This course covers the history of the human species from its origins on the African continent up to the new interconnections of human populations initiated by the intercontinental (transatlantic, and soon, transpacific) voyages around the year 1500. “Global” implies history at its most encompassing, but we will meet the challenge of these vast temporal and geographical expanses of history by taking a thematic approach. We will look at the evidence for human evolution and the development of particular cultural features that moved *Homo sapiens* beyond the sociability exhibited by other primates to the intensely complex modes of language, food production, habitation, and travel that have helped make humans the only truly global species. In this way, we can examine human societies of all types, in both the Old World and the New, whether they remained hunter-gatherers or organized into empires, including the largest land empire in human history, that of the Mongols in the 13th century.

The goals of the course are to develop a sense of the deep roots of modern culture: the roles of migration and settlement, trade and empire, language and religion, which have acted to unite (and divide) peoples for the last hundred millennia. You will be asked to do small individual and group investigations into such questions as the cultivation of certain food products, textile production, writing and other modes of communication, the histories of certain world cities. Most importantly, you will learn how to think historically and appreciate the value of doing so: how understanding the surface landscape of present-day society can come by looking deep into its historical roots.

We will pay attention specifically to material culture for several reasons. First, the materiality of the earth, the climate, the foodstuffs and animals with which humans interacted are all subject to historical understanding due to advances in the sciences. Second, a focus on material goods also allows us to study the foundations of pre-modern economies and develop frameworks for cross-cultural comparison.

**Course Objectives:**
At the end of the term, you will be able to:
• formulate questions like a historian, to be a historian in everyday habits of thinking: to continually ask “Where did this come from?”, “Why here?”, “Why now?”, and know how to frame a plan to answer these questions persuasively.

• list the basic precepts of a global approach to history—that is, explain why we work on multiple scales of perspective, from local to regional to hemispheric.

• articulate the value of the different kinds of primary sources used for pre-modern history.

• distinguish between evidence and assertion in secondary sources, and to demonstrate competency in the use of both.

• demonstrate your skill navigating different kinds of information sources for historical study, particularly with respect to geography and chronology.

A note about our readings. Although there are many world history textbooks on the market (you can feel free to acquire a copy on the used book market), for their cost, none were deemed fully suitable for the purposes of this course, with its focus on human migrations, trade, etc. Instead, MacGregor’s *A History of the World in 100 Objects (HW100)* has been selected as our main text because of its focus on the stories that can be elicited from material objects. We’ll be reading about 10 chapters a week. (Don’t worry: they’re usually just 5-6 page each.) However, because it was not written as a course textbook, it is very important that you read the chapters in the order they are listed on the syllabus, which presents them according to our thematic strands.

Because we’re covering such a huge amount of time (a mere 300,000 years!) and literally the whole globe, we’ll use a regularized structure for each module in order to allow our themes to develop sequentially over the course of term. Each module will consist of the following informational materials and assignments:

• a short introductory reading (“Overview”) to “frame” our questions for the module

• Discussion Question 1 (DQ1), which asks you to react to a short assigned reading in an anticipatory mode (“What do I think the big issues will be this week?” “In what direction do the cultures of the world seem to be heading?”)

• main readings:
  o 10 chapters (more or less) from MacGregor HW100, to be read in the order in which they are assigned
  o additional reading(s) that take us deeper into a specific question of the transformations of the period

• a geography quiz, to make sure you’re properly oriented to the places we’ll be talking about in the module

• Discussion Question 2 (DQ2), your substantive writing assignment each week, which will ask you to dive deep into a particular question and then debate it with fellow classmates. In a few cases, you will be asked to do some additional reading/video viewing to help zero in on a particular issue.

One additional assignment, to do on your own schedule, is to prepare a short essay (maximum: 1500 words) describing a type of scientific method that contributes to the work of reconstructing the past beyond the evidence of written documents. Choose from this list:
• ice cores
• palynology
• carbon-14 dating
• aDNA (palaeogenetics)
• dendrochronology (tree-rings)
• optically stimulated luminescence

More detailed instructions will be posted. This assignment is due during the week of Module 7, but can be turned in at any time prior to that date, as it is not tied to a particular module.

Aside from the weekly geography quiz, the only other exam is a FINAL EXAM at the end of term. And yes, it is cumulative.

Note that modules are “launched” sequentially: that is, a new one opens up when you’ve completed the previous one. While in principle they are available for you to do them at your pace, the DQ2 still requires you to respond to fellow classmates, so do keep that in mind.

Remember that the Methods Assignment - Science in the Service of History can be done at any time you want; it is not tied to a particular Module.

