

## Summer Assignment: Global Studies

**SUBMISSION DIRECTIONS:** Answer all of the focus questions for Parts I and II of the assignment on a separate sheet of paper. You may choose to type or handwrite your responses but be prepared to submit a hardcopy of the assignment on the opening day of class.

### Part I: The Study of History

#### What is this course about?

In this class we'll study history at three different levels, each progressively more complicated, framed as questions below:

- ✓ **Level 1: Historical Narrative:** What happened?
- ✓ **Level 2: Historical Analysis:** What were people thinking and why?  
What were the causes and consequences of the events?
- ✓ **Level 3: Concept Analysis:** What can we learn from a historical event? What is its deeper meaning? What does it tell us more generally about a period of time, a culture, or an idea? Why is this important?

The course examines both ancient and modern history in different parts of the world. We certainly cannot study all history that has occurred during this time—people everywhere interact and make changes all the time. However, by looking at some important examples of what humans have done, we can understand something deeper and more profound (that's Level 3 thinking!). Moreover, historians begin with questions to help them focus—on a place, a time, a group, an idea. The primary question we'll examine in this course is: **What is a just society?** In order to respond to that question we can study society in five categories:

- ✓ **Belief:** How do faith, religion and philosophy shape society?
- ✓ **Power:** What strategies do leaders and institutions use to organize society and gain power?
- ✓ **Culture:** How does cultural expression reflect the values and ideals of a society?
- ✓ **Geography:** How do people interact with their environment, utilize resources and impact the climate?
- ✓ **Exchange:** How does the exchange of goods (the economy, trade, production, labor) and ideas (technology, education, language) shape the building and collapse of society?

In this course we will examine how cultures, faiths and political systems have approached the question of *what is a just society*. We'll spend some time examining how history is constructed, and students will frequently work as historians, analyzing evidence, generating theories and formulating judgment. In the process we'll look at how history itself has been used to support or oppose claims of what is just and right. We'll examine the relationship between information and power, the tension between hierarchy and freedom, and the conflict between individual expression and group loyalty. We'll navigate the 'river of culture,' and appraise what art and architecture reveal about the people who produced it. Further we'll critically analyze economic development, in the past and present, and look closely at the toll that has taken on our health, geography and climate change, all part of the crucible of justice. As historians in training, we'll try to make sense of the world around us and the legacies we inherit—and in the process begin to clarify our values so that we may leave a more intentional blueprint for the future.

### **Is studying history about memorizing facts?**

On the surface, history seems like a simple undertaking—just catalog what has happened in the past, write it down with a little flair, and ask students to memorize it. But is that all that history is about? And is it really that simple? No. As the sociologist Peter Berger wrote, “The past is malleable and flexible, changing as our recollection interprets and re-explains what has happened.” History is interpreted, and then reinterpreted, through the ages, and what we conclude very much depends on *who* is writing it. Perhaps history is not so simple an undertaking.

The French general and Emperor Napoleon Bonaparte, going one step further, crassly asserted, “history is a set of lies agreed upon.” One might conclude from Bonaparte—who took no small role in navigating the path of European history—that we can never really discover the truth and thus, historical endeavor has no point. The British Prime Minister Winston Churchill, who commandeered Britain through the course of World War II, left us with this thought: “History will be kind to me for I intend to write it.” Churchill seems to agree with Bonaparte that historical truth is not easily revealed; rather it can be easily concealed and crafted by whoever records it. But unlike the short emperor who left a tall shadow, Churchill hints that we can begin to discover the truth in the past when we consider its author and the author's perspective. Churchill, of course, was on the winning side of World War II and viewed that war from a particular perspective (the victors). So, it seems, history is a more complex undertaking than assembling *facts*. Rather, we will have to assemble conflicting accounts from numerous sources to begin to uncover what led to later events.

### **What's the point in knowing about the past?**

But why do this? Is history merely an obsession for people who like riddles or puzzles? Or can history, as the American historian (and frequent PBS documentary narrator), David McCullough insists, be “a guide to navigation in perilous times?” We've all heard the philosopher George Santayana's caution, “Those who cannot learn from history are doomed to repeat it.” Perhaps, then, McCullough's suggestion that we study history for the sake of paving a less perilous future is a good one. But we've been studying history for ages, and we can't seem to prevent genocide, war and hunger. Mark Twain famously commented, “history doesn't repeat itself—at best it sometimes rhymes.” Nevertheless, we needn't give up on history as an ethical compass, because no event is so unique that we cannot learn from it.

