

**History 102: World History since 1500**  
**(Online Course)**  
**Spring 2021**  
**Dr. Alexander Olson**  
**Western Kentucky University**

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Office hours: any weekday by appointment

**Required texts:**

- Bonnie Smith, et al, *World in the Making: A Global History, Volume Two: Since 1300* (2019)
  - Note: You do not need to purchase the supplemental books on Sources and Maps.
- Garrett Graff, *The Only Plane in the Sky: An Oral History of 9/11* (2021)
- Mohsin Hamid, *Exit West: A Novel* (2017).
- Film: *The Silence of Others* (2019) – Available on Netflix
- All other readings available on Blackboard.

**Course Description:**

This course provides an introduction to the global past since 1500. It helps students to understand the diversity of and the connections between the world's cultures and ideologies and to become acquainted with global political, social, and economic history. This course also encourages students to think analytically about how people have created and adapted societies and institutions in response to the challenges and opportunities that have confronted them. Major themes in this course include:

- Change, Continuity, and Connections
- Cross-Cultural Interaction and Transfers
- Consumption, Production, Human and Environmental Consequences
- Ideologies, Ethics, and Lived Experiences

**Course Objectives:**

This course helps fulfill requirements for Category A: Foundations – Intellectual and Practical Skills in the Western Kentucky University General Education program. After successful completion of this course students will be able to:

- understand the concept and practice of history as an interpretive framework
- comprehend significant events, diverse peoples, major turning points, and ideas in world history
- understand cause and effect relationships in history and historical methodology
- analyze and interpret primary and secondary sources
- think critically to construct informed arguments based on evidence
- communicate ideas effectively in written and oral formats
- write analytical essays applying historical knowledge, theory, and research methods

**Course Goals:**

History 102 aims to prepare students for life by emphasizing the following course goals:

- Critical thinking: prepare students to make informed decisions and ethical choices by examining historical examples
- Informed citizenship: develop knowledge of and concern for a multicultural world
- Historical perspective: increase awareness of how bias and opinion shape historical analysis
- Social engagement: encourage students to become actively engaged in issues affecting their lives and those others around the world

### **What is different about this section of History 102?**

This class is probably different than any other history course you have taken. At times, it might remind you of a philosophy or literature class. Instead of asking you to memorize names and dates, we will reflect on why we study history in the first place. Our schedule moves in reverse chronological order from 2021 to 1500, and we will not attempt to cover the entirety of world history (which is impossible). Moving backwards from the present will allow us to understand how our world has been shaped by history, memory, and national identity. By examining the building blocks of history, you will gain the skills to become a “citizen historian” able to look beyond official narratives.

### **Course Structure:**

This course will be taught asynchronously, which means there is no specific time when everybody will be logged on simultaneously. There will be no quizzes, exams, or zoom meetings. Instead, 65% of your grade is based on your writing in the discussion board. Rather than memorizing facts, you should think of this class as a college-level book club where we will analyze, critique, and discuss the readings, which have been carefully chosen to generate meaningful discussion. In addition to the discussion board, there are three essay assignments worth a total of 35% of your grade.

**Monday and Tuesday:** These days are reserved strictly for reading. During this time, I will post a set of framing remarks to guide the discussion.

**Wednesday:** Each student will submit a 500-word post (which can be longer if you wish) to the Blackboard discussion board. Your post can address any aspect of the readings and should not simply mirror what I have written in my framing remarks. Dissent is encouraged.

**Thursday and Friday:** Each student will submit at least three comments (for a combined total of at least 500 words) responding to the posts submitted by your fellow students.

### **Technology Requirements:**

Students are required to have access to a computer and reliable Internet connection to use Blackboard and to write and submit your assignments. To avoid losing your work in progress, you are encouraged to compose your drafts in a word processing program before submitting your posts on Blackboard. Although your discussion board posts can be conversational in tone, they still require careful thought, planning, and proofreading. You should also have a plan for an alternate way to connect to the internet in case of emergency. If you are unfamiliar with Blackboard, visit the Online Orientation for Online Learners at <http://www.wku.edu/online/orientation/index.php> before the course begins. Readings are located in the Content section and assignments can be found in the Tests & Quizzes section. If you have any problems using the online tools for this course, please contact me as soon as possible.

