

AP World Summer Assignment 2021-2022

Introduction: The AP World History course is an ambitious undertaking: it is intended to replace an introductory college course on world history. The content stretches from 1200 CE to the modern day, spanning almost a thousand years of human history. Students will develop and use the same skills, methods, and practices as historians in their field. Below are the six major themes covered in the course itself:

- THEME 1: HUMANS AND THE ENVIRONMENT (*ENV*)
- THEME 2: CULTURAL DEVELOPMENTS AND INTERACTIONS (*CDI*)
- THEME 3: GOVERNANCE (*GOV*)
- THEME 4: ECONOMIC SYSTEMS (*ECN*)
- THEME 5: SOCIAL INTERACTIONS AND ORGANIZATION (*SIO*)
- THEME 6: TECHNOLOGY AND INNOVATION (*TEC*)

The Summer Assignment has two goals: getting a headstart on preparing students for the content of the course, but also introducing students to the level of rigor / academic engagement required for the themes above. It is expected that all students who take the course will complete this Summer Assignment. Even students who sign up for the course after the Summer Assignment has been completed will be responsible for some alternative assignment.

Reading List

Excerpts from *Guns Germs and Steel*, written by Jared Diamond - “The Rise and Spread of Food Production” [Link](#), “How China Became Chinese” [Link](#)

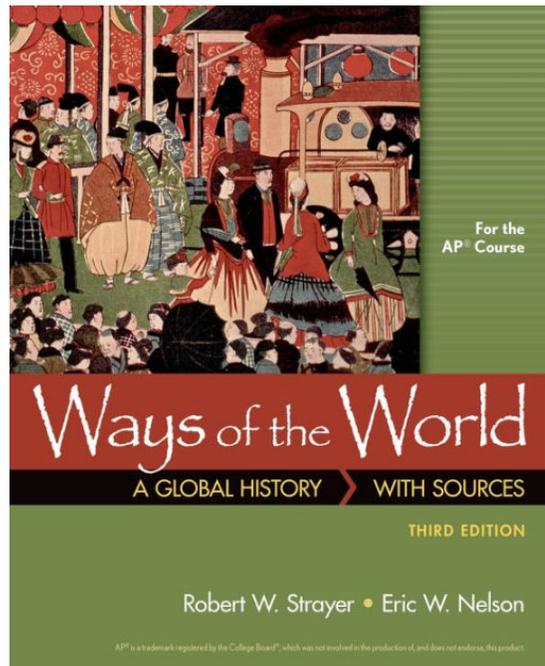
Excerpts from *Sapiens*, written by Yuval Noah Harari - “The Scientific Revolution” and “The Marriage of Science and Empire” [Link](#)

Excerpts from *1491*, written by Charles C. Mann - “Made in America” [Link](#)

Chapter Annotations

Our textbook for the year is Ways of the World, which we will use extensively throughout the year. Copies will be available for students to pick up for their summer work in room 2035 before the school year ends. Mr. Willick and I feel that there needs to be a strong foundation in some of the greater historical trends so we can “pick up” at the year 1200, and we will use chapters from the textbook to do so.

Material that we strongly want to highlight beyond just the start of the course falls roughly into three categories:



1. The development of major world religions
2. The rise and fall of second-wave civilizations and their legacies, especially social, cultural, and political
3. The establishment of interconnectivity like trade routes, shared religions, cultures, etc.

Each student is responsible for reading and annotating the following sections of the book:

Chapter 3: State and Empire in Eurasia / North Africa (600 BCE - 600 CE)

Chapter 4: Culture and Religion in Eurasia / North Africa (600 BCE - 600 CE)

Chapter 5: Society and Inequality in Eurasia / North Africa (600 BCE - 600 CE)

The first three days of class next semester will consist of our Socratic Seminar and an open-note multiple choice test on the material of Chapters 3-5. *Students will be allowed to use printed notes for this test, not electronic ones.* Allocate two days for the Socratic, and one for the test itself.

The questions posed for our Socratic Seminar are:

1. What is civilization? What are the most important factors in the development of civilization? Which is the most important?
2. What are the distinctive features of civilizations in the Western Hemisphere? How do they compare to the ones in the Eastern Hemisphere?
3. How did “China” become “Chinese?” What is the relationship between geography and identity?
4. What are the characteristics of Classical civilizations? What features set these civilizations (Rome, India) apart from China?
5. What are the foundational belief systems of Eurasia/North Africa? What are the similarities and differences of these systems? How do you account for these similarities / differences?
6. How is scientific progress and modern civilization linked? How is science and modern empire-building linked in similar and different ways?
7. How are developments of past civilizations and interactions between them important for how we contextualize and study the present?

If you have any question / concerns about the summer assignments, please contact Dave Willick (dwillick@westportps.org) or John Bengston (jbengston@westportps.org)