impact on the course of world history were the Chinese voyages of discovery in the early 1400s, and the Chinese decision to base its monetary system on silver. The chapter also describes the creation and expansion of the Islamic world, African societies and the place of Africa in the world trading system, the reasons Europeans were so interested in getting access to Asian trade, the obstacles they faced in going overland to Asia, and the consequences of the first Europeans (the Portuguese) finding an ocean route to Asia.

Chapter three covers the time period from 1500 to 1775 that ultimately proved to be pivotal in the course of world history. Three related processes—the “first globalization” that brought the entire world into a single trading system for the first time, the vitality of empires throughout the world, and the growth of a system of sovereign states in Europe—brought Europeans to a position of wealth and power broadly comparable with that of Asians.

Key Terms/Vocabulary (Chapter 2)

African ministates
agrarian empire
Annam

Arabs
armed trading
bombards

cannons	
Cape of Good Hope	
dar al-Islam	Marco Polo
European states	Mecca
fragmented sovereignty	Ming dynasty
Genoa	Ottoman empire
Great Wall	Persian Gulf
gunpowder epic	silver
Henry the Navigator	slavery
Ibn Battuta	Spice Islands
Islam	Strait of Malacca
Mali	Vasco da Gama
Mansa Musa	Zheng He

Key Terms/Vocabulary (Chapter 3)

Aurangzeb	Hernan Cortéz	repartimento
Aztec empire	import duties	Romanov dynasty
bullion	Inca	Russia
Charles V	Lake Titicaca	Safavid Iran
citizen	Manchus	Seven Years' War
Columbian exchange	Manila	silk
conquistadors	mercantilism	silver
cotton textiles	Mexica	slavery
divine right of kings	Moctezuma	sovereign state
dynamics of empire	monarchy	Spanish empire
empire	Mughal India	state building process
encomienda	Navigation Acts	sugar plantations
European state system	nomadic threat	taxation
first globalization	perdure	Tenochtitlán
Francisco Pizarro	Philip II	trade triangles
French Revolution of 1789	political economy	tributary states
Great Dying	Potosí	tribute trade system
Great Power wars	Qing dynasty	Turks (Turkish)

Written Assignment:

1. What were the “voyages of Zheng He,” and why were they important? Why were they stopped, and why is that significant for world history?
2. Describe the trade circuits of the Indian Ocean. Who traded what, where? How did Europeans, starting with the Portuguese, change the rules of trade there?

3. Compare and contrast China and India ca. 1400. What were some important political differences? Why do you think those differences might matter in the way world history developed in the period from 1500 to 1800?
4. What is “dar al-Islam,” and why is it an important concept to know about world history? Are all Muslims Arabs? What other peoples converted to Islam?
5. When and how did Constantinople, the seat of Eastern Orthodox Christianity, get renamed Istanbul?
6. What is meant by the “first globalization”? Why do you think the author uses that term? What do you think he is trying to distinguish it from?
7. What was the size of the New World population before Europeans arrived, and then after they arrived, around 1600? Why did so many New World natives die during the sixteenth century? What was the significance of the Great Dying?
8. Why was there such a huge demand in the world for silver? Where did most of it come from after 1500? Where did most of it go?
 - Why did the Spanish attempt to create an empire in Europe, and why did the effort fail?
 - Why did most New World silver wind up in China?
9. Who organized and controlled the African slave trade to the Americas?
10. What was the theory of mercantilism? Which countries used it to shape their economic policies during the eighteenth century?

Lesson 3

THE INDUSTRIAL REVOLUTION AND ITS CONSEQUENCES, 1750–1850

Reading:

Origins of the Modern World: Chapter Four

Objective:

The objective of Lesson 3 is to grasp the significance of historical contingencies that play significant roles in the historical narrative being developed.

Description:

How and why the Industrial Revolution occurred first in Britain is the topic of chapter four, and a wholly new way of thinking about that problem is introduced. Previously, most explanations of the Industrial Revolution focused on attributes specific to Europeans in general or Britons in particular. Rather, this chapter shows that the most advanced societies across the Eurasian continent (using China and England as examples) were all running into similar ecological constraints of the biological old regime. At first only England, because of a combination of factors particular to that time and place, was able to escape from the constraints of the biological old regime by drawing upon colonial resources and applying steam power to industrial production and the tools of war. Britain then used those advantages against Asians, from India to Burma and China, tipping the global balance of power that hitherto had been in Asia's favor.

