This course is a colloquium for first- and second-year students that is aimed at developing skills of critical thinking, including close reading, logical and articulate discussion, and clear analytical writing. The course focuses on a critical examination of approaches to world history including the continental, civilizational, and world systems approaches, as well as of narratives constructed around themes such as the rise of the West, European expansion, the discovery of the New World, and the like. We will focus on largely unexamined metageographical conceptions and how they are implicated in Eurocentric assumptions about world historical developments. We will read recent critical works on world history and historiography that have suggested new approaches to the subject, in particular regarding trade and economic exchange, so that we may bring to bear a critical perspective on material and cultural exchange and diffusion from a global perspective. Finally, although “globalization” is a very current concern, we will discover that it has been a salient issue for the past five hundred years.

This course will use a web-based program called Blackboard. Instructions for use can be found at http://www.oberlin.edu/OCTET/Bb/FAQ_Students.htm.

Assignments:
All assignments must be completed to receive credit for the course. Since the course emphasizes reading and discussion, it is important to keep up with the reading and be prepared for discussion. Class attendance is crucial for your own learning, but also for the learning of the other participants, including me.

1. Study questions will be posted on Blackboard for the major readings. A discussion question will also be posted on the Discussion Board of the Blackboard web site for each major reading. Each student is required to respond to the Discussion Board questions or to follow up on another student’s comments. Comments should be thoughtful and around 300 words or so.

2. An analytical essay of 6-8 pp. will be assigned on a topic or topics arising from the reading and class discussions. The essay is due Monday April 5 or before.

3. Collaborative Research: The class will be divided into groups for cooperative projects and mini-discussions. The cooperative project is a panel or other presentation. Topics will be discussed in class midway through the first half of the course. Group members will present the results of their work to the class and moderate a discussion after the presentation. Members of the previous group will submit short written critiques of the current panel to me and to the panel participants. The group scheduled for the last presentation will critique the first presentation. We will discuss the principles and practices of collaborative research and constructive critique in advance.

4. Each student will submit a final essay of 6-8 pp. on the topic of his or her preparation.

Books available for purchase: (and on Reserve under History 149)


Class Meetings:

Feb.  9  Introduction to the course and to each other
      11  World Histories: Some Big Questions

           Martin and Wigen, *The Myth of Continents*, Introduction through Chapter 3

      16  Mapping History
      18  Discussion: *The Myth of Continents* (through Chapter 3)

           *Myth of Continents*, complete

      23  Discussion: *Myth of Continents*, Chapter 4 to end
      25  World History over Time

           Bentley, *Old World Encounters* first half

Mar.  1  Discussion: Bentley
      3  Collaborative Research and Doing History

           *Old World Encounters*, complete

Mar.  8  Discussion: Bentley
      10  Interregional and Supra-regional History (Read Hodgson)


      15  World Systems and World History (Wallerstein and Voll)
      17  Discussion: Blaut


           Blaut, *Colonizer’s Model of the World*, through Chapter 2

      22  Discussion: Blaut
      24  Discussion: Themes of first half of course

           Blaut, *Colonizer’s Model*, complete.

Spring Break
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Apr.</th>
<th>5</th>
<th>Big History/Global History</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>7</td>
<td>Discussion: Diamond</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Diamond, *Guns Germs and Steel*. through Chapter 8

| 12   | Discussion: Diamond                   |
| 14   | Discussion: Pomeranz                  |

Diamond, *Guns Germs and Steel: The Fates of Human Societies*, complete

Pomeranz, *The World that Trade Created: Society, Culture & the World Economy, 1400 to the Present*, through Chapter 4

| 19   | Discussion: Pomeranz                  |
| 21   | Group Project Presentation            |

Pomeranz, *World Trade Created*, complete

| 26   | Group Project Presentation            |
| 28   | Group Project Presentation            |

May  
| 3    | Group Project Presentation            |
| 5    | Assessment and Discussion of Group Project Experience |

For discussion. Choose two:


| 10   | Discussion Future of World History    |
| 11   | Final Discussion: Where have we been? Where are we going? |

`Panel papers due`