THE EDUCATION UNIVERSITY OF HONG KONG
Course Outline

Programme Title : Bachelor of Education (Honours) (History)
Programme QF Level : 5
Course Title : Life in the Ancient World
Course Code : HIS1004
Department : Department of Literature and Cultural Studies (LCS)
Credit Points : 3
Contact Hours : 39
Pre-requisite(s) : Nil
Medium of Instruction : English
Course Level : 1

The University's Graduate Attributes and seven Generic Intended Learning Outcomes (GILOs) represent the attributes of ideal EdUHK graduates and their expected qualities respectively. Learning outcomes work coherently at the University (GILOs), programme (Programme Intended Learning Outcomes) and course (Course Intended Learning Outcomes) levels to achieve the goal of nurturing students with important graduate attributes.

In gist, the Graduate Attributes for Sub-degree, Undergraduate, Taught Postgraduate, Professional Doctorate and Research Postgraduate students consist of the following three domains (i.e. in short "PEER & I"):
- **P**rofessional **E**xcellence;
- **E**thical **R**esponsibility; **&**
- **I**nnovation.

The descriptors under these three domains are different for the three groups of students in order to reflect the respective level of Graduate Attributes.

The seven GILOs are:
1. Problem Solving Skills
2. Critical Thinking Skills
3. Creative Thinking Skills
4a. Oral Communication Skills
4b. Written Communication Skills
5. Social Interaction Skills
6. Ethical Decision Making
7. Global Perspectives

1. Course Synopsis

This course is the first part of a world history survey. It covers the period from the Big Bang until around 1500. Firstly, we discuss the beginnings of life on earth, the appearance of the first hominids and the long time when humans lived as hunters and gatherers. Secondly, we approach the 'early complex societies', the first societies with organized agricultural, political and writing systems. Such societies emerged notably in Mesopotamia, Egypt, India and China from around 4000BCE. Thirdly, the 'classical societies' in Persia, China, India, Greece and Rome around the beginning of the Common Era were the first high cultures that initiated path-dependencies up to the present day. Fourthly, the 'postclassical societies' (roughly 500-1500) encompass Europe of the 'Middle Ages', Byzantium in the Eastern Mediterranean, the spread of Islamic empires, the Indian dynasties and the Tang and Song Empires in East Asia. We finally approach the Eurasian integration brought by the Mongolian Empire and the subsequent rise of Western Europe. This course consistently adopts a world history perspective. While it highlights long-time civilizational traditions, it also puts a major emphasis on the interaction of different world regions. In this way, it engages students to reflect upon historical dimensions of globalization.

2. Course Intended Learning Outcomes (CILOs)

Upon completion of this course, students will be able to:

CILO$_1$ Demonstrate an understanding of the main features of world civilizations within a broad chronological structure from a variety of perspectives: political, economic, technological, and scientific, social, religious, aesthetic;

CILO$_2$ Evaluate different beliefs, values and attitudes in different societies at different time;

CILO$_3$ Evaluate change and continuity in major historical issues and developments, and relate the study of the past to contemporary life;

CILO$_4$ Demonstrate an understanding of concepts and terms fundamental to historical study, and identify different interpretations of major historical events and personalities.

CILO$_5$ Demonstrate an understanding of global interconnectedness in pre-modern history

3. Content, CILOs and Teaching & Learning Activities

Course Content	CILOs	Suggested Teaching & Learning Activities
• Beginnings of humankind	*CILO$_{1,2,3,4,5}$*	Lecture, Discussion, Readings, Oral Presentation, Response Papers.

• Early Complex Societies:
  ➢ Mesopotamia
  ➢ Egypt (Nile Valley)
  ➢ India (Indus Valley)
  ➢ China (Yellow River Valley)
	CILO$_{1,2,3,4,5}$	Lecture, Discussion, Readings, Oral Presentation, Response Papers.

• Classical Societies:
   ➢ Persia
   ➢ China
   ➢ India
   ➢ Greece
   ➢ Rome
	CILO$_{1,2,3,4,5}$	Lecture, Discussion, Readings, Oral Presentation, Response Papers.

• Postclassical Societies:
   ➢ Catholic Europe
   ➢ Byzantium
   ➢ East Asia (Tang and Song Dynasties, Korea, Japan)
   ➢ Spread of Islam
   ➢ India and Southeast Asia
   ➢ The Americas
   ➢ Mongolian Empire
   ➢ Rise of Europe
	CILO$_{1,2,3,4,5}$ *(etc.)*	Lecture, Discussion, Readings, Oral Presentation, Response Papers.