Key Terms/Vocabulary

agricultural productivity

Battle of Plassey

Battle of Pondicherry

calico

colonial legislation

Commissioner Lin

competitive advantage

deforestation

demographic regime (or system)

East India Company (EIC)

factory

four necessities of life

free markets

free trade

Glorious Revolution of 1688–1689

Guangzhou system

import substitution

Industrial Revolution

infanticide

James Watt

labor-saving device

land-saving device

Navigation Laws

nawab

opium

Opium War

paradox

peculiar periphery

population dynamics

private trading companies

protectionism
rice paddies
right of asiento
science
Sepoy
Sir George Macartney
spinning jenny
steam power

subsistence
tariff
technology
Thomas Malthus
Thomas Newcomen
Treaty of Nanjing
unequal treaties
water frame

Written Assignment:

1. What are the “four necessities of life”? Where did they come from in the biological old regime? Why is that important to know?
2. How does the Industrial Revolution compare with the agricultural revolution?
3. In the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, why did India and China have a competitive advantage in the production of cotton textiles? Who bought their cotton, and why? What did the British do in response? Why?
4. In what ways was the New World a “peculiar periphery” in the British empire? How did the British try to ensure that their New World colonials produced raw materials (or sugar) and imported finished goods? How might this relate to the causes of the American Revolution?
5. When and why did the British abandon mercantilism and begin to champion global free trade?
6. What are the usual explanations for why the Industrial Revolution occurred in Europe? What evidence from China does the author cite to suggest that these arguments are not persuasive?
7. To what extent can eighteenth-century China be considered a market economy?
8. Explain the paradox that in China personal freedoms, market exchange, improved transportation, and population dynamics led not to an industrial revolution but to a biological old regime dead end?
9. How and why did the British begin drinking so much Chinese tea? What economic problems did tea imports cause for the British? How did they solve that problem?
10. Why must all explanations of the Industrial Revolution, including the one provided in this book, be tentative?

Lesson 4

THE GAP

Reading:

Origins of the Modern World: Chapter Five

Objective:

The objective of Lesson 4 is to understand the origins and causes of the gap in living standards between the East and West that arose after the 1700's.

Description:

Chapter five explores the processes by which a huge and growing gap opened between the industrialized parts of the world, and Asia and Africa. In particular, the gap is shown to have opened up late in history (in the early 1800s), and to have been the result of specific historical processes, not a “better” or “more advanced” European culture. While competitive war pressures forced other European countries to industrialize just to keep up with Britain, India deindustrialized under British colonial rule, opium and el Niño–induced famines in China debilitated the ability of its government to protect the country, and the tools of empire led to the colonization of Africa. Whereas India and China had accounted for two-thirds of the world's industrial production in 1800, by 1900 their proportion had shrunk to less than 10 percent. Nationalism was pushing European powers toward a global war, while Africa and Asia became third world countries, supplying the industrialized world with raw materials and consuming their manufactured goods.

Key Terms/Vocabulary

collective action	Meiji era
Communist Manifesto	middle class
deindustrialization	nationalism
depression	nation-building
ecological warfare	nations
el Niño	New Imperialism
ENSO (el Niño–Southern Oscillation)	nobility
eugenics	Open Door Notes
GDP (gross domestic product)	quinine
global capitalism	recession
industrialization	revolution
Maxim gun	rifling

scientific racism
scramble for Africa
scramble for China
slump
social Darwinism
standard of living
Taiping Rebellion
trading bloc
third world
underdeveloped
working class

Written Assignment:

1. What were the relative GDPs of India, China, and Europe in 1800? In 1900? What explains the change? Why is that important to know?
2. When did the gap between the industrialized world and the third world emerge? What evidence is cited?
3. How did opium contribute to China's nineteenth-century problems? How much opium did the Chinese consume?
4. How did India's economy "deindustrialize"? When did it happen? Under whose auspices?
5. How did free trade work to India's disadvantage in the nineteenth century? How did it work to Britain's advantage?
6. How did the depression of the 1870s lead to protectionism and the "New Imperialism"?
7. What were the social consequences of industrialization? How could industrialization change the concept of time?
8. What is the difference between a nation and a state? Between state-building and nation-building? Which came first? When and how did they become linked?
9. What technological advances enabled Europeans to colonize Africa?
10. By the end of the nineteenth century, how did Europeans begin to conceive of, and explain, their good fortune in the world?

Lesson 5

THE GREAT DEPARTURE

Reading:

Origins of the Modern World: Chapter Six

Objective:

The objective of Lesson 5 is to understand some details of how the 20th Century came to differ from previous centuries, as well as how those changes can be seen as continuous with the past out of which it came.