### **Writing Center Assistance:**

The Writing Center on the Bowling Green campus is offering **only** remote assistance to writers during the covid-19 pandemic. WKU students may request feedback on their writing via email or arrange a real-time Zoom conference to discuss a paper. See instructions and how-to videos on the website ([www.wku.edu/writingcenter](http://www.wku.edu/writingcenter)) for making online synchronous (Zoom) or asynchronous (email) appointments. Students may also get short writing questions answered via email; just put “Quick question” in the subject line to ([writingcenter@wku.edu](mailto:writingcenter@wku.edu)).

### **Pandemic Policy:**

I recognize that we are living through a global crisis, and many of you may be experiencing grief, illness, and other significant stressors. Please let me know if you have any pandemic-related issues that are impeding your performance in this class.

**Grading Scale:**

The assignments for this class add up to exactly 1000 points. This allows you to calculate your final grade using the following scale. No grades will be rounded up or rounded down.

A (90-100%, or 900-1000 points)

B (80-89%, or 800-899 points)

C (70-79%, or 700-799 points)

D (60-69%, or 600-699 points)

F (0-59%, or 0-599 points)

**Late Assignments and Grade Disputes:**

Late assignments will result in a penalty. Grade disputes (which should consist of a one-page written explanation) will be accepted *no earlier than seven days* after grades are posted. Do not assume that your request will succeed; I reserve the right to lower your grade upon reconsideration.

**Academic Dishonesty:**

The maintenance of academic integrity is at the heart of higher education. Acts of plagiarism or any other form of cheating will not be tolerated. Engaging in academic dishonesty risks serious punishment, including a failing grade in the class. Please read the relevant section of the WKU Student Handbook: [www.wku.edu/handbook/academic-dishonesty.php](http://www.wku.edu/handbook/academic-dishonesty.php).

**ADA Notice:**

In compliance with University policy, students with disabilities who require academic and/or auxiliary accommodations for this course must contact the Student Accessibility Resource Center located in Downing Student Union, 1074. SARC can be reached by phone number at 270-745-5004 [270-745-3030 TTY] or via email at [sarc.connect@wku.edu](mailto:sarc.connect@wku.edu). Please do not request accommodations directly from the professor without a faculty notification letter from the Student Accessibility Resource Center.

**Sexual Misconduct/Assault:**

Western Kentucky University (WKU) is committed to supporting faculty, staff, and students by upholding WKU's Title IX Sexual Misconduct/Assault Policy (#0.2070) at <https://wku.edu/eoo/documents/titleix/wkutitleixpolicyandgrievanceprocedure.pdf> and Discrimination and Harassment Policy (#0.2040) at [https://wku.edu/policies/hr\\_policies/2040\\_discrimination\\_harassment\\_policy.pdf](https://wku.edu/policies/hr_policies/2040_discrimination_harassment_policy.pdf).

Under these policies, discrimination, harassment and/or sexual misconduct based on sex/gender are prohibited. If you experience an incident of sex/gender-based discrimination, harassment and/or sexual misconduct, you are encouraged to report it to the Title IX Coordinator, Andrea Anderson, 270-745-5398 or Title IX Investigators, Michael Crowe, 270-745-5429 or Joshua Hayes, 270-745-5121. Please note that while you may report an incident of sex/gender-based discrimination, harassment and/or sexual misconduct to a faculty member, WKU faculty are "Responsible Employees" of the University and **MUST** report what you share to WKU's Title IX Coordinator or Title IX Investigator. If you would like to speak with someone who may be able to afford you confidentiality, you may contact WKU's Counseling and Testing Center at 270-745-3159.