For Module 8 (the final week), there is neither a Geography Quiz nor a DQ2; just the DQ1 (no follow-up responses required) and the Final Exam.

Course Summary:

Orientation
Welcome to “HST 100: Global History to 1500”! Start here!
Orientation, page 1: Meet Your Instructor, Textbook Information, Course Tour
Discussion Questions (DQ1 & DQ2) - General Principles
Geography Quizzes - General Principles

Module 1: From Hominins to Humans - Overview
Module 1, Discussion 1 (DQ1): The World in Your Kitchen
Module 1: Study Materials
Module 1: Geography Quiz
Module 1, Discussion 2 (DQ2): Humans as a Global Species

Module 2: Collocations of Population - Overview
Module 2, Discussion 1 (DQ1): Naia of Yucatan
Module 2: Study Materials
Module 2: Geography Quiz
Module 2, Discussion 2 (DQ2): How to Domesticate Your Guinea Pig

Module 3: Ancient Empires - Overview
Module 3, Discussion 1 (DQ1): Climate and Conflict
Module 3: Study Materials
Module 3: Geography Quiz  
Module 3, Discussion 2 (DQ2): Stored Language

Module 4: A Global Collapse? - Overview  
Module 4, Discussion 1 (DQ1): Bones Don’t Lie  
Module 4: Study Materials  
Module 4: Geography Quiz  
Module 4, Discussion 2 (DQ2): Ships of the Desert

Module 5: A Medieval Efflorescence - Overview  
Module 5, Discussion 1 (DQ1): The Rhinoceros and the Walrus  
Module 5: Study Materials  
Module 5: Geography Quiz  
Module 5, Discussion 2 (DQ2): The Genizah and the World

Module 6: Pushing the Limits - Overview  
Module 6, Discussion 1 (DQ1): Virtual Angkor  
Module 6: Study Materials  
Module 6: Geography Quiz  
Module 6, Discussion 2 (DQ2): The Technologies of Empire

Methods Assignment - Science in the Service of History

Module 7: The Black Death and the Great Transition - Overview  
Module 7, Discussion 1 (DQ1): Decoding the Black Death  
Module 7: Study Materials  
Module 7: Geography Quiz  
Module 7, Discussion 2 (DQ2): “The living were hardly able to bury the dead”

Module 8: Completing the Circle - Overview  
Module 8, Discussion 1 (DQ1): Romanus Pontifex: A New Fate for Humankind  
Module 8: Study Materials  
Module 8: From the San to Santa Ana-La Florida  
FINAL EXAM

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STUDY MATERIALS

Module 1: From Hominins to Humans

as HW100. For Module 1, read chapters 2 (Olduvai Chopping Tool), 3 (Olduvai Handaxe), 4 (Swimming Reindeer), 5 (Clovis Spear Point), and 14 (Jade Axe)

- María C. Ávila-Arcos, “The Genetic History of the Americas” (video), https://carta.anthropogeny.org/mediaplayer/play/156412/299567. (21 mins. You can skip the first 1:30 mins, which is just advertising.)

Supplemental

The following resources are optional; they're my suggestions in case you're curious to learn more about our topics this week.

- Dan Smail, Deep History and the Human Brain (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2009)
- Patrick Manning, Jan Lucassen, and Leo Lucassen, Migration History in World History: Multidisciplinary Approaches (Leiden: Brill, 2010)
- John L. Brooke, Climate Change and the Course of Global History: A Rough Journey (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2014)

Module 2: Collocations of Population


- **HW100.** For Module 2, **read chapters 6** (Bird-Shaped Pestle), **8** (Egyptian Clay Model of Cattle), **9** (Maya Maize God Statue), and **10** (Jomon Pot).

- Ian Hodder, “Origins of Settled Life; Göbekli and Çatalhöyük,” *Talks at Google*, Published May 6, 2015, [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zKwSg7OyvoE](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zKwSg7OyvoE). This runs for about 52 minutes. **Note:** the DQ2 this week focuses on domestication of crops and animals, and not specifically on the separate issue of the new tendency among some populations to conglomerate in urban communities. That will be the major theme of Module 3. However, do take good notes of this lecture because Hodder is making the very important point that urbanization was likely **not** a result of a sudden “revolution” in domestication of plants and animals. (In the DQ2 prompt, you’ll see that this idea is now being supported from the genetics of the plants and animals themselves.) As you're watching this, note how much attention Hodder focuses on notions of religion and kin (one of our other seven human traits).