The political economist and revolutionary thinker Karl Marx wrote that “History repeats itself, first as tragedy, second as farce:” *how terrible it is to repeat tragedy, how foolish if we allow tragedy to repeat*. The genocide now underway in Sudan seems too tragic to call but a farce; yet why didn't we prevent it when we know so much about genocide? Aldous Huxley, author of *A Brave New World*, wrote “that men [sic] do not learn very much from the lessons of history is the most important of all the lessons that History has to teach.” As your teacher, then, it's my mission to teach history as a call to action. As the historian Gerda Lerner observed, “the main thing history can teach us is that human actions have consequences and that certain choices, once made, cannot be undone.” Thus, we can learn about making ethical choices from studying the past.

### **What does history have to do with you?**

You need not be Churchill or Napoleon for your choices to leave a mark on history. All of us make choices and take actions each day that influence others and change the course of history (there are companies, politicians and government agencies that annually spend millions of dollars to learn about your choices and respond accordingly). The difference between your choice to turn your cap a few degrees to the left or whether or not to wear baggy pants, thereby altering the course of fashion, on the one hand, and standing up to injustice on the other hand, is the degree of courage that you muster when making a choice. As the essayist Maya Angelou wrote, “history, despite its wrenching pain, cannot be un-lived, but if faced with courage, need not be lived again.” Think of the Chinese protesters standing off in front of tanks in Tiananmen Square, or the Polish Jews who fought the Nazis in the Warsaw Ghetto: they were courageous and hoped to be the last people in history forced to choose the actions they took. People in power—like Napoleon or Churchill—frequently get the credit for making history, but the nameless millions have no less an impact on history.

History makers need not be so dramatic to leave their mark. As the slain Attorney General (and brother of President John F. Kennedy) Robert Kennedy said, “it is from numberless diverse acts of courage and belief that human history is shaped. Each time a man [sic] stands up for an ideal, or acts to improve the lot of others, or strikes out against injustice, he [sic] sends forth a tiny ripple of hope.” As we study history, look for examples of courageous “ripples,” and often nameless actors, who sacrificed (even a little) so that we can better know the meaning of dignity, truth and doing the right thing. Sometimes they are hard to find - remember Churchill: the winners often get to choose who is included in history books. American women's historian Laurel Thatcher Ulrich reminds us that history makers are frequently those who challenge power. “Well behaved women rarely make history” she writes. Or as the witty 19<sup>th</sup> century writer Oscar Wilde wrote, “Disobedience, in the eyes of anyone who has read history, is man's original virtue. It is through disobedience that progress has been made, through disobedience and through rebellion.” Studying history, it seems, has a purpose and a method: “After the collection of facts, the search for causes” (Hippolyte Taine, 19<sup>th</sup> century French historian). It is up to you to unravel the questions posed about conflict, exchange, poverty, war, empire and faith: identify the evidence, find the causes, search for meaning, then muster a little courage to change the course of history yourself.

So, in a nutshell: history is not a simple retelling of a story from the past. Historians may use science to uncover the past, but interpreting its meaning is another matter, one that reflects bias and political views—often the views of people in power. Thus, studying history and expressing opinions about the past are as much about power and justice in the present. History



## Part II: Study of History Application - The Influence of Greece and Rome on Western Civilization

Directions: First, watch the overview clips on Ancient Greece and Ancient Rome. These clips will provide important context for the application. Next, recall the five areas of historical and concept analysis discussed in Part I. Your task in Part II of the summer assignment is to use the background information in each area to answer the focus question(s). The information included will be the foundation for class discussions in our opening days.

