



What and Why is World History?

Three Approaches to World History

Major Civilizations

- Brings major civilizations together to compare what they share and how they are different

Societies (including Civilizations in contact)

- Looks at how contact occurs and how it changes both parties (comparison)

Broader forces or patterns

- Helps define contacts and experiences of individual civilizations

Time Periods

Classical
(1000 BCE -
500 CE)

Postclassical
(500 CE - 1450
CE)

Early Modern
(1450 CE -
1750/1800 CE)

Long 19th
Century (1750
CE - 1914)

Contemporary
(1914 to
present)

WHAT IS THE INTEREST IN WORLD HISTORY?

- ▶ DIVERSITY
- ▶ ENGAGEMENT
- ▶ UNDERSTANDING



World History vs Western Civilization

Western Civilization

- ▶ Traces Mesopotamia to North America

World History

- ▶ Where does Western Civilization fit into the Big Picture?

Three Emphases in World History

Origins

Our greatest understanding of World History comes from the Postclassical period and part of the Early Modern

Studying the past helps us understand our world today

Overall Frame(work)

Balance and tensions between change and continuity

Balance and tension between developments and identities

7 Civilizational/Geographical areas

- East Asia
- South and Southeast Asia
- The Middle East (and North Africa)
- Eastern and Western Europe
- Sub-Saharan Africa
- Latin America
- North America

Why are dates important?

B.C. A.D.
or
C.E. B.C.E.



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B.C.E = Before Common Era

C.E. = Common Era

QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER

- ▶ Why does World History seem anti-Western to some? Is this a rift that can be healed? (Think about how Western Civilization is taught.)
- ▶ One World Historian once proclaimed that the field depended on a key principle: dare to omit. But what criteria can world historians use to decide what to omit? Are some parts of the world less important than others? Are some periods of time less vital than others? Can the three basic approaches to World History help deal with the decisions on what to omit?
- ▶ **Post your responses on Blackboard “What is World History?”**