### Supplemental

The following resources are optional; they’re my suggestions in case you're curious to learn more about our topics this week.


- *Nova*, “First Face of America,” Aired February 7, 2018 on PBS: [https://www.pbs.org/wgbh/nova/video/first-face-of-america](https://www.pbs.org/wgbh/nova/video/first-face-of-america). A special devoted to the story of Naia, the 13,000 year-old teenager found in an underwater cave in Mexico. **Note:** if viewed in Arizona, requires a subscription to ArizonaPBS Passport.

- *Hoyo Negro*, the website for the research team studying Hoyo Negro, the underwater Pleistocene era cave where the teenaged girl Naia was found: [http://hoyonegro.ucsd.edu/about.php](http://hoyonegro.ucsd.edu/about.php).


**Module 3: Ancient Empires**

• **Reading for Module 3, DQ1** (specific instructions will be found on the DQ1 page):
• **HW100.** For Module 3, read chapters 11 (King Den’s Sandal Label), 12 (Standard of Ur), 13 (Indus Seal), 15 (Early Writing tablet), 16 (Flood Tablet), 17 (Rhind Mathematical Papyrus), 18 (Minoan Bull-leaper), 19 (Mold Gold Cape), 20 (Statue of Ramesses II), 21 (Lachish Reliefs), 22 (Sphinx of Taharqo), 33 (Rosetta Stone).
• Here’s a map shown in Cline’s lecture, indicating the circum-Mediterranean empires around the time of the arrival of the “Sea Peoples”: [https://27a0436a-ab15346e-s-sites.googlegroups.com/a/umich.edu/imladjov/maps/SeaPeoples.jpg](https://27a0436a-ab15346e-s-sites.googlegroups.com/a/umich.edu/imladjov/maps/SeaPeoples.jpg).

**Supplemental**

The following resources are optional; they're my suggestions in case you're curious to learn more about our topics this week.

• John L. Brooke, *Climate Change and the Course of Global History: A Rough Journey* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2014)
• Fabian Welc and Leszek Marks, “Climate change at the end of the Old Kingdom in Egypt around 4200 BP: New geoarchaeological evidence,” *Quaternary International* 324 (2014), 124-133.
connections between the horse cultures of the Russian steppe and the spread of Indo-European languages: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_Horse,_the_Wheel,_and_Language. These ideas continue to be tested by palaeogenetics and linguistics.

- Harappa.com: https://www.harappa.com/about-us. This site brings together a variety of resources about this still little-understood society.
  - Some popularizing summaries of the Whitehouse et al. study are:

**Module 4: A Global Collapse? The End of Ancient Civilizations**

- **HW100.** For Module 4, read chapters 23 (Chinese Zhou Ritual Vessel), [skip 24], 25 (Gold Coin of Croesus), 26 (Oxus Chariot Model), 28 (Basse-Yutz Flagons), 29 (Olmec Stone Mask), 31 (Coin with Head of Alexander), 32 (Pillow of Ashoka), 34 (Chinese Han Lacquer Cup), [skip 35-36], 38 (Ceremonial Ballgame Belt), 40 (Hoxne Pepper Pot), 41 (Seated Buddha from Gandhara), 42 (Gold Coins of Kumaragupta I), 43 (Silver Plate showing Shapur II), 44 (Hinton St Mary Mosaic), 45 (Arabian Bronze Hand), 46 (Gold Coins of Abd al-Malik). **Optional** this week are the following: 27 (Parthenon Sculpture:}
Centaur and Lapith), 30 (Chinese Bronze Bell), 37 (North American Otter Pipe), 39 (Admonitions Scroll), 47 (Sutton Hoo Helmet), 49 (Korean Roof Tile).

- Nicola Di Cosmo and Michael Maas, “Introduction,” in: Empires and Exchanges in Eurasian Late Antiquity: Rome, China, Iran, and the Steppe, ca. 250–750, ed. Nicolà Di Cosmo and Michael Maas (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2018), pp. 1-15. **Read up through p. 9**, to the section beginning “Organization and Contents of the Book.” (You’re welcome to read the detailed descriptions of the chapters that follow, but that section won’t be necessary to respond to the DQ2.)

- For our theme on camels, you have your choice of either of these two essays:

**Supplemental**

The following resources are optional; they're my suggestions in case you're curious to learn more about our topics this week.

