

**The VMI Core Curriculum:
The Nucleus of Citizenship and Leadership**

HI 103- 104 – World History I and II

A. Course Information

1. Department: *History*
2. Course Number: *HI 103/104*
3. Credit Hours *3/3*
4. Full Course Title: *World History I/II*
5. Course Description:

This sequence of courses in World History provides broad, survey coverage of the history of the world from prehistory and the dawn of civilization to ca. 1500 (HI 103) and from ca. 1500 to the present (HI 104). Students will examine civilizations of the past and study how the peoples of each organized themselves as a culture. A principal theme will be causes and consequences of cultural change and diffusion. In addition to training students to think historically and to understand modes of thinking distinctive to the discipline of history, the courses focuses on geographic knowledge as well so that students may come to know the world as a physical place. The second course in the sequence—HI 104—serves as a vehicle for making cadets knowledgeable about the political, social, military, and economic history of the United States in the context of world history.

As foundation courses for beginning students of history, a main goal of HI 103 and 104 is to provide a rudimentary level of understanding about world civilizations. Also, however, these courses and their content serve as a vehicle for raising students' proficiency in basic skills such as reading, note-taking, writing, and oral communication. In other words, World History offers structured opportunities for students to begin to master the tools of learning. Student work in World History helps to lay the foundation for proficiency in such areas as critical thinking and reading, precision in written and oral communication, academic and professional ethics, and commitment to lifelong learning. The goal is to promote independent learning and the cultivation of skills that students can transfer to work in other courses and settings.

6. Prerequisite(s): *None.*

7. Indicate whether this is
 A new course
 An existing course with less than 75% content revision
 An existing course with greater than 75% content revision
8. When do you expect to offer the course first? *fall 2007/spring 2008*
And on what schedule thereafter? *annually*
9. Expected enrollment per section: *22 maximum*
10. Provide the following information for each faculty member who will teach the course. (Department heads may update this list as needed.)

Full-Time Faculty Members:

LTC Elena Andreeva
LTC Tim Dowling
COL Ken Koons
MAJ Eric Osborne
COL Rose Mary Sheldon
COL Bruce Vandervort

Part-Time Faculty Members:

COL George Brooke
Dr. Clifford Kiracoffe
Mr. Adam Trusner

11. Resources (existing or new) required to offer the course for the Core Curriculum:
Existing resources will be sufficient to offer this course for the Core Curriculum.

B. Core Curriculum Contributions

1. Primary Core Curriculum Component for which the approval for the course is proposed: *World History*
2. Indicate any meta-competencies that the proposed course will address. NA

C. Syllabus

[Click here.](#)

D. Discussion

Please attach narrative responses to the following questions.

1. **Briefly describe how the department views the contribution of the course to the overall goal of the Core Curriculum.**

The Department views participation in a World History course as vitally important to the education and training of citizen-soldiers for an active life in a complex world... VMI graduates encounter problems and challenges in their lives and careers that are deeply rooted in patterns of world history, that are global in dimension, and that require global consciousness to solve them. The career of General George C. Marshall, one of the Institute's greatest graduates, exemplifies this point. His success as Army Chief of Staff, Secretary of Defense, Secretary of State and President of the American Red Cross was due in great part to his grasp and knowledge of the global context of contemporary problems. To function effectively in the world of the twenty-first century—a world characterized by increasing global interconnectedness—VMI graduates will need to be familiar with basic patterns of development in the major countries and regions of the world.

Martha Nussbaum, VMI's 2004 convocation speaker, has argued that world history can play a key role in "helping our students to cultivate their humanity ... their ability to see themselves not simply as citizens of some local region or group, but also and above all, as human beings bound to other human beings by ties of recognition and concern." World history can also inoculate students against what VMI alumnus Patrick Lang, '62, a career defense intelligence officer, noted as the "cultural blindness" that he sees so frequently handicapping American actions abroad. Participation in a world history program helps develop what Nussbaum called "the narrative imagination ... the ability to think what it might be like to be in the shoes of a person different from oneself, to be an

intelligent reader of that person's story, and to understand the emotions and wishes and desires that someone so placed might have." As both Lang and General Anthony Zinni, former Visiting Professor of International Studies at VMI, have pointed out, these are the qualities that U.S. policymakers will need in the century ahead.

