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21H.912 The World Since 1492  
Fall 2004

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**Massachusetts Institute of Technology**  
**Department of History**  
**21H.912:**  
**HASS-D**  
**The World Since 1492**  
**MW 2.30-4**  
**Fall 2008**

**Dr. Bedross Der Matossian**

**Description**

The course deals with five hundred years of world history, beginning from 1492 until the present. Rather than trying to do a chronological survey of all the events and processes that shaped the last five hundred years of global history, the course will focus on specific geographic regions and key related themes and processes that had enormous impact in shaping our contemporary world.

To reach this aim, the class will focus on several central themes. These include political and social transformation; the global formation of capitalist economies and industrialization; colonialism and imperialism; nationalism; the emergence of modern states; and the rise of consumer society. While any of these themes could serve the subject for an entire semester, we will discuss them in conjunction with each other and the ways in which they interact. In addition, the class will be based on various types of readings ranging from primary sources, historical narratives, and historiography, to works of fiction and movies. This is intended to familiarize students with the craft of historical work and the process of creating historiography.

Finally, the class is aimed at developing the tools that students need in order to understand, analyze, and critically perceive history and historiography, not only to understand the past but also to better understand the contemporary world.

**Course Organization**

The format of the class will be lectures on Mondays and Wednesdays. The regular class meetings will be composed of lecture, question and answer and brief discussion of the material. All students must demonstrate that they have read and critically analyzed the material in preparation for lectures and class discussions. Therefore, participation in class is a very important part of the course, as is reflected in the breakdown of the final grade as follows:

Four 5-page papers: 15% each  
Discussion/Participation: 20% Final  
Exam: 20%

**Participation:**

This component of the grade includes mandatory attendance of all lecture classes and active participation in the classes. Failure to do so will result in a deduction from your final grade. From time to time students will be asked to facilitate a discussion session.

**Written assignments**

**Essays:** In addition to the discussion session, the criteria for HASS-D subjects include twenty pages of written assignments during the semester. These will be divided into four papers that will draw on the assigned readings, lectures, discussion, and movies from class. There will be no need for additional outside research. The four –5-page papers are due on September 29, October 27, November 19, and December 10.

**Film Project:** Students will be required to write one of the four 5-page papers on movies. In this paper students are required to compare 2-3 films [see film series below] and evaluate the extent to which they reflect the historical transformations that took place during the period that they cover. .

**Final Examination:** The final exam will take place during finals' week and it will encompass the entire semester's work. The final exam will include a map, key terms, short essays, and a long essay question. All of the sections mentioned in the final exam will have some element of choice.

**Academic Honesty:** The work that you submit for this class must be your own work. Plagiarism of any kind will not be tolerated under any circumstance and will result in an immediate "F" grade for the course. In addition, all such cases will be immediately directed to the Committee of Discipline. Any words and ideas that are not yours should be accompanied by full and complete citation. If you have any further questions dealing with academic honesty you must contact the professor prior to the submission of any written assignment.

**Books for Purchase:**

Marks, Robert. *The Origins of the Modern World: a Global and Ecological Narrative* (2006 edition; ISBN 0742554198

Bayly, A. Christophor, *The Birth of the Modern World: 1780-1914* (2004)

Equiano, Olaudah. *The Interesting Narrative of the Life of Equiano*. New York, NY: Modern Library, 2004. ISBN: 9780375761157.

Achebe, Chinua. *Things Fall Apart*. London, UK: Penguin in association with Heinemann African Writers Series, 2001. ISBN: 9780141186887.

Kovaly, Heda. *Under a Cruel Star*. New York, NY: Holmes & Meier, 1997. ISBN: 9780841913776.

Additional readings will appear on the course website or will be handed out in class.

**List of Movies:**

Double Suicide  
The Return of Martin Guerre  
Last Supper  
Danton  
Oliver Twist  
Ancestors in the Americas: Coolies, Sailors, Settlers  
El Norte  
Gallipoli and/or Avalon.  
Battle of Algiers

**Class Outline:**

**Week I- Sep.4.**

**Introduction to class and requirements**

**Week II - Sep. 8, 10**

**Global History and World Systems before 1492**

Pamela Kyle Crossley, *What is Global History* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2008) pp.1-27; pp. 102-121.

Abu Lughod, Janet Lippman, "The World System in the 13<sup>th</sup> Century: Dead End or Precursor?" in M. Adas, *Islamic and European Expansion*. Philadelphia, PA: Temple University Press, 1993, 75-102. ISBN: 978166390682.