Description:

Chapter 6 examines the process of accelerating change—in population, warfare, fossil fuel consumption, and environmental exploitation—that has gripped the world since the turn of the twentieth century. This chapter argues that the processes of global industrialization have fundamentally changed the relationship of humans to the environment during the twentieth century, and that the new dynamics of this relationship represent a major break with the past. In 1900, Europe still maintained its imperial empire, but a “thirty-year crisis” period consisting of two world wars and the Great Depression ravaged Europe and polarized the postwar world around two opposing superpowers, the United States and the Soviet Union. The ensuing Cold War fueled a nuclear arms race with the U.S. adopting a capitalist, consumer-driven economy while the Soviet Union pressed ahead with its state-run economy and its heavy emphasis on production. For what became known as the third world, the post–World War II era brought independence from the imperialist powers but continued problems as newly freed nations tried to overcome the growing gap separating the haves from the have-nots. Many states were forced to take sides in the Cold War, while others attempted to forge a neutral stance between the two competing countries and ideologies. At the close of the twentieth century, the Soviet Union disintegrated, unable to keep up with U.S. military spending. Having committed to the ideal of industrial development, most nations must now deal with its consequences and confront the issues of fossil fuel consumption, population growth, and environmental damage in the twenty-first century.

Key Terms/Vocabulary

Bolshevik Revolution
Cold War
communism
consumerism

containment
decolonization
dependency
development
first world

fossil fuels	
glasnost	
global warming	OPEC
globalization	partition of 1947
great departure	perestroika
Great Depression	productionism
Haber-Bosch process	second world
independence movement	the gap
industrialization	third world
MAD (mutually assured destruction)	thirty-year crisis
migration	total war
militarization	

Written Assignment:

1. What factors contributed to the almost four-fold increase in the human population over the course of the twentieth century?
2. How did World War I threaten the stability of the old imperialist order built by Europeans in the nineteenth century?
3. Why was the synthesis of nitrogen so important to the course of twentieth-century history? What was the name of the process? Why was it developed first in Germany?
4. How did the Great Depression of the 1930s facilitate the rise of fascism and military aggression? Why was the Soviet Union not as negatively affected as the rest of the world?
5. What were the goals of revolutions and independence movements in India, China, Vietnam, and other parts of the world? Why were they often of socialist or communist leanings? Why did both the United States and the Soviet Union support decolonization?
6. How did electricity, easy credit, suburban development, and advertising, among other factors, bring about a consumer culture in the United States? What portion of the U.S. economy was devoted to consumer goods? How did this differ from the Soviet Union's economy?
7. What are the first, second, and third worlds? How has dependency and development characterized the experience of the third world in the twentieth century?
8. Why is the gap most pronounced in Africa? How did the old imperialist order contribute to Africa's current plight?
9. What is the role of oil in the global economic system? Why has the Middle East become a place of continual violence and conflict?

10. What has the synthesis of ammonia done to the global environment?

Lesson 6

CHANGES AND CONTINUITIES

Readings:

Origins of the Modern World: Conclusion
AND Curtis “Artificial Enemies” (from archive)

Objective:

The objective of Lesson 6 is to understand some details of how the 20th Century came to differ from previous centuries, as well as how those changes can be seen as continuous with the past out of which it came.

Description:

In the conclusion of *Origins*, the author summarizes the story of the origins of the modern world as told in this book, and argues that interactions among various parts of the world, not the cultural achievement of any particular part and its diffusion, account for most of the story. The problem then is posed of whether or not the twentieth century represents a continuity of earlier trends, or a significant change in the dynamics of world history; evidence on both sides of the question is cited, and readers are asked to arrive at their own tentative conclusions.

Dr. Curtis’s essay argues that the 21st Century is founded on repeating the basic patterns of the Cold War, with conflict at the heart of government policy. He concludes that this pattern has been artificially maintained and challenges people to think more critically about how their world is portrayed to them.

Key Terms/Vocabulary (*Origin Conclusion*)

Bolshevik Revolution

Chinese communist revolution

Cold War

contingencies

ethnic cleansing

European Union

four tigers

Great Depression

interactions

migration

OPEC

pentimento

World War I

World War II

Written Assignment:

1. Does the story (i.e., history) depend on the time and place of the observer?
2. How might the history of the world have been told by people in various parts of the world in 1500?
3. In 1750?
4. In 1950?
5. Does this mean that history is relative? Or can there be truths about history?
6. Who is Sayyid Qutb? And what is his place in this analysis?
7. Who is Ayman Al-Zawahri? How does his view of Just War differ from standard views in Islam?
8. What does the term “False Flag” mean?
9. What was “Operation Gladio”?
10. What is the historical importance of “Team B”?

