

POHI 101 States, Economies, Cities

Fall 2025

Instructor: Nathaniel Greely nathaniel.greely@woodbury.edu

Lecture: Asynchronous, posted to Moodle by MW 10:15am

Instructor Office Hours: W 12:30-1:30pm on Zoom

<https://us05web.zoom.us/j/9282792703?pwd=qq9Uwac1Wij3RCXVQBQblbbwTQXSL.1&omn=83673642224>

Course Description:

This course is designed to introduce students to some of the major ideas and themes in the study of politics and history. Over the semester we will cover some of the key developments in human civilization from the birth of city-states in the Ancient Middle East and Mediterranean, through to the rise and fall of the Roman, Qin and Ottoman empires, the spread of Christianity and Islam, the European conquests of the Americas and up to the revolutions of the eighteenth century and the birth of today's urban, capitalist modernity.

The goals of the course are threefold: to provide students with an awareness of the major events, social processes and historical figures that have shaped human civilization; to develop in students a knowledge of the key terms, theories and concepts that inform how we understand the histories, cultures and political behaviors of human societies; and to familiarize students with world geography, the rise and fall of empires and the history of different regions of the world.

Learning Outcomes:

At the end of the course, it is expected that students will be able to:

Analyze political situations clearly and convincingly with one or more different political ideologies and theories in discussion and essay form.

Demonstrate significant global awareness of multiple cultural, historical and political traditions in the modern world in discussion and essay form.

Discuss intelligently the philosophical and historical origins of Western political and legal traditions in discussion and essay form.

Demonstrate a fluency in vocabulary relevant to the study of history and politics and a familiarity with world geography.

Lecture:

The lectures in this course will be asynchronous, posted to Moodle and viewable at your leisure.

Assessments:

The assessments in this course are largely designed to keep you engaged with the lectures, readings, and other students in the course. Your grades for discussion, quizzes, and the essay draft total 55% of your grade and it should be easy to do well on these components if you stay engaged. The midterm, final exam, and final essay will be graded on quality, and to get top marks on these components you will be required to demonstrate understanding of the material (for the midterm and final exam) and some original critical insight (for the final essay). Your final grade in the course will be composed of the following:

Weekly Online Discussion – 20%

Each student is required to post twice weekly to the Moodle discussion board about the course material from that week. The posts will consist of: (a) one original submission and (b) one reply to another student's submission, **due each Friday 11:59pm**.

(a) The original submission can be an objection to some claim or argument in lecture or reading, a request for clarification of some claim or argument from lecture or reading, or an extension of some claim or argument from the lecture or reading. You should avoid merely summarizing points from the lecture or reading. Original thought is the goal. The hope is that these posts will help you begin to formulate an original thesis for your essay.

(b) The reply to another student's submission should be respectful and constructive but may be an objection to a claim or argument they make in their submission, a request for clarification of a claim or argument they make in their submission, or an extension of some claim or argument they make in their submission. You should avoid merely agreeing with or summarizing the other student's post.

Biweekly Online Quizzes – 20%

Quizzes will be timed, multiple-choice, and accessible through Moodle. The goal of the quizzes is to assess whether students are keeping up with reading and lectures. They are designed to be quite easy for students who do so. See the course schedule for the dates that quizzes will be posted and due.

Midterm – 15%

The midterm will consist of two short essays (1-2 pages each). Students will be given four essay prompts and may choose to write on any two of them. The essay prompts will be on topics from the first half of the course. The short essays should demonstrate understanding of the claims and arguments from the readings and lectures on the given topic. **The essay prompts will be posted 10/2 by 11:59pm and the midterm will be due 10/6 by 11:59pm, submitted through Moodle.**

Essay draft – 15%

One of the most important parts of writing an essay is revision. Students will be required to turn in a rough draft of their final essay, **due 11/3 by 11:59pm, submitted through Moodle.** The essay should present and develop an original thesis on some topic from the course material. Prompts will be provided, but students are welcome to develop their own essay topics, possibly based on a discussion board exchange. **Sample essay prompts will be posted to Moodle 10/7 by 11:59pm.** The essay should be narrowly focused on a very specific topic. Provide an original argument for your view about that claim and consider objections to your argument. There is no length requirement, but 5-7 pages is a rough target length. The rough draft will be returned with comments on how the essay might be developed and improved. It should be easy to get full points for your draft so long as it reflects an honest effort to make a cogent argument.

Final Essay – 15%

Students will revise their essay drafts based on the comments they receive. You are almost certainly expected to make significant changes to your essay in order to get top marks. The final draft will be graded on quality, not merely on effort. **The final draft will be due 12/3 at 11:59pm, submitted through Moodle.**

Final Exam – 15%

The final exam will consist of two short essays (1-2 pages each). Students will be given four essay prompts and may choose to write on any two of them. The short essays should demonstrate understanding of the claims and arguments from the readings and lectures on the given topic. **The essay prompts will be posted 12/4 by 11:59pm and the exam will be due 12/? by 11:59pm, submitted through Moodle.**

Couse Schedule

9/3 – Course Introduction; No Reading

9/8 – Imperial Trajectories; Reading: Burbank and Cooper pp. 1-22

9/10 – The Ancient Mediterranean; Reading: Sansone pp. 131-140

9/14 – Discussion Posts Due 11:59pm

9/15 – The Ancient Mediterranean; Reading: Aristotle selections.

