

Foundations of World Civilization: Notes 1

Introduction to the course

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- History 201: Foundations of World Civilization
 - I'm Bruce Owen
 - I am an archaeologist, trained broadly in an anthropology department, as are most archaeologists in the US
 - I have done fieldwork and lab analyses in Peru on periods ranging from the origins of agriculture in the Andes to complex societies such as the Inka, Tiwanaku, and Wari
 - I have also done historical archaeology in Connecticut, San Francisco and Oakland, and Peru
 - So why am I teaching a history class?
 - You'll see as I explain what the course covers
 - much of it has to do with what happened before written records, or when writing was still used only in certain places, for certain purposes
 - events that laid the groundwork for written history
 - but are accessible to us only through archaeology
 - also, many of the broad concepts that are important to the early end of human history and prehistory are the same as those used by archaeologists
 - as is a surprising amount of the reasoning used in both fields, even though historians concentrate much more on written sources
 - So, what is this course about?
 - Why does history matter?
 - as we will see, historians try to show us not only what happened, but also why
 - understanding both the what and the why helps us see why our current world is as it is
 - what might change it, intentionally or not
 - what our options are
 - how they have worked out in the past
 - who we are as individuals, ethnicities, and nations
 - This course will introduce you to the “foundations of world civilization” in several different senses of the term “foundations”.
 - First, foundations *are what happened before*,
 - setting the stage for what came after.
 - This course will survey some of the events and processes prior to 1500 CE (AD) that led into modern world history.
 - For this, we will use Jared Diamond's *Guns, Germs, and Steel*
 - as an introduction to what happened mostly before written history,
 - and parts of a general world history textbook
 - (Bentley & Ziegler 2008, *Traditions & Encounters*, vol. I)
 - for the subsequent several thousand years.
 - Second, foundations refer to the *intellectual basis of the field*:
 - the concepts and theories that historians use to explain how and why events took place.
 - We will start with some general theories and viewpoints on history.

- Then we will focus on one kind of explanation, environmental determinism,
 - explained in *Guns, Germs, and Steel*.
- This book will be both
 - an example of theory and argument,
 - and a look into the processes before written history that led to the agricultural economic foundations of world civilizations.
- Third, we will consider “foundations” to refer to the *origins of the practice of studying and writing history itself*.
 - We will look at some of the first histories, starting with Herodotus around 425 BCE (BC), and at others as the field of history developed.
- Finally, the foundations of a field of study are the *methods* it uses.
 - So this class will help you to develop practical skills
 - for reading and interpreting academic arguments
 - and primary historical sources,
 - and for researching and writing historical and other sorts of papers.
 - You will get a taste of the raw material of history and how to handle it
 - by reading many old texts, as well as more recent commentaries on them
- Strategy of the course
 - we start with a general discussion of theories and approaches to history
 - then move to Jared Diamond’s *Guns, Germs, and Steel*, starting with the theory and general approach of this book as an example
 - Diamond also makes a good case for why we should care about this history – it explains the fundamental arrangement and injustice of the modern world
 - we continue through *Guns, Germs, and Steel*, using it as a series of cues to consider some of the important processes that formed the foundations of the world that was later documented by historians
 - and Diamond’s explanations for how they played out
 - then we will shift to a different, more traditionally historical approach to look very, very briefly at what happened from the origins of the first states in Mesopotamia and Egypt up to 1500 CE (AD).
 - the rise of complex societies in not only Mesopotamia and Egypt, but also India/Pakistan, China, and Mesoamerica
 - the Greek Mediterranean world and the first historians, Herodotus and Thucydides
 - the Roman Mediterranean world
 - Globalization and collapse in the classical world
 - Islam
 - and more...
 - interspersed with that sprint through world history will be discussions of early historians, how history is done, and some philosophy of history
- Specifically, in this course you will
 - 1) Learn about the variety of conditions in which complex social systems have emerged and in which they have transformed.