### Viewing Questions: [Ancient Greece 101](#)

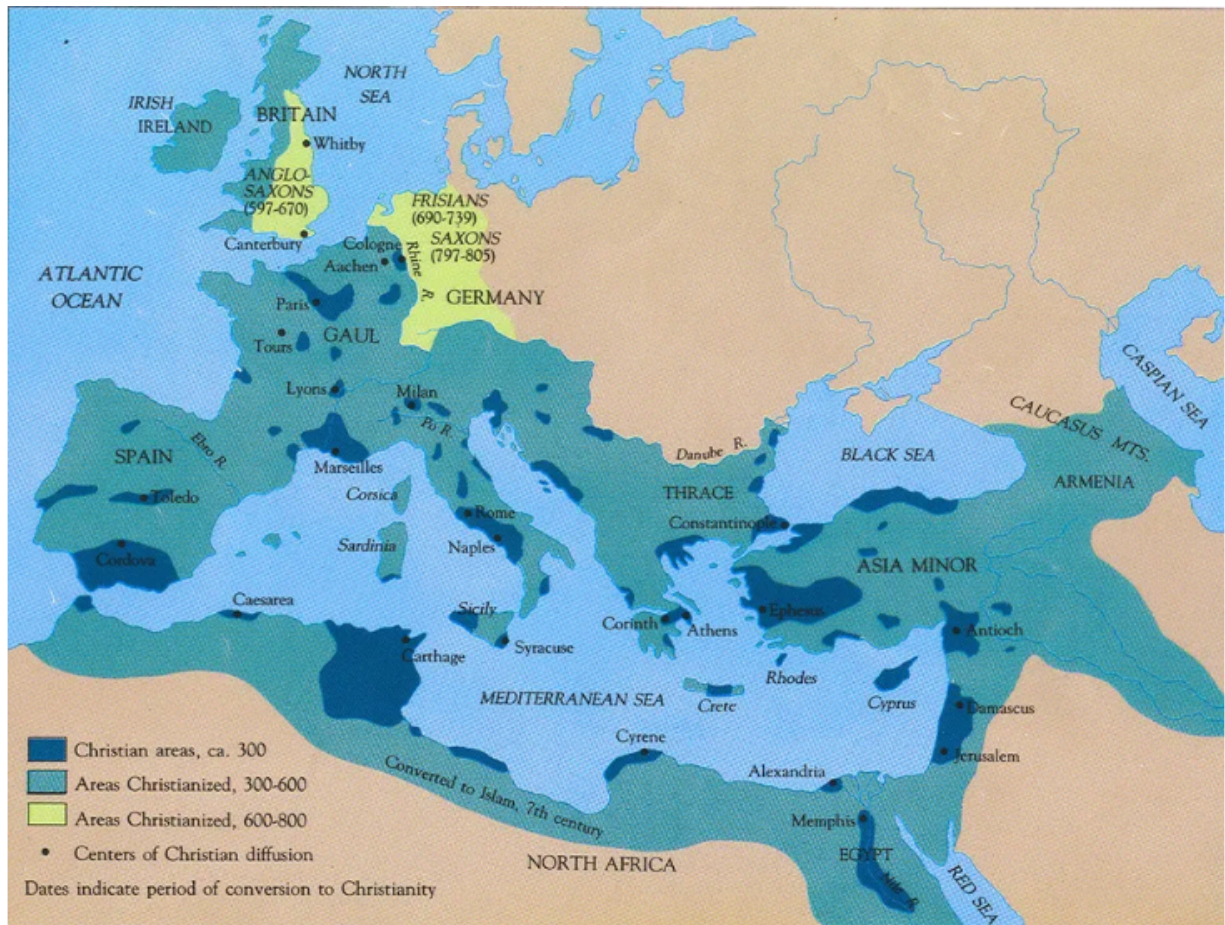
1. What are a few of the achievements closely associated with the Ancient Greeks?
2. Where and when was Greek civilization born? How large was the empire at its height?
3. What are city-states? How did the Greek city-states interact with one another?
4. Where did democracy originate and what is the basis of this system of government?
5. The Greeks were immensely proud of their military. How did they celebrate their military achievements?
6. What influence did Greek culture have on Western Civilization in the following areas:
  - a. Art:
  - b. Philosophy:
  - c. Mythology:
  - d. Language:
7. What do you think is the most significant Greek contribution to the modern world?

### Viewing Questions - [Ancient Rome 101](#)

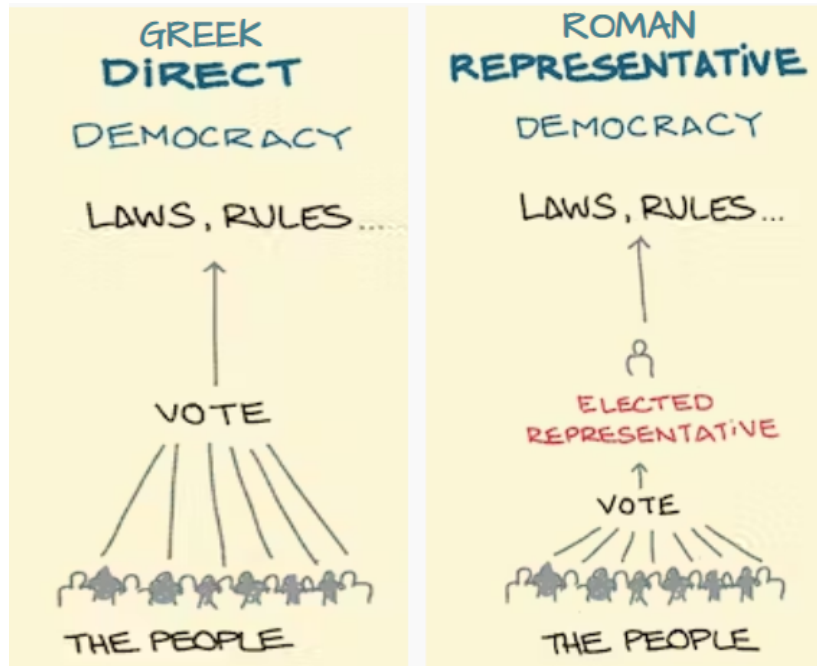
1. Rome began as a small village on central Italy's \_\_\_\_\_. In the coming centuries it grew into an empire that stretched from the north Atlantic all the way to the \_\_\_\_\_.
2. The lifespan of Ancient Rome can be divided into three major periods, the \_\_\_\_\_, the \_\_\_\_\_ and the \_\_\_\_\_.
3. During the regal period Rome was \_\_\_\_\_ and ruled by a succession of about \_\_\_\_\_.
4. Rome's first king, according to legend, was a man named \_\_\_\_\_. He and his twin brother \_\_\_\_\_ are said to have founded Rome in \_\_\_\_\_ B.C.