- Adam Izdebski and Michael Mulryan, eds., *Environment and Society in the Long Late Antiquity*, a special issue of *Late Antique Archaeology* 12, no. 1 (2016 [for 2018]).
- Joseph R. McConnell, Andrew I. Wilson, Andreas Stohl, Monica M. Arienzo, Nathan J. Chellman, Sabine Eckhardt, Elisabeth M. Thompson, A. Mark Pollard, and Jørgen Peder


- Teotihuacan Virtual Fieldtrip, an online exploration of the site made by the Teotihuacan Lab here at ASU: [http://vft.asu.edu/VFTTeotihuacan/panos/Teo/Teo.html](http://vft.asu.edu/VFTTeotihuacan/panos/Teo/Teo.html).


- Nicholas Purcell, “Unnecessary Dependences: Illustrating Circulation in Pre-modern Large-scale History,” in: *The Prospect of Global History*, ed. James Belich, John Darwin, Margret Frenz, and Chris Wickham (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2016), pp. 65-79. The title is obscure; the essay actually discusses the extensive evidence for the production and circulation of incense and other resins, most of which came from Yemen and all of which demonstrate the intense levels of regional trade in the early centuries of the Common Era.

**Module 5: A Medieval Efflorescence**

- **Reading for Module 5, DQ1:**
- **HW100.** For Module 5, **read chapters** 50 (Silk Princess Painting), 52 (Harem Wall-painting Fragments), 55 (Chinese Tang Tomb Figures), 56 (Vale of York Hoard), 57 (Hedwig Glass Beaker), 58 (Japanese Bronze Mirror), 59 (Borobudur Buddha Head), 60 (Kilwa Pot Sherds), 61 (Lewis Chessmen). **Optional:** 51 (Maya Relief of Royal Blood-letting), 53 (Lothair Crystal), 54 (Statue of Tara).
- Choose one or the other of the following readings on slavery:

**Supplemental**

The following resources are optional; they’re my suggestions in case you’re curious to learn more about our topics this week.

- Sebastian Lüning, Mariusz Gałka, Florencia Paula Bamonte, Felipe García Rodríguez, Fritz Vahrenholt, “The Medieval Climate Anomaly in South America,” *Quaternary*


- Kathleen Bickford Berzock, ed., Caravans of Gold, Fragments in Time: Art, Culture, and Exchange across Medieval Saharan Africa (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2019). This is the catalog of an exhibit currently going on at Northwestern University, which will later move to Toronto and then Washington, DC.


- Dirhams for Slaves Project, Oxford University, Recorded lectures (audio + slides) from 2015 on the theme: The Dark Ages’ Dirty Secret? Medieval slavery from the British Isles to the Eurasian steppes and the Mediterranean world, including eunuchs at Norman court of Sicily, female slaves, etc.: http://krc.orient.ox.ac.uk/dirhamsforslaves/index.php/en/resources.

- Ibn Butlän, “How to Purchase a Slave,” partial English translation by Bernard Lewis is reprinted in: Jarbel Rodriguez, Muslim and Christian Contact in the Middle Ages: A Reader (Toronto, 2015), pp. 422–29. Ibn Butlan (1001-64 CE) was an Arab Nestorian Christian physician active in Baghdad. Warning: Ibn Butlan trafficks in strong ethnic stereotypes that we would now consider profoundly racist. Also, a section included here describes female slaves in explicitly sexual terms. As we know, this is hardly unusual, given that female slaves were almost always sexually exploited. Still, due caution should be observed.


**Module 6: Pushing the Limits: Pacific Exploration, Mongol Expansion, and Mesoamerican Renewal**

- **Reading for Module 6, DQ1**: Virtual Angkor, [https://www.virtualangkor.com/](https://www.virtualangkor.com/).
- **HW100**: For Module 6, *read chapters 62* (Hebrew Astrolabe), *64* (David Vases), *65* (Taino Ritual Seat), *69* (Sculpture of Huastec Goddess), *70* (Hoa Hakananai’a Easter Island Statue), *71* (Tughra of Suleiman the Magnificent), *72* (Ming banknote), *74* (Jade Dragon Cup). **Optional**: *66* (Holy Thorn Reliquary), *67* (Icon of the Triumph of Orthodoxy), *68* (Shiva and Parvati Goddess).

- **Expansion into the Pacific:**
- **The Mongol Empire:**
- **The Foundation of the Mexica/Aztec Empire:**
  - Aztec Chinampas: the production quality is not good, but this does give a very good summary of how the unique and ingenious system of *chinampas* in Tenochtitlan were constructed and functioned (5 mins): [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hew9ZDO1caw](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hew9ZDO1caw).
  - Here’s another--shorter, but with a useful re-enactment (1:30 mins): [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9ay78bCwXe8](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9ay78bCwXe8)

**Supplemental**

The following resources are optional; they're my suggestions in case you're curious to learn more about our topics this week.