These observations dovetail with recommendations contained in the State Council on Higher Education in Virginia (SCHEV) report released in the 1990s in which the Commission on the University of the 21st Century urged the development of curricula featuring "greater emphasis on multicultural understanding" and "changes to ensure that students acquire global perspectives." The report notes that "global perspectives are pervasive in all fields of study." Evidence that this is true in engineering, for example, may be found in Unfinished Design: The Humanities and Social Sciences in Undergraduate Engineering Education, published by the Association of American Colleges. The authors of this report recommend the development of curricula that promote: 1) "historical consciousness" in order to train students "to recognize complexity, ambiguity, and uncertainty as intractable conditions of human society"; 2) "international and multicultural experiences," so that students may perceive "the insights and understandings, the lives and aspirations of the distant and foreign, the different and neglected"; and 3) "international studies," because "as technology, especially communications, makes international access easier, engineering students will find mastering the language and history of other cultures increasingly valuable."

- 2. Briefly describe how the course will address each of the intended learning outcomes required by the core curriculum component for which approval is sought.**
 1. Demonstrate understanding of the place and role of the United States in world history (History and Culture #1). *The course places the development of the Americas and the United States in a comparative context. The second half of the course, in particular: 1) compares the structures of English, French, and Spanish colonies in the New World; 2) juxtaposes the American Revolution with the French, Haitian, and Latin American revolutions; 3) compares U.S., Canadian, and Latin American development during the 19th century; and 4) focuses on the role of the U.S. as a leading player in the Second World War, the Cold War, and the decolonization movement.*
 2. Demonstrate understanding of the processes of globalization (History and Culture #2). *While the course is broken down into several sub-themes, one over-arching theme is globalization. Introductory and concluding chapters within the text emphasize this theme. Comprehensive essays at the end of each half ask the students directly to explain the process and its consequences.*

3. Identify cultures of the world and the components and practices that distinguish them from others (History and Culture #3). *World History identifies cultures by asking students to inductively group societies that might be widely separated by time and geography according to similarities in their practices of government and religion, for example. At the same time, World History asks students to search within those groupings for unique features that might make each culture stand apart.*
4. Discuss ways in which groups of people define themselves in a geo-political sense (History and Culture #4). *Even within a thematic approach, World History emphasizes the distinctive geo-political cultures of societies. The course includes, for instance, an examination of how religions can develop in conjunction with a society to give it a unique identity, as well as an introduction to the idea of nationalism and how that concept has changed over time. Both halves of the course pay particular attention to the religious and social identities of the civilizations of the Middle East, in order to provide students with a context for understanding the current situation there.*
5. Demonstrate understanding of how history influences collective or individual behaviors (History and Culture #5). *One of the insistent questions students are encouraged to ask in World History is: “Why did things happen this way?” The course is designed so that students can explore the role and effects of a variety of factors—ranging from geography and disease to ideas and individuals—that help determine the course of social, political, and cultural development. They might, for example, be asked to debate what caused the downfall of the Roman Empire, or whether or not an absolute monarch can really change the course of his society.*
6. Appreciate a culture’s distinctiveness either through texts or experiential contact (History and Culture #6). *The World History course is designed to bring students into contact with primary sources from other cultures. The most common interaction is between student and text, but other media and occasionally field trips are included in the course as well. Students might be asked, for example, to examine Hammurabi’s code or the Declaration of Independence in order to approach more closely the thoughts and values of the cultures that produced those documents. External writing assignments exemplify this practice.*
7. Understand societies of the past as models for how human beings organize themselves for solving life’s problems (History and Culture, #7). *In helping students answer the question of “why” a particular society developed as it did, World History teaches students to examine the problems facing that society, whether geographic, economic, political, or social. Examining how societies coped with historical epidemics ranging from the Black Death to AIDS, for example, gives students a framework for examining how the United States prepares for pandemics today. Students are encouraged to see development as a response to life’s problems at the individual and the collective level.*