At this time you have completed all assignments necessary to take your first examination. You must request an examination using the *Examination Request Form*. Thoroughly review the instructions on this form prior to requesting the examination. You should bring PHOTO ID and a pen or pencil to the examination.

Preparing for Your First Examination

The first examination will cover the materials assigned in Lessons 1-6. The examination will require the student to write essay-style answers about the material from the “Origins” textbook. The student can prepare for the exam by reviewing the book, their notes and responses to the written questions on Lessons 1-6. It is important to have a working knowledge of the various terms used, since the exam will ask the student to incorporate their general knowledge of this history in versions of key questions that have already been asked.

ALL EXAMS ARE ONE HOUR/ OPEN BOOK.

Lesson 7

China and Democracy?

Readings:

Gunde: “China’s Democratic Future: How It Will Happen and Where It Will Lead

Hughes: “Chinese Nationalism in the Global Era”

Yu: “The New Chinese Nationalism”

Liu: “How Will China Become ‘Democratic’”

Objective:

The object of Lesson 7 is to compare and contrast some competing theoretical analyses of the immediate political future of China and some speculation about what this means for the whole world. The readings do not agree with each other, and one task is to navigate their disagreements.

Description:

The history of China is deep and long, going back two and three times as long as histories in the West. The role China historically is massive in its significance and many observe belief China will again play a much larger role in world affairs. The readings collected here represent different perspectives. Read the readings with an eye to these differences. In some cases it will be necessary to look up terms on your own to complete the written assignment.

Written Assignment:

1. What does Gunde mean by “Democracy”? How is that contrasted with “Communism”? Is that distinction sensible (to you)?
2. Gunde claims “democracy” enhances the legitimacy of a government. Is that true? He mentions economic growth but China and the Soviet Union both outperformed the West at different times. Why is this important?
3. When Gunde uses the word “democracy” does he mean a political system or does he mean an economic system (democracy is equated with free-market capitalism)?

4. Hughes refers to “ideological orthodoxy” what does he mean? What is “Orthodox” in this context?
5. Hughes refers to “market socialism” as an “oxymoron”, why? Robert Marks had argued markets are a constant feature of every economic system. Is he disagreeing with Hughes or do they mean different things?
6. According to Yu, what is the Chinese “New Left”? How is that different from the way “New Left” is usually used in American politics?
7. What does Yu say “New Liberals” believe? How does that compare to “Neo-Liberal” in the American context?
8. What is “Nationalism”?
9. Liu seems very optimistic about the prospects for democratic political structures to arise in China, does that optimism seem sensible to you?
10. Can “Nationalism” and “Democracy” co-exist in your opinion?

Lesson 8

When China Rules the World

Readings:

Read all five (5) pieces in the archive written by Martin Jacques:

“No One Rules the World” from March 2009

“A New Sun Rises in the East” from June 2009

“China Rising” from February 2010

“No Chance Against China” from January 2010

“Spheres of Influence” from September 2011

Objective:

The objective of Lesson 8 a continuation of Lesson 7, with primary focus on the views of Jacques and what he thinks it means for China to become the dominant world power, which he expects sometime in the next couple of decades.

Description:

Jacques argument is that the history of China provides us with historical details with which to interpret China’s current rise in status and how China might behave. He takes special note of the lack of an expansionist program on the part of the Chinese historically. Westerners seemed to build empires and conquer other peoples, where the Chinese have historically (and still seem to) emphasized influence – which is a deeply woven into the fabric of the culture, via Confucianism.

In this way China can properly be seen as a curious hybrid of old and new (Confucian and Modern; socialist and capitalist). This hybrid and the Chinese comfort with that seems different than the west and so we ought to expect different behavior from a nation with those and other different characteristics.

Written Assignment:

1. In the May 2009 piece Jacques talks about an “end to US power as we have known it.” What does that mean, given that there is little reason to see a decrease in US military power any time soon?
2. What is “Bretton Woods” and why is it significant here?
3. From the June 2009 piece, people in the west talk about Civil Society as a balance to state power. Does that really work? How might a Chinese approach (the values that inform our Civil Society are incorporated into State structures in China) be stronger or weaker when it comes to protecting core values?
4. From February 2010, what does he say the Han view of race is?
5. What is “The Mandate of Heaven”? When and how is it withdrawn?
6. What factors keep Westerners from having a long view of history?
7. He says, “A people that suffered at the expense of European and Japanese imperialism will never see the world in the same way as those peoples that were its exponents and beneficiaries.” Never is an awfully long time, is he right?
8. From January 2010, why do Americans (especially, by the way Jacques is English) see the state so differently from the Chinese?
9. He says, “Maintaining the unity of Chinese civilization is regarded as the most important political priority and seen as the sacred task of the state, hence its unique role: there is no Western parallel.” What would an imagined (by you) parallel look like?
10. The 2011 piece is critical of the view of Aaron Frieberg, what do you think of Jacques critique?