• Bibliography on the Mongols: the field of Mongol studies has entered a period of resurgence in the past decade. One feature of the field now is that English has become the lingua franca of scholars. There is no living researcher competent in all the languages encompassed by the Mongol Empire at its height: no one who knows Tangut and Vietnamese and Persian and Chinese and ... (the list could go on for quite a while!). So, Mongol studies is actually a field now where you can read broadly even if you only have English. The following is an excellent place to start: Michal Biran, “The Mongol Empire: The State of the Research,” History Compass, 11, no. 11 (2013), 1021–33.
  - Some important works that have appeared since Biran’s review came out:


• David Carrasco, City of Sacrifice: The Aztec Empire and the Role of Violence in Civilization (Boston: Beacon Press, 2000)

Module 7: The Black Death and the Great Transition

• [note: importantly, there are no objects in HW100 relating to the Black Death! We already saw signs of Eurasia’s re-establishment of order in Module 6 (chapters 71, 72, and 74) in the decades following the worst initial outbreak. Keep this gap in the physical record in mind as you do the DQ2.]
• VIDEO: Daniel Cattier, Juan Gélas, Fanny Glissant, Slavery Routes, Episode 1: 476-1375: Beyond the Desert, (Paris, 2018), entire (52 minutes).

Supplemental

The following resources are optional; they're my suggestions in case you're curious to learn more about our topics this week.

• Monica H. Green, ed., Pandemic Disease in the Medieval World: Rethinking the Black Death, inaugural issue of The Medieval Globe 1, no. 1-2 (Fall 2014), available open-access here: https://scholarworks.wmich.edu/medieval_globe/1/.
This is a general overview of evidence for the infectious diseases malaria, smallpox, leprosy, and plague across Eurasia.


- Fredrik Charpentier Ljungqvist, Willy Tegeld, Paul J. Krusic, Andrea Seim, Friederike M. Gschwind, Kristof Haneca, Franz Herzig, Karl-Uwe Heussner, Jutta Hofmann, David Houbrechts, Raymond Kontic, Tomáš Kyncl, Hanns Hubert Leuschner, Kurt Nicolussi, Christophe Perrault, Klaus Pfeifer, Martin Schmidhalter, Mathias Seifert, Felix Walder, Thorsten Westphal, and Ulf Büntgen, “Linking European building activity with plague history,” *Journal of Archaeological Science* 98, 81-92. This a great example of how large datasets (in this case, the felling dates of 1000s of trees), can give a new kind of quantitative evidence for human activity. Or, in this case, the lack of it.

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- [For bibliography on the late medieval slave trade, see Module 8.]

### Module 8: Completing the Circle: One World Connected


- **HW100.** For Module 8, **read chapters 63** (Ife Head), **75** (Dürer’s Rhinoceros), **77** (Benin Plaque: The Oba with Europeans), **78** (Double-headed Serpent). **Optional:** **76** (Mechanical Galleon). **Then, for our Final Review, read chapters 24** (Paracas Textile), **48** (Moche Warrior Pot), and **73** (Inca Gold Llama, Peru)

- **Video:** *Slavery Routes*, Episode 2: 1375-1620: *For All the Gold in the World.* (Note: the video actually runs 52 minutes, and you're welcome to watch all of it. But only the first 32 mins are needed for our discussion in this Module.) You might be interested to look up the *Wikipedia entry for the Jerónimos (or Hieronymites) Monastery* in the Belem district of Lisbon, which is mentioned at 30:29.

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**Supplemental**
The following resources are optional; they're my suggestions in case you're curious to learn more about our topics this week.

- William D. Phillips, Jr., “Slavery in the Atlantic Islands and the Early Modern Spanish Atlantic World,” *The Cambridge World History of Slavery: Volume 3: AD 1420–AD 1804*, ed. David Eltis and Stanley L. Engerman (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011), pp. 325-349. This is a useful overview that will allow you to connect the narrative of late medieval slavery we have covered this week with the larger trajectories that will define transatlantic slavery for the next several hundred years.
- Ray Silverman, “Material Biographies: Saharan Trade and the Lives of Objects in Fourteenth- and Fifteenth- Century West Africa,” *History in Africa* 42 (2015), 375-95. This examines the importation of brassware into West Africa from Egypt and England after the Black Death (later 14th and 15th centuries), a period when a lot of dispersed household goods were circulating on the secondary market. West Africa had no copper deposits of its own, hence the special local value of these artifacts.