Marks, *Origins of the Modern World*, 1-42

**Week III- Sep. 15, 17,**

**Transatlantic Contact and its Significance**

Letter from Columbus; Morison, Sauer, and Todorov on Columbus in M. Lunenfeld. *1492: Discovery, Invasion, Encounter*. Boston, MA: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1991. 107-113, 131-142. ISBN: 9780669211153.

Begin: Pomeranz, Kenneth and Topik, Steven. Eds. *The World that Trade Created*. Armonk, NY: M.E. Sharpe, 1999, 21-23, 53-55. ISBN 9780765602497.

Marks, *Origins of the Modern World*, 43-66.

#### **Week IV- Sept. 22, 24. Sept. 22 is a Holiday**

##### **Indian Ocean Encounters; Conquest in the New World:**

Pomeranz, Kenneth and Topik, Steven. Eds. *The World that Trade Created*. Armonk, NY: M.E. Sharpe, 1999, 16-18. ISBN 9780765602497.

McNeil, "The Age of Gunpowder Empires 1450-1800," in M. Adas, *Islamic and European Expansion*. Philadelphia, PA: Temple University Press, 1993, 75-102. ISBN: 978166390682.

Excerpts from Las Casas, Bartolome de. *In Defense of the Indians (ca. 1548-1550)*. DeKalb, III.: Northern Illinois University Press, 1974, chap. 4-6, 34, 35.

Marks, *Origins of the Modern World*, 67-82.

Movie: *Double Suicide*

#### **Week V- Sept. 29, Oct. 1.**

##### **The Splintering of Christendom and the European State and Science as a Revolution**

Documents on Witchcraft Persecution (1486-1631). In *Translations and Reprints from the Original Sources of European History*. Vol. III, no.4: The Witch-persecutions. Edited by George L. Burr. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania History Department, 1897, pp.5-6, 11-13, 18-19, 23-35.

Movie: *The Return of Martin Guerre*

#### **Week VI- Oct. 6, 8.**

##### **Racism I: New World Slavery**

The Beginning of the Slave Trade and New World Plantations  
The American Paradox of Slavery and Freedom

Bayly Christophor, *The Birth of the Modern World, 1780-1914*, pp.432-444.

Craton Micheal. *Searching for the Invisible Man. Slaves and Plantation Life in Jamaica*. Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1978, pp.197-201, 209-212, 223-228, 235-238, 245-250.

Marks, 82-92

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

Movie: Last Supper

**Week VII- Oct. 13, 15. NOTE: Oct. 13 is a Holiday**

### **The French and the Haitian Revolutions**

Bayly Chirstaphor, *The Birth of the Modern World, 1780-1914*, pp. 86-120.

The Outbreak of the Revolution in France

Declaration of Rights of Man and Citizen, and other documents from L. Hunt, *The French Revolution and Human Rights*. Boston, MA: Bedford/St. Martin's, 1996, ISBN.

### **Revolution in Haiti: Universal Human Rights?**

Tyson, George F., ed. Toussaint L'Ouverture. Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice-Hall, 1973, parts of chap. 3 and 4: "Letter to the Directory" (October 1797), "Letter to the Directory," (November 1797), and "Forced Labor Decree" (1800), pp.36-45, 51-56.

Readings and documents on Toussaint L'Overture from Censer, Jack and Hunt, Lynn. *Liberty, Equality, Fraternity*. University Park, PA: Pennsylvania State University Press, 2001. ISBN: 9780271020884.

Movie: Danton

**Week VIII- Oct. 20, 22.**

### **The Industrial Revolution**

Bayly Chirstaphor, *The Birth of the Modern World, 1780-1914*, pp. 49-82; 121-198.

Pomerance, and Topik. *The World that Trade Created*. pp.179-213.

Documents on the from British Parliamentary Committees during the Industrial Revolution (1832-1842). The House of Commons Parliamentary Papers, vol. 15 (1831-1832), pp.35-36, 95-101, 195-199, 338-349; vol. 21 (1833), pp.28-30; vol. 15

(1842),pp.83-84; vol. 16 (1842) pp. 226, 230, 244, 250-51, 258-260, 261, 263, 292, 441-442, 461; vol. 17 (1842),pp. 39, 102, 107-108,122.

Blake, William. "Chimney Sweeper," "London," and "The Human Abstract." In *Songs of Innocence and Songs of Experience*. New York: Dover, 1992 [1794],pp.34, 41, 42.

Marks, *Origins of the Modern World*, 95-122

## **Social Implications of Industrialization**

Documents on Child Labor and Social conditions of Industrialization, Smiles, *Self-Help* (1882) [3 pp.];

Marx, Karl, and Friedrich Engels. *Communist Manifesto*. New York, NY: Signet Classics, 1998. ISBN: 9780451527103.

