

Course Title	: ANCIENT CIVILIZATIONS
Course Code	: HST2153
No. of Credits/Term	: 3
Mode of Tuition	: Sectional
Class Contact Hours	: 3 hours per week
Category in Major Prog.	: Required Course
Prerequisites	: None
Co-requisites	: None

Brief Course Description

This course provides an introduction to the world of antiquity from the origins of humanity to the end of classical civilizations. Through the case studies across various regions and over different periods of time, we will seek out both the linkages and forces molding the contemporary human community, particularly in the context of culture and belief systems.

Aims

The objective of the course is to help students understand different cultural heritages and develop a complex view of the ancient human past as a whole.

Learning Outcomes

Students completing this course will:

- a) Demonstrate an understanding of significant themes in ancient world history;
- b) Demonstrate an understanding of the material and environmental contexts that has helped to shape the emergence of early civilizations;
- c) Demonstrate an understanding of the ways in which different civilizations and cultures interacted with each other;
- d) Demonstrate an understanding of historical causation;
- e) Analyze primary sources within their historical context;
- f) Evaluate and construct historical arguments;
- g) Write and speak effectively in English.

Indicative Content (subject to minor changes)

- I. Humans and the World
 - A. Jared Diamond's *Guns, Germs and Steel*
 - B. Hominids to Humans in Prehistory

- II. River Valley Civilizations (3500-500 B.C.E.)
 - A. Complex Societies

- B. Mesopotamia: Sumerian City-States
 - C. Egypt: "The Gift of Nile"
 - D. India: The Indus Valley Civilization, The Indo-European Migration, and Caste
 - E. China: Xia, Shang, and Zhou
 - F. Mesoamerica: The Olmecs and the Maya
 - G. South America: The Chavin Cult and Mochica
- III. Legacies of Classical Societies I (3500 B.C.E.-500 C.E.)
- A. The Rise and Fall of Persian Empires and Religions of Salvation
 - B. The Unification of China: Qin and Han; Confucianism, Daoism, and Legalism
 - C. India: The Maurya and Gupta Empires and Buddhism
- IV. Legacies of Classical Societies II (3500 B.C.E.-500 C.E.)
- A. Classical Greece: Greek Economy, Society, and Civilizations
 - B. The Roman Republic, Empire, Judaism, and Early Christianity
 - C. The Silk Roads: Cross-cultural Exchanges
- V. The Post-Classical Era I (500-800 C.E.)
- A. The Realm of Islam and Islamic Traditions
 - B. The decline of Buddhism in India
 - C. The "Dark Ages" in Europe and the Transition to Christian Monarchy
- VI. Conclusion: The legacy of the ancient world

Teaching Method

Class will consist of weekly lectures and participatory discussions. Lectures will provide basic context so that students will be able to understand the readings more clearly. Discussions will focus on assigned readings, including primary sources and analytical secondary sources.

Measurement of Learning Outcomes

- a) Two quizzes will test students' mastery of course content (outcomes a, b, c)
- b) Two short essays and a longer essay will test students' skills in historical methodology and their ability to write effectively in English (outcomes d, e, f, g)
- c) Weekly participatory discussions will assess student's ability to speak effectively in English (outcome g); they will be evaluated according to a rubric, based on outcomes a-f

Assessment Task	LO A	LO B	LO C	LO D	LO E	LO F	LO G
Quizzes	X	X	X				
Essays				X	X	X	X
Discussions	X	X	X	X	X	X	X

Assessment

Continuous Assessment:	100%
Two quizzes @15%	30%
Two short essays @12.5%	25%
Longer essay	25%
Class participation	20%

Required Reading

Wiesner-Hanks, M. E., et al, *Discovering the Ancient Past: A Look at the Evidence*, Belmont: Wadsworth Publishing; 1st edition, 2004

Diamond, Jared. *Guns, Germs, and Steel: The Fates of Human Societies*. New York: W.W. Norton & Co., 1999 (excerpts).

Additional short readings (primary and secondary) subject to change on a term-by-term basis

Supplementary Readings

Anthony, David W, *The Horse, the Wheel, and Language: How Bronze-Age Riders from the Eurasian Steppes Shaped the Modern World*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2010.

Bellwood, Peter, *First Migrants: Ancient Migration in Global Perspective*. Oxford: Wiley-Blackwell, 2014.

Bentley, Jerry H., and Herbert F. Ziegler, *Traditions & Encounters: A Global Perspective on the Past*, Vol. I, Boston: McGraw Hill, 1999.

Bulliet, Richard W., *The Earth and its Peoples: A Global History, to 1500*, Vol. 1, Belmont: Wadsworth Publishing; 5th edition, 2006.

Chaudhuri, K.N., *Asia before Europe: Economy and Civilization of the Indian Ocean from the Rise of Islam to 1750*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990.

Cline, Eric H., *1177 B.C.: The Year Civilization Collapsed*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2nd ed., 2014.

Crosby, Alfred, *The Columbian Exchange: Biological and Cultural Consequences of 1492*, Westport, Conn.: Greenwood Pub. Co., 1972.

- Liu, Xinru, *Ancient India and Ancient China: Trade and Religious Exchanges, A.D. 1-600*, New York: Oxford University Press, 1988.
- Schwartz, Stuart B., et al, *The Global Experience: Readings in World History*, Vol. I, New York: Longman, 1997.
- Shaffer, Lynda, *Maritime Southeast Asia to 1500*, Armonk, N.Y.: M.E. Sharpe, 1996.
- Trigger, Bruce G., *Understanding Early Civilizations: A Comparative Study*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007.

Important Notes:

- (1) Students are expected to spend a total of 9 hours (i.e. 3 hours of class contact and 6 hours of personal study) per week to achieve the course learning outcomes.
- (2) Students shall be aware of the University regulations about dishonest practice in course work, tests and examinations, and the possible consequences as stipulated in the Regulations Governing University Examinations. In particular, plagiarism, being a kind of dishonest practice, is “the presentation of another person’s work without proper acknowledgement of the source, including exact phrases, or summarised ideas, or even footnotes/citations, whether protected by copyright or not, as the student’s own work”. Students are required to strictly follow university regulations governing academic integrity and honesty.
- (3) Students are required to submit writing assignment(s) using Turnitin.
- (4) To enhance students’ understanding of plagiarism, a mini-course “Online Tutorial on Plagiarism Awareness” is available on <https://pla.ln.edu.hk/>.