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21H.912 The World Since 1492  
Fall 2004

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## THE WORLD SINCE 1492

### Description:

This class offers a look into the last five hundred years of world history. Rather than attempt an exhaustive chronology of all of the significant events and processes that have occurred on the globe since 1492—an impossible task for a lifetime, let alone a single semester—we will be focusing on certain geographic areas at specific times, in order to highlight a particular historical problem or to examine the roots of processes that have had an enormous impact on the contemporary world.

In order to lend structure to such a wide-ranging exploration, the class will orient around four central themes: colonialism and imperialism; political and social revolution; industrialization; and the rise of consumer society. While any of these themes could provide the basis for a class in-and-of itself, we will look to the ways in which these themes interact—for example, how the history of imperialism relates to the course of industrialization. Finally, in this class we will engage with a range of different types of readings, from primary sources (writings from the times), to historical narratives, to historiography (debates about history), to works of fiction. In this way, the class will also allow a glimpse into the ways in which history itself is constructed and continually re-written.

### Organization of the Class:

In general, we will have an intensive discussion session every week addressing a specific book or group of essays. Other class meetings, meanwhile, will be a blend of informal lecture, question and answer, and discussion. Discussions will therefore be the single most significant element of this class. This is reflected in the calculation of the final grade, which can be broken down as follows:

Four 5-page papers:	15% each
Discussion/Participation:	25%
Final Exam:	15%

There may be short (1 or 2 page) written responses to the readings assigned intermittently; these will be factored into the discussion grade.

In addition to discussion, the criteria for a HASS-D subject include twenty pages of written assignments. These papers will draw from the assigned readings, lectures, and discussions over the course of the class: no additional or outside research will be required for the papers. The four 5-page papers are due **Sept. 29, Oct. 25, Nov. 17 and Dec. 8.**

You must revise and resubmit at least one of these papers. Please talk to me first before rewriting a paper; revisions must be returned, *along with the marked original and comments*, **within two weeks** of receiving the corrected original.

**Please note:** Plagiarism of any kind—that is taking another's words and/or ideas from a book, another student, or from the internet without full and complete citation—will not be tolerated regardless of the circumstances, and will result in an "F" for the final class grade.

Books for Purchase:

Catalina de Erauso, *Lieutenant Nun: Memoir of a Basque Transvestite in the New World*

Olaudah Equiano, *The Interesting Narrative of the Life of Equiano*

Chinua Achebe *Things Fall Apart*

Scott Cook, *Colonial Encounters in the Age of High Imperialism* (1995)

Heda Kovaly, *Under a Cruel Star* (1997)

Additional readings will appear on the Course Website or handed out in class.

Class Outline:

**Week 1**

Sept 8 (Thurs.): Introduction to class and requirements

**Week 2**

Sept. 13 (Tues.) Transatlantic Contact and Its Significance

Read: Janet Lippman Abu-Lughod, "The World System in the 13<sup>th</sup> Century: Dead-End or Precursor?" in M. Adas, *Islamic and European Expansion* (1993), 75-102

Discussion: Letter from Columbus; Morison, Sauer, & Todorov on Columbus  
(from M. Lunenfeld, *1492: Discovery, Invasion, Encounter* (1991), 107-113, 131-142)

Sept. 15 (Thurs.) Indian Ocean Encounters; Conquest in the New World

Read: McNeil, "The Age of Gunpowder Empires 1450-1800" in M. Adas, *Islamic and European Expansion* (1993), 103-139;

**Week 3**

Sept. 20 (Tues.) Discussion: Catalina de Erauso, *Lieutenant Nun*:

*Memoir of a Basque Transvestite in the New World* (entire book)

Excerpt from Sepulveda/Las Casas debate (1554) [6 pp.]

Sept. 22 (Thurs.): Racism I: New World Slavery

**Week 4**

Sept. 27 (Tues.) Discussion: Olaudah Equiano, *The Interesting Narrative of the Life of Equiano*

Sept. 29 (Thurs): The *Ancien Regime* in France, and the Outbreak of the Revolution

**Week 5**

Oct. 4 (Tues.) Revolution in France: Universal Human Rights  
Discussion: Documents from L. Hunt, *The French Revolution and Human Rights*  
**\*First paper due**

Oct 6 (Thurs.) **Film:** "The Last Supper" (1976) [120 min.] @ 7 p.m.

### **Week 6**

Oct. 11 (Tues.) *No Class: Columbus (!) Day*

Oct. 13 (Thurs.) Revolution in Haiti  
Discussion: Documents on the Haitian revolution on the Course Website

### **Week 7**

Oct 18 (Mon) European Industrialization  
Read: Excerpts from Pomerance & Topik, *The World that Trade Created*

Oct 20 (Thurs.) Social Implications of Industrialization:  
Discussion: Documents on child labor and social conditions of industrialization  
Smiles, *Self-Help* (1882)  
Karl Marx & Friedrich Engels, *Communist Manifesto*(1847 & 1888)

### **Week 8**

Oct 25 (Tues.) Discussion: Marx (continued)

Oct 27 (Thurs.) From the Opium Wars to the Boxer Uprising in the Far East  
continue discussion of Marx

### **Week 9**

Nov. 1 (Tues.) The New Imperialism and the Scramble for Africa  
Read: Scott Cook, *Colonial Encounters* (1995), 1-70  
**\*Second paper due**

Nov. 3 (Thurs.) Discussion of Chinue Achebe's *Things Fall Apart* (entire book)

### **Week 10**

Nov. 8 (Tues.) Imperialism, Industrialization, "Modernization"?  
Scott Cook, *Colonial Encounters*, "Islands of Manifest Destiny" and "*Imperium et Libertas*," 73-161

Nov. 10 (Thurs.) The Modern Metropolis and the Origins of Mass Culture

### **Week 11**

Nov. 15 (Tues.) Discussion: The Dawn of Advertising  
Raymond Williams "Advertising: The Magic System"  
T. Jackson Lears, "From Salvation to Self-Realization"

Nov. 17 (Thurs.) The First World War  
**\*Third paper due**

**Week 12**

Nov. 22 (Tues.) Socialism in the Soviet Union & China  
(begin reading Heda Kovaly, *Under a Cruel Star*)

Nov. 24 (Thurs.) *No Class: Thanksgiving*

**Week 13**

Nov. 29 (Tues.) World War II

Dec. 1 (Thurs.) Discussion: Heda Kovaly, *Under a Cruel Star* (1997)

**Week 14**

Dec 6 (Tues.) The Cold War  
**\*Fourth paper due**

Dec 8 (Thurs.) Decolonization  
Discussion: Excerpt from Frantz Fanon *The Wretched of the Earth*  
Optional Film: *Sugar Cane Alley*

**Week 15**

Dec 13 (Tues.) Globalization

*Dec. 16-22 Final Exam period*