9/17 – Ancient Rome; Reading: Burbank and Cooper pp. 23-42

9/18 – Quiz 1 Posted 11:59pm

9/21 – Discussion Posts Due 11:59pm; Quiz 1 Due 11:59pm

9/22 – Early China and The Qin; Reading: Burbank and Cooper pp. 42-59

9/24 – The Ancient World; No Lecture - Watch Film: *Agora* (2009)

9/28 – Discussion Posts Due 11:59pm

9/29 – The Ancient World (Lecture on the Film)

10/1 – The Late Roman Empire; Reading: Burbank and Cooper pp. 61-70

10/2 – Quiz 2 posted 11:59pm

10/5 – Discussion Posts Due 11:59pm; Quiz 2 Due 11:59pm

10/6 – Islam; Reading: Burbank and Cooper pp. 70-92

10/8 – The Mongol Empire; Reading: Burbank and Cooper pp. 93-115; Midterm Prompts Posted

10/12 – Discussion Posts Due 11:59pm

10/12 - Midterm Due by 11:59pm

10/13 – University Enrichment Day, No Class

10/15 – How to write a term paper; No reading; Essay Prompts Posted on Moodle

10/19 – No discussion posts due this week

10/20 – The Americas part 1; Reading: McKillop Ch.1

10/22 – The Americas part 2; Reading: McKillop Ch. 7-8

10/23 – Quiz 3 Posted 11:59pm

10/26 – Discussion Posts Due 11:59pm; Quiz 3 due 11:59pm

10/27 – No Lecture, Watch *Apocalypto* (2006)

10/29 – Apocalypto Discussion and Controversy; Readings: A.O. Scott, “The Passion of the Maya” *New York Times* Dec 8 2006,

<http://www.nytimes.com/2006/12/08/movies/08apoc.html> ;Traci Ardren, “Is *Apocalypto* pornography?” *Archeology* Dec 5 2006,

<http://archive.archaeology.org/online/reviews/apocalypto.html> ;“Gibson film angers Mayan groups” *BBC News* Dec 8 2006,

<http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/entertainment/6216414.stm>

11/2 – Discussion Posts Due 11:59pm

11/3 – The Spanish Conquests; Reading: Burbank and Cooper pp. 117-128

11/5 – The Americas part 3; Reading: Burbank and Cooper pp. 149-162; Clendinnen pp. 45-56

11/9 – Discussion Posts Due 11:59pm; Essay Draft Due 11:59pm on Moodle

11/10 – The Ottoman Empire; Reading: Burbank and Cooper pp. 128-138

11/12 – The Ottoman Empire; Reading: Burbank and Cooper pp. 138-148

11/13 – Quiz 4 posted 11:59pm

11/16 – Discussion Posts Due 11:59pm; Quiz 4 Due 11:59pm

11/17 – The Enlightenment; Reading: Descartes

11/19 – The Enlightenment; Reading: John Locke, Mary Wollstonecraft

11/23 – Discussion Posts Due 11:59pm

11/24 – Colonies, Territories, and Trade; Reading: Burbank and Cooper pp. 170-184

11/26 – Thanksgiving Break – No Class

11/30 – Discussion Posts due 11:59pm

12/1 – Capitalism and the Industrial Revolution; Reading: Burbank and Cooper pp. 219-250

12/3 – Selections from Karl Marx

12/4 – Quiz 5 posted 11:59pm

12/7 – Discussion Posts due 11:59pm; Quiz 5 Due 11:59pm

12/8 – Selections from Adam Smith; Final Exam Prompts Posted 11:59pm

12/10 – Essay Final Draft Due 11:59pm; Final Exam Due 11:59pm

Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion

Woodbury University is committed to building a university that values student, staff and faculty engagement in addressing issues of diversity, equity and inclusiveness because this is an essential part of an experience-centered education. We create an inclusive climate because we know that the richness of different experiences and perspectives is intrinsically valuable and vital to advancing innovation, critical thinking, solving complex problems, and creating a vibrant academic community. We seek to create a campus culture with this wide range of perspectives and experiences by recruiting and encouraging diverse candidates to apply as students, staff and faculty, including people of any race, color, creed, national origin, ethnicity, gender, gender identity, sexual orientation, age, socioeconomic status, disability, religion or military status.

OSD Accommodation:

Woodbury University is committed to making reasonable accommodations to assist individuals with disabilities in reaching their academic potential. Students desiring accommodations due to a physical, learning or psychological disability must first complete an Accommodations Request Form, which can be downloaded from <http://go.woodbury.edu>, and found under “Academic Resources.” Accommodations cannot be granted prior to the instructor’s receipt of a Notification of Special Needs Release Form from the Disabilities Coordinator. Accommodations are never provided retroactively. (For more information, contact Dr. Teresa Young, Disabilities Coordinator in the Whitten Center (818) 394-3345.)

Religious Accommodation:

If you require any accommodation on religious grounds, please alert me in writing as soon as possible.

Academic Integrity:

All instances of academic offences including plagiarism, cheating on exams, and multiple submission of work, will be handled in accordance with official Woodbury University policy, which can be found in the Student Handbook on the University website Please read the policy and ensure that you understand it.