Lesson 9

Is it All Over Now?

Readings:

Hern, “Is Human Culture Carcinogenic for Uncontrolled Population Growth and Ecological Destruction?”

Epstein, “Is Global Warming Harmful to Health?”

Monbiot, “Sleepwalking to Extinction”

Hansen, “Can We Still Avoid Dangerous Human-Made Climate Change?”

Objective:

The objective of Lessons 9 and 10 is to grasp some of the scientific predictions related to climate change and to consider their implications for the student, personally, and society, in general.

Description:

These pieces are mostly scientific. Hern holds two doctoral degrees; he is a Physician (Epidemiologist) and an Anthropologist, and Hansen is the most well known scientist in the world on these issues (he is a Physicist). Monbiot is a journalist commenting on the situation, although he has followed it extensively. These pieces begin the discussion of how dire the future is predictably going to be, in terms of human survival.

Written Assignment:

1. What are the four major characteristics of a “Malignant process”?
2. Hern refers to Van Forester’s calculations on cell growth and compares these to human population increases. What is his point?
3. What is the value of what here Hern calls a hypothesis (later he will call it a diagnosis)?
4. Do you think this analogy of his makes sense?
4. What is West Nile Virus, and why does it showing up in NYC matter to Epstein?

5. Is heat or floods the bigger issue?
6. What is “Dreamworld” and why was Monbiot talking about it?
7. From Hansen, how long ago was the world 2.5C warmer than today?
8. How does Hansen describe NOAA’s position that increasing hurricane strength is due to a natural cycle?
9. How does he describe what the “Business as usual scenario” will produce?
10. Hanes, in chart 32, claims there is time. That was in 2006, is there still time?

Lesson 10

“Is it All Over Now?” Continued

Readings:

IPCC, “Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change Fourth Assessment Report, Climate Change 2007”

Hansen, “Global Warming Twenty Years Later: Tipping Points Near”

IFPRI, “Food Security and Climate Change”

Curtis, “Constructing Meaning at the End of Humanity”

Objective:

The objective of Lessons 9 and 10 is to grasp some of the scientific predictions related to climate change and to consider their implications for the student, personally, and society, in general.

Description:

These pieces are also mostly scientific. Three of them come from large organizations or groups of scientists, another is from James Hansen, and then a concluding philosophical reflection. The conclusions are dramatic and dire. These pieces further the discussion of how dire the future is predictably going to be, in terms of human survival.

Written Assignment:

1. Which gas does the IPCC recognize as the most important Green House Gas?
2. If the sun and volcanic activity were the only factors, which direction does the IPCC say temperatures should have gone?
3. What do their models suggest will happen to the Greenland Ice Sheet by 2100? How much will that increase sea level?
4. What is Hansen’s level of confidence in his predictions? Has that changed over the years?

5. What amount (in Parts Per Million or PPM) of Carbon Dioxide does Hansen say is the upper limit of sustainable? What amount do we have as of the time he wrote that piece?
6. What does Hansen suggest should be done with the CEO's of fossil fuel corporations?
7. What does the IFPRI recommend to mitigate dangers associated with crop failure and starvation in the Third World?
8. Given that 2,000 calories is the average needed by an adult to survive daily, what conclusions can you draw from the "Pessimistic" side of the graph on page 5 of the IFPRI report?
9. What is the "most optimistic" increase in temperature Curtis cites from Agence France-Press?
10. What is "The New Absurd"?

Preparing for Your Second (and last) Examination

The second examination will cover the materials assigned in Lessons 7-10. The examination will require the student to write essay-style answers about the material from the "Origins" textbook. The student can prepare for the exam by reviewing the book, their notes and responses to the written questions on Lessons 7-10. It is important to have a working knowledge of the various the various authors and their different positions relative to each other.

At this time you have completed all assignments necessary to take your second examination. You must request an examination using the *Examination Request Form*. Thoroughly review the instructions on this form prior to requesting the examination. You should bring PHOTO ID and a pen or pencil to the examination.

ALL EXAMS ARE ONE HOUR/ OPEN BOOK.