**Problems?**

If you are struggling or not getting the grades that you want, please contact me. Don't wait until things seem dire. I am here to help you! I am happy to answer questions by email, and we can make an appointment to speak by Zoom or phone. My office hours are any weekday by appointment.

## Assignments and Grade Breakdown

There are a total of 1000 points available based on the following breakdown. Please note the very high percentage of the grade devoted to the discussion board. *The best way to succeed in this class is to actually do the readings every week.* Our goal is not to memorize facts and arrive at a “right” answer each week, but rather to engage deeply and critically with the readings.

### 1) Discussions (65% of grade)

#### **Weekly discussion of reading—560 points (56% of grade).**

Each week, you must write one 500-word-minimum original post (due by Wednesday at 11:59pm) and three shorter responses to your classmates’ posts (due by Friday at 11:59pm). Each thread is worth 40 points. Although you can write with a casual, conversational tone, you are expected to proofread all submissions. You will not receive full credit for posts that simply mirror my remarks rather than demonstrating your own thoughts on the readings. Dissent is encouraged.

#### **Engagement with peers—90 points (9% of grade).**

At the end of the semester, I will go back through all fourteen discussion forums and assess the overall quality of your responses to others. Although your comments are part of your weekly grade, these points are reserved for stepping back at the end and assessing overall quality.

### 2) Papers (35% of grade)

#### **Starting Point Essay—50 points (5% of grade)**

This assignment requires you to write a short essay (minimum 500 words) summarizing, to the best of your recollection, how history was taught in your high school. What did you find most interesting or appealing? What didn’t work for you? Upload your essay to the Tests & Quizzes section on Blackboard. **Due on 1/29.**

#### **History and Memory—100 points (10% of grade)**

For this assignment, find an elderly person in your life (over 70 years old) who is willing to talk on the phone with you for an interview. Ask them about how the world has changed over their lifetimes. Do any specific events from their youth seem to carry a different meaning today? Did they have any hopes or fears that didn’t actually happen, such a world peace or nuclear war? Your conversation should be at least 20 minutes. Please ask follow-up questions and take notes. In your essay (800 words minimum), share your findings and your own thoughts on the interview. Upload to Tests & Quizzes on Blackboard. **Due 3/5.**

#### **Slave Voyages Research Paper—200 points (20% of grade)**

This research paper involves utilization of an online database, *Slave Voyages*, which is the most comprehensive record of the millions of enslaved people brought from Africa to the Americas. The details of this paper (800 words minimum) can be found in the Tests & Quizzes on Blackboard. **Due 4/30**

## Schedule

Readings are due the week that they are listed on the syllabus. You are expected to read carefully, not skim. With the exception of the required books for purchase (*World in the Making*, *The Only Plane in the Sky*, and *Exit West*) and the film on Netflix (*The Silence of Others*), all readings can be found in the Content section of Blackboard.

### **Weekly structure:**

**Monday and Tuesday:** These days are reserved strictly for reading. During this time, Dr. Olson will post a set of framing remarks to guide the discussion.

**Wednesday:** Each student will submit a 500-word post (which can be longer if you wish) to the Blackboard discussion board addressing the weekly readings.

**Thursday and Friday:** Each student will submit at least three comments (for a total of at least 500 words) responding to the posts submitted by your fellow students. You are encouraged to check back several times on Thursday and Friday to keep up with the discussion.

### **Readings:**

#### **Week 1** (January 19-22): Surviving the Plague

- Liam Otten-Wustl, "Social Distancing Goes Back to the Plague" (2020)
- Elle Hunt, "The true story behind the viral TikTok sea shanty hit" (2021)
- Barry Yourgrau, "The Spontaneous Quarantine Writing that Became a Hit in Japan" (2020)

#### **Week 2** (January 25-29): Remembering and Forgetting

- Watch documentary: *The Silence of Others* (2019) (Streaming on Netflix)
- Alexander Olson, "Writing My Mother's Obituary" (2020)
- Louisa Lim, "Rewriting History in the People's Republic of Amnesia and Beyond" (2018)
- Fred Hiatt, "In China, Every Day is Kristallnacht" (2019)
  - Starting Point essay due on Friday, January 29th