5. In \_\_\_\_\_ B.C., Rome adopted a \_\_\_\_\_ system of governance in which the state was primarily ruled by two annually elected representatives called \_\_\_\_\_, who were later called \_\_\_\_\_.
6. The imperial period was characterized by the rise of the \_\_\_\_\_ and notorious leaders such as Octavian, Rome's first emperor, who issued an era of peace and Nero, who, some scholars believe, was Rome's cruelest emperor.
7. Rome's focus and pride in its \_\_\_\_\_ was vital to the civilization's growth and this ethos was evident as early as the regal period when Rome was only a small village.
8. Rome slowly conquered and annexed neighboring peoples. This slow and steady expansion eventually led to the Roman's domination of the \_\_\_\_\_ and the entire Mediterranean Sea.
9. This massive scale and growing populous necessitated advancements in Roman engineering. What are examples of Roman engineering?
10. A key to Rome's success and longevity was the empire's inclusion of cultures from the lands they conquered. From the nearby land of \_\_\_\_\_, Rome acquired the Latin language which became the empire's official language and the ancestor to Europe's Romance languages. Rome also adopted cultural aspects from the ancient state of \_\_\_\_\_ including their religion, alphabet, and the spectacle of gladiator combat.
11. No other civilization influenced the Romans as much as the ancient \_\_\_\_\_. Their influence is probably most apparent in Rome's art and architecture.
12. One cultural shift in particular that resonated throughout the empire was the rise of \_\_\_\_\_. Originating in the Middle East, the religion found a strong advocate in Constantine 1, the first Roman emperor to convert to Christianity. He enabled Rome's transition into a Christian state and encouraged the religion to spread across \_\_\_\_\_.
13. By the fourth century, after a lifespan of over a \_\_\_\_\_, the Roman empire declined.
14. Factors including political corruption, \_\_\_\_\_ and class conflict led to the empire's decay from within, while \_\_\_\_\_ and other military threats caused it to break down from outside.

Area 1: [Belief](#) (background info linked)



**BELIEF FOCUS QUESTION:** Christianity originated in the Jewish province of the vast Roman Empire. Ultimately, the religion spread throughout the Roman Empire. Based on this background and the information in the linked clip and map, why is Europe predominantly Christian today?



**POWER FOCUS QUESTION:** Analyze the impact of ancient Greek and Roman government on the United States government using the background reading and organizers above. Include the following terms in your response: rule of law, representative democracy and separation of powers.



Area 3: [Culture](#) (background info linked)



Jefferson Memorial - Washington DC



Pantheon - Rome, Italy



Second Bank of the US - Philadelphia, PA



Parthenon - Athens, Greece

**CULTURE FOCUS QUESTION:** *Using the background information and the images above, summarize the influence of Greek culture on the following areas: art, architecture, science and philosophy.*

Area 4: [Geography](#) (background info linked)



**GEOGRAPHY FOCUS QUESTIONS:**

*MAP: Describe the geography of Ancient Greece. How might geography impact the development of civilization in the region?*

*BACKGROUND INFO: According to Cicero, why was ancient Rome's location advantageous? How do you think geography helped ancient Rome build an expansive empire in the Mediterranean world?*



Area 5: [Exchange](#) (article linked)



Greek Empire in Europe, Africa and Asia



Roman Empire at its height, 117 AD

**EXCHANGE FOCUS QUESTIONS:**

Define **CULTURAL DIFFUSION**:

Identify three examples of cultural diffusion discussed in the article (linked above) in the following areas: Asia, Africa and the Middle East. How do the maps help to explain the spread of classical Greek and Roman culture to different parts of the world?