

**ESSAYS AND PRESENTATIONS FOR:**  
***HISTORY 1130-103/104: Trade, Economies, and Empires***

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**Teaching Format:** lectures and workshop meetings (including presentations)

**Presentations:**

Students in the class, in groups, are expected to deliver **ONE 10-15 minute presentation** on a given topic (see below for a list of topics). They are expected to do this in front of the class **orally**, plus deliver a **written** version (with a title, name of the presenter, **printed versions preferred** instead of handwritten versions, plus three sources to be listed at the end of the paper) of the presentation, and the PowerPoint to the moderator. The presentation will then be followed by a brief **discussion**, moderated by the lecturer. The **grade for the presentation (20 % of the overall grade)** will be comprised of: ability to be clear and stick to the time limit; clarity of the arguments; presentation style (e.g. use of overheads); written style. **A total of 3-4 presentations can usually be fitted for each of the dates, so choose quickly to get preferred date and topic!** *You can also suggest your own topic.* (PICK 3-4 TOPICS, IN ORDER OF PREFERENCE – YOU’LL ONLY WORK ON ONE TOPIC)

**Topics:**

March 19:

1. Defend the view that the prosperity of western countries is due largely to domestic factors
2. Defend the view that the prosperity of the west is due largely to the exploitation of other countries
3. Technology and tactics of sea transportation from Columbus to the 19<sup>th</sup> century
4. Assess the contribution of the Venetian Republic to western economic development

March 21:

1. Assess the contribution of the Dutch Republic to western development
2. Assess the contribution of the British Industrial Revolution to western economic development
3. How damaging was imperialism for Brazilian economic development
4. How damaging was imperialism for Indian economic development

March 23:

1. Assess the extent of economic globalization before World War I. How does it compare to the globalization of the last few decades?
2. Describe how the international monetary system worked prior to World War I.
3. Why was departure from the Gold Standard necessary for recovery from the Great Depression?
4. How and why have some commodities become illegal and some legal “drugs”?

March 26:

1. The decline of the British empire after World War II
2. Vietnam and France: why did the French lose this colony?

3. Privateering and buccaneers: How were the “pirates” crucial in the fight for colonies in the Early Modern Era?
4. Why did China decline in the second half of the 2<sup>nd</sup> millennium?

March 28:

1. Causes of Roman Empire’s collapse (military, economic, social, political etc.)
2. Most important innovations by the Byzantine Empire (also militarily)
3. What factors led to the colonization of Africa in the 19<sup>th</sup> century?
4. What are the differences and similarities between the causes, costs, and level of destruction between World War I and World War II?

March 30:

1. Assess the contribution of late medieval Portugal to western economic development
2. What are the main arguments by Jared Diamond and do they apply to history? Examples!
3. What does “Clash of Civilizations” mean and does it apply to historical events?
4. How did the East India Company influence British imperialism?



**Essays:**

Essays (one required in this class!) are to be **fully-referenced** academic essays, featuring a title, name of the writer, contents that conform to academic (see workshop for details) standards, a complete bibliography (**at least 1 primary source**, at least 5 different secondary sources). Recommended font is Times New Roman, 12pt., with 1.5 inch margins. Use subtitles to punctuate the essay. The length of the essay should be **2500 words** (*the word count should be indicated in the essay*). You will be punished in term of your grade for going more than 10 per cent over or under the word target. The essay is due **April 6**. The essays are to be turned in to the lecturer by 2 pm on the said day, either in class or to the instructor’s office. If you are late, you will be penalized by one full letter grade per day, unless you can present a compelling reason, such as a medical or family emergency. **SO DO NOT BE LATE!** The essay will be graded based on the following characteristics: academic style; strength of the arguments and theory; contents and structure; use of sources and bibliography; use of specific data (graphs and tables) when appropriate. **IF YOUR ESSAY DOES NOT HAVE BOTH REFERENCING (IN TEXT OR FOOTNOTES) AND A BIBLIOGRAPHY AT THE END OF THE PAPER, IT WILL BE AN AUTOMATIC F.**

**Essay topics (choice is yours, no need to inform me about it!):**

1. Is the prosperity of western countries due largely to domestic factors or exploitation of other countries? Cite examples supporting your arguments.
2. Assess the contributions of the Venetian Republic and late medieval Portugal to western economic development. Why did their experiences differ?
3. How did institutions and economic performance diverge between the Islamic world and the West? Why?
4. Why did China’s economy stagnate during the latter half of the second millennium?
5. Was the Dutch Republic the first nation to industrialize? Compare its historical development to that of the UK. What was the role of trade in this?
6. Assess the contribution of the British Industrial Revolution to western economic development. What was the importance of technological innovations? Imperialism?
7. Was imperialism behind the economic successes of the Western nations? What were the costs and benefits of imperialism for them?
8. How damaging was imperialism for Indian economic development? Or was it damaging?
9. Was imperialism behind the economic stagnation of the non-Western nations? Provide examples supporting your arguments.

10. Discuss how first Japan and later at least one other Asian economy achieved “modern economic growth”