#### **Week 3** (February 1-5): Iran Air Flight 655

- Watch: "The U.S. and Iran Weren't Always Enemies. What Happened?" (2018)
- Listen: "How the CIA Overthrew Iran's Democracy in 4 Days" (2019)
- Watch: ABC News, "Special Report: Iran Hostage Crisis" (1979)
- Annie Tracy Samuel, "The Past and Present of the U.S.-Iran Standoff" (2013)
- Golnaz Esfandiari, "Ukrainian Plane Tragedy Challenges Tehran's Narrative of 1988 U.S. Shootdown of Iranian Airliner" (2020)

#### **Week 4** (February 8-12): An Oral History of 9/11

- Garrett Graff, *The Only Plane in the Sky* (2019), 1-208 and 331-341.

#### **Week 5** (February 15-19): Empire State of Mind

- Daniel Immerwahr, "The War of Points," *How to Hide an Empire* (2019)
- Watch: Peter Arnett, "Interview with Osama bin Laden" (1997)
- Watch: "Killing Bin Laden," *60 Minutes* (2011)
- Graeme Wood, "What ISIS Really Wants" (2015)

**Week 6** (February 22-26): “a city swollen by refugees”

- Mohsin Hamid, *Exit West* (2017), 1-98.

**Week 7** (March 1-5): “as everyone was coming together everyone was also moving apart”

- Mohsin Hamid, *Exit West* (2017), 101-231.
  - History and Memory essay due by Friday, March 5th, at 11:59pm.

**Week 8** (March 8-12): Independence in the Global South

- Georges Nzongola-Ntalaja, “Patrice Lumumba: The Most Important Assassination of the 20th Century” (2011)
- Martin Luther King, Jr., “The Birth of a New Nation” (1957)
- Hakim Adi, “The United States of Africa?” (2019)
- Hồ Chí Minh, “Declaration of Independence of the Democratic Republic of Vietnam” (1945)

**Week 9** (March 15-19): On the Margins of World War II

- Daniel Immerwahr, “Introduction,” *How to Hide an Empire* (2019)
- Timothy Snyder, “Preface,” *Bloodlands: Europe between Hitler and Stalin* (2010)
- Brooke Blower, “V-J Day, 1945, Times Square” (2015)

**Week 10** (March 22-26): The Making of the Modern World

- *World in the Making*, “Industry and Everyday Life,” Ch. 23, 838-872.
- Watch: Clip from Charlie Chaplin, *Modern Times* (1936)

**Week 11** (March 29-April 2): The Many-Headed Hydra

- Phenderson Djèlí Clark, “Pirates, Hydrarchy, and the Motley Crew: Beyond Arrgggh!” (2012)
- Watch: “Who Were the Diggers, Levellers, and Ranters?” (2018)
- “An Agreement of the People” (1647-1649)
- Watch: Lin-Manuel Miranda, Performance at White House, May 12, 2009.
- “The United States and the Haitian Revolution, 1791-1804”
- Optional: *Hamilton: The Musical* (2015) (Streaming on Disney Plus)

**Week 12** (April 5-9): Early Modern Africa

- *World in the Making*, “Western Africa in the Era of the Atlantic Slave Trade,” Ch. 17, 604-637.
- Slave Voyages research paper guidelines

**Week 13** (April 12-16): Early Modern Asia

- *World in the Making*, “Expansion and Isolation in Asia,” Ch. 20, 720-756.

**Week 14** (April 19-23): Native America

- Philip Deloria, “Chuckle,” *Indians in Unexpected Places* (2004)
- Watch: “Saint Kateri and Native American Catholics” (2015)
- Brian DeLay, “Forgotten Foes” (2010)
  - Slave Voyages research paper due by Friday, April 30th, at 11:59pm.