- 2) Acquire an appreciation for a significant range and diversity of societies across a broad span of time from the Pleistocene to 1500 CE, and across a geographic span covering much of the globe.
- 3) Attain a basic geographical and historical literacy, learning to identify the locations and the basic chronological frameworks of numerous societies.
- 4) Study the ways in which aspects of these societies function and interact. These aspects include belief systems, social stratification, differential access to resources, gender, exchange, and conflict.
- 5) Learn current theoretical constructs that explain these phenomena.
- 6) Study ways in which societies interact with their physical environment. These include adaptations to, and modifications of, the environment as well as reactions to change in the environment.
- 7) Develop your reasoning and writing skills by using evidence to support arguments in brief but properly referenced papers, as well as written exams.
- Format of the course
 - Mostly lectures, usually with some Powerpoint slides
 - I hope you will ask questions and make comments
 - Enrollment
 - No waiting list, special permissions, etc.
 - If you want to get in, just keep checking PeopleSoft and grab a seat if someone drops
 - hint: use **getthatclass.com**. It will text or email you when a seat opens up in a specified class
 - This course meets the learning objectives for GE area D2 courses (World History and Civilization).
- Course mechanics, from the syllabus
 - Key to the course: the class web page
 - note that this is NOT a WebCT (Blackboard) page
 - You can get to it from the SSU “Class web pages” list
 - From the SSU web page (sonoma.edu)
 - click on "Information for...students",
 - then "Class web pages",
 - then "History 201.2: Foundations of World Civilizations (Owen)"
 - You are responsible for checking it regularly
 - The web page takes precedence over the paper syllabus
 - It *will* change over the semester, so check it!
 - I will post new announcements, assignment information, deadlines, study guides, etc.
 - I may adjust the reading schedule if we fall behind or get ahead
 - I will add some online readings that are not listed yet
 - but don't worry, it won't be too much
 - I may change deadlines, exam dates, etc.
 - The web page features:
 - Class news, reminders, changes to assignments deadlines, readings, test dates, etc.
 - These can be important!

- The schedule of readings
 - Each day shows what you should read from the textbook,
 - and has links to online assigned readings
 - Please do the readings *before* the class session
- The readings are pretty long, up to 50 or 60 pages per class
 - Much of this is chapters from *Guns, Germs, and Steel*, which is a bestseller, written for a general audience
 - this is NOT a technical, professional book for historians or archaeologists
 - some students find it difficult, but it is actually very well written. Pay attention and you should have no trouble with it
 - much of the rest comes from the Bentley and Ziegler textbook, which is also pretty easy to read
 - some is original historical sources
 - these can be harder to read because of their old-fashioned or unfamiliar style and vocabulary
 - but that is also some of the charm and interest of history
 - getting the story straight from the people who experienced it...
- The schedule also has links to
 - lecture notes
 - Usually will be posted before the class session
 - These notes can be useful for studying
 - PowerPoint slides used in class
 - usually posted after the class session
 - also good for assignments and preparing for tests
 - Optional online sources of additional information and images related to some class sessions
- The schedule also shows
 - dates when each assignment is due
 - dates of the tests
- Virtual handouts
 - the syllabus
 - detailed information about each assignment
 - charts, maps, and other items
 - study guides, etc.
- Links to other websites with useful and interesting information and images
- The class web page URL is in the syllabus (which is on the website... what use is that?)
- To access some items, you will need a class user ID and password
 - because some of the reading is copyrighted
 - restricting access meets the requirements of use for "educational purposes"
 - Class user ID:
 - Class password:
- Furloughs

- Because of the severe state budget cuts to the California State University system, most staff other than Police Services must take 2 unpaid furlough days a month, and faculty must take 9 unpaid furlough days each semester.
 - We have to sign a statement that we will not work on furlough days.
- We have been urged to divide the days proportionally among class days and days for preparation and grading (which extends both before the first class and after the last one.).
- This works out to three class sessions cancelled per semester for courses that meet twice a week,
- or over nine percent less school for your (increased) fees overall.
- Furlough days are not holidays, although I have scheduled them adjacent to holidays to give you more flexibility.
- The furlough days are indicated in the class schedule, along with required activities comparable to a class period.
 - Tuesday Sept 8 (day after Labor Day holiday)
 - Tuesday Nov. 10 (day before Veterans' Day holiday)
 - Tuesday Nov. 24 (day before Thanksgiving break)
- You may schedule those activities whenever you want, before the next class meeting.
- Other furlough days will delay my returning some assignments or tests.
- Should you wish to contact your Governor or legislators about funding for the CSU, contact information is posted at
 - <http://www.sonoma.edu/uaffairs/legislators.shtml>
- We use two books:
 - Diamond, Jared
 - 1999, *Guns, Germs, and Steel, the Fates of Human Societies*. Norton. ISBN 0-393-31755-2
 - Bentley, Jerry H., and Herbert F. Ziegler
 - 2008, *Traditions & Encounters, A Global Perspective on the Past*. Volume I, From the Beginning to 1500. Fourth edition. McGraw Hill. ISBN 978-0-07-333062-4
 - Available from the Northlight Books, the campus Barnes and Noble bookstore, Amazon.com, and elsewhere
- Grading
 - 15%: Reading quizzes (about 0.7% each). Three multiple-choices questions about the readings at most class sessions.
 - 10%: Written assignment 1: Abstracts and citations.
 - An exercise in understanding, summarizing, and citing two sources.
 - Details will be posted on the class website.
 - 15%: Written assignment 2: Using a primary and a secondary source.
 - Practice in evaluating and interpreting a primary source, using background from a secondary source, and citation format.
 - Details will be posted on the class website.
 - 20%: Written assignment 3: Writing a historical argument.
 - A brief history paper, based on one or more primary sources, advancing and supporting an argument, with proper citation format.
 - Details will be posted on the class website.

