

Villa Victoria Academy
World Cultures Course Syllabus
2014-15

Introduction:

Welcome to your first year of secondary education and to 9th grade World Cultures! This is an exciting time for you as young women and in particular, as students. I am particularly honored to be a part of your academic experience. This particular course aims to introduce students to the rich diversity of human culture from antiquity to the early 19th century. In this course, we will explore human culture in its myriad expressions, focusing on the study of literary, religious and philosophical texts as ways of narrating, symbolizing, and commenting on all aspects of human civic, social and material life. Even if you do not like history, you will gain a deep and abiding sense of yourself as an individual created by God to learn. The skills you develop will positively affect your other academic and career aspirations. You will be expected to actively develop your skills of analysis, synthesis, and evaluation, as well as comprehend, memorize, and apply relevant historical facts.

Course Description

World Cultures is an introductory freshman course and is a survey of many cultures including the ancient river valley cultures of Ancient Egypt, Mesopotamia, Ancient India, and Ancient China; the Classical heritage of Western Civilization; Western Europe of the Middle Ages; beyond Europe into Southeast Asia; the Golden Ages of China, Japan, and Korea; the early civilizations of Latin America; and ancient African kingdoms. Major topics of study will include a comparative analysis of Christianity, Judaism, and Islam, patterns of nation-building, the Renaissance, the Protestant Reformation and the Catholic Reformation, and finally, the Age of Discovery, the Age of Absolutism, and the Age of Revolution.

In each cultural focus, students are expected to identify important men and women; inventions and technology; analyze the causes of wars and conflicts, and synthesize the connections between politics, religion, and systems of economy. Identifying the characteristics of daily life, settlements, cities, and nation-building, as well as notable developments in the arts and great books will be an essential part of the course. Focusing on these topics will help students to evaluate the similarities and differences of the cultures but also how and why civilizations rise and fall. The approach will be largely chronological.

Texts:

Primary Textbook:

Leinwand, Gerald. *The Pageant of World History*. Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1994.

Grade Book Categories:

Tests, Papers, Projects, Debates	50%
Quizzes and IDs	30%
Homework	20%

Tests, Essays, and Projects – 50%

Tests are based on the textbook, lectures, and class discussions. The format includes Multiple Choice, Fill-in-the Blank, True-False, and from time to time, Chronological Ordering or Matching. Each test will have about 30-40 questions. Tests are administered at the end of each chapter.

Long essay tests will be completed at home or in class, depending on pace throughout the year. They will be completed or submitted at the end of each chapter and will compel you to analyze the content both in terms of depth and breadth. They will be graded according to a six point rubric.

Projects will be varied. A major project will include an historical research paper, while other projects will include Socratic Seminars, and evaluations of Primary and Secondary sources.

The research paper will be worth a test grade and will be completed in stages. It is designed to introduce students to the value of quality research, solid analysis, organizational structure, to include proper thesis construction, as well as appropriate historical citation. Citation will be in APA format.

Socratic Seminars are designed to be fun and engaging but also to allow development of skills in historical argumentation, inquiry, analysis, critical thinking skills, and overall scholarship. It also prepares students for full civic participation in the democratic process.

Evaluations of primary sources are essential to historical inquiry and evaluation of secondary sources are critical in identifying point of view, bias, and historical complexity. These projects (group and individual) will be assigned throughout the year.

Quizzes and IDs – 30%

Quizzes

I generally dislike giving **pop quizzes**, but will the moment I sense that the reading assignments are not being completed. They will be administered randomly and at my discretion.

Periodically, **pre-announced quizzes** will be given to assess your comprehension of the material as we progress through the units.

Reading quizzes will assess your progress in your textbook reading.

IDs

For each chapter covered in class, you will complete a series of Identifications that will be distributed at the beginning of the unit and will pertain to the textbook but also other required reading. These are not mere definitions, rather, they should help you contextualize and elaborate upon various ideas, issues, people, events, in any given era. They will be completed in a separate section in your notebooks. The format will be explained in class during the first week.

Homework – 20%

Homework may include **re-writes** of essays.

Lecture organizers, if used, are designed to assist you in taking proper notes. These are not a written recitation of the chapter in its entirety but some short hand version of main ideas, important terms, people, dates, events, and acknowledgement of themes. The entirety of your chapter lecture organizer will be due well before the test day so that you can use it as test preparation. These will be distributed in accordance with necessary differentiated instruction and therefore, will likely be determined in the first marking period.