8. Explain the fundamental principles of the U.S. Constitution (Citizenship, #2). *Students explore, in both halves of the course, the origins of democratic thought and representative government. The second half of the course examines the development of the enlightened, representative, Western tradition in some detail, and students are asked to compare the revolutionary experiences of several societies, including the U.S., with an eye to their political and cultural values. The Constitution, along with the Declaration of Independence, the Declaration of the Rights of Man and Citizen, and other contemporary texts are valuable historical tools in this regard.*
9. Differentiate among different forms of democracy (Citizenship, #3). *Political theories, as well as political structures, are integral parts of World History from the beginning of the course. Democracy is naturally a recurring theme, from the “primitive democracies” described by Rousseau and Marx in prehistoric times to the republic of Rome, the city-states of ancient Greece, as well as the Magna Carta in the first half of the course. The second half explores not only the similarities but also the differences between the processes and outcomes of the democratic revolutions in Europe, the United States, and Latin America, among others. The development of the English tradition of representative government and rule of law receives special attention throughout the course.*
10. Describe the role of the military within the American democratic polity (Citizenship #4). *World History explicitly deals with the United States’ role in global affairs as well as domestic affairs. Students examine, for instance, the role of the U.S. military in settling the American West as well as in the Second World War, Korea, Vietnam, and in the Global War on Terror.*
11. Discuss the historical origins of the “citizen-soldier,” describe the current civil-military relations in the 21st-century U.S., and be able to compare civil-military relations in the U.S. to those of other countries (Citizenship #5). *The concept of “citizen-soldier” is deeply embedded in history—in the city-states of ancient Greece, in republican Rome, in revolutionary France, and in the United States. Throughout the World History course, students are encouraged to explore the links between the military, government, and society—whether in Han China, 20th century Latin America, or modern-day America—and to draw comparisons across societies*

3. **Briefly describe how the course will address any of the meta-competencies identified in B.2.** N/A
4. **Describe the plan for assessing the outcomes identified in D.2 and, when appropriate, D.3. (This plan should be developed in close consultation with the Core Curriculum Assessment Working Group and/or the Office of Assessment and Institutional Research.)**

Students in World History will be assessed using a variety of tools.

1) The Department has designed a General Knowledge Survey (GKS). This instrument (one for HI 103 and one for HI 104) consists of fifty questions regarding items considered “essential knowledge” for a student of world history, as determined by a survey of leading world history textbooks. It is administered at the beginning of the course and again at the end of the course to measure students’ grasp of these facts, as well as their achievement regarding the LOs. Only the results of the second administration of the GKS, reflecting the accumulation of factual knowledge and progress toward the LOs across the semester, are counted toward a student’s mark (50 points of a 300-point final examination); the changes between the initial and final administration are used as a Departmental measure.

2) A second assessment instrument is the outside writing assignment. These essays are designed to engage the student with a historical document or question, and to provide a context and an interpretation in response to a prompt. They challenge the student’s critical thinking skills, and engage their technical and creative skills in written communication as well. The scope of both the reading and the writing assignments is limited by Departmental parameters, and the nature of the assignments is coordinated within the World History Group. A student will be required to read between 600 and 800 pages for these assignments, which will produce between six and ten pages of formal writing. The total of those assignments counts for 20 percent of the final mark.