4. Assessment

Assessment Tasks	Weighting	CILOs
(a) Mini-essays: Two individual short essays on a question assigned by the instructor (40% each).	80%	*CILO$_{1,2,3,4,5}$*
(b) Presentation: A collectively assessed group presentation on an assigned civilisation.	20%	*CILO$_{1,2,3,4,5}$*

5. Use of Generative AI in Course Assessments
Please select one option only that applies to this course:

☐ *Not Permitted*: In this course, the use of generative AI tools is not allowed for any assessment tasks.

☑ *Permitted*: In this course, generative AI tools may be used in some or all assessment tasks. Instructors will provide specific instructions, including any restrictions or additional requirements (e.g., proper acknowledgment, reflective reports), during the first lesson and in relevant assessment briefs.

6. Required Text(s)

TBD

7. Recommended Readings

Textbooks

Bentley, J.H., Ziegler, H.F. (2008). *Traditions & Encounters: A Global Perspective on the Past*. New York: McGraw-Hill.

Fernández-Armesto, F. (2016). *The World: A History. Volume One, To 1500. Third Edition*. Hoboken: Pearson.

Tignor, R.L. et al. (2014). *Worlds Together, Worlds Apart: A History of the World from the Beginnings of Humankind to the Present*. New York: Norton.

Stearns, P.N., Adas, M., Schwartz, St.B. (1992). *World Civilizations: The Global Experience*. New York: HarperCollins, 1992.

Craig, A.M. (2000). *The heritage of world civilizations*. Upper Saddle River: Prentice Hall.

Specialised Readings

Bentley, J.H. (1993). *Old World Encounters: Cross-Cultural Contacts and Exchanges in Pre-Modern Times*. New York: Oxford University Press.

Brosius, M. (2006). *The Persians: An Introduction*. New York: Routledge.

Collective (2015). *The Cambridge World History*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Burbank, J., Cooper, Fr. (2010). *Empires in World History: Power and the Politics of Difference*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.

Christian, D. (2004). *Maps of Time: An Introduction to Big History*. Berkeley: University of California Press.

Diamond, J.M. (1997), *Guns, germs, and steel: the fates of human societies*. New York: Norton.

Fried, . (2015). *The Middle Ages*. Cambridge: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press.

Herrin, J. (2007). *Byzantium: The Surprising Life of a Medieval Empire*. London/New York: Allen Lane.

Hobson, J.M. (2004). *The Eastern Origins of Western Civilization*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Hodgson, M.G.S. (1974). *The Venture of Islam: Conscience and History in a World Civilization*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Lewis, M.E. (2007). *The Early Chinese Empires. Qin and Han*. Cambridge/London: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press.

Lewis, M.E. (2009). *China's Cosmopolitan Empire: The Tang Dynasty*. Cambridge: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press.

Liu, X. (2010). *The Silk Road in World History*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Morgan, D. (2007). *The Mongols*. Malden: Blackwell.

Morkot, R. (2005). *The Egyptians: An Introduction*. New York: Routledge.

Nissen, H.J., Heine, P. (2009). *From Mesopotamia to Iraq. A Concise History. Translated by Hans J. Nissen*. Chicago/London: University of Chicago Press.

Olstein, D. (2014). *Thinking History Globally*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan.

Schiedel, W. (2009). *Rome and China: Comparative Perspectives on Ancient World Empires*. New York: Oxford University Press.

Waterfield, R. (2018). *Creators, Conquerors, and Citizens: A History of Ancient Greece*, Oxford, Oxford University Press.

Wolpert, St. (2000). *A New History of India*. New York: Oxford University Press.

8. **Related Web Resources**

Bridging World History:
http://www.learner.org/courses/worldhistory/
World History Connected :
http://worldhistoryconnected.press.uillinois.edu/
World History for Us All:
http://worldhistoryforusall.ss.ucla.edu/
World History Maps:
https://legacy.lib.utexas.edu/maps/

9. Related Journals

Journal of Global History
Journal of World History
The Asian Review of World Histories
The Medieval History Journal

10. Academic Honesty

The University upholds the principles of honesty in all areas of academic work. We expect our students to carry out all academic activities honestly and in good faith. Please refer to the *Policy on Academic Honesty, Responsibility and Integrity* (https://www.eduhk.hk/re/uploads/docs/00000000016336798924548BbN5).   Students should familiarize themselves with the Policy.

11. Others

 Nil

14 August 2025