

AP World History (WHAP) Summer Syllabus 2020

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Information and Supplies for the 2019-2020 school year

WHAP is a college level course taught in high school. In this class you will use the same historical methods used by undergraduate students, graduate students, and professional historians. In short, this is a reading intensive class reinforced by historical research and writing by students. In this class reading and writing are paramount to learning, much the same way that using numbers, variables, and equations are paramount to understanding mathematics.

For the 2020-2021 school year you need to purchase one supplementary text by the first week of school. This will be used throughout the school year. It is available from amazon.com. You can order them from local Memphis booksellers such as Novel or Burke's Books as well. Be sure you get the third edition or the fourth edition. It usually sells for under \$15. If you need assistance with the purchase price please don't hesitate to let me know. I will make sure that you get a book.

This text, widely used in university world history courses, does a great job of framing a world history narrative that is not centered on a Eurocentric view of the world but instead will "take the entire world as our unit of analysis", as stated in the author's description from the introduction.

[The Origins of the Modern World: A Global and Environmental Narrative from the Fifteenth to the Twenty-First Century \(3rd Edition\)](#) by Robert B. Marks (ISBN # 978-1442212404)

You will also need a few smaller 3 ring binders and looseleaf paper to keep your work organized. Your classwork and assignments will serve as a study guide for the AP exam in May so it is crucial that you stay organized for this class.

Summer Assignments

Before the start of the school year please read the introduction to *Origins of the Modern World*. It is important to understand the historical perspective that the author is writing from so I have selected nine quotes (on the next page) from the introduction that explain Marks' approach to studying history. As you come across these while you are reading, make note of them in the margins. We will discuss them and the following three ideas when we return to school:

- According to the introduction, why does Marks think we should study history? Do you agree with him? Why or why not? Why do events that are happening around us now require historical context to understand (e.g. the killing of George Floyd by police in Minneapolis and the subsequent nation-wide protest movement)?
- Have you ever taken a history class or read a history book where the author takes a perspective on history that is similar to Robert Marks? Perhaps you have been in a world history class, that was Eurocentric, like the author describes. How much did you learn about the non-European and non-US world in your earlier world history classes?
- How does the introduction to *Origins of the Modern World* make you feel about taking this class? Are you excited to study history that goes beyond Europe and the United States? Which parts of the world and world events are you eager to learn more about this year?

Excerpts from: Introduction: Rise of the West? (pp. 1-17)

1) From p.1

“The tools of history can help us understand how and why the world we live in- the modern world- got to be the way it is. That understanding can be helpful as we search for ways to make the world a better, safer, more sustainable, and more equitable place for all people.”

2) From p. 5

“But as we will see, Europeans were not exceptional, and one of the most important important points about the history of the world until about 1800 is the broad comparability of Asia with Europe, showing more surprising similarities than meaningful differences. Nevertheless, the search for answers to why Europeans were perceived as exceptional and hence ultimately superior continues among historians today, even though many now think it is the wrong question to be asking.”

3) From p. 7

“Readers may be wondering why the issue of the rise of the West matters. Indeed, why even study history? The brief response is because our understanding of the past - who we are, where we came from, why we are here- inform our definitions of who we are in the present and have real implications and applicability for actions taken by us or in our name to shape the future”

4) From p.8

“As this book intends to show, the more we look at the world and its past through a new light, the more the pictures painted in our minds by the rise of the West will reveal another, and rather different pattern, underlying. To see it, though, we will have to begin shedding our Eurocentric perspectives.”

5) From. p.9

“Finally, Eurocentric ideas about the world and how it came to be the way it is are deeply held by Americans. Indeed, American history is often presented as the pinnacle, the purest and best expression, of Western civilization. European and even world history are often presented from a Eurocentric point of view, whether or not students or teachers recognize it.”

6) From p. 12

“On the one hand, if history- and our view of it- is contingent, then actions we take in the here and now do indeed have the possibility of changing the world. We are not trapped, but rather we (and I take that to mean all peoples in the world, not just Americans or those in the West) can have agency. If the past could have been different, then so too can the future.”

7) From p. 13

“A conjuncture happens when several otherwise independent developments come together in ways that interact with one another, creating a unique historical moment.”

8) From p.14

“So the narrative in this book about how the modern world came to be- the world of industrial capitalism, a system of nation-states and interstate wars, a growing gap between the richest and the poorest in our world, and mounting human impacts on the environment- will be one that has contingency, accidents, and conjuncture.”

9) From p. 16

“First, we have to take the entire world as our unit of analysis, rather than particular countries or even regions (e.g. Europe, East Asia). We will have the opportunity to discuss developments in particular nations and empires, but always in a global context.”