- 20%: In-class midterm.
 - Short-answer and essay questions, and maps on which you mark important places and regions.
- 20%: Final exam.
 - Similar to the midterm, emphasizing material covered in the second part of the course, but using concepts and comparisons from the first part.
 - study guides will be posted on the web page
- Grading scheme: This course is graded on a curve, with the minimum score for a B- initially set near the median (that is, about half the class gets a B- or better).
 - I may then shift the grade ranges up or down somewhat to better reflect the performance of the class.
- Submitting assignments: The written assignments must be submitted as a file attached to an email message to me.
 - No paper copy is needed.
 - I will comment and grade the paper on an evaluation form tailored to each assignment.
 - This form will be included in the assignment information, to help you understand what I am looking for.
 - I will email the completed form back to you.
 - The computer file is due by midnight of the due date.
 - Due dates will be on days when the class does not meet, so that coming to class will not conflict with last-minute work on your assignment. Due dates will be indicated on the class web page.
 - Details on submitting assignments will be included in the assignment information.
- Late assignment policy:
 - I will accept assignments up to one week late with a 10% grading penalty. I will not accept any assignment more than one week after the due date.
- Drafts: I encourage you to submit drafts of the assignments so that I can comment on them and suggest directions for the final version.
 - Email is fastest, but I will also look at paper drafts.
 - please indicate that you are sending a draft, and not submitting a final version
- Rewrites: If you get a C or lower on an assignment, you may submit a rewritten version
 - within two weeks of the date when I returned the evaluation form.
 - I will deduct 20% from the score, and count either the original grade or the rewritten paper's grade, whichever is higher.
- Email: I usually reply to emails within 24 hours. If you do not hear from me within 48 hours, assume that I did not get your message and try again.
- Plagiarism
 - Don't do it!
 - I have failed students for plagiarism
 - I have posted an explanation of plagiarism on the course web page that you may want to look at. It explains how to easily avoid plagiarizing
 - Please see me if you have any doubts or questions about this
- I do not take attendance, but
 - I cover things in class that are not in the readings

- I show lots of pictures that make things easier to visualize and remember
- I explain overall patterns, important points, and errors in the readings
- You and your colleagues can ask questions
- Sometimes I announce changes to assignments, deadlines, readings, etc. in class
- Students who come to class tend to do better on the assignments and tests.
- But I won't patronize you or waste time by taking roll, so I'll leave attendance up to you.
- Students with Special Needs:
 - If you are a student with special learning needs and you think you may require accommodations, your first step is to register with the campus office of Disabled Student Services, Salazar 1049, phone 664-2677.
 - DSS will provide you with written confirmation of your verified disability and authorize recommended accommodations.
 - You then bring this recommendation to me, and we work out how to handle the accommodations.
 - If you think you may require assistance evacuating a building in the event of a disaster, please let me know what type of assistance you think you may need.
- University polices
 - the syllabus includes a link to University policies on adding and dropping, appealing grades, cheating, and other things you might want to know about
- Contacting me:
 - My office hours:
 - Tu-Th 2:30-3:30; Tu 5:30-6:30
 - in Stevenson 3007
 - or see me after class
 - or arrange to see me at some other time, if none of these are convenient
 - email me at: bruce.owen@sonoma.edu , which I usually check at least once every day
 - or click on the email link near the top of the course web page
 - Don't bother with my office phone, since I am rarely there except during office hours, and I rarely check the voice mail.
 - I have a box in the Anthro department office, Stevenson 2054, where you can leave messages or papers for me
 - If the door to Stevenson 2054 is locked, go in through Stevenson 2070
 - please don't slide things under my office door, stick them to a nearby bulletin board, etc., because I share that office with several other people who may not correctly figure out what to do with your paper.
- Preparation for the online reading assignment for next class
 - short extract from a book by Arnold Toynbee
 - many students find the language obscure
 - that is part of the reason I assign it
 - it is only 60 years old, but it is good practice for reading historical sources
 - print it out
 - read it with a browser window open to Google

- when you find a word you are not sure of, just type in define: word and read a few definitions
- when you see a phrase you don't understand, type it into Google in quotation marks
 - you will often get some hits that explain it
 - he refers to the “general war of 1914”
 - what does that mean? try Googling it
 - information you find with Google is not always right, but if a bunch of sites agree and the answer makes sense, it is probably OK
 - this is like asking a friend: very easy and helpful, but not necessarily authoritative on all subjects
- take notes in the margins: write down what he is saying in each paragraph
 - this will keep you attentive and thinking as you read
 - and will help you figure out what his main points are
- be ready to discuss the reading in class
- also a reading on the conventions of expressing dates: AD/BC, BCE/CE, BP, counting centuries or millennia, etc.
 - this is basic knowledge that you will need to make sense of many readings in this course
- Photos