Movie: *Oliver Twist*

**Week IX- Oct. 27, 29.**

## **Nation, Empire, and Ethnicity**

Bayly Christophor, *The Birth of the Modern World, 1780-1914*, pp.199-226.

Origins of National Identity (and of Nationalism) Read: Marks, 139-142 Discussion: Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities* (excerpts)

European Industrialization Read: Marx, 95-139 Excerpts from Pomerance & Topik, *The World that Trade Created* (course website)

**Week X- Nov. 3, 5.**

## **From Opium Wars to the Boxer Uprising in the Far East**

Marx, Karl. *Capital: A Critique of Political Economy* (1867). Translated from the Third German edition by Samuel Moore and Edward Aveling. Vol. 1. New York: The Modern Library, [1906], pp. 11-16, 41-63, 81-106.

Yataro, Iwasaki. "Letter to Mitsubishi Employees" (1876). In *Sources of Japanese History*, Edited by David John Lu. Vol. II. New York: McGraw-Hill, 1974, pp.80-82.

Movie: *Ancestors in the Americas: Coolies, Sailors, Settlers*

**Week XI- Nov. 10, 12. NOTE: Nov. 10 is a Holiday**

## **The New Imperialism in the Americas and Africa**

Bayly Christaphor, *The Birth of the Modern World, 1780-1914*, pp. 227-242.

Casemen Roger. "Correspondence Respecting the Treatment of British Colonial Subjects and Native Indians Employed in the Collection of Rubber in the Putumayo District." *The House of Commons Sessional Papers. Accounts and Papers*, vol.68 (1912-1913): 7-52, 154-159.

Excerpts from: Adas, Michael. *Machines as the Measure of Men*. Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1990. ISBN: 9780801497605.

Discussion of Chinua Achebe. *Things Fall Apart*. London, UK: Penguin in association with Heinemann African Writers Series, 2001.

Marks, 142-151

Movie: *El-Norte*

### **Week XII- Nov. 17, 19.**

#### **State and Society in the Age of Imperialism**

Bayly Christaphor, *The Birth of the Modern World, 1780-1914*, pp. 245-322.

#### **Russian and "Backwardness"**

Turgenev, Ivan Sergeevich. *Father and Sons*. Translated by Eugene Schuyler. New York: Leypoldt and Holt, 1867 [1861], Chap. 1-10

Movie: My Childhood

### **Week XIII- Nov. 24, 26.**

#### **Global Wars and The Origins of Consumerism and The Dawn of Advertising**

Williams, Raymond. "Advertising: The Magic System." In *Problems in Materialism and Culture*. London, UK: Verso, 1980, 170-195. ISBN: 9780860917298.

Lears, T. J. Jackson. "From salvation to self-realization: Advertising and the therapeutic roots of the consumer culture, 1880-1930." In *The Culture of Consumption: Critical Essays in American History, 1880-1980*, Edited by Richard Wightman Fox and T.J. Jackson Lears, New York, NY: Pantheon Books, 1983, 1-38. ISBN: 9780394511313.

Marks, 155-162

Movie: Galipoli and/or Avalon



**Week XIV- Dec. 1, 3.**

**Socialism in the Soviet Union and China**

Kovaly, Heda. *Under a Cruel Star*. New York, NY: Holmes and Meier, 1997. ISBN 9780841913776.

Lenin Vi. I. "The Immediate Tasks of the Soviet Government" (1918). In *A Documentary History of Communism*. Edited by Robert Vincent Daniels. Vol. I: Communism in Russia. London: Tauris, 1985, pp.94-98.

Harsatzi, Mikos. "The Culture of Censorship." In *The Velvet Prison*. New York: Basic Books, 1987 [1983], pp. 64-81.

Harsatzi, Mikos. *A Worker in a Worker's State*. Translated by Michad Wright. New York: Universe Books, 1977 [1875]pp.1, 22-29, 35-41, 98-105, 125-137.

The Rise of Fascism Marks, 162-166

**Week XV- Dec. 8, 10.**

**The Cold War, Decolonization and Global Inequity**

Marks, 166-174

Buchanan, Patrik. *Death of the West*. New York: Thomas Dunne, 2002, pp. 1-10, 143-146, 147-177.

Excerpts from Fanon, Frantz. *The Wretched of the Earth*. New York, NY: Grove Press: Distributed by Publishers Group West, 2005. ISBN: 9780802141323.

Movies: Battle of Algiers

**Globalization and the Great Acceleration**

Bayly Christaphor, *The Birth of the Modern World, 1780-1914*,pp. 451-486.

Marks, *Origins of the Modern World*, 199-208.