Re-writes are designed to improve essay writing. Each essay will have a grading rubric, clearly defining the required components.

Midterm and Final

The midterm and final exams will be in the same format as chapter tests. However, there will also be an essay portion on the exams.

Class Policies:

Please read these carefully. If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to ask. As you are aware, the school as a whole is crafting policies that will provide more clarity. However, in the meantime, these stated policies apply.

1. **Plagiarism:** Please note that plagiarism is not tolerated. The guidelines in the student handbook will be followed. All citation will be in APA format. Instruction for these guidelines will be distributed prior to the first writing assignment in the U.S. History Toolkit.
2. **Attendance:** Students are expected to be in class daily. If you are unable to attend, it is your responsibility to obtain the classwork and homework missed.

Ideally, missed quizzes and tests should be made up within two days of returning to school, including the day of your return. Please communicate with me on the day you return as to when you will be taking the quiz or test. I am in my room *almost* everyday until 4:30. Per school policy, the **last** day to make up a quiz or test is on the 1st Tuesday following the absence. Beyond that, the quiz or test will fail to serve you and will only become an onerous burden for you. Please understand that this policy is for your benefit. Be aware that the accepted standard in most collegiate environments is to take the test or submit the assignment on *the day of your return*. We will use this time to prepare you for that standard.

If an excused absence constitutes non-participation in a class activity, a replacement assignment may be distributed. Due dates for that assignment will be discussed at that time.

3. **Tardiness:** When the bell rings, please be in your seat and ready for work. You will know that I am ready to begin when I begin class with prayer or a reading from Scripture. Please be respectful during this time.
4. **Late submission policy:** Clearly, if there is a valid reason (family emergency for example) for a late submission, this will be accepted upon notification from a parent/guardian. If you are absent on the day a paper or assignment was due, it is due the day you return. *Please* know that participation in extra-curricular activities and social activities is **not** considered valid. Ultimately, allowance for such a policy will work against you in your post-secondary endeavors. Therefore,

The first time this occurs, we will have a conversation. After the first occurrence, I will email home to help encourage you to rectify the late submission. If there is a continued delay or late submissions are an habitual event,

Projects and papers will be docked 10% a day for each day late, up until one week from the due date. After that, late work will not be accepted.

Homework is due when it is collected or reviewed in class. Credit for work will not be accepted beyond the first day. Remember that homework is for your benefit. In your post-secondary endeavors, you will learn that homework is rarely graded at all because it is considered to be a help to you - not a burden.

5. **Food and Water:** Please feel free to bring water or a snack to class. It is difficult to perform academically when hungry and most especially, when dehydrated. Drink plenty of water. However, it is your responsibility to clean up after yourself. Respect your environment and others - ultimately, this is self-respect.
6. **Restroom/Nurse:** Students should plan on using the restroom before or after class. If you must use the restroom or see the nurse during class time, please do so one at a time and leave the room quietly - you do not need to interrupt the class to ask for permission. The policy for leaving the room requires the student to date, sign your name, delineate the reason (i.e. Bathroom), and note the time you leave and return in the book by the door. Caveat! Please do not abuse this policy by leaving excessively, leaving with other students, or leaving for substantial periods of time.
7. **Electronic Devices:** Please adhere to the school policy regarding electronic devices, which includes mobile phones, and iPods. These are not allowed anywhere in the classroom -- **no exceptions**. They are disruptive and disrespectful. Please keep them out of sight and check your messages after class. iPads, tablets, laptops, etc. are acceptable provided they are being used for a history class. Please do not use them to access recreational activities OR to do homework for another class, unless I have given you permission to do so.
8. **Love God and love your neighbor as yourself. This establishes the foundation of all interpersonal interaction.**

Class Supplies

It is your responsibility to have all of the following supplies by the end of the first week.

1. Personal preference is important when it comes to study habits. However, I advise an appropriate notebook and pocket folder or binder with paper and folders. Each student is required to maintain a dedicated, organized notebook or binder, according to your preference. You need blank paper for in-class note taking derived from class lectures, group discussions, and activities; as well as at-home note taking derived from required reading. You also need pockets to keep handouts and print outs that you will receive throughout the year. Notes and accompanying papers and handouts should be organized with dated, titled

entries. You must have this notebook by the end of the first week of school, no exceptions. These notebooks will be checked regularly and the work within will count as a large percentage of your homework grade.

2. Access to a computer and a printer. If you do not have one or both at home, there are available computers and printers in the library. If you use the computers or printer in the library, you must acquire a Flash Drive to save your work and to print.