3) Students are also required to write in-class essays as part of examinations. They are provided with a choice of prompts on which to write, and asked to provide an answer solidly supported by historical evidence within the short span of the examination. This tests not only the student’s mastery of the factual details of World History, but also his or her ability to critically select those facts that are most relevant and compelling, and to put them in a logical context in response to the prompt. Four hourly examinations measure the student’s mastery of individual themes and topics, while the final examination includes a comprehensive essay that evaluates the student’s ability to place those themes and topics in a broader context. The comprehensive essays are common to all sections across the Department. The essays count for 60 percent of each hour-

test, and the comprehensive essay counts for one-half (150 of 300 points) of the final examination.

4) Examinations also contain objective questions, designed to reinforce and measure a student's knowledge and understanding of World History, and short answer questions intended to elicit a summary response regarding the historical importance of the data in question. These elements count for 40 percent of each hour-test.

5) *Assessment also includes the rubric of classroom participation. This instrument, broadly defined, measures the student's ability to frame and respond to historical questions in a logical, critical, and coherent fashion. It may include formal or informal presentations to the class on a historical topic, leading a discussion on a theme, active engagement in classroom activities, or active involvement in group exercises exploring some historical problem. The final evaluation of participation may be made by the instructor, by the student, by the student's peers, or by some combination of those. Class participation makes up 10 percent of the student's mark.*

6) *Student progress is also measured, between hourly exams, by quizzes. These may be framed as multiple-choice questions or in short answer format, and they may ask for factual knowledge or test higher-order thinking skills. They are designed by the instructors to check on student study habits, intellectual development, and/or breadth of knowledge in a particular area. Instructors may administer between six and twelve quizzes, as they see fit. The quizzes will count for 10 percent of the student's mark.*

7) *A detailed description of how each (of eleven) specific learning outcomes—seven relating to History and Culture (HIC) and four relating to Citizenship (CIT)—is available on the VMI webpage for Core Curriculum Assessment: <http://new.vmi.edu/show.asp?durki=8292>.*

5. Core curriculum courses must be taught with an explicit effort to stimulate students' intellectual curiosity and awareness of why these requirements have been established as the core academic contribution to the Institute's mission to develop citizen-soldiers. The Core Curriculum Oversight Committee therefore encourages instruction that promotes active, engaged learning. Describe how the pedagogy for this course addresses the issue of relevance and routinely engages students as active learners.

The teaching of World History presents many possibilities and opportunities for employing a variety of pedagogical techniques designed to arouse the intellectual curiosity of students and immerse them deeply in the substantive content of the course. Instructors will use any and all of the following teaching techniques: class discussions and debates, the Socratic method, audio-visual materials (including images, maps, and short video-clips), ancillary readings, small-group work, student presentations, and discussion of current events as they relate to historical topics covered in the course. All of these techniques feature student-centered activities that engage students as active learners rather than treats them as passive recipients of information dispensed via lecture. As a mechanism for ensuring that instructors do not rely exclusively on lectures or other passive learning techniques, in annual self-evaluations they will specify the active learning techniques used, and describe their experiences with them. Also, in their syllabi, instructors will provide explicit indication of the kinds of active learning

techniques they will employ. Further, instructors' teaching will be observed by the department head at least once per academic year, or by other colleagues as requested by the department head.

6. If this is a multi-section course, what faculty development plans does the department have for ensuring consistency and effectiveness across the various sections? Please note any resource requirements for faculty development in A.11.

In a typical semester, 6 to 9 instructors teach 16 to 22 sections of HI 103 or 104. To ensure a degree of commonality of experience for all students, instructors adhere to a common organizational structure of the course, with attendant guidelines and strictures, which are set forth in a document entitled "Teaching World History at the Virginia Military Institute." Reflecting our recognition of the virtues of a common organizational structure for the world history courses, it is expected that all instructors of World History will adhere, without significant deviation, to the course structure defined and described in that document. Also, all instructors are members of the World History Committee, which meets regularly under the direction of the coordinator of the World History Course, to discuss course pedagogy, air and resolve problems, formulate new policies when appropriate, reach consensus about examination questions, and the like. This committee, which has been functioning since 1999, will remain in-place and continue to ensure standardization of approach in the teaching of HI 103 and 104.

Submitted by

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