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21H.912 The World Since 1492  
Fall 2004

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21H.912  
Spring, 2008  
MW 11-12:30

Instructor: David Ciarlo

## 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 several central themes: colonialism and imperialism; political and social transformations; industrialization; nationalism; 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%

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 **March 10, April 2, April 23 and May 7**.

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:

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

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

Jonathan Spence, *The Death of Woman Wang* (1978)

Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities* (1991) (optional; we'll read excerpts)

Chinua Achebe *Things Fall Apart*

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

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

Class Outline:

**Week 1**

Feb. 6 (Wed.): Introduction to class and requirements

**Week 2**

Feb. 11 (Mon.): World Systems before 1492

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

→ bring one (written) question on Marks

Feb. 13 (Wed.) Indian Ocean Encounters; Conquest in the New World

Read: Marks, 43-79

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

**Week 3**

Feb. 18 (Mon.) *No Class (President's Day)*

Feb. 19 (Tues.; following Monday Schedule): Racism I: New World Slavery

Read: Marks, 82-92

Feb. 20 (Wed.) Discussion: Olaudah Equiano, *The Interesting Narrative of the Life of Equiano*

**Week 4**

Feb. 25 (Mon.): Dynasties: China and India in the Seventeenth and Eighteenth Century

Marks, 79-82

Feb. 27 (Wed.): Discussion: Jonathan Spence, *The Death of Woman Wang*

### **Week 5**

Mar. 3 (Mon.) **Film:** *To Be Announced*

Mar. 5 (Wed.) Dynasties: France's *Ancien Regime*

### **Week 6**

Mar. 10 (Mon.) The Outbreak of the Revolution in France

**\*First paper due**

Mar. 12 (Wed.) Revolution in Haiti: Universal Human Rights?

Discussion: Documents from L. Hunt, *The French Revolution and Human Rights*

### **Week 7**

Mar. 17 (Mon) Origins of National Identity (and of Nationalism)

Read: Marks, 139-142

Discussion: Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities* (excerpts)

Mar. 19 (Wed.) European Industrialization

Read: Marx, 95-139

Excerpts from Pomerance & Topik, *The World that Trade Created* (Course Website)

March 24-27 *Spring Break*

### **Week 8**

Mar. 31 (Mon.) Discussion: Smiles, *Self-Help* (1882) [3 pp.]

Karl Marx & Friedrich Engels *Communist Manifesto*(1847 & 1888) [36 pp.]

Apr. 2 (Wed.) Social Implications of Industrialization:

Read: Documents on child labor and social conditions of industrialization

**\*Second paper due**

### **Week 9**

Apr. 7 (Mon.) The New Imperialism and the Scramble for Africa

Marks, 142-151

Apr. 9 (Wed.) Discussion of Chinue Achebe's *Things Fall Apart* (entire book)

### **Week 10**

Apr. 17 (Mon.) The Origins of Consumerism?

Apr. 16 (Wed.) Discussion: The Dawn of Advertising

Raymond Williams "Advertising: The Magic System"

T. Jackson Lears, "From Salvation to Self-Realization"

**Week 11**

Apr. 21 (Mon.) *No Class (Patriot's Day)*

Apr. 23 (Wed.) The First World War

Marks, 155-162

**\*Third paper due**

**Week 12**

Apr. 28 (Mon.) Socialism in the Soviet Union & China

(begin reading Heda Kovaly, *Under a Cruel Star*)

Apr. 30 (Wed.) The Rise of Fascism

Marks, 162-166

**Week 13**

May 5 (Mon.) World War II

May 7 (Wed.) Discussion: Heda Kovaly, *Under a Cruel Star* (1997)

**\*Fourth paper due**

**Week 14**

May 12 (Mon.) The Cold War

Marks, 166-174

May 14 (Wed.) Decolonization & Global Inequity

Marks, 174-207

**May . 19-23 *Final Exam period***